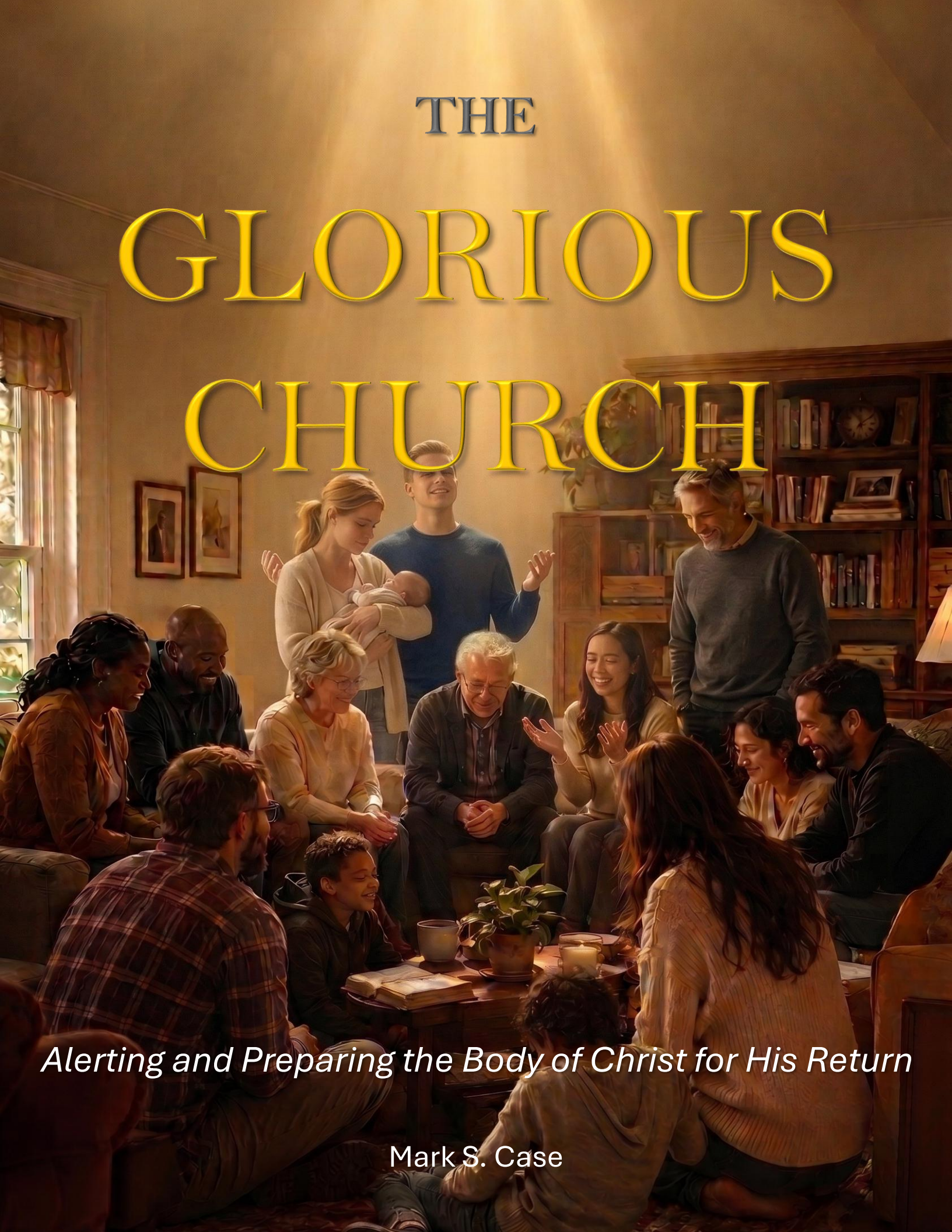


A diverse group of people, including men, women, and children, are gathered in a cozy living room. Some are sitting on the floor around a coffee table, while others are standing. A man in a blue sweater is standing and gesturing, possibly leading a prayer or song. A woman is holding a baby. The room is warmly lit, with a bookshelf in the background and a window on the left. The overall atmosphere is one of community and worship.

# THE GLORIOUS CHURCH

*Alerting and Preparing the Body of Christ for His Return*

Mark S. Case

# THE GLORIOUS CHURCH

*A BOOK OVERVIEW (PART ONE OF TWO)*

by Mark Case

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**Please note:** Throughout this book summary, I often use the term “*the Last Church*.” There are other organizations and denominations that also use that term when speaking about God’s finished work in His Church; however, please do not confuse this message with others. I have found that some others who teach a glorious church message have an agenda and are usually unbiblical in their eschatology too. This “*glorious church*” view does not carry an agenda at all – not a personal agenda, or anyone else’s either. My desire is to be purely Biblical.

The Glorious Church Book (part one of two)  
By Mark S. Case

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#### **EPHESIANS 4:11-16**

11. AND HE HIMSELF GAVE SOME TO BE APOSTLES, SOME PROPHETS, SOME EVANGELISTS, AND SOME PASTORS AND TEACHERS,

12. FOR THE EQUIPPING OF THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF MINISTRY, FOR THE EDIFYING OF THE BODY OF CHRIST,

13. TILL WE ALL COME TO THE UNITY OF THE FAITH AND OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SON OF GOD, TO A PERFECT MAN, TO THE MEASURE OF THE STATURE OF THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST;

14. THAT WE SHOULD NO LONGER BE CHILDREN, TOSSED TO AND FRO AND CARRIED ABOUT WITH EVERY WIND OF DOCTRINE, BY THE TRICKERY OF MEN, IN THE CUNNING CRAFTINESS OF DECEITFUL PLOTTING,

15. BUT, SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE, MAY GROW UP IN ALL THINGS INTO HIM WHO IS THE HEAD—CHRIST—

16. FROM WHOM THE WHOLE BODY, JOINED AND KNIT TOGETHER BY WHAT EVERY JOINT SUPPLIES, ACCORDING TO THE EFFECTIVE WORKING BY WHICH EVERY PART DOES ITS SHARE, CAUSES GROWTH OF THE BODY FOR THE EDIFYING OF ITSELF IN LOVE.

#### **EPHESIANS 5:26-27**

26. ... THAT HE MIGHT SANCTIFY AND CLEANSE HER WITH THE WASHING OF WATER BY THE WORD,

27. THAT HE MIGHT PRESENT HER TO HIMSELF A GLORIOUS CHURCH, NOT HAVING SPOT OR WRINKLE OR ANY SUCH THING, BUT THAT SHE SHOULD BE HOLY AND WITHOUT BLEMISH.

# PREFACE

## My Faith Journey in the Word, in the Spirit, and Among the Churches

Greetings to you in the matchless name of Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord! I'm happy to know that your desire, like mine, is to know Him more! I hope this message strengthens your faith in the knowledge of God.

***“Do not quench the Spirit.  
Do not despise  
prophecies.”***

The Apostle Paul  
I Thess. 5:19-20

I would never suggest using a dream, vision, prophecy, or any other revelation as the starting point of any message, except that which is clearly affirmed by God's Word.



*Mark preaching in a pastors' conference in Chile, South America, 1998*

Our Lord taught that His Father would give us His own Spirit, who would teach, guide, and lead us into *all* truth. The Bible plainly tells us that God still speaks through spiritual revelation in several ways; and if you're not listening, you should be. **Listen to His Spirit!** Don't allow the errors of the many to cause you to despise the way of His Spirit. **Let's grow up!** Learn to walk with Him and learn the sound of His voice. If you're in Christ, He's in you by His Spirit, and **He's not deaf or mute!**

With that in mind, I want to share a couple of particular times when the Holy Spirit spoke to me, powerfully.

In the wee hours one morning, around 2:00 AM, sometime in the year 2001, the Holy Spirit abruptly awakened me. I was leading a pastors' seminar in Ushuaia, Argentina, during a seven-year ministry season traversing most of South America, teaching and preaching in leadership conferences, churches, seminaries, etc.

I sat straight up in bed, and the Holy Spirit spoke to me, saying, ***“Mark, I'm not coming back for this Church!”*** And again, loudly, ***“Mark, I'm not coming back for this Church! I'm going to perfect her first”*** (*bring to full maturity*)!

The second time He spoke to me this way was in the summer of 2003, during another leg of that seven-year journey. He declared: ***“There is a fire in the threshold of every church that names the name of Jesus Christ as Lord!”*** He then added, ***“Share that everywhere you go”*** (Luke 12:49-53)!

**This clear mandate from the Holy Spirit perfectly aligned with what I was already preaching: that God is calling His people out of unsanctioned, man-made religious traditions into assemblies formed according to His biblical pattern, and that He is going to prepare a bride worthy of His Son at His return. That means He is going to turn our church world upside down, and through difficult trials He will test each one's faith. Some will fall, and others will remain faithful.**

The essence of what He spoke to me is clearly established throughout the New Testament, including in the Gospels before the Church was born, where Jesus began to lay foundational truths that we should walk in.

I sat straight up in bed, and the Holy Spirit spoke to me, saying,

***“Mark, I'm not coming back for this Church! I'm going to perfect her first!”***

(Eph. 4:13; 5:27; Phil. 1:6)

To “*perfect*” here means to make complete, or whole, or to bring to full maturity—no longer babies, tossed by the cunning craftiness of men, but perfectly fitted together.

