The Vision of the Universal Woman and the Man-child

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LIVING STREAM MINISTRY

THE VISION OF THE UNIVERSAL WOMAN AND THE MAN-CHILD

by Witness Lee

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PREFACE

This book is composed of selected messages from Brother Witness Lee's Life-study of Revelation and Life-study of Genesis. The first seven chapters are from Messages 34 through 39 and Message 45 of the Life-study of Revelation. Chapters 8 and 9 are from the second half of Message 19 and Message 20 of the Life-study of Genesis.

CHAPTER ONE

THE UNIVERSAL BRIGHT WOMAN

Life-Study of Revelation; Msg. 34

The first section of the book of Revelation, composed of the first eleven chapters, covers all things to eternity. The second section, comprising the last eleven chapters, gives details of the important things and crucial matters from the last three and a half years of the present age, which will be the period of the great tribulation, to the eternal age of the new heaven and new earth. The first of these important things and crucial matters revealed in this section is a woman with a man-child (12:1-18).

The first eleven chapters of this book cover the seven seals and the seven trumpets. The seven seals and the seven trumpets give us a brief yet inclusive sketch of the contents of this book. The first four seals (6:1-8) cover the nearly two thousand years of history from the time of Christ's ascension until the end of this age. We are now living at the very end of this age, very close to the time of the fifth seal. The fifth seal (6:9-11) consists of the prayer of the martyred saints. When this seal is opened, the thousands of martyred saints who have been slain for the Lord's testimony will cry to God for vengeance, beseeching Him to intervene and deal with rebellious mankind. The sixth seal (6:12-17) will be God's answer to the cry of the martyred saints. The supernatural calamities of this seal will be a warning to those who dwell on this earth. These six seals bring us to the end of this age.

The seventh seal, which includes the seven trumpets, is all-inclusive. Since the seven trumpets are the content of the seventh seal, the seventh seal equals the seven trumpets. The first four trumpets (8:7-12) are supernatural calamities, God's judgment upon the earth, the sea, the rivers, and the sun, moon, and stars. These four trumpets will damage heaven and earth, causing the earth to no longer be a suitable place on which mankind can dwell. The heavens are for the earth, and the earth is for mankind to dwell on. However, since mankind has continually disappointed God, rebelling against Him, God will eventually declare that His toleration has come to an end. The great earthquake and the shaking of heaven in the sixth seal will be a warning to earth's dwellers. This warning will be an introduction to the supernatural

calamities to follow. After the first four trumpets have been sounded, the time of the great tribulation will be at hand. The sixth seal and the first four trumpets of the seventh seal will be a preliminary to the great tribulation. The fifth trumpet (9:1-11), which will bring damage directly to man, will be the beginning of the great tribulation. The fifth trumpet is the first of the three woes mentioned in 8:13. The sixth trumpet (9:12-21), a further judgment on men, will be the second woe. The third woe (11:14), part of the negative content of the seventh trumpet, will consist of the seven bowls of God's wrath poured out upon Antichrist, his people, and his kingdom (16:1-12, 17-21). These seven bowls included in the seventh trumpet will close the great tribulation. After this, the Lord Jesus will come down to earth to fight Antichrist at the war of Armageddon. Antichrist will be defeated and, with the false prophet, will be cast into the lake of fire (19:19-21). Following this, the millennial kingdom, lasting a thousand years, will be ushered in. Then will come the new heaven and the new earth with the New Jerusalem for eternity. The seventh trumpet will last for eternity. This is a brief sketch of the book of Revelation.

The scroll of God's economy which Christ has opened needs eternity to be fully opened. Today, we can only see a portion of it. When we get into the new heaven and new earth and live in the New Jerusalem, we shall have a much fuller vision than we have now. The scroll which we shall see in eternity will be eternally long. The seventh trumpet, which continues into eternity, includes many significant things: the last part of the great tribulation, the resurrection and rapture of the majority of the believers, the reward to the saints, the fall of Babylon the great, the marriage of the Lamb, the seven bowls, Christ's descent to the earth with His overcomers as His army to fight Antichrist at Armageddon, the binding of Satan, the millennial kingdom, the last rebellion of mankind, Satan's being cast into the lake of fire, the judgment at the great white throne, the new heaven, the new earth, and the New Jerusalem.

Brother Nee conducted a study of the book of Revelation when he was young. After that study, he saw more and more light concerning this book. In 1933, we asked him to give us a thorough study of the book of Revelation. He told us that he would not give us the study we had requested unless we had read this book so many times that we knew every chapter and could almost recite the entire book. At the time, I thought that this demand was too great. But through the years I have gradually learned that if we would understand

this book, we must be fully acquainted with all the points and details it contains. We must be thoroughly familiar with every chapter.

We have seen that the first eleven chapters of Revelation are a general sketch and that the last eleven chapters give us the details of certain important things and crucial matters. Do not consider the last eleven chapters as the continuation of the first eleven chapters. No, in a sense, the last eleven chapters are a retracing of the first eleven chapters. Reading the book of Revelation is similar to reading a map of a city. First we look at the main streets and see a general sketch of the city. Then we go back to consider the smaller streets, lanes, and other details. After gaining a general understanding of the map, we proceed to consider it section by section.

The first important detail and crucial matter in the second half of Revelation is the woman mentioned in 12:1. This verse says, "And a great sign was seen in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon underneath her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars." Here, the woman is revealed in the heavens and is called "a great sign." This great sign is not of a strong man, but of a woman. The woman in this tremendous vision is not on the earth but in the heavens. She is clothed with the sun, underneath her feet is the moon, and on her head is a crown of twelve stars. She is under the shining of the twelve stars, above the shining of the moon, and enveloped with the shining of the sun. Because of this, she is fully emancipated. Anything that is in darkness is bound and imprisoned, but anything that is in the light is released and emancipated.

Would you like to be a part of this woman? Let me ask you this question: Are you a male or a female? All the sisters, of course, find this question easy to answer. But what would the brothers say? If they say that they are males, then they have no part in the woman of this vision. Does this woman include you? If it does, then, in the eyes of God, you are a female.

From the beginning of the Bible to the end, in the eyes of God, God's people are considered as a woman. Isaiah 54:5 says, "Thy Maker is thine husband." In Jeremiah 3:14 the Lord tells His children that He is married to them, and in Jeremiah 31:32 He says that He is a husband to them. Moreover, in Hosea 2:19 and 20 the Lord says that He will betroth His people unto Himself forever. Although, as we all know, the Lord Jesus came as the Savior and as the Lamb, one day He indicated to His disciples that He came as the

Bridegroom (Matt. 9:15; John 3:29). Furthermore, in 2 Corinthians 11:2 Paul says, "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." Brothers, do you have a husband? Praise the Lord that our husband is Christ. Naturally, we brothers are males, but spiritually, we are, in a sense, females in God's eyes. In God's eternal economy there is one unique man— Christ. Adam was a symbol, a type, of Christ as the Bridegroom, and Eve, the wife of Adam, was the symbol, a type, of God's people being the counterpart, the wife, of Christ. Therefore, in His economy God's redeemed people are always considered by Him as His wife, and God considers Himself as their husband. In Revelation 12 we have the woman and her child, but here we are not told who her husband is. Nevertheless, this chapter reveals that she is pregnant and is about to deliver her child. By whom did she become pregnant, and who is the source of her child? By reading the whole Bible, we see that the husband is God in Christ.

I. A SYMBOL OF THE TOTALITY OF GOD'S PEOPLE

It is difficult to understand the book of Revelation. If we would rightly interpret this book, we need all the other sixty-five books of the Bible. Hence, in order to understand who this woman is, we need the whole Bible. Some Christian teachers have held the concept that this woman is Mary, the mother of Jesus, and that the man-child is Jesus. This concept, however, does not suit the context of this chapter because Jesus ascended to the heavens nearly two thousand years ago. But in 12:5 and 6 we are told that the man-child will be raptured to the throne of God and that, following this, the woman will be nourished for "a thousand two hundred and sixty days" (v. 6). These twelve hundred sixty days are three and a half years or forty-two months (12:14; 11:2-3; 13:5), which will be the period of the great tribulation. This proves that the man-child is not the Lord Jesus and that the woman is not Mary. Mary was just a single woman on earth, but this woman is universally corporate and is revealed in heaven.

Others say that this woman is Israel, the Jewish race. Some of those who hold this view take Genesis 37:9 as their basis. According to this verse, Joseph had a dream in which "the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance" to him. Since the woman wears the sun and the twelve stars and stands upon the moon, apparently corresponding to Joseph's dream

concerning his family, it is said that the woman in Revelation 12 must signify Israel, the Jewish people. But 12:17 proves that this woman does not only comprise those who "keep the commandments of God," but also those who "have the testimony of Jesus." Those who "keep the commandments of God" are Jews. However, those who "have the testimony of Jesus" must be New Testament believers, not Jews. This is a strong proof that the woman is not only composed of Jews but of two classes of people: the Jews who keep the commandments of God and the believers who have the testimony of Jesus. Therefore, to say that this woman is merely Israel does not fit the whole context of this chapter.

The woman in this chapter is the totality of God's people. According to the vision, this totality is in three sections: the section of her head with the twelve stars, the section of her body clothed with the sun, and the section of her feet on the moon. Hence, this woman is universal, composed of the twelve stars, the moon, and the sun. In Joseph's dream, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars plus Joseph himself signified the total composition of God's people on earth. Based upon the principle of that dream, the sun, the moon, and the twelve stars here must signify the totality of God's people on earth, which in this chapter is symbolized by a woman.

Most of her being is clothed with the sun. The sun signifies God's people in the New Testament age. Before Christ came into the world, it was the dark night of the Old Testament age. When Christ came, it was the sunrising from on high (Luke 1:78 KJV, margin), the beginning of the age of the sun. Before that, it was the age of the moon, which signifies God's people in the Old Testament time. The moon is under the feet of the woman, for the age of the moon was the age of the law, which should not be exalted as the stars. The stars, which signify the patriarchs, God's people before the law was given, are on her head as a crown. All God's people in these three ages, who together constitute this woman, are light bearers. Hence, she is the bright woman shining throughout all generations.

A. The Patriarchs Symbolized by the Twelve Stars

If we read the Bible carefully, we shall see that God's people are grouped into three sections. Firstly, there are the patriarchs, who lived from the time of Adam until the time of Moses; secondly, there are the people under the law,

from Moses until Christ's first coming; thirdly, there are those from Christ's first coming to His coming the second time, the believers who compose the church. Those in the third category are the majority of God's people in the universe. The patriarchs are symbolized by the twelve stars (Dan. 12:3) shining individually in the night with heavenly light. All the patriarchs were individual stars. They dwelt in the nighttime because, in their age, Christ had not yet come and day had not dawned. As individual stars, they are a crown for this universal woman, symbolizing the glory of God's grace and His economy exalted. The number twelve signifies completion in God's eternal economy. The patriarchs, who are in the principle of God's grace, were not under the law; hence, they were a crown exalted above the head of the woman. All the patriarchs, such as Abel, Enosh, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are considered to be a crown.

B. The Children of Israel Symbolized by the Moon

After the patriarchs, we have the children of Israel, symbolized by the moon, reflecting the sun (Christ) and shining collectively in the light of Christ. The children of Israel were in the night under the law. Although the law was good, it was not exalted. Rather, in this chapter it is pictured as the moon underneath the feet of the woman. According to this vision, the moon is not upon her head but underneath her feet. The moon is bright and shining, but it is underneath her. This means that the principle of the law is not exalted in the eyes of God.

C. The Church Composed of All the Believers Symbolized by the Sun

This woman is clothed with the sun, with Christ. According to Luke 1:78 and 79, when Christ came, that was the sunrising. Matthew 4:13-16 says that Christ came as a great light to shine upon the people in darkness. This means that before Christ's coming it was nighttime. The church composed of all the believers symbolized by the sun shines collectively in the day with the glory of God (Phil. 2:15; 2 Cor. 3:18). That the church is the major part of God's people is indicated by the fact that the sun clothes the woman's body. Since Christ has come, we live in the day. Although, in a sense, the age in which we live is the night and we shall have a greater day when the Lord comes back, this day

that began at Christ's first coming is at least a small day. The millennial kingdom will be a greater day because at that time the light of the sun will be seven times stronger than it is today (Isa. 30:26). We live in a small day expecting the coming of a greater day. We are in the onefold sunshine expecting a day with sevenfold sunshine. Some may argue with me, pointing out that Romans 13:12 says that the night is far advanced and that Revelation 22:16 says that Christ is the bright morning star. I am familiar with all these verses. Remember that the truths in the Bible have two aspects. We must take both aspects, both sides, into account. Since Christ has come, we are not in the night—we are in the day. What are we—a star or a part of the sun? On the one hand, we are the stars in the night (1:20); on the other hand, we are a part of the sun in the day.

How wonderful is this great sign! This is another proof that the Bible was inspired and written by God Himself. No one else could have had the wisdom to use the symbol of the woman to signify all of God's people. Moses, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, etc. were all part of the moon. But praise the Lord that we, the New Testament believers, are part of the sun because we are a part of Christ. This is the vision of the universal bright woman.

II. UNIVERSAL

The woman in this chapter is universal both in time and in space. She is universal in time, from the creation of Adam to eternity. She is also universal in space, on earth and in heaven. This is a strong proof that she is not Mary, but Mary is included in her, as we all are. How can people say that this universal bright woman is Mary? Mary is too small. She is not that bright and she certainly is not universal. Mary does not wear a crown of twelve stars. Neither is this woman merely the race of Israel, for Israel is represented by the moon. Look at this woman once again: on her head are twelve shining stars representing the patriarchs. Surely Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were all stars. The children of Israel are represented by the moon. No matter how evil and defeated they sometimes were, comparatively speaking, they were a people on the moon. Only the children of Israel, not the heathens or the pagans, were a people standing on the shining moon. Were the Egyptians, Babylonians, Greeks, Romans, or Chinese people standing on the moon? Certainly not. They might have stood on a lump of coal, but not on the shining moon. All other races have been and still are standing on the dark things. Among the human race, only one people, the children of Israel, stand

on the moon. However, they do not realize that the moon is a sign that the sun, Christ, will come. Praise the Lord that today we are the sun. Although there are some Jewish believers among us, they are no longer a part of the moon but a part of the sun. The church is the sun because Christ is the sun and we are a part of Christ. Christ is the head sun and we are the body sun. Praise the Lord that we are in the major part of this bright universal woman.

III. BRIGHT IN CELESTIAL LIGHT

The woman in chapter twelve is not only universal both in time and in space, but is also bright in celestial light. She stands upon the bright moon and under the bright stars and is clothed with the bright sun. She is altogether bright, not being in any darkness. Her brightness is celestial, heavenly. We, the church, as her greatest part, must be like this.

IV. A UNIVERSAL WAR

In Genesis 3, the little serpent came in through the woman. Throughout the centuries, the expositors of the Bible have said that the serpent came in through the woman because she was weaker than the man. In my early ministry I also said the same thing. But now I realize that in fulfilling God's economy we must firstly be the female, not the male. The serpent, the subtle one, knew whom he had to poison. Today, we are not a part of Adam but a part of the universal bright woman. Satan came in to damage the female because he knew that she would be used by God to accomplish His purpose. Anyone who does not firstly consider himself as a female in the eyes of God can never fulfill God's economy. You must firstly consider yourself as a female, saying, "Lord, I am not the man. Lord, You are the man, and I am part of the woman. Since You are the male and I am a part of the female, I must take You as my husband and my head and submit to You."

After the serpent damaged the woman, God intervened to judge the serpent, saying, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). Revelation 12 must be interpreted by Genesis 3. In Genesis 3:15 we have the woman, the serpent, and the seed of the woman. In Revelation 12 we have the same three things, although on a larger scale. The woman is now much greater, the serpent has become a great dragon, and the seed of the woman has also developed into the man-child. The woman in Revelation 12

began with the woman in Genesis 3:15. We need the vision to see in this universe the sign of a great universal bright woman travailing in birth to bring forth a child. In front of this woman is a dragon fighting against her and seeking to devour the child as soon as he is born. This enmity, which is first seen in Genesis 3:15, is of God; it was God who put enmity between the serpent and the woman. In the universe today just one war is raging—the war between God's people as the woman and the serpent as the dragon. Have you seen this vision? Today, we all are the greatest part of the woman, and in front of us is a dragon.

