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THE CLOUD OF GLORY

NO.202

UNTO SALVATION

"So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation." (Heb.9: 28) Most Christians today are looking for a second "coming" of Jesus dropping down from the sky and setting His feet on the Mt. Of Olives in Jerusalem. This is the picture that has been set in the minds of God's people by teachers who are blind in the things of Spirit. Although they mean well, their words are not according to the truth. I am not criticizing because we have all been there, but none of us desire to be babes all of our spiritual lives. Let us go on to perfection (maturity).

"That the genuineness of your faith, being more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor and glory at he revelation (appearing) of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith-the salvation of your souls." (I Pet.1:7-9)

Indeed, we are constantly looking for Him to reveal Himself to us more and more each day. It is as we hold firm to our faith while His Holy Spirit takes us through the fires that our souls learn to submit and surrender to His authority. This is how we work out our salvation with fear and trembling. When Christ is fully formed He will appear through us and the world will behold Him in His body. He appeared to us as Savior the first time to atone for our sins, but the second time He appears unto our full salvation.

It is certain that our faith is tested, because we cannot see Him physically yet we believe. It is also obvious that our complete salvation does not happen at the beginning of our faith, as some have taught us, but the salvation of our souls comes at the end of our faith. It is when we have passed the test of time through thick and thin and continue in the faith, that our souls are saved. It is at that point that we do not need anymore testing and we are securely locked in to Him.

It is important to know that all the violence and upheavals in the world today are caused by His appearing within each of us. "Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! 'Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time." (Rev.12: 12)

The heavens speak of invisible governmental places. Our minds and spirits are "heavens" because they are the invisible places that control us. All the earth is ruled by the heavens. In the natural, these are heavenly bodies such as the sun that gives life to the earth and the moon that controls the tides of the seas and oceans. Heavens are also where principalities and powers dwell and where spiritual battles rage. They are also where the throne of God is established in Christ. The devil as the prince of the power of the air, and his angels, had been controlling the people of the earth until "...war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but

they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer." (Rev.12: 7) Since His resurrection, Jesus has taken His place at the right Hand of God and Michael and His angels have been fighting to throw these ruling powers out of our heavens and replacing them with Christ rule.

This is the warfare that has been taking place in the saints and in the world today. This is why we are seeing governments fall and money systems fail everywhere. As history shows us, trying to fix these problems is an exercise in futility. Jesus ascended in the heavens and took His place as the ruling power while Michael and His angels set out to clear out the dragon and his angels and cast them into the earth where they only have power over men in darkness. As the sons arise in Christ, the Light of truth dawns brighter and brighter and Satan loses all power over the earth as well. It is the truth that will make us all free. This is why it is vital for us who are the Light to keep our eyes upon our destination.

"So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." (Rev.12: 9)

Not long after Jesus ascended we saw the forming of great world religions, including Christendom which lured the masses into captivity. Then came a period called the "dark ages" when indeed the Light of the world was pushed underground and the true church was replaced by the counterfeit that the Lord Himself calls "Mystery Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth." (Rev.17: 5)

The information below is from a website called "All about History." It is helpful in that it researches popular issues in a Christian vein. I quote, "The dark ages is a term that is no longer used but it is the period that followed the decline of Rome and the Western World. The Middle Ages is loosely considered to extend from 400 to 1000 AD. It was a period of religious struggle. Protestants regarded this as a time of Catholic corruption; they repudiated the ways of the Catholic Church with its papal doctrines and hierarchy.

The Dark Ages were also the years of vast Muslim conquests. Along with other nomads and horse and camel warriors, the Muslims rode through the fallen empire, wreaking havoc and seeding intellectual and social heresy in their wake. Muslim conquests prevailed until the time of the Crusades. This age old conflict between Christianity and Islam remains until this day.

"The irony of this is that our 21st Century world is no less dark. It is an individual darkness, which multiplies and grows as those who reject God walk together and dominate politics, education and society. Our age is characterized by every intellectual and technological advance but our morals have turned backwards. But mark this: there will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God- having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them." (II Tim.3: 1-5) These are the characteristics of true darkness." End of quote.

It was at the beginning of the Dark Ages that the true church went "underground." Those who followed the Truth were not allowed to shine their lights and so they did it privately and in hiding. We know of some of the saints who became martyrs because of the truths that they held. God has chosen a remnant in the earth in every generation and it is through these that the Light has been kept in the earth.