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**My missionary journeys speaking to the churches showed me early on that the visible Church is an expert at devising ways to substitute earthly things for God's heavenly glory.**

I had already preached from the pulpits of countless South American churches, ranging from large, prestigious congregations in Sao Paulo, Brazil, to humble village assemblies in the mining communities of Chile. Sometimes I preached in three to five different congregations on a single Saturday, and it was our custom to assemble all the evangelical congregations at a large venue in a city, where I would speak to everyone at one time. I had spoken to hundreds of pastors, calling them to teach their congregations how to flow as living organisms and away from lifeless forms. I had ministered across every Christ-confessing tradition, from Oneness and Mainline Pentecostals, to Charismatics, Baptists, Independents, and more. I had seen them all, and learned much. The Lord was showing me His Church up close and personal. It was not pretty. His part is, but ours is not.

**From the very beginning of my ministry, the Holy Spirit impressed His clear mandate upon me—to call God’s people away from the practice of religious Christianity to life, and back to the New Testament pattern.**

What the Spirit clearly spoke to me through many encounters confirmed, strengthened, and expanded my understanding of the core New Testament message to deliver to the churches—that He would prepare a glorious church to greet Him at His return, that He would make us complete and glorious through trials, that He would sustain us, and more!

#### **Mainstream Christianity Overlooks Critical Truths Such As These:**

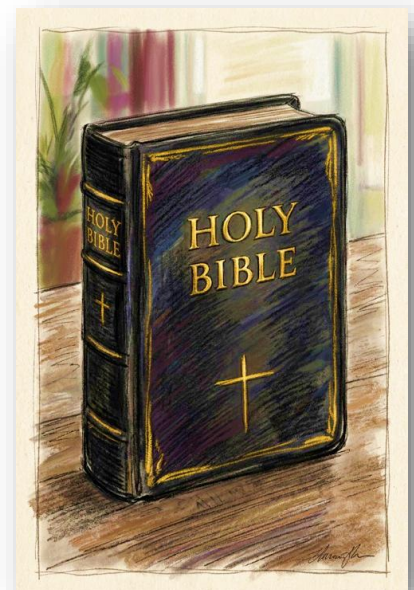
*“I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished! Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division” (Luke 12:49-51). “... He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Matt. 3:11).*

Paul teaches that Jesus is preparing us as a beautiful bride by *“the washing of water by the word,”* with the ultimate purpose *“that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish”* (Eph. 5:27). He wrote that we’d become *“the perfect man, the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”* (Eph. 4:13). I believed him then, and I do now!

**God is preparing a glorious church—a bride made worthy of the Groom who is coming to receive us for Himself! He’s going to finish His Church born at Pentecost, “perfecting” that which concerns us (Ps. 138:8)!**

I cannot possibly express the depth and breadth of the many Holy Spirit-inspired messages He gave me from Genesis to Revelation, about how He is going to prepare a beautiful bride, and that we should be aware and ready! **He showed me the coming collapse of our man-made forms of Christianity, the purity of what He designed for us from the beginning, and how He will restore us at the end of the age to finish the work He started. Also, He gave me glimpses of things to come, some that have already passed and others coming.** Again, every believer should hear Him.

**I’m not boasting at all. I have *nothing* to boast about. Every believer who walks with Him will hear Him and be used by Him. I testify of these things to give you confidence that what the Holy Spirit showed me, He sent me to proclaim to many, many churches and Christian leaders.**



*The best church-growth manual.  
Return to the Word!*

#### **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

*"Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession... Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate."*

#### **T. Austin Sparks**

*"As he [Satan] sought to triumph with Christ, so he has sought to triumph with the Church, and, in a great degree, has triumphed by bringing the Church into the realm where present kingdom, present power, present glory is the thing sought after..."*

*"... whereas the true kingdom, power and glory is spiritual, not temporal; is heavenly not earthly..."*

**The Church's primary purpose here is to know and to show the glory of God.**

I recall speaking at an Arabic church in the Dallas/Fort Worth area several years ago—about five years after my final ministry trip to speak with evangelical leaders in Iraq. The former president of the Evangelical Churches of Iraq was living in Dallas at the time and attended the service with his wife. When they greeted me after the meeting, with tears in their eyes, they expressed how everything I had preached and taught them five years earlier in Iraq had come to pass. They thanked God for sending me to them when He did. Hearing their testimony made my heart overflow with praise—glory to God!

**I spoke in Jordan, India, Argentina, Chile, Sri Lanka, Scotland, Spain, England, and many other places where I expounded on Paul's teaching about a glorious church! My confidence grew as many leaders agreed that God was not pleased with our condition and that they would love to see course correction. Many wholeheartedly bore witness, some saying the Holy Spirit had shown them the same thing.**

## My Spiritual Start

Since most of you don't know me at all, and since the words in this little booklet are so out of sync with the way we do Christianity today, I thought good to share a little of my background. I believe this brief letter will help you understand and receive Paul's Spirit-taught message which I'm trying to convey, that few in the Church even think about. My objective is only to help each local gathering of believers grow up to the kind of maturity the Apostle Paul told us would come at the end of this age.

I grew up in a Christian home in the heart of the Bible Belt, where church was central to everything we did. We were there whenever the doors opened—not out of cold "religiosity," but because, by God's grace, we genuinely loved being with Him and His people. The church of my youth certainly had its faults, but it was also home to sincere believers who truly sought to follow Jesus. **Over time, however, I realized that the institutionalized molds in which we were fitted actually stifled our spiritual potential. The religious systems built in His name ended up distracting us from a pure faith, trapping us in traditions shaped generations before.**



*First Baptist, our home church where I made a public profession of faith in Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior when I was nine years old*

**Modernizing what my generation inherited, such as changing formal dress to casual clothes, or adding drums, guitars, performance stages, "worship artists," and theater lights, has done *nothing* to solve the core issue. God doesn't want an updated religious production; He wants *us*, fully surrendered (Is. 66:1-2)!**

While I remain deeply grateful for the faith community that raised me, I saw that the Church at large had drifted far from its biblical blueprint—a compromise centuries in the making. **Instead of true disciples, bound in real Christian brotherhood maturing daily into Christlikeness, modern church culture often keeps members anchored to the world, merely wearing His name as a label.**

Sunday morning fellowship gave a lot of attention to weekend football winners and losers and the latest Saturday night movies. For some, Sunday morning church was a fashion show too. Nothing wrong with dressing up, but when it becomes "the thing," it steals the show from the One we said we came to see. Our glory is not **His** glory.

**Local churches worldwide are not only more religious than spiritual and relational; but churches who seek to be relevant to social culture are also grieving His Spirit.**

**Many God-called preachers, generations before me, warned of the dangers of worldliness in the local church.**

Our congregation, like so many others of that era, even built a small "mission church" building on the poor side of town. That way, believers who couldn't afford to dress up like we did had a comfortable place to meet among themselves—and we could remain comfortable with our own social class. I can't judge the motives of those who built that mission; I only share this to show how far we had drifted from the biblical pattern. We were a single local body, intentionally divided by social status. This was just one of many glaring contradictions between our lifestyle and Scripture. My heart was stirred! If these flaws were so obvious to me, imagine what God was seeing!

**Most churches down the street and around the nation were no different in many ways—and some were far further off base than we were. Based on everything I've witnessed since then, I'd say we actually ranked pretty high among others regarding the need for sinful humanity to look to Jesus. I was ordained in that denomination years later; but I've had nothing to do with it for over two decades. "The whole head is sick."**

## **My Parents Were Given Spiritual Sight Beyond Religious Tradition**

While some men inherit a business or the family farm, my dad's inheritance wasn't measured by earthly value—it was heavenly. He was remarkably smart, fearless, gifted, and strong, with a gracious personality that made everyone he met feel like a friend. But above all, his true inheritance was a spiritual gift of sight. He was a spiritual seer, not of a strange spirit, but of the Holy Spirit. His ministry was that of a modern-day prophet of sorts.

He wasn't perfect at all but *"was a man with like passions"* as all men, knowing the battle between flesh and Spirit like the rest of us. He didn't count himself better than anyone; but, spiritually speaking, he could see much further, deeper, higher, and clearer than most; his pursuit of the way of the Lord was relentless too. He bore a great burden with honest conviction to tell his fellow believers what he saw so that they might see too "and live." Most were born and bred in some form of Christian religion that he couldn't identify with.



*My parents, Stanley and Peggy Case*



*First Presbyterian, a few blocks away from our home church - all were fitted into their family's church tradition*

many acknowledged that he shared rare wisdom that rang true. But because he didn't flow with mainstream, they labeled him a Christian fanatic—a smart man who was wasting his time delving too deeply into the things of God. They believed that was the pastor's job, and Dad should just "join the choir" like everybody else and sing whatever was handed out. He could not.

**He loved God's Word and believed it. He saw truth and embraced it. At every opportunity, he spoke in love to everyone with a spiritual fervor that was real. He was indeed zealous and jealous for the name of the Lord. He hurt for the people he saw hurting, and he believed the visible Church was far from what God intended for us to be; he desired to do his part to set it aright.**

Dad was not anything like those who read a crystal ball. He never read anyone's "mail," telling them their past or their future. Yet, the Holy Spirit did gift him with a rare conviction about living the Christ-life to the full, about serving God by serving others; and God showed him big-picture things years ahead of his time.