How did the serpent in Genesis 3 become the dragon in Revelation 12? It was by eating a great deal. Through his eating the serpent has been continually increasing. Many have been feeding him, and now he is trying to devour us. But we will never be devoured by him; rather, we will give him a death blow. When the Lord cursed the serpent, He assigned him to eat dust (Gen. 3:14). As long as we are dusty, earthy, we are food for the serpent. But if we are heavenly, the serpent cannot devour us. We are not dusty or earthy; we are a part of the heavenly, bright woman.

We must see the vision that in the universe a warfare is raging between the woman and the dragon. Whoever persecutes the church is one with the dragon. Because the Catholic Church persecutes the Lord's lovers, she is one with the dragon. In chapter seventeen, we see a beast with seven heads and ten horns, the same number of heads and horns that the dragon has (12:3; 17:3). On this beast sits a woman clothed in purple and scarlet and gilded with gold and precious stone and pearls (17:3-4). The apostate Catholic Church, being the prostitute riding on the beast, is one with the dragon in persecuting the bright woman. When the apostle Paul was Saul of Tarsus, he persecuted the church. At that time, was he a part of the moon, a part of Israel? We say strongly that he was not. Likewise, the Pharisees, although they were Jews, were not a part of the moon. The Lord Jesus called them "serpents" and the "generation of vipers" (Matt. 23:33). They were "the seed of the serpent," as mentioned in Genesis 3:15. Along with Saul of Tarsus, they had become part of the great dragon. But praise the Lord that Saul was converted!

It does not matter whether or not you are religious, for as long as you persecute the church, you are part of the dragon or at least one with the dragon. The ancient Jews thought that they were fighting for God. But they did not realize that they were fighting together with the dragon to persecute

God's people and to damage and frustrate God's economy. Christians today must be careful. Their attitude towards the church determines what they are and where they are. Any Christians who persecute the church are one with the dragon, taking sides with him against God's economy. If we have this vision, we shall see that there can be no neutral ground. There are only two parties—the woman or the dragon. To which party do you belong? With which do you stand? Some so-called Christians hate the church and are eager to see it collapse. They speak lies about the church and spread rumors concerning the church. They oppose the church and do everything possible to frustrate and damage her. This is of the evil spirit of the dragon. These people are one with the dragon. If they are not a part of the dragon, they at least take sides with the dragon. You may ask, "Are they not Christians?" I would reply with this question: Were not the Pharisees the Jewish religionists? Certainly they were. They held to their Scriptures. According to their opinion, everything they did, including sentencing Christ to death, was according to their Scriptures. But what were they in actuality? They were vipers, snakes, part of the great dragon, doing things to destroy God's economy. Until the sovereign Lord intervened as Saul was on the way to Damascus, Saul also was actively a part of the dragon. When the Lord appeared to him, knocking him to the ground, He seemed to say, "Saul, what are you doing? I, Jesus, have come to visit you." At that time, Saul was converted and translated out of the darkness of Satan into God's kingdom of light. At the time of his conversion, the Lord charged Saul, telling him to open people's eyes "that they may turn from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me" (Acts 26:18). By the example of Saul of Tarsus we see that whoever persecutes the church today is part of the dragon or at least one with him.

The dragon is now persecuting the church and plotting to damage it. The opposition is active in Orange County and throughout this country. The dragon is everywhere on earth, seeking to devour whatever the church would bring forth. Have you seen this revelation? It is not a small thing. We are for the Lord's recovery. We face the attack of the dragon, but who will be victorious? Hallelujah, the dragon will be cast down, and we shall be victorious. Firstly, the dragon will be cast down from the heavens to the earth, then from the earth to the abyss, and finally from the abyss to the lake of fire. We can declare, "Satan, go to your destination in the lake of fire. Do not

remain on earth any longer. The earth is for Christ, not for you. Our Christ is coming to possess the earth, and you must go. Satan, you have no choice—go to the lake of fire!"

Revelation, the last book of the Bible, unveils Satan's destiny. Among all the important things and crucial matters in the second half of Revelation, the first is the universal bright woman in chapter twelve. We are the topmost item, the most crucial thing. Now is not the time to sleep; it is the time to fight. Wherever we are, we must say to the opposition and persecution, "Go to the lake of fire!" We are the woman, and Satan is in the lake of fire.

CHAPTER TWO

THE WOMAN AND THE MAN-CHILD

Life-Study of Revelation; Msg. 35

In the Bible there are some crucial signs. One of them is Jacob's dream at Bethel (Gen. 28:10-22). In that dream Jacob saw heaven opened and a ladder set up on earth extending from earth to heaven. This sign needs the whole Bible for its development. Another sign is Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan. 2:1-45). In that dream he saw a great image symbolizing the power of the Gentiles. Although that sign appears simple, it covers the Gentile powers from Babylon to the coming kingdoms of the revived Roman Empire. If we would understand that sign fully and adequately, we need to consider the whole of world history. In Revelation 12 there is still another sign—the great sign of the bright woman with the man-child. In this message I am burdened to give a further word on this great sign.

The view that the woman in Revelation 12 is Mary is entirely too narrow. To say that the woman is merely Israel, the race of the Jews, is also inadequate, for the woman in this vision is not local but universal. The woman in this chapter is not limited to any locality on earth; rather, she occupies the universe. As we have seen in the last message, she represents the totality of God's people from Adam until the end.

GOD'S NEED FOR THE WOMAN AND THE MAN-CHILD

Before God's people can be the man-child, they must firstly be a woman to Him. This indicates that we in the church today must firstly be the woman to God and then the man-child. By the sign in Revelation 12 we see that God's intention is to bring forth a man-child through this woman. The woman has been and still is the means by which God can bring forth this man-child, the one whom God will use to defeat His enemy and to bring in His kingdom. In other words, God will use this man-child to fulfill His economy and to accomplish His purpose. This is a great matter. In order to accomplish His purpose, God not only needs the individual Christ but also a corporate Christ, the church, God's people. We do not agree with the concept that this woman

is merely the mother of Jesus or the nation of Israel. She is the universal, corporate body of God's people. God needs the man-child to defeat His enemy and to bring in His kingdom that His eternal purpose might be accomplished. In order for Him to have such a man-child, there is the need of the woman.

THE POSITION OF THE WOMAN

Now we need to see a few crucial matters relating to the position of the woman in the Bible. The Bible reveals that in God's eyes His people are His wife. In Isaiah 54 God even refers to Himself as the husband to His people. According to the Bible, in order for a woman to be a proper wife, she must submit to her husband. In this universe the unique husband, the unique man, is God. God, the universal man, the universal husband, is our husband. Whether we are males or females by birth, being God's people, we are females in God's eyes. God is our husband, and we are His counterpart. As His wife, we must submit ourselves to Him. Although we may say that we are a wife to Christ, we still have our own way and intention. Often, we do not take His will and intention as ours. This means that we do not actually take Him as our husband or submit to Him.

A wife must also receive something from her husband in order to become pregnant. The Bible reveals that submission is to receive something of Christ, just as the woman submits to her husband, not to do something for him but to receive something of him. Nothing that a wife does for her husband is more important than receiving something of her husband. Actually a wife's duty is not to do things for her husband; it is to receive something of her husband that she may bring forth something for her husband. In the great sign in Revelation 12, the woman is not portrayed as doing anything for her husband; she is pictured as being pregnant. She has been impregnated by her husband in order to bring forth something for her husband. The church's duty is not mainly to do something for Christ. Her duty is to receive something of Christ that she may be made pregnant of Christ and may bring forth something for Christ.

The woman in this chapter firstly indicates submission to God. Secondly, she indicates that we do not need to do anything for God. What we need is to receive something of God. He does not need anything of us, but we need something of Christ to enter into our being that we might be made pregnant and might bring forth something for Him. The church today needs Christ.

This vision is altogether lacking in today's Christianity. When Christians speak about submission, their concept is to do something for Christ, to perform some work for God. But as the proper woman, we must firstly submit ourselves to our husband, not to do something for Him, but to receive something of Him. If we do this we shall be made pregnant, and something will be brought forth through us.

THE MEANING OF FORNICATION

Now we need to consider what fornication is. Fornication is to have a husband and to submit yourself to another man. Many Christians today, perhaps including some of us, are committing fornication. We commit fornication when, on the one hand, we admit that Christ is our husband, while, on the other hand, we submit to so many other things. Submitting ourselves to anything other than Christ is fornication. If we have the light, the vision, we shall see that Christianity today is full of this kind of fornication. As a chaste wife, you should not submit to anyone other than your husband, and you should not receive anything from anyone else. To receive something from someone other than your husband is fornication. But look at today's Christianity! Week after week and day after day, Christians are receiving things other than Christ. We in the church life should be careful not to receive anything other than Christ. We should not receive teachings, doctrines, practices, or forms. To receive something other than Christ, even if that thing is good or even scriptural, is to commit spiritual fornication. We should receive only Christ and allow only Him to make us pregnant.

THE WAY TO PRODUCE THE MAN-CHILD

Only by receiving Christ into our being can we bring forth the man-child. The man-child is formed wholly of the constituent of Christ. In order to produce the man-child, we must first be one with Christ and receive something of Him. When we receive something uniquely of Christ, we shall be made pregnant of Christ to bring forth the man-child. If you see this vision, you will feel sorrowful about the situation in today's Christianity. Where is the man-child? Christianity has produced many things, but there is nearly no man-child. Because Christianity has been impregnated of things other than Christ, hardly anything that it brings forth is the man-child.

God does not intend for the woman to fight the dragon. God intends to use the man-child to fight against the dragon. The dragon is still active in the heavens because the man-child has not yet been brought forth. Now we can see that this life-study of Revelation is not accidental; it was planned and timed by God that we all might see that we must be the unique woman submitting ourselves only to Christ, not to anything or anyone else, and that we must only receive what is of Christ. When, as this woman, we receive something uniquely of Christ, the man-child will be brought forth.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE WOMAN AND THE MAN-CHILD

The man-child is the stronger part of the woman. On the one hand, we firstly must be the woman; on the other hand, we must also be the man-child. It is not adequate simply to be bright and heavenly. We must be fully constituted with the element of Christ. The difference between the woman and the man-child is this: not much of the element of Christ is constituted into the being of the woman, but the entire being of the man-child is saturated and permeated with the element of Christ. Hence, the man-child is the very constitution of Christ. How can this man-child be brought forth? He is brought forth by Christ's getting into part of the woman to constitute that part of her with all the rich element of Christ. Do not consider this merely as an interpretation, but apply it to your daily experience. Even if you submit yourselves to Christ and receive something of Him, you are still the woman and are not yet the man-child. You will not be strong until you have allowed the element of Christ to be worked into your being. The more the element of Christ is worked into you, the stronger you will become. This is the man-child.

BECOMING PART OF THE MAN-CHILD BY FOLLOWING THE LAMB

Do not understand the man-child in just a doctrinal way as consisting of the dead overcomers resurrected. Doctrinally speaking, this is correct. But we do not like to understand the Bible simply in a doctrinal way. Rather, we must know the Word in a practical way. Even today, before the time of resurrection, we can be the man-child. If you are not a part of the man-child today, then how do you expect to be a part of the man-child in resurrection?

The principle in becoming the firstfruit or the man-child is the same: we must follow the Lamb wherever He goes (14:4). However, in my early ministry I did not realize that following the Lamb is not an outward matter. We should not say, "Oh, the Lamb was patient and humble, and we must imitate His patience and humility. The Lamb was absolutely for God, and we must also be absolutely for Him. The Lamb is our example, and we must follow Him." Forty years ago, I gave messages along this line. But later I realized that this is a natural understanding of following the Lamb. If the element of the Lamb does not get into us, we shall be unable to follow Him. We are not a lamb; we are "monkeys" or "donkeys." How could a "monkey" or a "donkey" follow the Lamb? It is impossible. To follow the Lamb means to allow the Lamb to get into you. When the element of the Lamb is constituted into your being, you will actually be a part of the Lamb. You will be unable to be what you were before because you have been transformed. Our transformed being is the man-child. Now we are the woman submitting to our husband and receiving something of Him into our being. If we allow the element that we have received of our husband to saturate and permeate our being, constituting us with this element, we shall no longer be simply the woman, but the man-child.

Although we need to pray more, if we simply pray in a common way, we shall not be supplied. We need to constantly be open to our husband. We must permit the element of Christ, the divine constituent of Christ, to work in us continually to saturate and permeate our whole being. Today, the Lord's desire is that many of His children realize that, as God's people, we are His wife for the purpose of bringing forth the man-child. We cannot produce or manufacture this man-child; we must receive something of Christ and be made pregnant of Him. Something of our Christ must enter into our being. It is not a matter of our being humble, patient, nice, or good. It is absolutely a matter of opening our being to His divine element and of allowing this element to be worked into us. For this, we need "nine months." It takes this long for the man-child to be developed within us.

The apostle Paul said in Galatians 4:19, "I am again in travail until Christ is formed in you." This indicates that he realized that he was part of this travailing woman to bring forth the man-child, which is Christ formed in us. Then in Philippians 1:21 he said, "For to me to live is Christ." This indicates that he became a part of the man-child by experiencing Christ. On the one hand, he was a part of the travailing woman and, on the other hand, he was a

part of the man-child. Paul was set up by God as a pattern for the believers (1 Tim. 1:16). We all must be like him. On the one hand, we should be part of the woman to travail for the birth of the man-child and, on the other hand, we should be the man-child to defeat God's enemy and to bring in His kingdom for the fulfilling of His purpose.

THE DRAGON'S HATRED OF THE WOMAN

The enemy hates this woman and is seeking to devour the man-child. The warfare is due to the enemy's desire to put this woman out of function. Even today, we in Anaheim are small in number. Sometimes I wonder why people oppose us so much and are doing everything possible to exterminate us. Humanly speaking, it is very difficult to understand this. Even many of the opposers and critics do not know the reason. But the great dragon knows. He realizes that some of God's people are resuming the true position of the woman. Once we have resumed this position, God has the opportunity to bring forth the man-child. Satan, the subtle one behind the opposers, knows that some of God's people have taken the position of this woman and that they will be made pregnant of Christ to bring forth the man-child. In this warfare we must touch the throne, call upon the highest authority, and exercise our spirit to fight the battle.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SEEING THIS GREAT SIGN

Today, it is crucial for us to realize that we are the woman. As the woman, we must submit to our husband, open to Him, and receive something of Him that His element might be wrought into our being. As a result, we shall not only become pregnant, but, eventually, we shall bring forth a man-child. This is God's economy. I hope that we all see this simple yet profound sign of the bright woman with the man-child opposed by the great dragon. If we see this vision, our concept regarding our Christian life will be radically changed. What is the significance of being humble, nice, holy, or spiritual as long as the man-child, or even the woman, is not with us today?

THE WAY TO BE ONE

As individuals, you and I are not the woman. Only together, as a corporate unit, are we all the one woman. Since there is only one woman, whoever of

God's people is dissenting is finished with this woman. The only way we can be one is to submit ourselves to Christ and to receive something of Christ. If we do not submit to Him, we cannot be one. True oneness only comes from submitting ourselves to our one husband, to the unique headship. Furthermore, we must only receive the unique element of Christ. Although we may have different concepts, we should not receive anything of our concept. If you receive something of your concept, you will be divided immediately.

Satan, the serpent, is very subtle. It has not been easy for me to pass through nearly fifty years in the church life. How many subtle imaginations and concepts there are! At times, even the dear saints are utilized by the enemy to cause questions, to make proposals, and to raise doubts. None of these things is of Christ. Whenever you take these things into your being, you will be divided. But if you have seen the vision, you will never accept any concept, proposal, criticism, suggestion, or doubt. You will only receive something of Christ. Although thousands of concepts may be presented to you, you will say, "I will receive nothing of these concepts. I will only receive something of Christ. If I receive anything other than Christ, I commit fornication." If we submit ourselves to our one husband and only receive something of Him, we shall be chaste and we shall be one. Otherwise, we shall be fornicators and we shall be divided. Fornication is confusion caused by division. We need to see this controlling vision. Then we shall be one and shall bring forth the man-child to defeat God's enemy and to bring in God's kingdom.