At the same time, the dragon has been loose in the earth and the true church has been going deeper and deeper into hiding. As the Light of truth is snuffed out in the world, we have witnessed the terrible sufferings that the Devil has poured upon humanity in darkness. Because he knows that his time is short, his filthy works have been on the increase and the peace-loving citizens of the earth are losing their patience and their peace. Diseases, plagues and natural disasters are on the rise as well as wars and violence. Fear is mounting in the hearts of the people.

While the light of Truth is underground and the light of the Law is being totally snuffed out from our schools and our governments, Hollywood and such are having a hay day producing films and videos that control the minds of children and adults alike to drag them to the bottom of the pit. Drugs and drug trafficking are the master work of the Devil to totally disarm mankind and drag them down into shame, degradation and destruction.

From this darkness have come all kinds of doctrines trying to give men a way out of this morass. The doctrine of a "rapture" in the sky and escape to a far away city comes out of the pit of man's carnal interpretations. The idea that Jesus Himself will literally appear in Jerusalem planting His feet on the mount of Olives to make all things right in the world is also a false interpretation of God's word.

Because people are seeking for a way of escape from the disasters that they see coming, false teachings and prophets are most popular. One of these is "secular humanism" which teaches of the power that is to be found naturally in each person. This leaves out the cross of Jesus and the Christ of God. It is kin to Buddhism or any man-made deity except that the "self" becomes the god.

The written testimony of those who were with Jesus and of Paul who was called by Jesus to be the apostle to the Gentiles are a witness to what we hear by the Spirit today. Another scheme of the enemy is to slip the Bible out and say we do not need it anymore. We must hear by the Spirit, but the written Word confirms what we hear by the Spirit. Not the other way around.

John wrote about the true Light and the Word of life; he had no doubt about what He had seen and heard. He writes, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our own eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of lifethe life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us- (I Jo.1: 1-2) They saw Him with their own eyes but we see Him by the eyes of the Spirit and by the

spirit of revelation.

In Adam, man is in darkness. Man cannot see or let alone enter into the kingdom of God, or spiritual realities. The first Light that God sent to man was the Law through Moses. The law is spiritual but it was interpreted by carnal men. Then He sent the prophets, of which John the Baptist was the greatest. John was the greatest Light because He introduced the true Light, which was Jesus the Christ, the Lamb of God. Those who loved the darkness did not receive that Light.

Then the Light came through the disciples of Jesus who became the Light in the earth. They had seen with their own eyes and heard Him first hand. They received the Holy Spirit and became true witness of that Light.

The testimony of the disciples (New Testament) is written as a Light in the earth. Then God's Holy Spirit began the work of overshadowing those who were to bring forth the Manchild, the life of Christ in the earth. By the work of the Holy Spirit, from glory to glory, Christ has been appearing to those who have been looking for Him.

"For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known." (I Cor.13: 12) As our soul becomes one with Him, we are being transformed into the same image as His glory is appearing in us.

It is when He fully appears within all His disciples that the groaning creation will behold Him in His many-membered body. It is then that the Light of truth, for He is the Truth, will rise from the East to the West and light up the world. This Company of saints is the Body of Christ, Jesus the Head, who will arise as the Sun of Righteousness and illuminate the whole world. This is the appearing for which all are groaning and travailing.

UP IN A CLOUD

When Jesus was about to leave this earthly realm, He assembled His apostles and commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem. As they were together He gave them instructions about the Holy Spirit that they would receive and "Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight."

"And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven." (Acts 1: 9-11)

The cloud received Jesus. Let us understand that this was no ordinary cloud; it was the cloud of glory- the same cloud that followed Israel through the wilderness. His returning in like manner speaks of Jesus' coming when every eye will see Him. Indeed we read that Jesus not only comes in a cloud, He comes with clouds.