**By profession, he was a steam engineer.**

**Everyone knew he was smart, and**

***"Laughter, ridicule, opposition, persecution, are often the only reward which Christ's followers get from the world."***

J. C. Ryle

***"Loneliness would seem to be the price that the saint must pay for his saintliness."***

A. W. Tozer

As he taught us through the gospels, he tried to express what he saw that we didn't. My mother and five siblings and I caught a glimpse of it, but at that time we didn't really understand what he was trying to say. The way he read and taught us was so different from the way we were taught in our local church. He didn't read the Bible as a historical book, but rather as one for applying to our present day, and he was literal about it.

**Dad quoted these and many other passages with power like I'd never heard anyone speak before:**

*"Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them" (Mk. 11:22-24).*

*"If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away" (Matt. 5:40-42).*

*"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6:24).*

*"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt. 6:19-21).*

*"Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble" (Matt. 6:31-34).*

*"Do not love the world or 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, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever." (I John 2:15-17).*

*"If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him" (I John 2:29).*

*"For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another" (I John 3:11).*

*"... that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one" (John 17:21-22).*

Dad, like many other men down through the centuries, didn't fit in any established form of Christianity, though he wanted to be fitted in. He never stopped loving the people of God or Christ-centered corporate worship and fellowship.

Strangely enough, even my father-in-law, a successful local businessman who was not influenced by my dad, once told me that he quit going to church because he realized that the people in the church were no different from the people in the world. He had been raised in a rural holiness church, and when he left the country for the city, he discovered that city church folk were quite different from his spiritual roots. He would have nothing of it.



*The Catholic Church, near our church, but far away from biblical Christianity.*

**We were thankful that our community was filled with churches that maintained a social culture of peace with virtue; some churches even preached the gospel, but we all were a long way from the biblical pattern.**

It took years for us to see what Dad saw, but in time we all did. And even though he was not an in-your-face kind of street preacher at all, but was kind to everyone and sought earnestly to help others in our church community to see what he saw, yet he was sorely rejected all his life by nearly everyone. He lived lonely.

So goes the life of the one who bears the truth amid a religious system that is comfortable just the way it is. His exhortations to lukewarm Christianity wore him down when he reached about retirement age, and he quietly faded into the shadows until he passed away at seventy-nine years old.

My mother was truly a godly woman, second only to my own wife, and both endured in faith the ups and downs that all wives do when married to someone with a prophetic preacher's leaning. My parents' insights were contagious, affecting our whole family, but especially me. In God's time, I was given a spiritual gift and calling similar to my dad's and was blessed to travel the world as he had, but for the sole purpose of declaring this truth!

## My 40-Year Mark

The Bible gives significance to the 40-year mark, and that was certainly the case with me. I had wrestled for nearly twenty years after marriage before finally coming to grips with the fact that, in the normal scheme of things in this world, I was like a fish out of water. I seemed to be following in my Dad's footsteps. But I was uncertain about how to fulfill my calling. I managed to squeeze in two years of Bible college before dabbling in business with a measure of success, while trying my hand at preaching on the radio too; but it wasn't until I was 40 years old that I launched out into the deep, casting my net on the other side, never to look back!

Unlike Dad, who never preached a sermon outside our living room (though his ministry went far and wide), the Lord allowed me to preach a thousand times, and in perhaps hundreds of Christian gatherings, including teaching literally thousands of pastors across four continents for about a dozen years, where I called *all* out of our lifeless religious forms and into a Church "*made according to pattern, His pattern!*"

**Many received this message with joy, but most couldn't see. Some wanted to believe it could be true, saw how the Word of God said so, and even testified that He had shown them the same; but most couldn't imagine how our mess could be fixed. I saw no one exit their comfort zone—some desired to, but had no faith to change.**

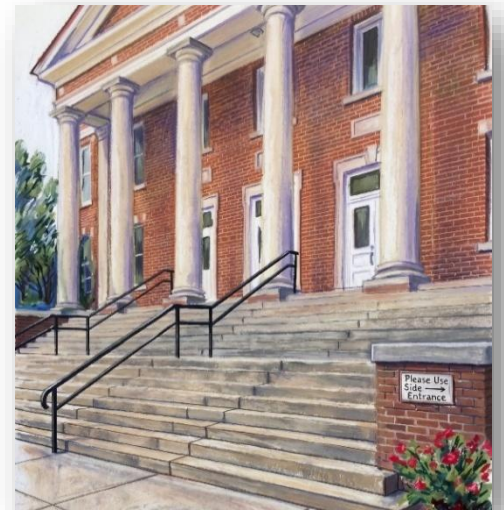
And today, by the grace of God, I'm still calling myself, and all the members of Christ's body, to a higher plane—to the prize of His *highest* calling!

I've written countless articles for most of thirty years, preached hundreds of messages at home and abroad, published one book, and jotted down an endless number of spiritual musings, keeping the yellow notepad people in business.

This publication is part one of two on the Glorious Church doctrine taught by the Apostle Paul. **Part one** is meant to **alert the body of Christ** to the severity of our waywardness and to the end-time fiery refining trials that have already begun and will soon overtake the world. **Part two** gives attention to **what we will look like** as we grow into true spiritual maturity. How wonderful that will be!

Realizing the lateness of the hour, I have prepared this easily digestible book overview in keeping with what the Holy Spirit has shown me through these many years, beginning with the basic understanding my dad saw way before our time, and continuing until now. The glorious church doctrine is an escatological theme, as it is a moment to be enjoyed by the Last Church. It is a central theme from the Spirit of the Lord to the Churches in the world for this hour.

Seeking for a truly "glorious Church,"



*First Methodist, one block down the street from us – yet another inherited church model*

In 1999, the Spirit of the Lord spoke to me in the middle of a sermon, saying,

***"God is going to let us exhaust ourselves of ourselves; then He's going to show up!"***

We're almost there!  
Hallelujah!

# INTRODUCTION

## Practical Sanctification – Washed in the Water of the Word

Eph. 5:26: “...that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word...”

**The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. The Word of God helps us stay clean. We need both to be presented to Him as “a glorious church,” according to Paul. Let’s take a closer look at what the Word says.**

The Bible tells us that God does three distinct things in our lives so that we can experience His fullness. We are **justified**, **sanctified**, and **glorified**—in that order. He has made a way to preserve us completely, spirit, soul, and body.

### ❖ **FIRST, we are justified once and for all.**

To be justified is positional. That happens instantaneously when the blood of His Son is applied to us at the moment when we receive by faith His grace freely given. From that moment on, we are made just, fully accepted by Him.

### ❖ **LAST, we are glorified once and for all.**

To be glorified is a state of being—a celestial state. That will happen the instant we see Jesus when He comes to receive us in the air to be with Him in heaven. The Apostle John writes that “we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” (I John 3:2). The Apostle Paul writes that when we see Him “... this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (I Cor. 15:53). We shall be given “a celestial” body (I Cor. 15:40, 44, 52-53). That is our glorified state.

Regarding His glory here, we can and should grow in “glory” in this life by continuing to walk with Him, pursuing Him with all of our hearts. Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, saying we should gradually increase in His glory, “being transformed into the same image from glory to glory” (II Cor. 3:18). He also tells us that the last church, the end-time church, shall be “a glorious church,” which is the theme of this message. However, we will not be “glorified” until Jesus is revealed when He comes to receive us to Himself.

### ❖ **BETWEEN THE FIRST AND THE LAST, we are sanctified once in heaven, but we progress here.**

Sanctification means to be set apart unto God. It is **positional** in heaven and **practical** down here.

**Even while still in our earthly bodies, God sees us as His own special people; and, spiritually speaking, He positions us with Him in glory already. That is instant, *positional* sanctification. When the blood of Jesus is applied to us at the moment of salvation (I Cor. 6:11), He washes our sins away and makes us His very own. From that moment forward, Paul writes that our lives are “hidden in Christ with God” and that we are “seated in heavenly places in Christ” (Col. 3:1-3).**

*Positional* sanctification is different from *practical* sanctification, which is an ongoing work of cleansing from sin by washing our hearts and minds with His word and by constant fellowship with His Holy Spirit; also, by the same means, we are continually separated from the spirit of this world unto God. If we neglect these things, we hinder practical sanctification. We become spiritually impotent and stay immature.

**Throughout our whole life God is working to help us look more and more like Him. He does that through the process of practical sanctification. He doesn’t stop unless we stop Him by our own unwillingness to cooperate with Him. Are you consciously allowing**

**A glorious church is one that has been made completely whole.**

**GOD IS ABLE!**

***“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”***

**I Thess. 5:23**

**He wants a people who no longer claim their own lives, who make a clean break with the spirit of this world and fully embrace His heavenly kingdom on earth, where every decision is made in light of His glory here and His soon return!**

**Him to continue to mature your faith through practical sanctification? That is a serious question to which we should always give serious contemplation.**

Paul writes that we are being “*conformed into the image of His Son*” and “*transformed by the renewing of [our] mind*” into “*His image*” (Rom. 8:29; 12:2; II Cor. 3:18). Paul also writes that, though “*outwardly we are wasting away, inwardly we are being renewed day by day*” (II Cor. 4:16). There are at least a dozen New Testament passages that speak directly to God’s continuing work to change us into His image. It is important to Him that we continue to grow progressively into His likeness.