CHAPTER THREE

THE MAN-CHILD AND THE REST OF THE WOMAN'S SEED

Life-Study of Revelation; Msg. 36

We have seen that the woman in Revelation 12 is not an individual woman, but a collective, universal woman symbolizing the totality of God's people. In Genesis 3:15 the woman was local and individual; the seed, Christ, was also individual; and the serpent was a small snake. All three, the woman, the seed, and the serpent, were individual and on a small scale. But in Revelation 12 the woman is universal and collective, symbolizing all of God's people: the patriarchs represented by the twelve stars; Israel represented by the moon; and the church, the New Testament believers, represented by the sun. In Revelation 12 the serpent has become a dragon. While the serpent creeps on earth, the dragon flies through the air. Now Satan not only moves on the earth, but is also exceedingly active in the air. The seed in this chapter is not just the individual Christ but is a corporate entity, the corporate Christ, including Christ as the Head and all His overcoming believers as the Body. Hence, the three items found in Genesis 3:15 are seen in a highly developed form in Revelation 12. In this message we need to consider the man-child and the rest of the woman's seed.

I. THE MAN-CHILD

A. The Stronger Part within the Woman

Verse 2 says that the woman was with child, and verse 5 says that "she brought forth a son, a man-child." The child here, being a man-child, signifies the stronger part of God's people. Although in verse 2 this child was in the woman, the Word does not call him a baby, but a man-child. By reading and praying over this portion of the Word, we realize that man-child here does not indicate a baby. Rather, it indicates the stronger part within the woman. The woman represents the totality of God's people. But throughout all generations there have been some stronger ones among God's people. These are

considered in the Bible as a collective unit fighting the battle for God and bringing God's kingdom down to earth.

History proves that not everyone among God's people is a strong one. No, only a minority of God's people are strong ones. This was true during the time of the patriarchs. Do you not believe that during Noah's time there were others who belonged to God besides Noah? I believe that God had hundreds of people. Noah, however, was a strong one. During the time of Israel, there were hundreds of thousands who belonged to God, but only a few of them were strong. For example, Elijah and Jeremiah were strong ones. Undoubtedly, the majority of God's people were genuine, but they were not strong. We find the same thing in the New Testament. Although there were thousands of Christians in the early days, not that many were truly strong. Even at present there are thousands, even millions, of Christians, but not many are strong. I encourage you all to be strong.

We should not only be part of the woman, but also part of the man-child. In the Bible woman signifies the weaker one, and man signifies the stronger one (1 Pet. 3:7). The man-child, the stronger part, is within the woman, the weaker part. Although the woman is bright and universal, she is not altogether strong. Only a part within her is strong. This is true in the local churches, even here in Anaheim. Not all those in Anaheim are strong ones. Rather, I believe that in Anaheim there are more weak ones than strong ones. How about your locality? Everywhere the strong ones are few, and the weak ones are many.

There is a proverb that says that if we do not have quantity, we can never have quality. Quality comes out of quantity. Suppose God had a hundred thousand people. If one per cent of this number were strong ones, then there would be one thousand strong ones. Firstly, we have quantity, then quality. God's way is always wise. Firstly, He gains the quantity. He calls many, but chooses few. As Matthew 22:14 says, "Many are called, but few are chosen."

Although we all have come into the Lord's recovery, we should not say that everyone in the recovery will be an overcomer. We have no warrant for saying this. We can only say that those in the recovery have a greater possibility of being overcomers. Whether or not you will be an overcomer depends upon you; it depends upon how much you share of God's grace. How much you share of God's grace will determine whether or not you will be a strong one

among God's people in the Lord's recovery. I thank the Lord that we all are part of the woman, but I dare not say that we all are also part of the man-child. We must look to the Lord that we may be enriched, strengthened, and become more solid so that we might grow from the woman into her stronger part. But no matter how strong you become, do not prematurely separate yourself from the woman. If you do that, you will have a miscarriage. Be careful not to be "too strong." If you are too strong, you will come out of the woman too soon. Stay in the woman as part of the man-child until the time of delivery has come.

How can we be the man-child? If you would be part of the man-child, you must eat more, grow more, and become stronger. To put it into practical terms, you must pray more, spend more time with the Lord, eat more of the Word, experience the Lord more, grow in life more, and have more dealings with the negative things. If others would gossip, you would not gossip. If others would not pray, you would pray more. Although you should not be separate from the woman, you should be somewhat different from others. The woman is too general. Those who are part of the man-child are somewhat particular. Many of the dear ones in the Lord's recovery are indifferent. They have little appetite and do not like to eat very much. But if you would be in the man-child, you should not be indifferent. You must be particular, sober, and serious. You must have a good appetite and have a personal, direct moment by moment dealing with the Lord. If you are like this, then it is possible that you will be the stronger part in the Lord's recovery, the stronger part within the woman. Whether or not you will be in the man-child depends upon how you react to God's desire, God's move, and God's eternal economy. If, day and night, you cannot go on until you have given yourself wholly and thoroughly to God's economy, then it is likely that you are a part of the man-child.

Not only the Lord's economy but even His recovery today depends upon the stronger ones, not upon the indifferent ones. There might be thousands in the Lord's recovery, but not all are strong ones. Praise the Lord for the strong ones. The Lord's recovery today absolutely depends upon them. Not all those in the Lord's recovery in the United States are strong. Some say, "Oh, I love the Lord's recovery, but I just can't make it." Such a one means business and loves the Lord's recovery, but he is not absolute. Thank the Lord for the honest and faithful ones. They are absolute, saying, "This is it! I will be absolutely for it. I don't like to be neutral." We should be either cold or boiling

hot, but not lukewarm. If we are lukewarm, we are only good for being vomited out of the Lord's mouth (3:16).

Firstly, the Lord's economy is with His people represented by the woman. But the Lord's economy cannot be carried out merely by the woman. There is the need of the strong ones. This is always the principle. We must be absolute and strong. If we would take this way, we would take it absolutely. But if we would not take it, then we would forget about it. We must not only be part of the woman, but also part of the man-child within the woman. It is not adequate simply to be in the Lord's recovery. We have to be among that part in the Lord's recovery which is strong. Whatever tests and trials may come, we would stand against them. You are all familiar with Brother Watchman Nee. He was imprisoned for over twenty years. During that long trial, he was daily tempted to fail. But praise the Lord that for more than twenty years he stood without changing. He was truly among the stronger part. Do not excuse yourself. Rather, you should say to yourself, "Poor self, get away. I have no heart for you and I don't care for you. I care for the Lord and for His testimony and recovery." We all must be absolute and strong.

If you are absolute, and strong, your appetite will be enlarged. Some think that the three messages put out each week by the ministry station are too much to digest. When I was young, I could have taken in thirty messages a week. How easy it is to take in just three messages a week. We only need to read six pages a day. However, if you do not have any appetite, even a small piece of candy would be too much for you to take in. How much we eat depends upon our hunger. Do you have a big appetite? If you do, you would like to devour the whole Bible. Three messages a week are not too much. Even three messages a day would not be excessive. Many of you have time to gossip, but you do not have time to read a few pages of the life-study messages. Are you in the man-child? If you are, then you will be hungry. Mothers know that if a child does not have a good appetite, he will not grow and be strong. If you do not eat, you cannot grow, and if you do not grow, you will not be strong. The Lord's recovery depends upon the hungry ones. Whether or not you are part of the man-child depends upon how hungry and thirsty you are. If you are truly thirsty, you will hate gossip and nonsensical talk. You will say, "I am here to be trained, strengthened, nourished, and built up. I have neither the heart nor the time for gossip. I have no appetite for idle conversation." If you are like this, it is a proof that with you there is the possibility of being part of the man-child. We are here for the Lord's recovery and for nothing else.

Remember that the Lord's recovery is the practicality of His economy today. His economy can only be carried out by the man-child.

It is difficult for most Christians to understand Revelation 12. Many cannot understand who the woman is and who the rest of her seed are. You cannot apprehend this according to your natural mind. The woman is composed of all her seed. If she had one thousand children, these one thousand, put together, would equal the woman. Do not consider the woman as being separate from all her children. The woman, the mother, is her children, and the children are the woman.

This chapter is not just for the future, for it began in Genesis 3:15. Abel was a seed of the woman. As a seed of the woman, he was part of the woman and was persecuted by his brother Cain, who was part of the serpent. The serpent who damaged Eve in Genesis 3 subtly crept into Cain in Genesis 4, making him a part of the serpent. It was not Cain who murdered his brother, but, according to John 8:44, it was Satan, the serpent, who murdered Abel. In Genesis 4 we have the woman represented by Abel and the serpent represented by Cain. As we continue on through the Old Testament, we see that Elijah and Jeremiah were part of the woman and that those who opposed them were part of the serpent. The Lord Jesus certainly was the seed of the woman. In front of Him stood the seed of the serpent, the "generation of vipers" (Matt. 23:33), the Pharisees. All those who opposed the Lord Jesus were part of the serpent. When the apostle Paul was Saul of Tarsus, persecuting the church and laying it waste, he was part of the serpent. But the Lord called him, and Saul became part of the woman. All the synagogues of Satan (2:9) were also part of the dragon. At the time of the New Testament, the serpent had become a great dragon. All the Jewish synagogues had become one with the serpent in persecuting the woman.

This has continued throughout all the centuries until the present time. Today, in one sense, we are the woman, but, in another sense, some of us are the man-child. Directly in front of us is the dragon. Even as I am speaking, I can see the dragon before me. Do not be afraid of him, for we have One who is stronger than he (1 John 4:4). The dragon may send forth the waters, but God will use the earth to swallow them (12:15-16). The first one to be part of the man-child was Abel. All the martyrs are also part of the man-child. As we shall see, all the dead overcoming saints are included in the man-child.

The period of the woman's pregnancy is not nine months; rather, it is approximately six thousand years. It will last from the death of Abel until the time of the great tribulation when Satan will be one with Antichrist to persecute the believers left on earth during the great tribulation. Those Christians who will refuse to worship the image of Antichrist will be the later overcomers mentioned in Revelation 15. From the time of Abel until Revelation 15 will be about six thousand years. This is the period of the woman's pregnancy with the man-child.

In front of the woman who is about to bear the man-child stands a serpent who has become a dragon. This subtle one has been constantly fighting to damage God's people throughout the centuries. He has used every means to accomplish this, including both Judaism and Catholicism. In his history of martyrs, Foxe says that the Roman Catholic Church has killed more saints than the Roman Empire did. If you go to Spain, you will not have the same liberty to speak as we have in this country. If you speak out, you will probably be persecuted by the religious people. Although they would persecute you for the sake of preserving their religion, they would not realize that they are part of the great dragon. Today, this war of persecution is raging. Sometimes I am asked why we have so much opposition and why we do not receive a good name. As long as we are standing for the testimony of Jesus, there will be opposition. Satan never sleeps. Day and night, he is working to oppose and damage the Lord's testimony. But praise the Lord that His recovery is here! The real woman is here, and within her there is the man-child.

Do not think that Revelation 12 is merely for the future. No, it began in Genesis 3:15 and has been continuing ever since. In Galatians 4:29 Paul says that those who are fleshly persecute those who are spiritual. The fleshly are one with the dragon, and the spiritual are those in the woman with the man-child. In this age and on this earth, the woman is here. Within her, there is the stronger part, the man-child. This is the reason that we experience so much opposition and fighting. This opposition is a sign that we are the woman, for if we were not the woman with the strong man-child within her, there would be no opposition. Praise the Lord for this opposition! It is an indication that we are the woman with the man-child within her.

B. The Resurrected Overcomers throughout All Generations

The man-child consists of the resurrected overcomers. That the man-child "was about to shepherd all the nations with an iron rod" (v. 5) indicates that the man-child consists of the overcomers as mentioned in 2:26-27. These overcomers are those who have already died.

1. "Brought Forth"

Verse 5 says that the woman "brought forth" the man-child. "Brought forth" here signifies resurrection, as in Acts 13:33-34. The man-child is composed of the overcoming saints who have died and who have been resurrected. This is proved by the words *unto death* in verse 11. The Lord Jesus was brought forth in resurrection to be the Firstborn Son of God. To Him that was a birth. Acts 13:33 and 34, a quotation of Psalm 2:7, reveal that when He was resurrected, He was begotten as the Firstborn Son of God. Prior to that, He was the Only Begotten Son of God with divinity, but through His resurrection He was begotten as the Firstborn Son of God with both divinity and humanity. All the overcomers who die will be part of the man-child. By resurrection, the man-child will come into full existence. Abel, the apostles, and so many martyrs and deceased overcomers are waiting for the time of resurrection. The resurrection of all the dead overcoming saints will be the delivery of the man-child. Hence, the man-child is composed of all the overcoming saints who die before the time of this resurrection. If you are an overcomer today and live until the Lord comes back, you will not be a part of the man-child. Instead, you may be among the firstfruit mentioned in chapter fourteen. But if you are an overcomer and die before the Lord comes back, you will be resurrected to be part of the man-child. Therefore, the man-child does not represent the overcomers who live until the Lord comes back, but represents all the dead overcomers who will be resurrected immediately before the Lord comes back. This resurrection will be their delivery as the man-child.

2. Composed of the "Brothers"

The man-child brought forth in verse 5 is composed of the "brothers" in verse 10 who have been opposed and accused by Satan, the enemy of God. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, by the word of their testimony, and by loving not their soul life even unto death (v. 11).

3. Unto Death

"Unto death" (v. 11) surely indicates martyrdom. A number of the brothers of whom the man-child is composed were martyred for the Lord's testimony. This proves that the man-child brought forth by the woman will be the dead overcoming saints resurrected.

4. Overcoming the Devil, Satan

We have seen that war is raging between the dragon and the woman. The woman, however, does not fight the battle. The battle is fought by the man-child. Today, the war is between the dragon and the Lord's recovery. But, the battle is being fought by the strong ones, by the man-child. The brothers who constitute the man-child fight Satan and eventually overcome him. They overcome Satan by three things: by the blood of the Lamb, by the word of their testimony, and by loving not their soul life even unto death.

a. By the Blood of the Lamb

The blood of the Lamb, which is for our redemption, answers before God all the accusations of the Devil against us and gives us the victory over him. We need to apply this blood whenever we sense the accusation of the Devil. If you wage war against Satan, the accuser will constantly condemn you. Many of us can testify that when we were indifferent, there were no accusations. But when we woke up and began to war against Satan, then the accusations came. Satan said, "Look at yourself—you are not very good. You are not right with your wife or with your brothers." Some of these accusations are accurate, but others are falsehoods fabricated by the accuser. Day after day we need the blood, not only to cleanse us but also to cover us. We not only have the redeeming blood, but also the prevailing, overcoming blood. If you have done wrong, you need to clear it, but do not take the accusations of the enemy. Whenever you wake up and take your standing against the dragon as a stronger part of the woman, the dragon will immediately accuse you in your conscience. Do not listen to those accusations. Rather, you must say, "Lord, cover my conscience, thoughts, and realizations with Your prevailing blood. Your blood defeats the enemy." You need to make your conscience strong under the covering blood. The brothers overcame the accuser by the blood of the Lamb.

According to our experience, when we turned to the Lord for His purpose, the accusations came immediately. But we did not know that those

accusations came from the enemy. We thought that it was the working of our conscience being enlightened. Satan, the serpent, is the subtle one. He always does things in a subtle manner, pretending to be something that he is not. Satan often pretends to be us. When we were indifferent toward God's purpose, we had no trouble with this. But once we had turned to the Lord for His purpose, it seemed that our conscience was continually working to tell us of the things in which we were wrong. That was not you—it was Satan. How can we prove that it was Satan? If your conscience is truly working under the light of God, then once you confess and apply the blood, that condemnation will cease and you will have genuine peace. If this is your experience, then the condemnation is from your enlightened conscience working within you. But many of us can testify that after we confessed and applied the blood, the so-called condemnation lingered on. This is not the condemnation of our conscience, but the accusation of the Devil. Condemnation comes from God, but accusation comes from the accuser. Any apparent condemnation that does not stop after we have confessed and applied the blood must be of the Devil. Once we realize this, we should tell Satan, "Stop! I will not confess anymore. This is not me; it is you. Devil, this is not God's enlightenment—it is your accusation. I am not perfect, but you must realize that I am under the blood of the Lamb, and the blood is my perfection. Don't you realize that I am under the blood? I am one of the brothers who overcome you, not because of my perfections, but by the blood of my Redeemer."