When they saw Jesus going up in a cloud, they were seeing Him disappearing into the heavenly realm of spirit. Everyone who leaves this earthly realm goes into the invisible realm of spirit; they are clouds. We read that "...we are surrounded, by so great a cloud of witnesses..." (Heb.12: 1a)

These are the saints who are with Him on the other side of the veil. They are Abraham, Moses, Joseph and all His people. Since then many more are constantly added to that cloud of witnesses that encompasses us and it is with these and in these that He will appear again. As we read in Jude the "Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints." (Jude vs.12 b)

On the other side of the coin, Jude also speak of clouds who are "...without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." (Jude 12b-13)

There is also the verse made famous by the rapture theory, "Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus shall we always be with the Lord." (I Thes.4:17) Those who remain alive in the earth shall be caught up together with them... Who are the them? They are ten thousands of saints who will appear with Him in their new bodies. They have been around us all along but they have been hidden from visible view even as He has been. This verse speaks of the first resurrection of the body when mortality puts on immortality, and corruption puts on incorruption. We will be caught up in the same glory with them. This is not a literal rapture in the literal sky, it is when we are caught up together in the same dimension of life as He is.

Jesus said, "The words I speak to you they are spirit and they are life." Literal interpretation kills the life of the word for us. This is what it means to be always with the Lord. If anyone is comforted by the thought of a physical rapture, so be it. I would not want to take their comfort away. But if the Spirit shows you the glorious truth of this word then let me confirm it to you with a resounding Amen.

Yesterday I received a letter from a young man who is serving a long prison term. Yet, in his confinement, this man has found the real freedom that we have in Christ. In his letter, he explains something that troubles him. "Is Jesus coming back in us only, or will He also appear physically?" My answer at this time is BOTH. First of all, Jesus is not coming back- HE IS HERE. But He has not yet appeared.

We know that Christ is being formed in His body and that He (the Word made flesh) will fully appear or be manifested in the sons. "And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man." (I Cor.15: 49) Our image, our bodies and identities have fully been as the man of dust (Adam). When He is revealed in us, we will fully look like Him, that is we will be as He is in His resurrected body. The creation of God in Christ will be fully revealed in the earth.

Will we ever see the Man Jesus Himself as He once showed Himself after His resurrection? Many seem to believe that we will. Will we see Abraham and Joseph and Moses and Elijah? I believe we will. However because Jesus is the Head of this body of

people, it is possible that we will not physically see Him although He will always be there. My head can see all of my body, but to see my head, I have to look into a mirror. However, as the young man pointed out, we have Scriptures that declare, "Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." (I Jo.3: 2)

This young man also quotes, "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 Thes. 5: 23).

He also quotes several other Scriptures on the subject and he concludes, "This question (will Jesus return physically?) has been asked of me many times, but somehow I feel a pit in my stomach when I see the physical resurrected Jesus left out of the picture. He means more to me as I see Him in me, but there seems to be a disconnect with Him as if I can't see Him physically. Have I not totally seen the "endtime truth" or is the "end-time truth" missing the physical Jesus of I Thes. 5:23?"

The answer is simple. There are no end-time messages that leave Jesus out of the equation. He is always there, whether seen with physical or spiritual eyes. We know that either way we will see Him, for we shall be like Him. He is coming with clouds and in the clouds. It is certain that Christ has to first be seen in His body but also "Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, and they also who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen" (Rev.1; 7) So Father, may it be according to Your word.

GATHERED UNTO HIM

We are surrounded by storms on every side. Not only is this obvious, but it has been confirmed through many dreams and prophecies. This is the time to get into our secure abode in the Spirit and our Lord as the good Shepherd is gathering us unto Himself with speed. Because we have a tendency to get our eyes off Him and wander off, the lessons that He teaches can be very harsh, but they are effective.

Recently I had a troubling dream. I awoke with my heart beating fast, it was so real. In the dream "I was in Paris France with my husband Michael. He was dressed in a white polo shirt with bands of blue around the edges of the sleeves. We went into the Subway (Metro) and he went to the ticket window to purchase our fare. In the meantime I looked down one of the corridor to try to find our destination. When I looked back to find him, he was gone. I knew that it would be very difficult to find him again in this Subway. How could I contact him? Should I call the police? I promised that I would never take my eyes off him again. I was truly in panic when I woke up."

Paris is called the City of Light and the word France means Free. I represent not only myself but all who are in the same walk with the Lord. Paris and France are used as metaphors to let us know that we are walking in the Light and that we are free indeed in Christ. But we are traveling underground (Subway). There is nothing about us at this time that is revealed to the world.