**Individual maturity and local-church corporate maturity both matter.** The New Testament refers to various levels of local church spiritual development. In Paul’s first letter to the church in Corinth, he said that they were still “*babes*” and that he could not even speak to them as a spiritual people (I Cor. 3:1-3). Immediately before that, he said he could share the things of the Spirit only with the “*mature*” (I Cor. 2:6). The writer of Hebrews said that even though those to whom he was writing “*ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the first principles of the oracles of God*” (Heb. 5:12). They were not growing up.

Time and again the New Testament speaks to us about the local church in the context of a work that should mature in the same way that the individual believer should mature. **One mark of corporate maturity is how we conduct our gatherings, which is the starting point and launching pad for how we replicate Him as many members in one body.**

Jesus was “*the fullness of the Godhead bodily*” (Col. 2:9). His local church is “*His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all*” (Eph. 1:23). We are *His* body—bone of *His* bone, flesh of *His* flesh (Gen. 2:23; Eph. 5:30).

We are to receive and exercise the gifts of His Spirit as the Spirit gives them for edification for the whole body. We are to abide in His Word, allowing it to do a cleansing work in our hearts and minds, resulting in holy, righteous living. We are to seek and submit to the way of His Spirit in everyday life, and we are to help each other live in such a way that God is pleased both with our conduct and our spiritual sensitivity and obedience.

**Simply put, God desires every local church to be a living reflection of Jesus—not a religious institution or a traditional gathering operating under His name. He isn't seeking pomp, human hierarchies, executive pastors or boards, or culturally trendy rebrands. Grand old cathedrals, modern mega churches, scripted services, pipe organs, stage performances, and award-winning “worship artists” don't impress Him. He doesn't want most of what we've *built*, or what we *do* in His name—not according to what His Word says. He just wants *us*—the very thing we resist most.**

It is clear that God wants us to seek full spiritual maturity here. One thing should be clear to all... we are not there yet! The question is: “Do we want to be?”

This is the heart of the doctrine of “*a glorious church*” as taught by Paul in Ephesians. **This was revelation to me, but not my revelation. I’m only echoing what Paul taught. He’s the one who received this revelation from Jesus Christ.** Seminaries won’t teach it because it would destroy their religious empires. This was the exact same problem the Jews were confronted with in Jesus’ day. Had they believed on Him, they would have self-destructed.

## **Preliminary Considerations:**

### **1. The Pastel Images**

The artwork included throughout this message represents a small sample of the diverse churches, revivals, and Christian movements through which God’s Spirit has patiently, lovingly, and generously moved for twenty centuries, despite us. They are not placed in any particular order but are here to highlight the stark contrast between the living body God originally established and what we have turned it into.

**We can read God’s Word without also living by His Word.**

**Living by His Word helps keep us clean from the dirt of sin, and it helps set us apart from the spirit of this world.**

Notice the New Testament church gathering in a home, where Spirit-led leaders serve among the believers and every member participates according to their spiritual gifts. The contrast between God's original blueprint and our static structures and service formalities is telling. In many ways, modern church life has blurred the lines between Old Testament temple worship and New Testament body ministry. While God graciously meets us where we are, any structure that strays from the New Testament pattern will ultimately fall short of producing the full stature of Christ in the local assembly. God can always make an exception—and He has every right to do so—but our pursuit should be in His prescribed way, not with a desperate reliance on His exceptions.

## 2. Christendom at Large Is Largely Apostate

The largest orthodox religious institutions and modern mega-church evangelical systems in the world are skewed to their own biases, adding confusion. What is more, in recent years God has exposed massive scandals from the top down across every major denomination, plus in many nondenominational churches as well. It is obvious that God is exposing the fallacies of both old religious systems and new religious trends, and His end-time judgment for those who claim to be of His own household has begun.

*“For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God”* (1 Peter 4:17).

**It is obvious that God is exposing the fallacies of both old religious systems and new religious trends, and His end-time judgment for those who claim to be of His own household has begun.**

**At this very moment, untold millions of God's people are crying out for the pure work of His Spirit to be regained!**

While not every church or Christian organization was founded with bad intentions—many began with sincere faith and pure motives—none will endure unless they were built on the biblical pattern and stayed true to that course. I have yet to find an institution that has done so. Nevertheless, God has always preserved a faithful remnant, raising up men and women of fervent prayer, total devotion, and humble reverence among those gathered in His name. He continues to do so today. Still, to say we need a spiritual awakening is a profound understatement.

**God has proven time and again that His mercies are new every morning and extend to a thousand generations!**

**When Paul plainly taught that God is going to prepare an end-time “glorious church,” one that measures up to “the fullness of Christ” so that we will “no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but fitted together by that which every joint supplies,” he was letting us know that we should expect an end-time move of God—one that dismantles our man-made religion, sets His remnant free, gathers His scattered people, and refines us through fire to be presented glorious at His coming!**

## 3. A True Pastor Has a Very Difficult Calling to Fill

There are pastors, and then there are true pastors. A faithful pastor has an extraordinarily difficult calling, especially in today's Christian environment. It may be that your pastor is a genuine undershepherd—an elder worthy of double honor—who simply does not know how, or even if, he can exit his inherited system of Christianity. The Holy Spirit will lead each one who is willing. He may lead some pastors to maintain their current form of meeting while they teach and lead those God has put in their care to a higher plain, and to alert them of where we've missed it and what's ahead. However, any pastor who simply holds to the status quo, or who neglects speaking to the times we live in, especially relative to Bible prophecy, is irresponsible.

A congregation can often be as stubborn as its leaders, and your pastor's flock may resist taking higher ground even if his heart longs for it. It is not always a leader's fault when a local assembly fails to take an off-ramp from mainstream traditions; nevertheless, he remains charged before God with leading according to the Word. In His appointed time, God is going to help us exit by bringing an end to our own man-made church forms and self-reliance. We will not have a choice about the change. **Many will drop out of Church, and many others will integrate into what will quickly become the “Harlot” Church of Revelation 17; but a minority remnant will gather in His name and, by His indwelling Spirit, become glorious. More about that later.**

**I encourage believers currently in an established church, who believe the Lord planted them there, to pray fervently for their leadership to be attentive to this late hour and hear what the Spirit is saying today.**

# THE CHURCH IS BORN

## The Book of the Acts of the Holy Spirit, Chapter Two

**1** When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. **2** And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. **3** Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. **4** And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

### The Crowd's Response

**5** And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. **6** And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. **7** Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? **8** And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? **9** Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, **10** Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, **11** Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God." **12** So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?" **13** Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine."

### Peter's Sermon

**14** But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. **15** For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.

**16** But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

**17** 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God,  
That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh;  
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
Your young men shall see visions,  
Your old men shall dream dreams.

**18** And on My menservants and on My maidservants  
I will pour out My Spirit in those days;  
And they shall prophesy.

**19** I will show wonders in heaven above  
And signs in the earth beneath:  
Blood and fire and vapor of smoke.

**20** The sun shall be turned into darkness,  
And the moon into blood,  
Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.

**21** And it shall come to pass

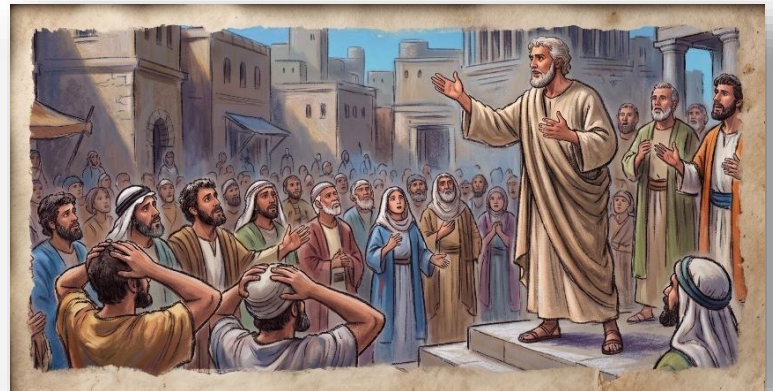


Pentecost: The Outpouring on the 120 - Acts 2

These were not Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, Charismatics, or Assemblies of God. These represented a virgin faith.

For that spiritually sterile moment, they were completely outside any religious camp. They do, however, represent a remnant of believers from every generation, who long for pure, Holy Spirit presence and power, outside the halls of our religious forms, into His life-changing glory!

Paul longed to "present" us as "a chaste virgin to Christ" (II Cor. 11:2).



Within only days, at least eight thousand souls had believed on Jesus Christ, repented of their sins, and were publicly baptized!

God had not abandoned them at all; but like every other generation of believers, His Spirit was leading them as they sought to find their way. There were many big questions, including, "What to do with the Law, with the Priesthood, etc.?" "What about Gentiles?" "Who's to lead?" "Where do believers assemble and how do they conduct meetings?"

Those questions and more would be answered by revelation from Jesus Christ Himself to the Apostle Paul, who at that time was still a persecutor of the early Church. None of those questions would be answered by seminarians - who have since altered Paul's revelation.

We must return to Paul's revelation and become that "chaste virgin."

*That whoever calls on the name of the LORD  
Shall be saved.'*

**22** Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know— **23** Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; **24** whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.

**25** For David says concerning Him:  
'I foresaw the LORD always before my face,  
For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.

**26** Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad;  
Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope.

**27** For You will not leave my soul in Hades,  
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

**28** You have made known to me the ways of life;  
You will make me full of joy in Your presence.'

**29** Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. **30** Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, **31** he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. **32** This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. **33** Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.

**34** For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, **35** Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."