None of us knows how much the blood implies. Only God knows this. The Devil also knows more of what the blood implies than we do. In the early years of our ministry we had experience in casting out demons. During that time, we did a great deal of gospel preaching in China and often we had to conquer cases of demon possession. Many times as we were praying to cast out the demon, sharp accusations came against us. The demon said, "Will you pray to cast me out? Don't you remember that last night you lost your temper with your wife? Now you want to cast me out?" Immediately, our praying conscience was weakened and our praying mouth was shut. Instead of praying, we declared, "Yes, last night I lost my temper with my wife. But, demon, don't you know that now I am under the blood?" When you mention the blood, the demons will be defeated. The demons know more about the power of the blood than we do. A number of times, demon-possessed females took scissors and, as we were praying, threatened to cut us with them. Then we declared, "We are under the blood. Demons, you must realize that your king and leader,

Satan, the Devil, has been crucified and that you and he have been judged." Whenever you say this, the demon-possessed person will relax. Through experience we have come to see the power and authority of the blood of the Lamb. We must always apply the blood, telling the Devil that although we are not perfect, we are under the perfect blood. It is not your perfection that silences the demons—it is the blood. None of us has a complete perfection. Rather, our perfection is punctured. Do not trust in your perfection and do not fight the battle by your perfection. Even now as I am ministering, I do not minister by my perfection. I have come here to minister by the blood. Hallelujah, the blood is here! We all must see the blood and declare that we are under its covering. This blood is the prevailing blood, and it speaks and implies a great deal. Only God and, to some extent, the Devil know how much the blood implies. But whether or not we know all that the blood implies, as long as we apply it, we shall have all it implies.

b. By the Word of Their Testimony

They also overcame the enemy by "the word of their testimony." This is their word testifying that the Devil has been judged by the Lord. Whenever we sense the Devil's accusation, we should verbally testify how the Lord has already dealt with him. We must declare the Lord's victory over him with the uttered word. We need to testify not only to men but also to the demons, saying, "Demons, you must be reminded that Satan, your king, has been defeated by my Lord Jesus Christ. You should not be here troubling me." Along with testifying to the demons, you need to preach to Satan, saying, "Satan, don't you know that you have been crucified on the cross? You have been judged, and your destination is the lake of fire." This is the testimony of your verbal word. Do not simply keep these thoughts in your mind—you must utter them to Satan. Although no one may be with you in your room, Satan is there. I have preached to the demons and to Satan. That preaching was not for their repentance; it was a repellent. By spraying the heavenly poison through our verbal testimony, all the "bugs" are killed. You may not see any demons, but they are there. Some brothers have wondered how I can be so strong. The reason is that by preaching to the "bugs" I am strengthened. But my strength is not in what I am—it is in what the blood is. I am not the poison. The demons are not afraid of what I am, but they are afraid of what the blood is. We need to apply the blood.

Shortly after we moved into our new house, we were troubled by gophers. Some brothers put poison into the gopher holes, and all the troublesome gophers were exterminated. Our "poison" today is the blood of Jesus and the word of our testimony.

We need to send out the word of our testimony. At times, you may need to preach to Satan for several minutes, saying, "Satan, I was deceived by you for years. One day, my Lord came to me and said that I was redeemed at the cross. Satan, don't you know this?" You need to speak to him like this. Many of us have never preached to Satan, but now we all must learn to do this. If you would preach prevailingly, the first person to whom you must preach is Satan. This preaching to the enemy is the word of our testimony.

Our testimony is that we were sinners but that the Lord is our Redeemer. He died on the cross for our sins, and now we have His blood. Tell this to Satan! After you have spoken to him about this, say, "Satan, you should not be here. Your destiny is firstly the abyss and then the lake of fire. But I want you to stay here awhile until I have finished my message to you. Only then will I allow you to be released." If you preach to Satan like this, the accuser will not dare to trouble you because you trouble him. After you have finished your message, say to the enemy, "Satan, don't come back again. If you do, I'll give you a longer sermon."

The brothers overcame him not only by means of the blood, but also by the word of their testimony. The blood is the fact, and the word is our preaching. The blood implies the fact that our sins have been forgiven and taken away, that we have been crucified, that Satan has been judged, and that his head has been bruised. When we apply the blood, we apply all these facts. After applying the blood, we must declare the facts to Satan. This is the way to overcome the enemy.

If you apply the blood and preach to Satan, he will be threatened. He accuses you, troubles you, and makes you of none effect. He would destroy you by his accusations. I am afraid that many dear ones are still under the destruction of the Devil's accusations. They say, "Oh, I love the Lord, but I am not perfect. I have made so many mistakes and blunders." The result of these accusations is to make you of no effect. Through the crippling effect of his accusations, the enemy confiscates you. But you must tell him, "Devil, my standing is not my perfection. My standing and my covering are the blood."

Anyone who is still under Satan's accusations should preach a long sermon to him. If you do this, you will immediately be strengthened.

c. By Loving Not Their Soul Life

The brothers also overcame the enemy by not loving their soul life. Due to Adam's fall, Satan has joined himself to man's soul life, man's self (Matt. 16:23-24). Hence, to overcome him we should "not love our soul life," but rather hate it and deny it (Luke 14:26; 9:23). The overcoming believers who constitute the man-child do "not love their soul life even unto death." Those who do not love their soul life are willing to be martyred. We must hate our self. As long as we love our soul life, we are dust, good to be food for Satan. But if we do not love our soul life, our self, there will be no dust, and Satan will be killed. When our soul life is killed, Satan is killed also. This is the way for us, as the stronger part of the woman, to overcome Satan.

If you preach to Satan, he will leave you. Then you should be prepared to say, "Satan, even if you hate me, I would die to you. I would like to lose my soul life, for when I die, I have a glorious graduation." If you are willing to lose your soul life, Satan will have no way with you. If he bothers you, you may preach to him; if he hates you, you die to him. What then will he be able to do? He will be able to do nothing and he will quit. This is the way to overcome the enemy.

5. Brought Forth by the Suffering Woman

The man-child is brought forth by the suffering woman, by the suffering people of God (vv. 2, 4-5). The words *cried out* in verse 2 signify that she was praying. "Being in travail and in pain to bring forth" signifies that throughout all generations God's people have been suffering the travail of delivery (Isa. 26:17-18; Jer. 6:24; 13:21; 30:6; Micah 4:9-10; 5:3; Gal. 4:19) to bring forth the man-child to fight for God's kingdom.

6. To Rule All the Nations

Verse 5 says that the man-child "was about to shepherd all the nations with an iron rod." This is the authority of Christ (Psa. 2:9) which He gives to the overcomers (2:26-27). The man-child, the resurrected overcomers, will

exercise the authority of Christ over the nations and rule them with Christ in the millennial kingdom (20:4, 6).

C. Caught Up

Verse 5 also says that the man-child "was caught up to God and to His throne." To be "caught up" is to be raptured. The rapture of the man-child differs from that of the majority of the believers as mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 4:17. There, the rapture of the majority of the believers will be to the air and at the last trumpet (1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thes. 4:16), which will be the seventh trumpet (11:15). But here, the rapture of the man-child will be to the throne of God and before the "thousand two hundred and sixty days," which will be the time of the great tribulation of three and a half years (forty-two months, v. 14; 13:5; 11:2), beginning from the fifth trumpet (9:1).

II. THE REST OF THE WOMAN'S SEED

The rest of the woman's seed mentioned in verse 17 is the weaker part of the woman, which includes the Israelites who keep the commandments of God and the believers who have the testimony of Jesus. Both the Israelites and the weaker believers will be left to go through the great tribulation. They will be persecuted and attacked by the dragon.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE GREAT RED DRAGON AND HIS PERSECUTION

Life-Study of Revelation; Msg. 37

There are three main figures in Revelation 12: the woman, the man-child, and the great red dragon. Throughout the centuries, there has been war between the woman and the serpent. Actually, the battle has not been fought by the woman, but by the man-child. This chapter covers all the generations from Genesis 3:15 until the end of this age. But it especially gives a more detailed portrait of Satan's activity during the last three and a half years. This warfare began in Genesis 3:15, and it will consummate in the last three and a half years. The woman with the man-child and the serpent, which has become the great dragon, will fight until the time of the resurrection of the dead overcomers. When all the dead overcomers are resurrected as one entity, the man-child will come into full existence. This single entity, the stronger part of God's people, will be raptured before the great tribulation, not to the air, but to the throne of God. After the rapture of the man-child, there will be the final three and a half years, or the twelve hundred sixty days.

After the man-child has been raptured to the throne of God, there will be war in the heavens. This indicates that the overcoming saints will exert a great influence upon the coming warfare in the heavens. This war will not begin until the overcoming saints have been resurrected and raptured. After this, there will be war between Satan and his angels and Michael, the archangel, and his angels. (Before Satan fell, he was also an archangel.) After the man-child has been raptured to the throne, there will no longer be any place there for the dragon. Rather, the dragon will be defeated and cast down to the earth. When he comes to earth, the great tribulation will begin. During this period of time, the dragon will do everything possible to damage the man created by God for His purpose. Because up until now God has not yet gained the man-child, He has not had a way to cast Satan from heaven to earth. God needs a corporate man to accomplish this for Him.

The picture in Revelation 12, which concentrates on the last three and a half years, portrays a complete picture of the enmity between the serpent and the woman. When Satan has been cast down to earth, he will cause great damage to the woman, who will still be on earth. In this message we need to consider the great red dragon and his persecution.

I. THE DRAGON

Verse 3 says, "And another sign was seen in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems." While the serpent is the subtle one, the dragon is the cruel one.

A. Great

Verse 3 says that the dragon is great. In Genesis 3, Satan was a serpent, a smaller creature. Here he has become a dragon, much greater than a serpent. Because the serpent has been eating a great deal throughout the centuries, he has been enlarged into a great dragon.

B. Red

This great dragon is red. Red here signifies the shedding of blood caused by Satan's murders (John 8:44). Abel was the first martyr murdered by the dragon. In Matthew 23:35 the Lord Jesus spoke of the blood of Abel the righteous. The dragon is not only great because of his eating, but is also red because of his murdering so many overcomers throughout the years.

C. Seven Heads

The great red dragon has seven heads, which are the seven Caesars of the Roman Empire (13:1; 17:10-11). When we come to 13:1, we shall see that these seven heads are the heads of the beast and that the beast will not only be the Roman Empire but also Antichrist. In 17:9 and 10, we are told that the seven heads are seven Caesars. That the dragon has seven heads, which are the heads of the seven Caesars and of the beast, Antichrist, indicates that the dragon and the beast are one. This means that the seven Caesars of the Roman Empire are the heads of Satan. By this we see that the Roman Empire, especially Antichrist, is the embodiment of Satan.

D. Ten Horns

The dragon also has ten horns. According to 17:3 and 10, these ten horns will be the ten kings under Antichrist. In the future, the Roman Empire will be restored and will have ten kings. These ten kings equal the ten toes of the great image seen by Nebuchadnezzar in his dream (Dan. 2:42-44). The Roman Empire, like the two legs of this great image, was divided into two sections—the western Roman Empire and the eastern Roman Empire. The ten toes, which are yet to come, will be the ten kings under Antichrist. These ten kings will be the ten horns of the great dragon. This indicates that the Roman Empire, Antichrist, and the ten kings will all be one with Satan.

E. Seven Diadems

On the seven heads of the dragon are seven diadems indicating the glory of the seven Caesars' kingship. All these seven Caesars have an extraordinary kingship. This kingship is their crown. Because the seven Caesars are one with Satan, their crowns are also the crowns of the dragon. Each of these Caesars assumes deity, claims to be God, and forces the people to worship him as God. In doing this, they are one with Satan.

F. His Tail Dragging away the Third Part of the Stars of Heaven

Verse 4 says, "And his tail drags away the third part of the stars of heaven, and he cast them to the earth." "The stars of heaven" signify the angels (Job 38:7; Isa. 14:12). "The third part of the stars of heaven" should be the fallen angels who followed Satan in his rebellion against God. Satan drags all of them away. After the man-child has been raptured to the heavens, he will no longer tolerate Satan's presence in the heavens. Then heaven will be cleared up, and Satan will be cast down to the earth. When Satan is cast down to the earth, all the fallen angels will be cast down with him (v. 9). At that time, the earth will be filled with fallen angels who will damage the dwelling place of rebellious man. What a dreadful place it will be! I do not want to be on earth at that time.

Have you noticed that in the word *dragon* there are the words *drag-on*? The dragon drags things on. Any dragging in the church life is a sign of the

dragon. The dragon not only drags away the angels, but sometimes he drags the saints.

G. Standing before the Woman

Verse 4 says that "the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bring forth, so that when she brings forth he might devour her child." That the dragon stood before the woman signifies that Satan is always against the people of God. From the time of Genesis 3:15 to this day, Satan has been continually fighting against the woman with the intention of devouring her child. During the last three and a half years, Satan will oppose that part of God's people who will be left on the earth during the great tribulation.

Do not accept the wrong teaching that all Christians will be raptured before the great tribulation. There is no verse that teaches this. I have been studying this matter of rapture for over fifty years. In my study I have learned that the deep, sound Christian teachers agree that it is wrong to say that all Christians will be raptured before the great tribulation and that no believers will pass through the great tribulation. This concept is a wrong teaching. If you accept it, you may be left in the great tribulation. In 12:5 we see that the man-child will be caught up to God before the last three and a half years. After the rapture of the man-child, the remainder of the woman's seed, including the Jews who keep the commandments of God and the Christians who have the testimony of Jesus, will be left on earth. On the one hand, the man-child will be raptured before the three and a half years and, on the other hand, the seed of the woman, including both Jews and Christians, will be left to pass through most of the great tribulation. After Satan has been cast down to earth, he will do his best to persecute God's people who are still on earth after the rapture of the man-child.

H. The Ancient Serpent

The ancient serpent is the subtle, deceiving one. Whenever the Bible speaks of the serpent, it denotes the subtle one (Gen. 3:1). By the time of Revelation 12, the serpent is not new; he is ancient, being close to six thousand years old.

I. The Devil

Verse 9 says that the great red dragon is called the Devil. The Greek word for Devil is *diabolos*, meaning accuser, slanderer. The Devil accuses us before God and slanders us before men. The Devil accused Job (Job 1:9; 2:4-5) and Joshua (Zech. 3:1-2) and is now accusing the believers "before God," even "day and night" (v. 10). The Devil not only accuses us to God, but he also slanders God to us. When the Devil goes to God, he accuses us before God. But when the Devil comes to us, he slanders God to us. Do not think that his slander is apparent, for often he slanders God in a subtle way. For example, he may slander God by raising within you the question, "Why does God do this to me?" This questioning is a form of slander. Something in you may ask why God treats you in a certain way. Do not think that this issues from you. No, it is the speaking of the Devil in you. Any question about the word of God in the Bible is also a slander. If you take a small slander, the Devil will give you a greater one. Then you would say God probably is not faithful. What slander this is! The significance of the title Devil is that he is the accuser and the slanderer.

J. Satan

The great dragon is also called Satan (12:9). In Greek, the word *Satan* means "adversary." Satan is not only God's enemy outside of God's kingdom, but also God's adversary rebelling against God from within God's kingdom. The enemy denotes the foe outside of God's realm; the adversary denotes the foe within God's realm. Satan was once within God's realm; he was not an outsider. Hence, he was and still is the adversary. Where is this adversary? He is inside of you. He is not only the outside enemy, but also the inside adversary. It is easy to defend yourself against an enemy, but it is difficult to defend yourself against an adversary because he is within you. The adversary is in your house.

You need to realize that this adversary is inside of you. Many times he will pretend to be you. Not realizing that it is he, you may think that it is you. Often when you are wrong, you should not blame yourself that much. Rather, you should say, "Satan, you must bear the blame because this is not I, but you." Dare you say this to Satan? You may not be bold to say this because you have been deceived. Before 1936, I was deceived for over eleven years. When filthy thoughts entered my mind, I confessed them, telling the Lord how bad I was and asking Him to forgive me. But the more I confessed, the more these unclean thoughts came in. One day, in 1936, I saw that I was being cheated.