My husband represents the Christ bridegroom who is purchasing the way for us. He is the Word that guides us and the true vision in our hearts. I decided to look for the destination on my own, but when I did I took my eyes off Him and He disappeared from view. I panicked. The Paris Subway is a maze of tunnels and unless we know our way we can wander for days and still not know where we are.

Jesus said that in the end days there would be false christs and false prophets who would show great signs and wonders, so as to deceive even the elect if it were possible. Spiritually, there is a maze of doctrines and prophecies that the carnal mind and the devil have spun together to confuse and stumble us and make it difficult to keep our eyes steadfast on the truth. He knows our destination and He is the Way. He has purchased our tickets. My dream ends as I vowed that "I will never take my eyes off Him again!" This is the cry of our hearts. We are coming

to the end of the journey and we have learned our lessons well. We will never take our eyes off Him again!

When our souls are totally in union with His Spirit, the marriage will be consummated. We will be joined with the entire Body of Christ and there will not be a chance of getting out of the Spirit. As a married bride we will bear His name- His nature- His identity! We will be fully the Bride of the Son and the sons of the Father. But as long as we are still on the journey, we must keep our eyes continually on Him.

SET YOUR AFFECTION

"Set your affection on things from above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." (Col.3: 2 KJV) The word "affection" is also translated "mind." Our affections are emotions or zealous attachments; they come from the "mind." When we have the "mind of Christ" are affections are set on things above. This is the "progress" through which the Holy Spirit is taking us. He is changing our minds so that our affection will no longer be for the things of the natural man.

With the mind of Christ, we no longer feel the need to pray for temporal blessings. We no longer need to run to every preacher that comes to town and we no longer feel to support the hungry televangelists.

We may find that our prayers are no longer the petitions with a lot of flourish that we once felt were needed to reach the heart of God; they are simple heartfelt words spoken from a son to a loving Father. We find ourselves praying according to the Holy Spirit within. We pray for our brethren who are sick and for those who are hungry and in need, but mostly we pray that God will draw them closer to His heart and that they will find the One who is the true Life.

We no longer desire to pray for worldly prosperity, large estates, great cars and the like. The Lord will bless us with some of these, but our affection is set on Him. Jesus taught this pure and simple, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His right-eousness, 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 as its own trouble" (Matt.6: 33-34) Jesus was not just giving a suggestion for life, He was revealing a principle that must be followed for true prosperity.

So what are the things above and where can they be found? Are they found in books of learning or in the words of great philosophers? Are they complicated and only accessible to certain anointed persons? Actually they are none of these things. They are the things that are hid in Christ in the midst of each of us. They are true righteousness, holiness, sincerity...they are the fruit of the Spirit, "...love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, temperance..." Jesus told us to "seek" these things and all others would be added unto us as He will

From my own experience and perhaps yours as well, it was when I sought to know Him that He revealed His treasures to me. I have never found that seeking to know more of the Scriptures brought me peace of heart. Studying the Bible leads to more head knowledge and that kind of knowledge "puffs us up." It is when we seek Him that He reveals His treasures to us as He will. He knows what we need for the day. Trying to uncover His treasures on our own is like trying to find candy when our bodies really crave protein and vitamin-rich foods.

We don't all need the same things. What each need today are the things that will give us the strength to face our challenges. This is why the Lord has given us various ministries to edify the body of Christ in the earth. Some may send me something written or spoken by a brother or sister that has truly blessed them but when I read it, I may get nothing out of it. I put it on the shelf. It just was not what I needed at this time. I may pick it up again later and rejoice when the Spirit quickens it to my heart.

We are not all in the same stream; some of us are in one stream while others flow in another stream.

God will bring these streams together in His way and in His time. Each stream gives life and as long as we flow in the same direction and hear from the same Spirit there is no conflict.

THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD

Returning to Paul's epistle we read, "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God." (Col 3: 1) It takes a greater revelation from God to understand the meaning of Christ at the right hand of God. Paul is not speaking of a resurrected Jesus in the clouds somewhere, sitting on an actual throne next to His Father. This is a nice picture for babes, but it is not the true spiritual reality.