**36** Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

**37** Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" **38** Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **39** For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

### **The Newborn Church Grows in the Fear of the Lord and Multiplies**

**40** And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." **41** Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. **42** And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. **43** Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. **44** Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, **45** and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

**46** So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, **47** praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the Church daily those who were being saved.



*Initially, the church in Jerusalem was led by elders and deacons;  
its first leading elder was James, the half-brother of Jesus.*

*Eventually, house churches sprang up everywhere!*

*The Apostle Paul began appointing elders in all the churches at the end of his first missionary journey. We don't know when he first received or taught his revelation about how God designed local church governance and its operation, but it was not until his letter to Corinth that he spelled it out—some 20 years after Pentecost.*

*The Apostle Paul teaches that God will finish His work in us by sanctifying us with His Word and by His Spirit—presenting "a glorious church," "the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 5:27; 4:13).*

## Chapter One Summary:

# GOD STILL SPEAKS TO HIS CHURCHES

### 1. Jesus is watching His churches – every single one.

*“I know your works, your labor, your patience...” — Rev. 2:2*

For nearly thirty years, I’ve preached about the Seven Churches of Asia, found in Revelation 2 and 3. Jesus maintains an active, unwavering vigil over every single gathering in His name, measuring corporate spiritual health against His divine standards, rather than against our flawed human metrics. He is not “out to get us” at all, but He has entrusted us with His name, and He is concerned for His name above all. No administrative shortcut, or even *slight* departure from the New Testament model, escapes His sight. **Since He grades us by His Word, I shudder at the thought of seeing our scorecard! We’ve failed in far too many ways for a passing grade. Are we better than five of the seven churches of Asia who all had failing grades? I think not!** Our downfall has much to do with the way we “do church.” It all starts there. When we get that wrong, it’s nearly impossible to get the rest right. Yet though we have long drifted from God’s blueprint, He continues to work with us. What a Faithful Shepherd! He is so faithful to His promise that He is going to “*complete that which He began in us.*” The Apostle Paul teaches that God is going to prepare us as a beautifully sanctified bride, dressed worthy for a king—the King of all kings, Jesus!



*Eastern Orthodoxy marked a major shift in the institutional Church nearly 900 years ago; but, spiritually speaking, it was a horizontal shift, not a vertical one. There are still many Orthodox churches today; and despite their institutionalized hierarchy and formal liturgy, God is still watching. He knows who are His.*

### 2. He still speaks through “messengers.”

*“To the angel [messenger] of the church of Ephesus write... He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” — Rev. 2:1, 7*

**Contrary to popular opinion, God still speaks to His people, individually and corporately. And He still uses human agents as His messengers to deliver urgent, prophetic messages to His Church, especially when we need a course correction. In this way, His voice pierces through centuries of religious tradition to call a wayward Church back to its early first-century purity and power. To every single church down through the Church age, He says, “If you have ears to hear, hear what the Spirit is [still] saying to the churches” (Rev. 2 and 3). Those called by God to speak into His churches do not shrink back from proclaiming His Word just as it is, including a reminder that everything that can be shaken will be shaken. It is not His foundation that will fail, but rather the “wood, hay, and stubble” that we’ve used to build upon it.**

### 3. There’s nothing new under the sun, or in the Church either.

*“That which has been is what will be, that which is done is what will be done...” — Eccl. 1:9*

Cultural compromise and twisted theological trappings steering us from God’s Word in modern churches echo errors documented since the first century. The entire Church age has shown no more maturity in the visible Church than did the New Testament churches of Corinth, Ephesus, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, and Laodicea. **Man’s ingenuity and philosophy, along with demonic strategies to undermine God’s plan and deceive His people, remain unchanged, resulting in the cyclical repetition of doctrinal divides and stagnation rather than an upward trajectory to spiritual maturity.** In 1999, the Spirit of the Lord told me that God is going to let us exhaust ourselves of ourselves, and *then* He will show up! We’re almost there! Hallelujah!

## Chapter Two Summary:

# WHY GIVE ATTENTION TO A GLORIOUS CHURCH?

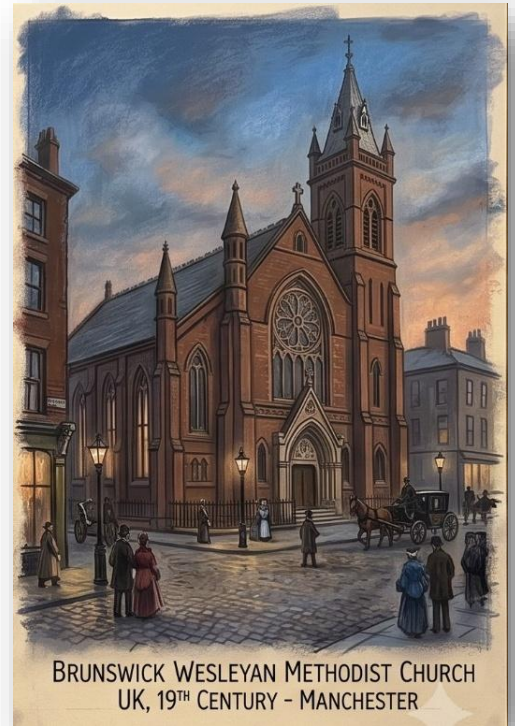
### 1. It is required of stewards to be found faithful.

*“...it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.” — I Cor. 4:2*

The leadership and members of Christ's body bear a strict, non-negotiable stewardship responsibility to maintain the purity and power of the Spirit who gave us birth, as well as to follow His instructions. **Two millennia of organizational drift and endless division have created a plethora of traditional religious ruts, none of which is so deep that we cannot escape; but we simply will not. Our contentment does not absolve this generation from accountability to God's original design.** If we *can see* what is right today, we *can do* what is right today. Faithfulness demands a radical rejection of man-made over-organized church, large and small, in favor of absolute compliance with the Master Builder's instructions—something God *required* of Moses and Solomon before He would make His presence known. The Apostle Paul was given the spiritual blueprint, but we have not been good stewards of it. Every house that we've built in His name is about to be tested: *“... each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is”* (I Cor. 3:13).

### 2. It will show Jesus' victory over the devil through His Church on earth.

*“...and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.” — Matt. 16:18;*  
*“... that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places...” Eph. 3:10*



*The John Wesley story proves that God calls men inside religious halls to proclaim Him outside for all to hear. His break from institutional preaching methods did not include a break from institutional liturgy; thus, Methodism reverted right back to a formal, structured religious system—now completely liberal in theology and far from God.*

**The realization of a completed, uncompromised end-time Church is central to the ultimate demonstration of God's total victory over satanic subversion. A victorious Church in the world is an extension of what Jesus accomplished on the cross when He crushed Satan's head! By presenting to Himself a “chaste virgin” out of the dirty, adulterous ashes of centuries filled with apostasy and fragmentation, Jesus will prove that the gates of hell could not prevail! The first resurrection was His. The coming one will be *ours* as His Glorious Church! He will make *another “show of him [Satan] openly!”* This Last Church will be a cosmic monument (literally) to Christ's absolute triumph over the powers of darkness on earth!**

### 3. Today, the visible Church is hardly aware of the drastic changes coming upon us.

*“Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.” — I Thess. 5:6*

A deep slumber blankets most of today's Church regarding the tests of our faith just ahead. The overwhelming majority of believers are completely oblivious to the imminent structural collapse of the house that we've built in Christ's name. **What God didn't build won't stand. Yet we continue to adopt known practices with all their obvious flaws, completely ignoring the signs of the time, unwilling to exit traditional forms, remaining utterly unprepared for the refining fiery trials that are already nearing our doorstep.** This lack of awareness necessitates an immediate, jarring wake-up call before the tests of our faith hit every local church on Main Street in every town in America, large and small.

## Chapter Three Summary:

# THE GLORIOUS CHURCH: A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

### 1. The Church was only born at Pentecost, not matured there.

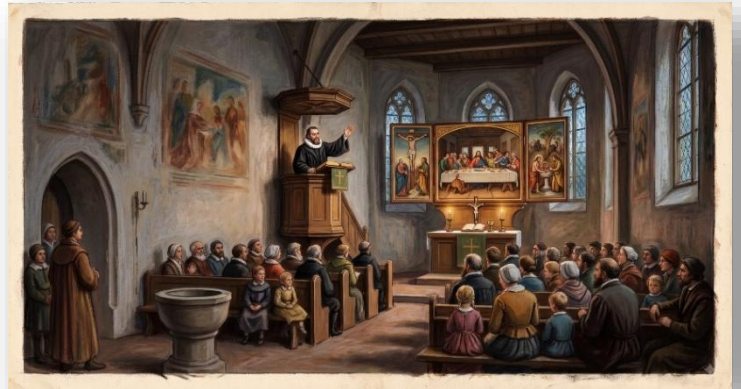
*“...till we all come to the unity of the faith... to a perfect man...” — Eph. 4:13*

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost marked the birth of the Church, providing the functional DNA for our spiritually organic pattern; but what happened at Pentecost did not represent our final, fully mature state. Unprecedented signs through spiritual gifts, the fear of the Lord, conviction for sin, and the pursuit of holiness were all there for a brief season; but history records an almost immediate and prolonged deviation from that initial purity, demonstrating that the corporate body still had a way to go to measure up to that “perfect man,” Jesus. **Pentecost was great, but it was only the starting line for a race of faith that will go all the way to the end of the age, when the Glorious Groom comes for His mature bride.**