These thoughts were not mine; they were the thoughts of the evil one. From that time onward, I have not confessed these things anymore. Instead, I say, "Satan, take this away. I refuse to be cheated by you. This is not my thought; it is yours. Now get rid of it. Satan, you must be condemned." Do not be kind to Satan and do not be cheated by him. Be bold to speak this way to him. Satan is within you. Because of this, he pretends to be you. Thus, you must say to him, "Satan, this is not I—it is you. I don't care whether you are outside of me or inside of me—you are you. You are the adversary." Learn to say this to him. Do not be cheated into believing that you are that bad. Satan, not you, is the bad one. Before we repented, we did not admit that we were bad. Rather, we were arrogant, saying, "I'm not sinful—I'm perfect." But after we repented, were saved, and received grace, the adversary subtly came to us, causing us to think that we were so dirty and so bad. That is the thought of the adversary.

For many years, I did not know the difference between the enemy and the adversary. As the adversary, Satan is even in the church pretending to be something that he is not. In Matthew 16:22 we see that Peter was cheated. Peter thought that he was speaking, but actually it was Satan. The Lord exposed the adversary, saying, "Get behind Me, Satan" (Matt. 16:23). Likewise, in our experience, many times it is not we who do certain things; it is Satan, the adversary.

K. The Deceiver of the Whole Inhabited Earth

Verse 9 says that the great dragon, who is called the Devil and Satan, "deceives the whole inhabited earth." No one is an exception; everyone has been cheated by him. Everyone on earth, from the highest to the lowest and from the greatest to the least, is being deceived by Satan. If we would know who the great dragon is, we must know all these aspects regarding him.

II. HIS PERSECUTION

A. Being Cast down from Heaven to the Earth

Now we must see the dragon's persecution. Verse 13 says, "And when the dragon saw that he was cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who brought forth the man-child." The dragon will be cast down from heaven to earth (vv. 9-10, 13). As we have seen, this has not yet taken place because the

man-child has not yet been brought forth and raptured to the heavens. But one day the man-child will be resurrected and raptured, and Satan will be cast down.

B. Knowing He Has a Short Time

After Satan has been cast down to the earth, he will know that "he has a short time" (v. 12). The short time here will be the three and a half years of the great tribulation (v. 14; 13:5; 11:2).

C. Having Great Rage

The dragon will also have great rage (v. 12). He will be angry because of losing his territory in the heavens and in the air. He will be cast down and limited to the earth. This will enrage him.

D. Persecuting the Woman

The dragon will persecute the woman who brought forth the man-child. Satan will concentrate his hatred upon God's people. Due to this, I encourage you to be prepared to be among the overcomers. Otherwise, you will be part of the woman left to pass through the major part of the last three and a half years. During that time, you will have to face the angry dragon.

E. Casting Water like a River out of His Mouth after the Woman

Verse 15 says, "And the serpent cast water like a river out of his mouth after the woman that he might cause her to be carried away by its current." "Water" here signifies armies which will be sent by Satan to destroy the people of God (Isa. 8:7-8; 17:12-13; Jer. 46:7-9; 47:2-3). Satan will speak a word to the kings of this earth to gather their armies to persecute the people of God. Three unclean spirits like frogs will proceed out of the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet (16:13). These unclean spirits will "go forth to the kings of the whole inhabited earth, to gather them to the war of the great day of God the Almighty" (16:14). These spirits will instigate the rebellious kings to send their armies to persecute God's people, which will include the loyal Jews and the faithful Christians. If you are left to pass through the great tribulation, you may have to suffer this.

F. Making War with the Rest of the Woman's Seed

Verse 17 says, "And the dragon was angry with the woman and went away to make war with the rest of her seed, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus." The "rest of her seed" signifies the people of God other than the man-child. Among them, some will be the Jews "who keep the commandments of God," and some will be the believers who "have the testimony of Jesus." Satan will not only persecute the woman, but will make war with the rest of her seed, with the weaker part of the woman.

III. GOD'S PRESERVATION OF THE WOMAN

A. Giving Her the Two Wings of the Great Eagle to Fly into the Wilderness

Verse 14 says, "And the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman that she might fly into the wilderness into her place." The "great eagle" signifies God, and the "two wings" signify His strength to rescue (Exo. 19:4; Deut. 32:11-12). As God brought the children of Israel out from Pharaoh's persecution, so will He bring His people away from Satan's persecution in the great tribulation. The mighty God will afford His people divine strength to escape Satan's persecution.

Some may wonder what the wilderness is. I cannot answer this question definitely, but I do have my own realization of what it might be. Although I do not wish to interpret this verse, I am willing to share with you my realization of what the wilderness is. Since its beginning, the United States has been a land to which people who desire a free conscience toward God might escape. We are all familiar with the story of the Mayflower. The pilgrims fled from persecution and escaped to this country. For more than three hundred years, America has been used by God as a refuge for His escapees. The symbol of this country is an eagle. When the persecution comes, many of God's people may escape to the United States by airplane. Hallelujah, there will be a wilderness on earth for God's escapees! Even today, the United States is still a refuge for escapees.

B. Swallowing the River by Opening the Earth

We have seen that the dragon will "cast water like a river out of his mouth after the woman." Verse 16 says, "The earth helps the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river which the dragon cast out of his mouth." At that time, just as in Numbers 16:31-33, the earth will open and swallow the armies sent by Satan. This means that during those three and a half years there will be many earthquakes. God will use these earthquakes to open the earth to swallow the armies sent by Satan. Do not be on earth at this time. Rather, we should watch this from the heavens. When God sends the earthquakes during the great tribulation, earth will no longer be a good place on which man can dwell peacefully. God will shake the earth, not only to warn the earth dwellers, but also to swallow up Satan's armies. Satan will send his frogs to stir up the kings of the earth to send their armies, but God will move His little finger to shake the earth that the earth might swallow up the armies. This will be God's way to deal with the situation.

C. Nourishing Her in the Wilderness a Thousand Two Hundred and Sixty Days

Verse 6 says, "The woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, so that they might nourish her there a thousand two hundred and sixty days." Moreover, verse 14 says that the woman will "fly into the wilderness into her place," where she will be "nourished for a time, and times, and half a time from the face of the serpent." After the rapture of the man-child, the woman will be left on earth to suffer persecution (v. 13). During the time of the great tribulation, God will prepare a place to nourish her for "a time, and times, and half a time," or "a thousand two hundred and sixty days," the three and a half years of the great tribulation. God will nourish her before He brings His people into the millennial kingdom. This is similar to the time when Pharaoh persecuted the children of Israel and God brought His people to the wilderness, where He nourished them before bringing them into the good land. The United States is so rich in food that it can nourish nearly any number of people. No country on earth is as rich in food as the United States. Praise the Lord that there will be such a nourishing place on earth!

We have seen a general picture of the coming days. Since Genesis 3:15, both the woman and the serpent have been present, fighting against one another. Throughout the years, this fighting has increased and intensified. It will

continue to do so until the time of the end when all the martyred saints will be resurrected and raptured to the heavens as the man-child. When they reach the throne, they will say, “Satan, here we are. Now that we have come, you must go down to earth.” Then Michael, the archangel, and his angels will war against the dragon and his angels. The dragon will be cast to the earth and the great tribulation will begin. During that time, the dragon will persecute and make war against the people of God who are still on earth. This will last three and a half years. But God will still be sovereign. On the one hand, He will swallow up Satan’s armies by opening the earth. On the other hand, He will afford a way for His people to escape and He will nourish them in a special place. God will preserve His people. However, I do not want to enjoy that preservation. I prefer to be taken away before the great tribulation. How about you? Praise the Lord for this clear picture of the coming days.

CHAPTER FIVE

WAR IN HEAVEN

Life-Study of Revelation; Msg. 38

I am burdened that we would all see the vision in Revelation chapter twelve. Do not think that the portrait here is a small picture showing a few insignificant matters. No, it is a great vision regarding what is taking place in the entire universe. The woman in this vision has been representing the people of God since the fall of man in Genesis 3. The woman not only represents God's people, but also God Himself. In front of the woman is a dragon signifying God's enemy. Throughout the centuries, the war has been between the woman and the serpent, the dragon.

This vision unveils the true situation in the universe. The worldly people can only see the obvious outward things: commerce, politics, industry, education, war. If you ask them the meaning of all this, they would say that they do not know. They only know to obtain an education that they may have a good job to earn a good living. They do not have the vision of what is taking place in the universe. But we see clearly what is going on. A woman symbolizes God's people and represents God. In a positive sense, the wife always represents her husband. If your wife does not represent you properly, you will be shameful. But it is wonderful to have a wife to represent you in a good way. This signifies that we, the people of God, are His wife and that we need to represent Him adequately. God is the unique husband, and we, the unique wife, represent Him. But God has an enemy. Firstly, this enemy was a little serpent. Eventually, however, it became a great dragon who is now in front of us. If you do not have this vision, you will be blind, not knowing what is taking place on earth or in the universe. Praise the Lord that it is not simply a matter of education, industry, commerce, diplomacy, etc., but a matter of warfare between the people of God and God's enemy. This war has been raging throughout the centuries and it is still raging today.

We all must be aware of the fight between the woman and the dragon. Actually, it is not the woman who fights, but the stronger part within her. Of those in the Lord's recovery, some belong to this stronger part. This stronger part must bear the responsibility to fight the battle. The way to fight is by

praying. Through the past four messages the dragon has been exposed and now he is naked. Hallelujah, we know what and who he is, and we know what his destination will be. We all need to preach to Satan about this. This will terrify him.

Most Christians mainly see that man fell, that God so loved the world and sent His only begotten Son to be the Savior, and that sinners need to hear the gospel, repent, and be forgiven of their sins and saved, so that one day they will go to heaven. But we must see something higher. The book of Revelation unveils a universal scene, a universal view. It is not simply that man has fallen—it is that God's enemy is fighting against Him. In His economy God has selected a people to be a glorious woman. Once we were sinners, but now we are part of this glorious woman. Before I was saved, I was a poor sinner, but after I was regenerated, I became a part of the glorious woman. Look at how bright she is. In her there is no darkness at all. With her, everything is light—the light of the sun, the moon, and the stars. In front of this glorious woman is a blood-shedding, murderous dragon. We have no choice except to fight against him. But, according to the vision, the whole woman does not fight; the stronger part within her does the fighting against the dragon.

I. BECAUSE OF THE MAN-CHILD'S RAPTURE TO HEAVEN

There will be war in heaven because of the man-child's rapture to heaven. Many Christians have a poor concept of the rapture, thinking that rapture is merely for the purpose of giving them a happy time, of taking them to a pleasant place. The rapture is not only for us; it is for God's economy and for God's strategy. God's enemy is still in the heavens. This enemy has been judged and his sentence has been pronounced, but during the past nineteen centuries God has not had those who could execute His sentence upon the enemy. Satan, the enemy of God, was judged by the Lord Jesus on the cross (John 12:31; 16:11). Following that, there is the need of the overcoming believers to carry out that judgment, to execute that sentence. The fighting waged by the overcoming believers against Satan is actually the execution of the Lord's judgment upon him. Eventually, through their fighting, he will be cast out of heaven (v. 9). Who will go to heaven to execute God's judgment and command the condemned, judged, and sentenced enemy to depart? The angels will not do this, for they are not qualified. The angels lack the position

to do this because, being angels, they are on the same level as Satan who formerly was among them. God needs a man to accomplish this. This man has a Head—the man Jesus. He is the Head of the man-child, the Pioneer of all the overcomers. God needs such a man to execute His sentence upon Satan. God has been waiting a long time for this man. Although God does not have him yet, one day He will have him.

We must be raptured to the heavens to fulfill God's need. We should not care that much for our own happiness. To care for our happiness is a Babylonian concept. This is also the concept of Catholicism derived from Babylonianism and resembling Buddhism. Religion is for human happiness, for having a good life in a merry land after we die. This thought is devilish. But, alas, this concept has infiltrated all of Christianity. Christians only care for their happiness, saying, "We like to have joy and a happy life. We want to go to heaven when we die, for we shall be happy there." In Christianity you probably never heard that God has an eternal purpose and that we must fulfill God's purpose. We need to be raptured to heaven, not for our happiness, but for the fulfilling of God's purpose. We must go there to execute God's judgment upon His enemy. God is waiting for this.

A. The Overcomers Having Fought unto Death against Satan on Earth

Verse 7 says, "And there was war in heaven." Immediately after the man-child is raptured to heaven, a war commences with Michael and his angels against Satan. This indicates that the man-child, the stronger part of God's people, is always engaged in fighting God's enemy, Satan. The overcomers have been fighting Satan continually, even unto death, and have defeated him on earth. But heaven is still waiting for them to arrive there that a war may be waged to cast Satan out of heaven.

The Lord has shown us the most effective way to defeat the enemy. What we need to do is to take the covenant, the word of God, and preach to Satan regarding what the Lord has accomplished for us. For example, whenever we were troubled by our temper in the past, we firstly confessed it, then asked the Lord for forgiveness, prayed to the Lord to help us, and finally made up our mind never to lose our temper again. I experienced this many times. But we should not do this anymore. When our temper is aroused, we should forget it and preach to Satan. Go to the source of the problem—Satan—and preach to

him, saying, “Satan, you have been crucified on the cross.” The more you preach to Satan, the more you will be released.

When the man-child is delivered and is raptured to the throne, he will say, “Satan, you were defeated by me on earth. Are you still here hiding in the heavens? Now I have come here to preach to you! Don’t you remember the messages I gave you on earth?” I am not joking about this. When we get there, this will be the situation. Then the man-child will say, “Satan, you should no longer be here! Get out!” As soon as this word is uttered by the man-child, Michael the archangel will lead all his angels to war against the dragon. After the executor gives the word, all the policemen will come to carry it out. God is waiting in the heavens for this executor. Who will be the executor? We, the man-child. Let us go there to preach to Satan. Before we can do this, however, we must first defeat him on earth. After defeating Satan on earth, we shall fight upward to heaven and eventually we shall fight downward to earth. Now as we confront Satan, we must give him many messages. Later, we shall go to the heavens, meet him there, and preach to him again. Then, after he has been cast down to earth to damage it, we shall descend and say to him, “Satan, are you still here? Let me give you another sermon. Now is the time for you to go to the abyss.” Then after the millennium there will be the fourth sermon given to Satan. At that time, Satan will instigate mankind to rebel against God. But we shall say, “Satan, listen to us. This is our last sermon. Now you must go to your destination—the lake of fire.”

If you would be qualified to participate in this, you must fight now. Do not be indifferent. I hope that after you read this message you will give a strong word to the enemy, saying, “Satan, you have deceived me for years. But by reading these messages, my eyes have been opened and I see that I must no longer be indifferent. Satan, you are not only God’s enemy—you are also my enemy. From now on, I will be absolute for my Lord and I will never listen to you.” The longer you make your message, the better it will be. Also, it is better for us to do this preaching individually. If you preach to Satan like this, you will become another person and will probably soon be included in the stronger part of the woman. Begin now to be qualified, equipped, and perfected to be among those who will be raptured to heaven to execute judgment upon Satan. We must tell the enemy, “Satan, I will preach to you on earth today. Later, I will also give you a message in the heavens. After that, I will see you on earth and preach to you once more. Finally, I will give you one more message, and then you will be cast into the lake of fire.”

I say again that the rapture is not for our happiness; it is for God's purpose. Our God is waiting for the overcomers, the man-child, to go to heaven to execute His judgment upon the enemy. What a privilege it is to share in this! The angels are not positioned to share this privilege, but we are. Now we have the ground to say, "Praise the Lord that I am in the position to be an overcomer!"

We have seen that as soon as the man-child is raptured to heaven, the war begins. When I was young, I sought to understand why this war will start immediately after the man-child is raptured to the throne. I also wanted to know why the man-child did not actually fight but that the fighting was done by Michael and his angels. The reason is that the man-child is the executor, and the executor does not need to fight. Rather, he simply gives the word. After we, the executor, give the word, the angels who serve us will fight for us. The angels are our servants. When we say, "Satan, go away," Michael will take the lead to fight against him. When the executor gives the word, all the policemen will carry it out. Are you willing to be in the stronger part of the woman? If you are, then you must learn to preach to Satan. Satan has constantly been troubling you, but after you decide to preach to him, he may run away, for he knows what you intend to do. Thus, you need to say, "Satan, don't go yet. You are not allowed to leave until I command you to do so. Stay here until I am through speaking to you."