There came a day when Jesus asked Peter, "who do you say that I am?" and Peter answered in a way that mere mortal man would not have known, "'Thou art the Christ..." Later when the Holy Ghost had descended upon them, Peter was giving a powerful sermon. He was explaining to the crowd gathered in Jerusalem that the very same One who had walked among them was indeed "...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-" (Acts 2: 22)

He continues to say that this same Man, "This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. 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." (Acts 2: 32-33)

Peter was trying to open their understanding to the truth that was before them. But opening the understanding of spiritual realities and replacing the literal images that have been formed in one's mind is not unlike Galileo supporting the theory of Copernicus that the sun and not the earth is the center of the universe. This piece of news caused an uproar among the philosophers of the day and the clerics of the Catholic Church who came strongly against Galileo. Even though he contributed much to science, they condemned him and put him under house arrest for the rest of his life.

With that in mind we see that what Peter was trying to explain to the crowd that day was that this same Jesus was no longer flesh and blood but was now flesh and bone Man.

Paul wrote to Timothy, "For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the MAN CHRIST JESUS..." (I Tim.2: 5) This verse teaches the most important truth that after His death and resurrection, Jesus Christ was not just "spirit," He was the Man from heaven or the man born of the Spirit. He had earned the place of "Firstborn from the dead.." (Rev.1: 5a)

He was the firstborn of the new creation of God in Christ. He had put to death the old Adam creation and had come forth as the first of the new creation of God in Christ. He is the Head of a body of people begotten to be in His image and He sits in power at the right hand of God in that position, bringing a people to the same dimension of life.

The throne upon which Jesus sits is not a literal seat in the sky, it is a place of great power at the right hand of God. It is this same Jesus that men saw walking the earth and doing the things that His Father did through Him, this same Jesus who also became the first Man of this new creation, sits in full power at God's right hand and so are these who are in Him.

God's right hand is the power of God toward man. It is the authority of His ministry in the earth. When Stephen was being stoned to death for his word, 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, and said, 'Look! I see the heavens open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" (Acts 7: 55-56)

What was so offensive to the Pharisees who were judging Stephen that day was that he said, "I see the Son of Man." He did not see One as the Son of God, he actually saw the same Jesus that He knew had walked the earth before. This is why they stopped their ears and ran casting stones at him with one accord. They saw him as a blasphemer when he saw the same Jesus they had crucified. They abso-

lutely wanted that Jesus removed from the scene and now Stephen who saw Him at God's right hand had to go as well!

Our heritage in Christ and His inheritance in the saints are some of the treasures that we seek to know and to possess. These are all contained in the Christ within and when He reveals them to us not only do we find great eternal riches, but we possess them, behold them and are changed from glory to glory. How great is our God! Thanks be unto Him for His unspeakable gift! The Christ within!

SEATED WITH HIM

"... what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He (the Father of glory) raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come." (Eph.1: 20-21)

"...and raised us up together, and made us to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come, He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." (vs.6-7)

There is so much for us in these verses. God in Christ is pouring out His love over us with such abundance that not only in this age but also in the age to come, we are given the assurance of His grace toward us. And not only toward us, but He has chosen us to be the ones who will show forth or display the exceeding riches of His grace to creation in the ages to come.

As the Christ within us is raised from our death, He takes us with Him to the place of power at God's right hand. "And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all." (Vs. 22-23) Our Father has raised us

up together with Christ. This is what Jesus meant when He told the disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you." He was not talking about building us a mansion in heaven, He was talking about building us as mansions (abodes) for God to dwell in. He was going to the Father who would send His Holy Spirit to prepare us to come to the same dimension of life as He. This is not a physical geographical place, it is a dimension of life. Since then, the Holy Spirit has been working to transform the minds of those who yield to Him and build them into the abode of God as is the Son of God.

Jesus explained to the disciples, "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak of my own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works." (Jn.14: 10) That being the case, Jesus was not going to meet the Father someplace, the Father was already in Him and He was already in the Father. Therefore Jesus was going to meet the Father in a higher dimension of life; not in a new geographical place.

This is our destination. As in my dream, let us keep our eyes on the One who has purchased our tickets and who is the Way to take us there.

Let us be exhorted by these words and press toward the mark of this high calling in Christ. This is our calling, let us make it sure. Let us set our affection on things above and not on the things of earth. Let us rejoice that our Light has come and that His glory is risen upon us.

Because of His love, Jackie Caporaso