### 2. The long age between Pentecost and Rapture.

*“...and the bride has made herself ready.” — Rev. 19:7*

The vast centuries stretching between the early Church and the final catching away have functioned as a prolonged testing ground, exposing human weakness and religious failure. Religion is indeed *“the opium of the masses,”* but a living relationship with Jesus Christ it is not. **I do not say that God hasn’t worked among us or that He is not working now. He has, He is, and He will.** But neither will I neglect to point out the dark blight that much of our flailing Christianity has caused and is causing upon His name and upon the multitudes who suffer because of it. **Good works by godly people are duly noted. But good works are not the only metric in God’s spiritual measure. Man-made traditions and rehashed religious ideologies have quickly overwhelmed spontaneous, Spirit-led activity ten thousand times—activities that could have led to a closer New Testament model.**



*For most of twenty centuries, the masses gathered in His name, many of them illiterate, the vast majority without their own Bible.*

*They knew only what they were taught, very little compared to what we know today; yet many of them had a closer walk with God than we do. No surprise. History recorded their stories.*

*God has always had a people. His true Church has always existed inside and outside the visible Church.*

### 3. Is anything too hard for the Lord?

*“Is anything too hard for the Lord?” — Gen. 18:14; “...being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ...” — Phil. 1:6*

**Nothing is too hard for the Lord! He has absolute sovereignty; and in the fullness of time He can and will recalibrate His Church. No amount of historical failure can prevent His Spirit from executing His stated goal! Do not doubt God or His Word! What He said, He will do! God is not limited by our maladies! David wrote that *“the heavens are the work of the finger of God,”* so *“what is man that thou art mindful of him?”* (Psalm 8:3-4). We are of little faith sometimes, aren’t we? Lord, *“increase our faith”—“perfect our faith!”***

#### **Prophecy for Israel, likened unto what He will do with His Church**

*“But I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking,” says the LORD” (Jer. 23:3-4).*

## Chapter Four Summary:

# MORE BIBLICAL EVIDENCE FOR "THE GLORIOUS CHURCH"

### 1. To be caught up alive calls for more.

*"Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from [through] the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth."*— Rev. 3:10

(The Greek word "terēō ek" [keep you from] means to preserve in trial, not to take out of, also found only in John 17:15).

**Both Enoch and Elijah were types of the glorious end-time Church that will be raptured while alive.**

**Enoch, faithful to God, "*pleased God,*" and was taken up alive before the wrath of God judged the world with a flood** (Gen. 5:24; Heb. 5:11). In like manner, God is preparing a bride fully pleasing to Him who will be taken up in the rapture before God's wrath judgments begin after the Great Tribulation (II Thess. 2:9; Rev. 8, 9, 16).

**Passing through coming tests will prepare local churches and an entire corporate bride that is purged of spot, wrinkle, blemish, or any such thing—one that is glorious!**

*"In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love" (I Peter 1:6-8a).*

**Elijah walked in God's mighty power; and when the prepared bride matures to the full measure of Christ's stature as Paul teaches, she will walk in the power of Jesus Christ** (I Kings 17-18; Eph. 3:20-21). By God's grace and Holy Spirit power, we will no longer please ourselves, devoid of His power, but we will please Him and know the power of His might!

*"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen" (Eph. 3:20-21).*

God is calling His people out of anywhere that's preaching "*another gospel*" (Gal. 1:8). If He's calling you out, gather with those of like mind, read His Word and share it together, ask God for leadership gifts and for the Holy Spirit to work through each one as He wills, pray together, and expect Him to meet you there. He will do it!

### 2. The New Covenant Church mirrors Old Covenant Israel.

*"Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition..."* — I Cor. 10:11

Just as Israel patterned a cycle of deliverance, rebellion, wandering, and restoration, so the Church has mirrored this journey. **The true members of His body now stand on the finish line of twenty centuries of Wilderness wanderings! Those who want to see His glory this side of heaven need to allow Him to wash us clean of the many forms of "Christian" religion we have created here.** The Bible tells us that unbelieving Israel will be



*The damage done by the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church is incalculable. They have prostituted God for 1500 years, inflicting billions of souls here and for eternity. If there is only one Church institution that is a near-perfect antithesis to biblical Christianity, this is it.*

*Revelation chapter 17 leaves little room for doubt that **this harlot will play a leading end-time role in the formation of the soon-coming "Harlot of Babylon,"** where her fake Christianity will be one part of the largest interfaith work in history.*

*Yet, God has had many people come through its corridors of apostate glory. I can't image that some of His own are not there today. He knows.*

*Revelation 18:4 is a future cry from heaven, but fitting today for any true believers still there—*

***"Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues."***

purged through the fire of His wrath before they see Him again. While **the Church will most certainly not be here for the wrath of God**, we may certainly be here for the first six seals. God knows. Be prepared.

### 3. A Quick Review of the Seven Seals.

The Bible does not identify **the first four seal judgments** as wrath but as “great tribulation” (Rev. 7:14).

**The fifth seal is not judgment at all** but is worldwide persecution of believers (Rev. 6:6-11).

**The sixth seal is not judgment either**, but it’s when “*men’s hearts fail them for fear of the things coming [future] upon the earth,*” saying, “*the wrath of God is [future] come*” (Rev. 6:12-17).

**Notice chapter seven, after the first six seals were opened:**

Then, chapter seven shows that **the great tribulation has ended**, and the wrath of God is about to begin. The wrath of God judgments, and of the Lamb, begin in chapter eight (Rev. 8:7) and continue through chapter nine, then in chapter sixteen.

**Tribulations are a part of living in a fallen world:**

*“... Do you now believe? Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world”* (John 16:31-33).

The Apostle Paul said, “*We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God*” (Acts 14:22b).

### 4. Two end-time Church types, not one:

*“... that day will not come unless the falling away comes first.”* — II Thess. 2:3;

*“... and the glory of this latter temple shall be greater.”* — Hag. 2:9 (foreshadows the Church and her glory)

Much like *the many* in Israel were called, but *only a few* proved faithful, the Bible marks the final generation by two parallel Churches: unfaithful and faithful.

**Widespread apostasy and a purified, victorious Church will emerge. Israel will continue to be under temporary judgment until God “pours out a Spirit of grace and supplication” on her and many believe on Jesus Christ (Zech. 12:10-14). Likewise, many within the visible church will face judgment for professing Christ while denying the true Christ and embracing destructive error (II Peter. 2:1). Many will “fall into the error of the wicked.”**

*“You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”* (II Peter 3:17-18).

As Christian religious forms descend into deception (old and new) and multitudes unite with the end-time newly inaugurated Harlot Church, God will separate and sanctify His faithful remnant. Refined through trial and empowered by His Spirit, this people will stand as a clear witness to Jesus Christ.

Joshua’s challenge is being renewed even now: “*Choose you this day whom ye will serve*” (Josh. 24:15).

*“... being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ”* (Phil. 1:6).

The faith of the American Church has been tested once, and only lightly, with the COVID challenge.

We did not do well at all.

**Imagine when the whole financial system collapses.**

**The man-crafted Church is built almost exclusively on the US Dollar.**

The only way to prepare for the long run is not with gold, silver, cash in the bank, or any other tangible goods, but rather with prayer and daily devotion now.

## Chapter Five Summary:

# THE HOUSE WE'VE BUILT IS NOT GLORIOUS

### 1. Whose glory is it?

*“I am the Lord, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another...” — Isa. 42:8*

God has never failed and cannot fail. And much of what we have done in His name through faith and prayer has revealed His glory—at least in part, and for centuries. God has always had a people—a lot of people, I believe. You and I are in Christ today partly due to the good work He did through our forefathers in the faith. **But overwhelmingly, the Church’s landscape past and present has been dominated by human ambition, hierarchy, celebrity culture, and academic and organizational pride, all designed to feed institutions and showcase man's capabilities rather than God's.** These elaborate religious empires, orthodox and evangelical, old and new, consume vast resources while remaining completely devoid of the weight of God’s glory. We’ve sought to carry His glory on a man-made cart, but The Last Church will return to His instruction manual. God will be pleased to carry His own glory, and us with Him.

### 2. Where’s the “manifold wisdom” of God?

*“...to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church...” — Eph. 3:10*

While we certainly benefit from the supernatural manifestations of God’s Spirit, those manifestations serve a much higher purpose. Besides the personal benefits we receive, spiritual gifts were also given to show principalities and powers in the heavens and on earth that Jesus won the victory over the devil, revealing that He is still alive in His body on earth. **But we have sold our inheritance for something of far less value because we were not and are not willing to pay the price necessary for carrying His greater glory. Having relied on human strategies to promote Him to the world, rather than on raw demonstration of the Holy Spirit and power, we confess our own spiritual bankruptcy.** The glorious Church will abandon our wisdom in exchange for His!