The angels are ready to war against the dragon. Michael might even be saying, "Man-child, come up here and give us the word. We'll carry it out." But if we would be qualified to be there in the heavens to execute judgment upon Satan, we must begin to execute the judgment upon him now on earth. Say, "Satan, I will not let you go. I will bind and defeat you."

B. Having Wrestled against the Spiritual Power of Wickedness in the Heavenlies

This is what Paul meant when in Ephesians 6:12 he spoke of wrestling, not with flesh and blood, but with principalities, powers, and spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies. These powers are Satan's angels. Satan is a usurping, self-enthroned king. Under him, there are many angels who are the princes, the principalities, and authorities in the air. According to the Bible, the principalities, powers, and authorities under Satan, rule over the countries on earth. For example, Daniel 10:20 speaks of "the prince of Persia" and "the

prince of Grecia." All heathen countries are under the ruling of these satanic princes in the air. In Daniel chapter ten, Daniel prayed for three weeks. Although he was burdened to pray, he did not receive an answer. Eventually, a heavenly visitor said to Daniel, "From the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days" (Dan. 10:12-13). This heavenly one had been sent to Daniel, but he was frustrated by the prince of Satan. However, as Daniel 10:13 continues, "Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me." Ancient Persia and Greece both were under principalities in the air. The nation of Israel, however, was not under a satanic prince, but under Michael, the defender of Israel. While Daniel was praying those three weeks, a war was raging in the heavenlies. If we would be the overcomers, the stronger part of the woman, we must pray. All the rumors, criticisms, and opposition do not come from any human beings, but from Satan, who is behind them. If you pray like this, you are qualified to be an overcomer. Do not spend time dealing with your temper or your besetting sin. These things are little "bugs." Rather, tell Satan, "Satan, I have been distracted for years with paying attention to my temper and to my besetting sin. But now I shall pass this on to you. I will not pay attention to these things, but I will pay attention to preaching to you. I don't have the time to pray about my temper, but I do have the time to give you another sermon." We all have been deceived, saying, "Oh, my temper and my besetting sin! If I don't overcome them, how can I be holy, see the face of the Lord, and have the proper church life?" Leap out of your besetting sin and give Satan a sermon. According to my experience, I can testify that if you try to overcome your temper, your temper will be enlarged. Do not pray to overcome your temper—pray to overcome "the prince of Persia" and "the prince of Greece." Pray that there may be a way for Michael to come. Pray that many in the Lord's recovery may not only remain part of the woman but also become part of the man-child. If we pray like this, then one day the man-child will come into existence, and the archangel Michael will take the lead to wage war in the heavens against the dragon and to cast him down to earth.

C. Being Resurrected and Raptured to Heaven and not Tolerating to See Satan in the Heavens

After the man-child has been resurrected and raptured to heaven, he will not tolerate to see Satan in the heavens. Even today, we should not tolerate to

see Satan in the church, but should fight against him. If you fight against Satan today, you will be qualified to fight against him in the heavens. After we have been raptured to the throne of God, we shall see Satan, and he will be terrified of us. When we see him, we shall not tolerate his presence there and we shall say, "Satan, are you still in our God's sanctuary? This is not your place. Satan, you must go." Immediately, Michael will act on our word and war against him.

II. THE ARCHANGEL MICHAEL AND HIS ANGELS WARRING WITH THE DRAGON

Why will Michael and the angels not fight the dragon now? The reason is that they are not the legal and qualified executors. They are simply the policemen. We, the man-child, will be the legal and qualified executors. As we have seen, after we have spoken our executing word, the captain and his policemen will fight against the enemy.

A. Having Contended with the Devil about the Body of Moses

The Bible reveals the names of two angels—Michael and Gabriel. Gabriel is a reporter bringing news to God's people (Dan. 8:16; 9:21-22; Luke 1:19, 26), whereas Michael is a fighter contending for God's people (Dan. 10:13,21; 11:1; 12:1; Jude 9; Rev. 12:7). Jude 9 reveals that Michael the archangel contended with the Devil about the body of Moses. God had a purpose for Moses' body. Moses had to be present on the Mount of Transfiguration and, according to chapter eleven, he must return to be one of the two witnesses. Hence, God had to preserve his body. Satan, however, wanted to destroy it. But Michael fought against Satan regarding this.

B. Having Fought the Princes of Satan for the People of Israel

Daniel 10:13, 21 and 11:1 have unveiled that Michael has fought the princes of Satan for the people of Israel. Michael has always been a fighter for the interests of God.

C. Now Fighting the Dragon

to Cast Him out of Heaven to Earth

Michael has been fighting throughout the centuries. When the man-child is raptured to heaven and gives Michael the word, he will fight once more against the dragon to cast him out of the heavens to the earth. I want to be there to see this take place, to execute the word, and to see Michael act upon it. I hope that many of us will be there.

III. THE DRAGON AND HIS ANGELS WARRING

A. Having Not Prevailed

Verses 7 and 8 say, "And the dragon warred and his angels; and they did not prevail." "His angels" should be the fallen angels who follow Satan to rebel against God (Matt. 25:41). Satan will never be victorious against Michael and his angels. He will be defeated.

B. Having No Place Any Longer in Heaven

Verse 8 also says of the dragon and his angels that "neither was their place found any longer in heaven." Having been defeated, there no longer will be any place for the dragon and his angels in heaven.

C. Being Cast with His Angels out of Heaven to Earth

Verse 9 says, "And the great dragon was cast out, the ancient serpent, he who is called the Devil and Satan, he who deceives the whole inhabited earth; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." We see here that the dragon and his angels will be cast down to the earth. This will take place at the beginning of the fifth trumpet. Revelation 9:1 says, "And the fifth angel trumpeted and I saw a star out of heaven fallen to the earth and to him was given the key of the shaft of the abyss." The "star" in this verse is Satan. After he has fallen from heaven to earth, he will use the key to the abyss to cause the torment of the fifth trumpet. At that time, the shaft of the abyss will be opened and demon-possessed locusts will emerge from it. We have already pointed out that these locusts will torment men for five months. Recall that the fifth trumpet will mark the beginning of the last three and a half years.

After Satan, the heavenly star, has been cast down to earth, his time will be very short, only three and a half years.

IV. THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

After the dragon and his angels are cast out of heaven, there will be a loud declaration in heaven. Verse 10 says, "I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, Now is come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ, for the accuser of our brothers has been cast out, who accuses them before our God day and night." The fighting of the overcoming believers against Satan is to usher in God's kingdom. The Lord teaches us to pray for the coming of the kingdom (Matt. 6:10). Along with our prayer for the kingdom's coming, we need to fight for it.

The rapture of the man-child to heaven, the casting of Satan to earth, and the declaration in heaven signify that the man-child will bring the kingdom to earth. When the man-child is raptured to heaven and Satan is cast down from heaven to earth, that will be the time for the kingdom of God to come. Not only will the kingdom come, but also the salvation of our God. Although we have God's salvation today, we do not yet enjoy it in full, to the uttermost. But when the kingdom of God comes, we shall enjoy God's salvation in full. It is the same with the power of God and the authority of Christ. We have participated in God's power and Christ's authority today, but our full enjoyment of them will be in the kingdom age.

We have seen that there are two aspects to the kingdom of God: the aspect of the reality of the kingdom (Matt. 5:3) and the aspect of the manifestation of the kingdom. Today, in the proper church life, there is the reality of the kingdom. However, in the church life we do not have the manifestation of the kingdom. The manifestation of the kingdom, which will be brought in through the overcoming believers, will come after the man-child has been raptured to heaven. The words, "Now is come...the kingdom of our God" denote the manifestation of the kingdom of God. If we are the overcomers, then we are living in the reality of the kingdom today. Since we are in the reality of the kingdom now, we shall certainly be in the manifestation of the kingdom in the future. Being in the manifestation of the kingdom requires us to be in the reality of the kingdom.

In these messages we have seen a vision regarding what is taking place in the universe. We are sober and know what is transpiring. We are not viewing things from the earth— we are viewing them from the heavenlies. We see a bright woman representing God and a dragon signifying God's enemy. We also see that these two are fighting. Praise the Lord that we are not only part of the woman, but we are also becoming part of the man-child, the stronger part of the woman that fights against the dragon. We are fighting the dragon today and one day we shall be there in the heavens to give him the word to leave heaven. No human mind could have devised such a picture. Once again, we are forced to believe that this is the divine revelation. Who could have written such a record? No one, including Plato or Confucius, is wise enough to compose this. This record is simple, wonderful, profound, and all-inclusive. It affords us a universal view of what is taking place in the universe. From now on, none of us can say that we do not know what is happening. We all must say, "I have seen the vision and I know what is going on." Hallelujah for this vision! I am glad that among the many crucial matters in the second section of the book of Revelation the first is this vision of the universal bright woman with her man-child warring against the dragon. This must be a governing vision. As long as we see it, we shall know where we are, what we must do, and where we shall be. We are in the church, we must be in the man-child, and our destiny is to be raptured to heaven that we may issue the order to Michael to cast Satan and his angels out of heaven. If we see this vision, we shall surely be beside ourselves.

CHAPTER SIX

THE ACTUALITY AND PRACTICALITY OF THE BRIGHT WOMAN

Life-Study of Revelation; Msg. 39

When I was young, I was told that there were at least one hundred different expositions of the book of Revelation. Later I spent a great deal of time to study this book. I eventually came to realize that the Bible cannot be understood simply by studying its language. If we would understand the Scriptures, we also need experience.

THE NEED OF EXPERIENCE

Let us consider, for example, the matter of the pillars in 1 Kings 7:13-21. In message eighty-three of the Life-study of Genesis, I pointed out that the height of each of the two pillars, which was eighteen cubits, was half of three complete units of twelve cubits. I did not get this point from a commentary. Rather, I read various versions of the Bible in order to obtain the correct understanding of the language concerning all the points related to the building of the pillars. Second Chronicles 3:15 says that the height of the pillars was a total of thirty-five cubits. Immediately I asked myself, "Why does 1 Kings 7:15 say that the height of each pillar was eighteen cubits, but 2 Chronicles 3:15 says that the height of both was thirty-five cubits?" I could immediately see that this thirty-five cubits was the total height of both pillars. This confirms my saying that eighteen cubits was half of three complete units. But the total should have been thirty-six. What about the missing cubit? By a note in one version I was helped to conclude that the joint in the capitals no doubt accounts for the missing cubit. The whole pillar measured eighteen cubits, but half a cubit was lost in the joint between the pillar and the capital. In order to gain the proper understanding, we need to study various versions of the Bible. But the versions of the Bible do not give us the significance in life. In order to know this, we must have experience. Only by experience could I apprehend that eighteen cubits indicate half of three complete units and that we need others to match us.

With this in mind, let us now come to the book of Revelation. We all agree that Revelation is a book of prophecy. But to understand prophecy there is still the need of experience. The prophecies do not simply teach objective doctrines. The Bible is a book of life. Everything in the Bible, whether it is a narrative, a history, a type, a shadow, a prophecy, or a plain word, must be related to life. If we lack the experience in life, we shall be unable to apprehend the significance in life of many portions of the Word. In order to understand Revelation, we need the experiences in life.

THE BRIGHT WOMAN
BEING THE TOTALITY OF GOD'S PEOPLE

In this message I am burdened to share more concerning the universal bright woman. Some of the expositions of the book of Revelation say that this woman is Israel. Of course, they have a ground to say this. When Brother Nee was very young, in the years before 1933, he conducted a study of this book. At that time, he followed the concept that the woman in chapter twelve was Israel. However, afterward he saw something further—that this woman signifies God's chosen people (see *The Glorious Church*, pp. 73-77). As I have pointed out, this woman is neither Mary, the mother of Jesus, nor merely the children of Israel. She is the totality of God's people. When I was in Taiwan, I did not use the expression "the totality of God's people." This utterance has come to me during this last period of my ministry. Some may ask, "How can you prove that this woman is the totality of God's people?" I have said that in order to understand this book we must check whether our apprehension of it corresponds to our life experience. Is there any confirmation from our life experience of a particular interpretation? If we would rightly interpret the woman in Revelation 12, we must check any proposed interpretation with our experience in life.

To say that this woman is Mary, the mother of Jesus, is altogether too objective and has nothing to do with our experience. If this is the case, then the entire twelfth chapter of Revelation is not for us. It is merely an account of a woman named Mary who brought forth Jesus and later suffered persecution. If this were the proper understanding of the woman in chapter twelve, then, as far as we are concerned, this chapter has no purpose. What would be the point of its being included in the book of Revelation? This interpretation is groundless and, according to the experience of life, has no standing whatever.

It is somewhat an improvement to say that this woman is Israel. But even if she were merely Israel, she would not be related to us, for this chapter would then simply be a record of Satan's fighting against the children of Israel.

I would remind you that the book of Revelation, composed of twenty-two chapters, is divided into two main sections of eleven chapters each. The first section gives a complete sketch of the events from Christ's ascension unto eternity. In chapter four we see the scene in heaven after the ascension of Christ, and in chapter eleven we see the eternal kingdom. While the first section affords a general sketch, the second section gives the details of some important things and crucial matters which transpire during the period of time between Christ's ascension and eternity future. At the very beginning of this second section, we have the first of these important and crucial matters—a bright woman opposed by a red dragon. Just as the second section begins with a woman, so at the ending, in chapter twenty-two, we also see a woman. Hence, both the first and last crucial matters are a woman. This is significant.

Who is this woman? If we look at chapter twelve with a narrow view, we may think she is Mary or the nation of Israel. But if we have a broad view which encompasses a wide span, we shall see that she is not Mary or merely the nation of Israel, but the totality of God's people. If we have a panoramic view, we shall say, "This woman is not Mary or even the nation of Israel. She must be all the people chosen and saved by God for His economy." Once you have this realization, you will begin to see that the stars indicate the Patriarchs, that the moon under her feet must signify those under the law, and that the sun must represent the church people. Such an understanding fills our entire view and causes us to say, "This woman is certainly a universal woman, including all the people from the Patriarchs to the last member of Christ's Body." This understanding is confirmed by the vision of the woman at the end of Revelation, where we see that the New Jerusalem is the wife of the Lamb (21:9), composed of both the Old Testament saints, represented by the names of the twelve tribes, and the New Testament saints, represented by the names of the twelve Apostles.

THE CONTENT OF THE SECOND SECTION OF REVELATION

What is between these two ends of the second section of Revelation? In chapters twenty-one and twenty-two we have the New Jerusalem as the Lamb's wife, and in chapters nineteen and twenty we have the bride and the wedding feast of the Lamb. In chapter twenty the bride will be those reigning with Christ during the thousand years. Hence in chapters nineteen and twenty the woman is the bride, and in chapters twenty-one and twenty-two she is the wife. In chapters seventeen and eighteen we see Babylon the Great, the counterfeit of this woman, the counterfeit of Jerusalem. This view is not only logical but also very meaningful.

What about chapters thirteen through sixteen? The link that connects chapters twelve and thirteen is the three and a half years, or the one thousand two hundred sixty days. In 13:5 we are told that Antichrist will be given authority to act forty-two months, which are three and a half years or the one thousand two hundred sixty days. In 12:6 and 14 we are told that the woman will be nourished in the wilderness for a thousand two hundred and sixty days, or for a year, two years, and half a year "from the face of the serpent." Therefore, chapter thirteen is an addition to chapter twelve describing what will happen when the red dragon persecutes the woman. During this period of time, a beast, Antichrist, will emerge from the sea and will be one with the dragon to war against the saints, God's people. In chapter fourteen God warns the people, including the saints, not to worship this beast, and He warns the people on earth not to follow Antichrist to persecute His people. In chapter fifteen we see a vision of a number of the saints who overcome the beast and his image and stand on the glassy sea to sing and praise the Lord. Chapter sixteen covers the end of this period of time, when God will drop seven bombs, the seven bowls of the last plagues, to destroy the entire kingdom of the beast. This is a summary of the second section of this book.