### 3. Surrender; we have no defense.

*“...that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” — Rom. 3:19*

**The larger corporate Church of the 21<sup>st</sup> century possesses zero theological defense for continuing in centuries of compromise and departure from the New Testament pattern.** Attempting to excuse our obvious spiritual impotence by saying that God no longer operates as He once did, without addressing our sheer neglect or, in many cases, abuse of the will and way of His Spirit, is a futile, indefensible argument. **The only worthy scriptural response for a body of believers today is absolute and unconditional surrender and repentance.**

*“To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him. We have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets” (Dan. 9:9-10).*



*Many a godly man and woman have come through the Presbyterian Church for more than 500 years, yet its common resistance to the present-day operation of the Holy Spirit through each member of His body has grieved Him for just as long.*

*Begotten through men of intellectual mind, it's bred generations of thinkers and academic dissectors of every jot and tittle of the written Word. Claiming to "rightly divide the Word of truth," in many ways they often miss the forest (Spirit) for the trees (Letter).*

*Is God at work there? Sure! He's at work wherever any true believer allows Him to work. Is the Spirit grieved there? Sure! He's grieved anywhere He's not welcomed.*

#### 4. Who or what has our greatest allegiance?

Stephen was martyred by those who claimed to worship the God of the Bible; but they had made their once pure worship their god.

**In like manner, if we are not careful, we can idolize a pastor and show more loyalty to our church and tradition than to God.**

##### Acts 7:44-60

**44** “Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as He appointed, instructing Moses to make it according to the pattern that he had seen, **45** which our fathers, having received it in turn, also brought with Joshua into the land possessed by the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers until the days of David, **46** who found favor before God and asked to find a dwelling for the God of Jacob. **47** But Solomon built Him a house.

**48** “However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says:

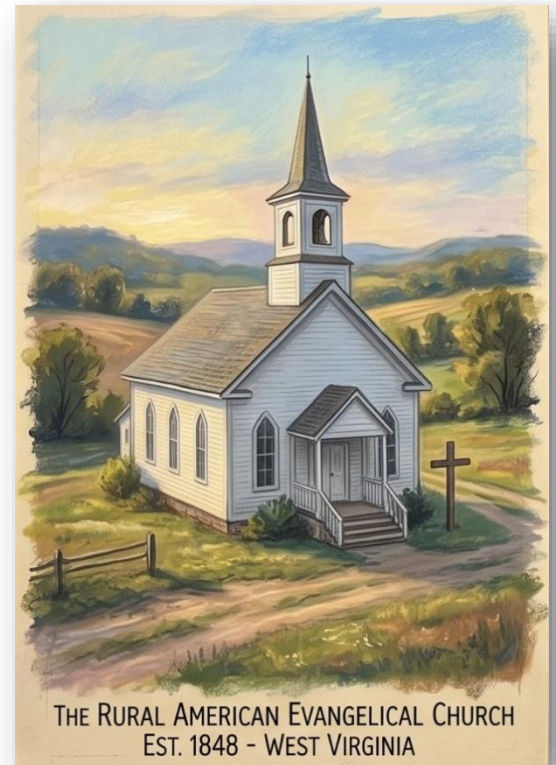
**49** ‘Heaven is My throne,  
And earth is My footstool.  
What house will you build for Me?’ says the LORD,  
‘Or what is the place of My rest? (Isaiah 66:1-2a)

**50** Has My hand not made all these things?’ **51** “You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. **52** Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, **53** who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it.”

**54** When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth. **55** But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, **56** and said, “Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!”

**57** Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; **58** and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. **59** And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” **60** Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

**Church history reveals many steps forward and backward too. The Church that becomes glorious in God’s eyes will return to the New Testament pattern. You and I can’t change the Church. Only God can. If God’s planted you there, worship Him with all your heart. If He’s calling you to meet in a non-typical gathering with like-minded believers, do that with all your heart. He will bring about His finished work soon, and His former glory shall be revealed!**



Thousands of rural churches like this one popped up all across America in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, spreading salt and light in every corner of society. Some still do! Perhaps millions of souls have been saved, much brotherly love shared, and countless lives changed.

But if we are not careful, we can become more protective of our church and traditions than we are of how God may be revealing Himself in greater ways to lead us into a greater understanding of how to worship Him together for greater spiritual maturity.

When we park our spiritual understanding on the traditions of the past, we frustrate God’s ability to transform us into His full image.

Crossing the Red Sea did not bring the same freedom as did the crossing of Jordan.

The Red Sea miracle delivered God’s people from the slavery of Egypt to worship Him freely. The Jordan miracle delivered His people from what they had allowed to become a stubborn, stagnant faith, into the Promised Land.

Many of us still celebrate the Red Sea miracle only, roaming the desert our whole lives, never willing to cross into the Promised Land beyond the Jordan.

Let’s ask the Lord to show us whether our attachment to a past glory is holding us back from walking in the glory He gives today.

## Chapter Six Summary:

# THE GLORIOUS CHURCH IS AN END-TIME MOMENT

### 1. First in swaddling clothes, next as a groom in all His glory.

*“When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.” — Col. 3:4; “...faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you?”— Matt. 17:17*

Christ’s first advent began in the utter humility and obscurity of a manger, but His manifestation at the end of the age will be defined by staggering majesty. **The Last Church will shed our weak and fractured ties to man-crafted religion to emerge as a stunning, stellar reflection of the Bridegroom Himself!** Established churches come in all shapes and forms, old and new, and most contain elements of truth. Generations of families keep these churches going; and until God exposes our weaknesses, breaking down our “hallowed halls,” His much greater glory will not be seen.

### 2. God identifies the spiritual health of generations.

*“... I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.” — Matt. 24:34*

God operates through distinct generational dispensations (Eph. 1:10; 3:2), and He has explicitly marked the final generation for a unique, intensive spiritual awakening, cleansing, and glory. The powerless Christianity that survived and thrived in previous centuries will not suffice for the days of cosmic shaking that are quickly drawing near. **We must recognize our specific generational season in God’s plan and anticipate an accelerated refinement for His greater glory. The inevitable change will be drastic but truly glorious for the true members of His body!** Will we continue to identify with the traditions of the Silent Generation, the Boomers, the Gen Xers, Millennials, with Gen Z, Alpha, or Beta? Saint, hear me, please! **We are the Glorious Generation!**

### 3. The world will not tolerate the “Real Jesus.”

*“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you.” — John 15:18*

**When we begin to manifest the authentic, unadulterated Christ, it will immediately trigger hostility from the world in the same way that Jesus triggered it, as did His earliest disciples.** The world tolerates a watered-down, non-threatening “Jesus,” but it fiercely hates the Jesus of the Bible, who is inseparable from absolute truth. *That* Jesus will not be allowed to walk freely on the public square. **The coming clash with the world will quickly separate casual Christian consumers from blood-bought, Spirit-filled disciples of the Real Jesus!**

*“... they realized that they had been with Jesus. And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, saying, ‘What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name’” (Acts 4:13b-17).*



*The Episcopal Church, a stepchild of the Church of England, still treats worship as a sacramental mystery utilizing symbols, clerical vestments, specific colors, and sometimes incense. It emphasizes corporate transformation through the sacraments, rather than by the gifts of the Spirit operating through the members of the body—focused on “good works” and “social justice.”*

*God has used members of this Church too, though it is errant in some theology, and wayward from biblical truth.*

## Chapter Seven Summary:

# PREPARATION BY SANCTIFICATION IS REQUIRED

### 1. Our pride has rendered us stone blind.

*“Because you say, ‘I am rich...’ and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked...” — Rev. 3:17; “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, ‘We see.’ Therefore your sin remains.” — John 9:41*

The world is not the only people group blinded by Satan’s schemes. **Much of the Church is too. Generations of intellectually derived theology, carefully designed systems, and denominational dogma have inflicted a profound and even catastrophic blindness upon much of the modern Church.** We mistakenly assume that numerical growth and material prosperity are signs of divine approval, while we remain oblivious to our internal nakedness—so obvious to God. **Breaking this delusion requires a lifting of the veil, exposing our poor condition, leading to repentance and glory.**

### 2. Obedience is better than substitute.

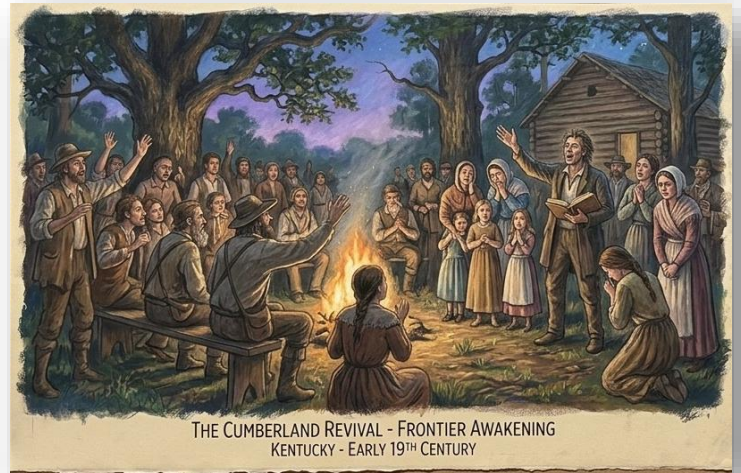
*“Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice...” — I Sam. 15:22*

While we should not disregard the fruit of good works done in His name, neither should we hold the false impression that good works are God’s only metric for a mature Church. There is so much more, including the operation of the gifts of the Spirit and the edification that can come only by them. **The religious Church substitutes things that men and money can buy (sacrifice) for faith and obedience to the New Testament blueprint, which is the will and way of His Spirit.** We build meeting houses for conducting services to make ourselves comfortable, not realizing that going to great lengths to please our physical man overrides our sensitivity to His Spirit. We’ve substituted our spiritual inheritance with a building we built through “sacrifice.” We’ve traded celestial glory for creature comforts. God doesn’t hate us for being comfortable, but He knows that when we meet all our own wishes, we lose sight of our need for Him. **The coming refining fires will expose all wood, hay, and stubble that we’ve sacrificed to build “for His glory”; and the Spirit Himself will fill the void we didn’t even know we had! No need to peer through stained-glass windows. His glory will be in the room!**