A HISTORY OF THE WOMAN

The second section of Revelation is virtually a history of this woman. It seems that the last eleven chapters relate a series of isolated things—the dragon, the two beasts, the glassy sea, the seven bowls, the great Babylon, the wedding feast. It may appear that some of these isolated items are very important and that others are less important. But to consider the matter in this way indicates that you lack vision and do not have the proper view. When you have the proper view, you will say, "This is not a section composed of various isolated things. It is a section giving a full history of God's people. It

tells how God's enemy is fighting against His people and how His people are producing the stronger part, the man-child, to defeat the enemy. We see that God's enemy will instigate Antichrist, the false prophet, and their followers to war against God's people. But God's people will overcome them. Eventually, we see that God will exercise His judgment by means of the seven bowls to destroy the kingdom of Satan under the power of Antichrist. Following this, He will overthrow the prostitute, Babylon the Great. Then Christ will come to marry God's people, to defeat Antichrist with the chosen ones among God's people, and to reign with them over the nations for a thousand years. After this, there will be the new heaven and the new earth with the New Jerusalem, the ultimate consummation of God's people as the wife of the redeeming Lamb for eternity.

THE PROPER STANDING OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Although you may be one of God's people, the crucial question is whether or not you are standing here as God's people. Let us use, once again, the illustration of the Jewish people today. There may be thirteen or fourteen million Jews on earth, but less than three million of them are in the nation of Israel. Are not the millions of Jews in New York City genuine Jews? Yes, they are. However, although they are Jews and although their number exceeds the number of those in the nation of Israel, they are not the nation of Israel. Actually and practically, the nation of Israel is composed only of those Jews who have returned. Of the thirteen or fourteen million Jews, at least eleven million have lost the ground of the nation of Israel. As a result, though they are typical Israelites, they are not the nation of Israel. Only those Israelites who returned to the land of their forefathers and who stand, live, and fight there are the nation of Israel. Likewise, all Christians are God's people, but the vast majority of them have lost the ground of being God's people.

Many are offended when we say that we are the church. They say, "What! Are we not also blood-redeemed and Spirit-regenerated?" We realize that there are a great many blood-redeemed and Spirit-regenerated Christians and that some of them are rich in the Lord; yet they have lost the ground of God's people as the church. There are some Jews in New York City who are millionaires; they are much richer than the poor Jews who returned to Palestine. But those poor Jews are the nation of Israel and the rich ones in New York are not. Some wealthy Jews in New York City have donated a lot of money to the nation of Israel. But no matter how much they donate, still they

are not the nation of Israel; they are citizens of the United States. They may say, "I love the nation of Israel and I am for the nation of Israel." Although we would thank the Lord for this, nevertheless this does not make them the nation of Israel. The only way for them to be the nation of Israel is to return to the land of their forefathers to stand and fight alongside those poor Jews who have already returned. Only then will they be an actual part of the nation of Israel. Only then will they be not only for the nation of Israel; they will be the nation of Israel.

Likewise, it is not the Christians in the denominations, sects, and free groups who will bring forth the man-child. To bring forth the man-child there is the need for at least a portion of God's people to come back to the proper standing of the woman. Those who have this standing have God alone and nothing else. They are the woman on the proper ground to bring forth the man-child.

Once again I say that if we would understand the Bible, especially the prophecies, we must understand it by life and for life. The interpretation the Lord has given us is not only by life and with life—it is, much more, for life. We all must actually and practically be a part of the woman. If you can only say, "I have been redeemed by the blood and regenerated by the Spirit and filled with the Spirit," you are a real Christian—thank the Lord for this—but you are not actually and practically part of the woman who is bringing forth the man-child. You are like the Jews in New York City who declare that they are Jews and that they are for the nation of Israel. They are Jews, but they cannot say that they are the nation of Israel. They help the nation of Israel and they are for the nation of Israel, but they are not the nation of Israel in a practical way. In like manner, today it is not the scattered children of God, those who have lost their ground, who will bring forth the man-child. Only that part of God's redeemed people who have seen His economy and who are willing to return to the standing, the ground, of the chaste woman will bring forth the man-child.

RETURNING TO THE UNIQUE GROUND

If we would be included practically in this chaste woman, we must forsake all things other than God and Christ and return to the unique ground to have Christ as our only husband. We refuse to become impregnated by anything other than Christ. We will only be made pregnant of Christ, for He is our

unique husband. In addition to Him, we have no one and nothing. Today, we have the standing of this woman. However, if you are the wife of Mr. Smith, why are you living with Mr. Jones? You may say, “I am the wife of Mr. Smith. We were properly married in a certain year, month, and day.” This is correct, but with whom are you living? Do you live only with Mr. Smith, or also with someone else? Perhaps you do not stay with another man, but you stay with your pet dog alone in your house. By doing this, you lose the ground of being Mrs. Smith. Doctrinally, you are the wife of Mr. Smith, but actually and practically day after day you are not Mrs. Smith. You have lost this ground and are still losing it. If you would return to the ground of being Mrs. Smith, you must drop every other man and every other thing, and return purely, singly, and uniquely to be one with Mr. Smith. Then you will actually, practically, and absolutely be the wife of Mr. Smith. It is this wife who will bring forth children, not only for Mr. Smith but of Mr. Smith. May the Lord have mercy on us. This is not a doctrine; it is very practical. We thank the Lord that He has opened His Word to us and that He has opened our eyes to see this vision. Now our need is to be faithful to this vision. “O Lord, we thank You for bringing us back to the proper standing of Your people. Thank You, Lord, that we are actually the woman who will bring forth the man-child. Lord, not only are we the woman, but we expect to eventually become the man-child.”

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE VISION IN REVELATION 12 AND THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

Life-Study of Revelation; Msg. 45

In this message I would like to point out the correspondence between the vision in Revelation 12 and the book of Ephesians. In Revelation 12 we all have been impressed with the vision of the woman with her stronger part, the man-child, fighting against the enemy by means of the word. In the book of Ephesians we also have the woman. As we all know, Ephesians is a book on the church, which is the greater part of the woman in Revelation 12. In Ephesians this woman is the wife of Christ.

STRENGTHENED TO BECOME THE STRONGER PART WITHIN THE WOMAN

In Ephesians 3:16 Paul prayed that the Father would grant us, "according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man." This strengthening takes place in our inner man, which is our regenerated spirit indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The more we are strengthened in our inner man, the more we become the stronger part within the woman. The key to becoming the stronger part within the woman is being strengthened in our inner man. In verse 18 Paul continues to pray that we would "be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth." Although the King James Version uses the word *able,* the Greek word translated *able* means to be strengthened with power. We must be empowered to know the dimensions of the riches of our Christ. In order to be the man-child, we must be not only strengthened in our inner man, but also nourished with all the riches of Christ. Furthermore, Ephesians 6:10 tells us to "be empowered in the Lord and in the might of His strength." According to this chapter, the way to be strong is to put on the whole armor of God (vv. 11, 13), which is the all-inclusive Christ. To put on the whole armor of God is to put the all-inclusive Christ upon us. Every aspect of the all-inclusive Christ must become our covering. Thus, in Ephesians 3:16 and 18 and 6:10 and 11, we see that the way to become the stronger part

within the woman is to be strengthened in our inner man, to be empowered to experience the riches of Christ, and to be strong through putting on the all-inclusive Christ as our armor. Hence, in the book of Ephesians we find the aspects of both the woman and the man-child.

FIGHTING THE ENEMY BY PRAYING

In the book of Ephesians we also have the warfare against spiritual darkness, against the principalities and powers in the heavenlies (Eph. 6:12). These evil powers are, of course, the powers of the enemy, Satan. Therefore, in this book we see not only the woman and the man-child, but also the third party, Satan, the serpent. Ephesians reveals that a warfare is raging between the stronger part within the woman and the enemy and, furthermore, that this fighting is carried on by praying. The way the man-child fights against the enemy is by prayer. Eventually, the entire book of Ephesians brings us to one climactic point—watching and praying.

TAKING THE WORD BY MEANS OF ALL PRAYER

At this point we need to present a literal translation of Ephesians 6:17 and 18. “And receive the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God, by means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit, and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints.” According to these verses, the way to fight is to take the word of God by means of all prayer. We should not simply have one way of prayer, but every means of prayer, exercising our spirit to pray in various ways to take the word of God. This portion of the Bible speaks about pray-reading, about taking the word of God by means of all prayer. It is of no avail to fight against the enemy with our own thoughts and words. We cannot use our mind or utterance to do battle against him. The most effective way to war against the enemy is to pray-read the Word, and the best portion of the Word to pray-read is the book of Ephesians. If you pray-read this book in a concentrated way for a period of time, you will be strengthened. Instead of trying to understand the book of Ephesians, you should pray-read it, even covering the whole book in two weeks. If you do this, you will be able to testify that you are becoming the stronger part within the woman.

KILLING OUR OPINIONS AND CONCEPTS

The word in John 6 is for nourishing. In John 6:57 the Lord said, “He who eats Me shall also live because of Me,” and in 6:63 He said, “The words which I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life.” The word in John 6 is for nourishing, whereas the word in Ephesians 6 is mainly for killing. The word in John 6 is bread, but the word in Ephesians 6 is a sword. A sword does not nourish; rather, it kills. But this sword does not kill you—it slays the enemy and all the negative things within you. If we would fight against the principalities and powers in the heavenlies, we must firstly kill all the “bugs” within us.

You may wonder what these “bugs” are. Speaking in terms of doctrine, you may say that these “bugs” are your mind, emotion, and will. But to be practical, the “bugs” that most need to be killed are our opinions. We need an intensified enlightenment to see that we are filled with opinions. When you listen to a message, fellowship with the saints, or read the Bible, you cling to many opinions and concepts. Nearly every saint holds on to some opinion or concept. My point here is this: If we would be the stronger part in the woman, fighting against the enemy by praying, we must take the word of God by renouncing every opinion. In other words, the way to take the word of God by pray-reading is to have our opinions slain. In message eighty-seven of the life-study of Genesis we pointed out that to keep the word of the Lord means to take in the Lord and to have all our opinions killed. If it were not for the Lord’s mercy, we would all frustrate the word of the Lord by our opinions. How we need to pray-read the killing word, the word that kills our opinions and concepts!

In my experience in the church life, many times I have frustrated the Lord by my opinions. The problem with everyone in the Lord’s recovery is this matter of opinions. I am not saying that we should be without feeling, like a wooden log. When you come to the Word, as a living person who is strong in thought, feeling, and judgment, you must ask the Lord to slay your opinions. Not many saints have prayed in this way. But we must say, “Lord, I am about to pray-read Your word. Lord, kill my opinions.” What has frustrated you from being built up with others is not mainly your weakness or even your worldliness—it is your opinions. We all have a heart to love the Lord and a desire to be built up into the church. Often, however, the outcome has not been according to our desire. Some have been in the church life for more than ten years, but they are still not a part of the actual building. Although they are very close to the building, they are detached from it. No matter how close they

are to the building, they are not actually built into it. Their opinions have hindered them from being built up with others. Thus, we all must pray, "Lord, I want to be strengthened in my inner man; I want to be empowered to realize the riches of Christ; and I want to be strong by putting on the whole armor of God. But my problem is that I haven't yet allowed Your word to kill my opinions."

Occasionally, some friends have asked me why I receive so much light from the Word and why they receive very little. Although we read the same Bible, they do not receive much light. Here is the secret to receiving light from the Word: Allow the Word to kill your opinions. Many read the Word in a selective way, taking whatever matches their opinion and rejecting whatever does not match it. Genuine pray-reading, on the contrary, is taking the Word itself and letting it kill your opinions. Ephesians 6 does tell us the way to pray-read. It is to take the Word by means of all prayer. As we pray-read, the first thing the Word will do is kill our opinions. If you do not allow the Word to slay your opinions, you will not be able to reach the enemy in the air to do battle with him. Our experience proves that pray-reading does not firstly nourish us; it firstly kills our opinions. Every time we have some practical pray-reading, our opinions are put to death.

You may be wondering what your opinions are. The brothers hold on to one opinion, and their wives hold on to a different opinion. You may think that you are a good husband, but you do not realize how strongly you cling to your opinions in relation to your wife. You love her and you may rarely argue with her, but, deep within, you treasure opinions that differ from hers. Of course, the same is true with the wives. Therefore, the husbands and wives hold to different concepts. As a result, they have not only been hindered from being built up with the brothers and sisters in the church life, but they have not even been built up with each other in their married life. Although you and your wife may have been saved for many years and may have spent those years loving the Lord and seeking the truth, up until this very moment you may still be clinging to your opinions. You love the Lord, you love the church, and you love each other, but you still hold to your opinions. And these opinions hinder you from being built up in the church.

Every one of us is opinionated. I confess that I used to be very opinionated, but I praise the Lord that my opinions have undergone a good deal of killing. Although I do not boast that I do not hold on to anything, I can say that, by

His killing, it is difficult for me to cling to anything. According to the implication of Ephesians 6, by pray-reading we take the killing word as the sword that is able to slay all our opinions.

THE WAY TO PUT ON CHRIST AS OUR ARMOR

If we hold to our opinions, we shall not be able to put on Christ as our armor. In order to put on the whole armor of God, our opinions must be killed. Instead of having Christ as their armor, many have their various opinions. Their thinking, desiring, and choosing are governed by their opinions. Because they have all these opinions, they do not have the whole armor of God. They may have opinions in their mind, but they do not have Christ as their helmet covering their head. The only way to put on the helmet of salvation as our covering is to have our opinions and concepts subdued and killed. We need to pray, "O Lord, have mercy on me and slay my thoughts, opinions, and concepts." If we sincerely pray in this way, we shall be under the covering of the helmet. The same is true with respect to the breastplate. You may have your own tastes and choices, and you may be strong in certain likes and dislikes. But if this is your condition, you cannot put on the breastplate. Only when your choice is killed will you be able to put on Christ as your breastplate to cover your conscience.

Although I knew Ephesians 6 in a doctrinal way years ago, I thank the Lord that today I know this chapter in the way of experience. I have seen that, if we would put on the all-inclusive Christ as the whole armor of God, all our thoughts, concepts, opinions, affections, and choices must be put to death. Only then shall we be completely under the covering of the all-inclusive Christ. Having this armor upon us, we shall be able to fight the evil powers in the heavenlies.

Many are disqualified from fighting against the principalities and powers in the heavenlies because they are entangled by their concepts, opinions, and choices. The only fight they know is the fight within themselves, not the warfare in the air. They are not able to get out of themselves and penetrate into the enemy's territory in the air. They are like a fighter plane that is grounded because of bad weather. This "bad weather" is the self, full of opinions, choices, intentions, decisions, likes, and dislikes. Because many are entangled with these things and thus have not put on the all-inclusive Christ as the armor to cover and equip them, they cannot soar into the air to war

against the enemy in the heavenlies. Rather, they are still enveloped in all their own opinions and concepts.

THE PRACTICAL WAY TO COME INTO THE EXPERIENCE OF THE VISION

In Revelation 12 we have the vision, and in Ephesians we have the practical way to come into the experience of this vision. Although Revelation 12 unveils the stronger part within the woman, it does not give us the way to become this stronger part. The way, unfolded in the book of Ephesians, is to be strengthened in our inner man, to be empowered to experience the riches of Christ, and to be strong through putting on the armor of God by pray-reading the killing word. The word we take in by pray-reading will kill every negative element in our being. The more these negative elements are killed, the more we shall be equipped with the armor of God. After we have been thus equipped, we shall be able to take off from the ground and fight against the principalities and powers in the heavenlies. Hence, the way to fight the battle as the man-child is found in Ephesians 6.

Because I realize that everyone in the churches in the Lord's recovery loves the Lord, I have been burdened to fellowship with you in this way. Although you love the Lord, you still have many opinions that need to be killed. The killing word must do its work within us. This cannot happen by teaching or by listening to messages; it is the result of a proper pray-reading of the Word. As word after word penetrates into our being, our opinions, concepts, desires, and choices are slain. I suggest that you take two weeks to prove this by pray-reading the entire book of Ephesians. This pray-reading will expose all your opinions and concepts, and it will bring you to the point where you will be willing to renounce them all. Then you will be able to say, "In the church life with the brothers and sisters and in my married life, I do not hold on to any opinions. Lord, because I am no longer entangled by anything on earth, at any moment I can take off from the ground and soar into the heavenlies to fight against the enemy. Nothing can hold me down." If you pray-read the book of Ephesians, you will see where you are and you will know what you need.