### 3. Justified, sanctified, glorified – in that order.

*“Whom He justified, these He also glorified.” — Rom. 8:30*

**We eagerly claim our justification and future glorified state, but we’re not so eager to embrace ongoing sanctification. Yet the New Testament is replete with passages that tell us we shall give an account to God, for which our ongoing sanctification makes us ready. Through the Apostle Paul, Jesus says the Last Church will be dressed in holy separation before we’re caught up and glorified. Let us allow Him to sanctify us here rather than have to account for our failures at the judgment seat of Christ.**



*These believers around a simple campfire experiencing Holy Spirit revival were possibly at their highest point ever in their intimacy with God. It does not have to be that way; but when we organize and make religion out of a fresh move of God’s Spirit, we inevitably lose our intimacy with Him once it’s done.*

*We’re so far off now, only God can bring us back.  
His loving, refining fire will do just that.*

*“Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man” (Luke 21:36).*

## Chapter Eight Summary:

# THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY WILL SEE JESUS, BUT NOT BY OUR DOING

### 1. The great divide is here. Who is on the Lord's side?

*“Whoever is on the Lord’s side—come to me!” — Exodus 32:26; “Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division.” — Luke 12:51*

Jesus said He did not come the first time to bring peace, but a sword. He came to present the truth, and the truth divides. **The current historical moment marks the onset of a massive, irreversible polarization within the visible Church, forcing every individual to choose between compromise and total devotion. God’s uncovering of gross darkness, both in the Church and in the world, is giving His people greater clarity for choosing whom we will serve. Neutrality is rapidly becoming impossible as God draws a clear, unbending line of demarcation. This crisis demands an immediate, public alignment with the undiluted truth of Jesus Christ.** The Israel phenomenon is a perfect example of this.

The plain reading of the Bible clearly reveals that God is going to redeem ethnic Israel, yet millions of Christians reject the Bible’s claim. Those who are a part of the Last Church will not give place to those who teach clear biblical error in order to get around God’s Word to fulfill their agendas; but we will wholeheartedly agree with the Word: *“till we all come to the unity of the faith,” “that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting.”*



*Gospel-preaching churches that also promote country music stars, Easter bunnies, and for all to agree to disagree prove we are not growing up. It’s entertaining, comfortable, exciting, with all the bells and whistles, and all-American—saying “the right things”—but the tests of authentic faith are yet to come.*

### 2. Forsaking the first, cleaving to the last.

*“Do not remember the former things... Behold, I will do a new thing...” — Isaiah 43:18-19*

**Jesus said that no man can serve two masters. He will either love one and despise the other, or vice versa. To be a part of a glorious Church, we must abandon our religious affections and actually walk with God. Many are being sidetracked by man-made religious methods of the past, and others by easy modern styles of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Spirit-filled life is the “new thing” He’s referring to, not a new, organized religious order.**

### 3. Casting the net on the other side.

*“Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.” — John 21:6*

**Nearly thirty years ago, the Holy Spirit spoke to me while I was preaching in South America and said that God is going to allow us Christians to exhaust ourselves of ourselves; then He will show up. Surely, we are almost there.** The numerous modern methods designed and geared for general evangelism and Church growth have literally lost their effectiveness, leading to social-science-experiment exhaustion. **If it were not for an unprecedented American crisis, for which we rally in His name, and a thrill for modern-worship entertainment, including headliner “Christian artists,” Church attendance would have declined more than it already has.** Some mega-churches are consumed with current affairs and the salvation of the nation, an easy out over the high price of pursuing deep spiritual maturity. We’ll still see an unprecedented harvest of souls—not the result of high-profile, mega church trends, but of *“casting the net on the other side.”*

## Chapter Nine Summary:

# THE BRIDE IS MAKING HERSELF READY

### 1. The time is now. Now!

*“And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep...” — Rom. 13:11*

After watching all things in light of biblical prophecy for most of my lifetime, I am fully persuaded that the alarm clock must be sounded. **Israel is the ultimate timeclock revealing the final moments of the Last Days, and God’s been sounding alarms through Israel for seventy-eight years! Today, it’s like a five-alarm fire signal regarding Bible prophecy.** The prophetic clock has reached its final minutes, eliminating any room for procrastination from pursuing the Lord and His will and way with our whole heart. The end-time fall of man is on full display. It’s no longer a distant prophetic moment, but a present reality that is destabilizing otherwise stable structures of the world’s society. Believers should ward off anxiety and must be urgent about engaging in the process of spiritual preparation today in this small window of transition, when God “folds the [old] earth like a garment” and unfolds the new (Heb. 1:11; Rev. 21:1).

### 2. Put off and put on.

*“...that you put off... the old man... and that you put on the new man...” — Eph. 4:22-24*

The preparation of the bride calls for two things: putting off and putting on. Notice, Paul said, “put off” first, then “put on.” That’s because God won’t put new wine in an old wineskin (Luke 5:37-39). **If we want to put on more and are struggling to do so, maybe we need to put off more first.** The flesh and the Spirit are at war within us. If we put off by the Spirit’s power within, He will put on us greater things, leading to the presence of His greater glory! We must not give up on putting off stubborn things. If we lay hold of God, His Spirit *will* mortify our flesh!

### 3. Become the “perfect man.”

*“...till we all come... to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ...” — Eph. 4:13*

**The goal of this end-time refining process is the corporate maturation of every local body (the Church) into the absolute fullness of Christ's stature. Not one-third of His stature. Not half; but His *full* stature. This comes only through time and experience together, many becoming one. Two things are happening in heaven regarding the bride: the Son is preparing a place for her; and we are being prepared for that place.**

While many will fall away, many will become glorious—*“that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish”* (Eph. 5:27).



*Due to extraordinary exposure of the underbelly of our society and the imposing of that gross darkness on all Americans by our former antichrist federal government and many state governments, coupled with the miraculously failed assassination attempt on President Trump and the successful assassination of Charlie Kirk, millions have cried out to Jesus.*

*Jesus’ name trending is a very welcomed sight even though not everyone promoting Him knows Him. God has been reintroducing Jesus to all like we’ve never seen! Deception is a part of every awakening, but God knows every heart.*

*This is absolutely more evidence of an end-time work!*

**The Last Church will vindicate God's design, proving that His Church can indeed become the fullness of Christ on earth!**

# WHAT'S NEXT?

## 1. It's happening right now and moving quickly.

*"Behold, I am coming quickly..." — Rev. 22:7*

The divine dismantling of traditional Church paradigms are no longer future predictions; they are unfolding across the globe with accelerating speed. **Those who continue to insist on maintaining the status quo will soon find themselves left behind by the quickly moving operation of His Spirit.** He is doing *"a quick work in righteousness,"* not only with ethnic Israel, but also with the Church. Our present condition and His close return necessitate it. The "evil day" of Ephesians 6:13 is upon us. The deception of the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24; Mk. 13; Lk. 21) has arrived. Wars, earthquakes, and Christian persecution are all on the increase. The hour is late. *"He who endures to the end shall be saved"* (Matt. 24:13). We know He's coming soon, but we do not know when "soon" is. **Enduring for the long haul calls for sensitivity to hear and obey His Word and Spirit. Gather with like-minded believers. Ask for Holy Spirit leadership and discernment! Our Father is for us, not against us!**

## 2. God will help carry His "ark" when we follow His divine instructions.

*"... 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the Lord of hosts." — Zech. 4:6*

*"... God helped the Levites who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD" — I Chron. 15:26*

All man-made systems and forms that we call Christianity will come undone! God has been patient, loving, longsuffering, and cooperative for two millennia, but what's coming cannot be contained in this old wineskin we know today as "Church." **The remnant will be released through fire and will experience a surge of the glory of the Lord, who is the Spirit of the Lord, and will discover what God wanted all along—a people that look like Him!** Believers will no longer have to rely on the strained, mechanical efforts of religious organizations to sustain them. **The Last Church will be sustained by God Himself.** In much the same way that God is going to deliver Israel Himself, when even America cannot take the credit, He's going to deliver us from the elementary Christianity that has captured us for centuries in every church, and no man will be able to take credit, only God!



*For four decades, members of His body en masse have been leaving financially burdensome, system-based, and seeker-friendly churches for small authentic fellowship with personalized worship and ministry. The Last Church will meet in smaller groups out of desire and necessity. Then we will realize all we've missed!*

## 3. He who is wholly surrendered will endure to the end.

*"He who endures to the end shall be saved." — Matt. 24:13*

**Survival through the refining fiery trials of this late-hour Church does not depend on our own strength but on His! Nearly thirty years ago, the Holy Spirit spoke to me while I was preaching, telling me to assure God's people not to be afraid, but to *"Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord!"* He is the One who opened the sea before, and He is the One who will do it again! He continued to say, *"If we will walk in the faith He's given us today, He will give us the greater faith when we need it tomorrow."* When we completely yield our lives—our rights, our agendas, traditions, wants, and wills to the sovereign Master, Jesus, we will be sure to gain His strength and power. Endurance is a supernatural quality He freely gives when we lose our lives in Him!**

*"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field" (Matt. 13:44). "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it" (Matt. 13:45-46).*