CHAPTER EIGHT

GOD'S DEALING WITH MAN'S FIRST FALL

Life-Study of Genesis; Msg. 19b

I. THE CONTENTS

A. Causing Enmity between the Serpent and the Woman

In Genesis 3:15 God said to the serpent, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman..." We do not like the word enmity because we do not want to be involved in fighting or warfare, but God said that He would put enmity between the serpent and the woman. God did not relinquish control of the situation and He did not allow the woman and the serpent to fend for themselves. God seemed to be saying, "I will manage this situation. I will maintain control over everything. I will put enmity between you and the woman." Shortly we shall see who the woman is. In Genesis 3:15 God continued to say that He would put enmity between the serpent's seed and the woman's seed, that the woman's seed would bruise the serpent's head, and that the serpent would bruise the heel of the woman's seed. This reveals that the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman will be enemies, that the woman's seed will bruise the serpent's head, and that the serpent will bruise the heel of the woman's seed. To bruise the head of the serpent means to destroy and kill him. According to Genesis 3:15, the seed of the woman would destroy the serpent, but the serpent could only injure the heel of the woman's seed.

Like most of the items mentioned in Genesis 1 through 3, Genesis 3:15 is a seed, a tremendously significant seed of the gospel. It was in Genesis 3:15 that God first proclaimed His full gospel. Therefore, we need to spend considerable time on this verse to see who is the woman, who is the seed of the serpent, and who is the seed of the woman. We must become familiar with three classes of people—the woman, the seed of the serpent, and the seed of the woman. Firstly, let us see who the woman is.

As I have previously mentioned, nearly everything in Genesis 1 through 3 is a seed as well as a sign or symbol. Thus, we need to allegorize this portion of the holy Word. After reading the foregoing message we should realize that the

proper position of human beings is that of a woman. Whether we are male or female we all have the position of a woman before God. If we claim that we are men before Him, we will immediately be devoured by Satan. Undoubtedly, the woman mentioned in Genesis 3:15 is Eve, and Eve signifies all the people of God, the people who take the position of a woman trusting in God. As long as we trust in God, we are His people, His wife. Hence, the woman of Genesis 3:15 is firstly Eve and secondly all the people who rely upon God and who put their trust in God. In brief, all the people of God are the woman. Therefore, the enmity between the serpent and the woman is the enmity between Satan and Eve, between Satan and all of God's people. Eve signifies all the people of God.

In Revelation 12:1 we see the sign of a universal woman. This woman, a great sign, is clothed with the sun, has the moon under her feet, and has a crown of twelve stars upon her head. Therefore, this woman is not a single, local, individual woman; she is a universal woman, a sign that symbolizes all of God's people from Adam to Abraham, from Isaac to Moses, from Moses to the apostles, and from the apostles to the present time. All the people of God compose this woman and are included in her. The twelve stars represent the patriarchs such as Adam, Abel, Enoch, Abraham, and Jacob. Those patriarchs were stars, not yet formed as a unit. Following them we have the people of Israel. Since they lived during the dark night they are represented by the moon. However, when the Lord Jesus came, day dawned and the sun shone brightly. Thus, the church people are represented by the sun. Hence, all of God's people—the patriarchs, Israel of the Old Testament, and the church of the New Testament, including all the believers—compose this universal woman. The universal woman of Revelation 12 was symbolized by the individual woman, Eve, of Genesis 3:15. Eve in Genesis 3 was a symbol of this universal woman.

In the glad tidings which God announced in Genesis 3:15 God said that He would put enmity between the serpent and the woman. This means that throughout the centuries Satan, the Devil, has been fighting against all the people of God. The serpent not only fought against Eve, but has also fought against the people of God in every generation. An illustration of this is the murder of Abel by his brother Cain. According to 1 John 3:12, this act of murder was not merely a crime perpetrated by Cain, but a deed performed by the wicked one, by the serpent. The serpent used Cain to kill Abel. If we do not put our trust in God, we are not the people of God. If we are not the

people of God, we are in the same category as Satan, and he will not fight against us. However, once you turn to God and become a person who trusts in God, the serpent will immediately attack you. This is the enmity between the serpent and the woman.

B. Causing Enmity between the Seed of the Serpent and the Seed of the Woman

Adam and Eve were waiting for death, thinking themselves to be under the sentence of death. Hence, the mention of a seed came as glad tidings to them. They thought it was impossible for them to have a seed because they were doomed to die immediately. When Adam heard that the woman was going to have a seed, he called his wife's name Eve, which in Hebrew means "living." As Adam and Eve were awaiting the sentence of death in fear and trembling, there suddenly came the glad tidings that this woman would have a seed, and Adam spontaneously said, "Living. You are not dying, you are living. Your name is Eve. You are living." As we have seen in message seventeen, when Adam first saw Eve in Genesis 2:23 he was excited, saying, "This time it is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." However, in Genesis 3 Adam was also excited. Instead of receiving the sentence of condemnation, he heard the gospel. So, Adam called his wife, "Living." We have all heard these glad tidings and we all should call ourselves "Living." If you ask me my name, I will tell you that my name is "Living."

God preached the gospel in verse 15, and Adam reacted to the gospel in verse 20. If Adam had not reacted to the gospel, he would have called his wife "Dying," saying, "Poor woman, don't you know that you are the cause of death? Your name should be Dying." On the contrary, after Adam heard God's preaching of the gospel he was happy and called his wife's name Eve—"Living." The whole world today is under the sentence of death, and we must go to them proclaiming Genesis 3:15. When the people hear the glad tidings of Genesis 3:15, receiving the gospel and responding to it, they will shout, "Now we are living. Praise the Lord!"

1. Enmity between the Seed of the Serpent and the Seed of the Woman

The seed of the serpent are the people who follow Satan. The Bible uses various terms to describe them. In Matthew 3:7 they are called the "brood of vipers." In Matthew 13:38 they are designated "the sons of the evil one." In

John 8:44 the Lord Jesus referred to them as being of their father, the Devil. In 1 John 3 the Apostle John said that everyone who practices sin is of the Devil (v. 8); he also used the term "the children of the Devil" (v. 10). All of these titles indicate that the people who follow Satan are the seed of the serpent. Whether they are called brood of vipers, sons of the evil one, or children of the Devil, the meaning is the same: they are the seed of the serpent and they persecute and fight against the Lord Jesus and the overcomers.

The seed of the woman is the Lord Jesus. He was born of the virgin Mary (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23; Gal. 4:4). Thus, He is truly the seed of the woman. He is the very seed prophesied in the glad tidings proclaimed by God Himself in Genesis 3:15. He is the One who bruised the serpent. There is great enmity between the people who follow Satan and the Lord Jesus.

2. The Seed of the Woman Bruising the Head of the Serpent

The Lord Jesus, the seed of the woman, has bruised the head of the serpent. The Lord has destroyed Satan, the one who holds the power of death. This is fully revealed in Hebrews 2:14 and 1 John 3:8.

3. The Serpent Bruising the Heel of the Seed of the Woman

While the Lord Jesus was destroying the serpent on the cross, the serpent bruised His heel. This means that Satan wounded the Lord Jesus by nailing His feet to the cross (Psa. 22:16).

4. Enmity between the Serpent and the Overcomers

Who are the overcomers? As we have seen already, the woman in Genesis 3:15 firstly is Eve and secondly is all the people of God, including the virgin Mary, as signified by Eve. Hence, the seed of the woman is mainly the Lord Jesus who was born of Mary. However, more regarding the seed of the woman can be seen in Revelation 12. The woman depicted in Revelation 12 and signified in Genesis 3:15 is a universal woman, and within her is a part called the manchild (Rev. 12:1, 2, 5). In a biblical sense, woman represents weakness, for the woman is the weaker vessel (1 Pet. 3:7). The man, especially the manchild, represents strength. The universal woman of Revelation 12 has two parts: the outer part, which is the woman herself, and the inner part, which is

the manchild. The outer part, the woman, is the weaker part; the inner part, the manchild, is the stronger part. All the people of God are the woman, who is somewhat weak, but among all the people of God is a stronger part, which is the manchild, the overcomers. In the churches some of the saints may be comparatively weak, being a portion of the woman, but other saints may be quite strong, being a portion of the manchild. This manchild may also be considered as a part of the seed of the woman. The manchild is the stronger part among the people of God. The entire people of God are the woman, and the stronger part of the people of God is the manchild. Therefore the manchild is also a part of the seed of the woman.

I like to compare Revelation 12 with Genesis 3. In Genesis 3:15 we have three main items: the serpent, the woman, and the seed of the woman. We find the same three items in Revelation 12, where we see the old serpent, the universal woman, and the manchild. Have you seen how these two chapters correspond to one another? The "ancient serpent" of Revelation 12:9 is the serpent of Genesis 3, the universal woman of Revelation 12:1 is the woman of Genesis 3:15, and the manchild of Revelation 12:5 is a part of the seed of the woman that is also mentioned in Genesis 3:15. If you do not understand Revelation 12, you will not be clear in full about Genesis 3:15. In this small verse three major items were unfolded—the serpent, the woman, and the seed of the woman. It is difficult for us to understand these three items without reading through the entire Bible until we come to the book of Revelation. As we come to Revelation 12 we discover that the serpent of Genesis 3:15 is the Devil, for Revelation 12:9 speaks of "the ancient serpent, he who is called the Devil and Satan." The woman is not only Eve, but all the people who put their trust in God, including the virgin Mary, for God's people occupy a feminine position before Him. Furthermore, we see that within the woman is a stronger part called the manchild. Therefore, the manchild of Revelation 12 is a part of the seed of the woman mentioned in Genesis 3:15.

Some may ask who the manchild is. There are different schools of teaching in Christianity regarding this. Some say that the manchild is the Lord Jesus. I agree with this in a sense because the Lord Jesus is the Head, the center, the reality, the life, and the nature of the manchild. However, this manchild is not individual; he is corporate. Since the woman herself is not individual, but universal and corporate, her child must also be universal and corporate. This corporate manchild includes the Lord Jesus as the Head, center, reality, life, and nature of the manchild. This can be proved from the Scriptures. Psalm

2:8-9 prophesies that the Lord Jesus, God's Anointed One, will rule the nations with a rod of iron. Revelation 2:26-27 says that the overcomers in the churches will rule over the nations with a rod of iron. Now in Revelation 12:5 we are told that the manchild will rule all nations with a rod of iron. Therefore, according to the record of the Bible, both the Lord Jesus Himself and His overcomers will rule over the nations with a rod of iron. Thus, the manchild in Revelation 12:5 includes both the Lord Jesus and the overcomers in the churches. Furthermore, Revelation 20:4 says that Christ and the resurrected overcomers will reign as kings for a thousand years. Hence, the manchild in Revelation 12 is neither the Lord Jesus individually nor the overcomers separate from Him, but the Lord Jesus with the overcomers. Christ Himself is the foremost overcomer (Rev. 3:21). As the leading overcomer He is the Head, center, reality, life, and nature of the overcomers. Among the people of God on earth there is a stronger part which includes the Lord Jesus and the overcomers. Thus, the Lord Jesus and His overcomers compose the manchild.

The enmity between the serpent and the woman's seed mentioned in Genesis 3:15 is fully manifested in Revelation 12. In Revelation 12 we see that the old serpent tries his best to damage the manchild and the woman (vv. 4, 13-17). The enmity of Genesis 3:15 is thus fulfilled to the uttermost.

Although the Lord Jesus was a manchild, He was born of a woman. What does this mean? The spiritual significance of this is that the Lord Jesus was born of a source that trusted in God. The woman is the source of the seed, and the seed, part of which is the manchild that defeats the enemy, is stronger than the woman. The source of the manchild is a woman, not a man. His source is the one who trusts in God, not the one who declares independence from God. The manchild is the seed of a woman who trusts in God and depends on God. The Lord Jesus was the seed from such a source.

Likewise, we all need to be the seed of the woman, the seed from a source that depends on God. If we claim to be a man before God, we are finished with God and are no longer of God. Anyone who is of God must be a female before Him. If the leaders in the churches should say, "We know how to do things," they are no longer the woman before God, but have assumed the position of a man. The leading brothers should say, "O Lord, You know how weak we are. We depend upon You. Apart from You, Lord, we can do nothing. We trust in You for everything." If the leading brothers have this attitude, they are truly

the woman before God. Genesis 3:15 does not mention the seed of man, for only the seed of woman, not the seed of man, has the position before God.

On the one hand, we are the woman; on the other hand, we are the seed of the woman. We are the ones who trust in God: this is our source. We also are the seed of this source that trusts in God. Therefore, we can become strong. Only the seed of the source trusting in God can be strong, not strong in themselves, but strong in God. The Lord Jesus Himself took the lead to be such a person. He is the Head of the manchild. Now He is also the center, reality, life, and nature of the manchild. How the enemy, Satan, fights against this manchild!

II. THE CENTER

The focus, the central point, of Genesis 3:15 is that the seed of woman, the Lord Jesus, would come to destroy Satan on the cross. This is the strongest proclamation in the preaching of the glad tidings. Once again I say that Adam and Eve were trembling under the imminent sentence of death, but God, instead of condemning them, surprised them by preaching the gospel to them. Adam and Eve had fear toward God and hate toward the serpent. Therefore, God declared in His glad tidings that One entitled "the seed of woman" would come to destroy the serpent. That was the gospel. The promise regarding the seed of the woman and the coming destruction of the serpent was the glad tidings proclaimed to the first generation of sinners.

III. THE FULFILLMENT

A. In the People of God

The promise of Genesis 3:15 has been fulfilled throughout the generations. Firstly, it has been fulfilled in all the people of God. From the time that this promise was first given Satan has been the enemy of God's people. He will continue to be their enemy until he is cast into the abyss (Rev. 20:1-3) and ultimately hurled into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:7-10). Until Satan is cast into the lake of fire he remains the enemy of the people of God.

B. In All the Overcomers

Furthermore, this promise is fulfilled in all the overcomers until the time of rapture. This is revealed in Revelation 12.

C. In the Lord Jesus

This promise has been completely fulfilled in the Lord Jesus. Firstly, it was fulfilled at the time of His birth (Matt. 2:13-22). When the Lord Jesus was born, the serpent stirred up a great deal of enmity, causing many young lives to be lost. Secondly, the promise was fulfilled throughout the Lord's earthly life. If we read the four Gospels, we will see that Satan was continually troubling the Lord Jesus, pursuing Him and opposing Him. Eventually, Satan bruised the Lord's heel on the cross, as was prophesied in Psalm 22:16.

The promise in Genesis 3:15 reveals that Satan is the enemy of the people of God. Eventually, the Lord Jesus came as the seed of woman to destroy the enemy. Today we are enjoying the fulfillment of this promise.

CHAPTER NINE

THE SERPENT, THE WOMAN, AND THE SEED OF THE WOMAN

Life-Study of Genesis; Msg. 20

In this message I am burdened to present, as a parenthesis, a further word on Genesis 3:15. As we saw in the last message, Genesis 3:15 is the gospel. Genesis 3:15 is the first occurrence of the proclamation of the gospel in the entire Bible. In this verse God Himself preached the glad tidings to fallen man in judging the serpent. Therefore, we need to spend more time on this verse.

I have mentioned several times in previous messages that nearly everything found in Genesis 1 through 3 is a seed that grows throughout the following books of the Bible, appearing as a crop in the Epistles of the New Testament and ripening into a harvest in the book of Revelation. We have seen this principle applied to many items. In this message I want to point out this principle once again as we consider the three main items found in Genesis 3:15: the serpent, the woman, and the seed of the woman.

I. THE SERPENT

As we read through the Scriptures, we find the serpent is not only mentioned in Genesis, but also in other books of the Bible. Revelation 12:9 and 20:2 both refer to the serpent. In Revelation 12 and 20 we find that Satan has various names—the dragon, the ancient serpent, the Devil, and Satan. Among these names we find the title "the ancient serpent." John uses this term because at the time he wrote the book of Revelation the serpent had become very old, in fact, at least four thousand years old. Who is this "ancient serpent"? The only way to answer this question is to consult the third chapter of Genesis where the serpent is first mentioned.

In John 3:14 we find another reference to the serpent. When Nicodemus, a high-class gentleman of superior attainment, came to the Lord Jesus in a positive way, the Lord told him that he needed a new birth with a new life (John 3:3, 5). The Lord told him that his human spirit needed to be reborn of the Holy Spirit, for "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6).

However, not many Christians have observed that in His conversation with Nicodemus the Lord pointed that gentleman to the serpent (John 3:14). Although Nicodemus was a gentleman, a teacher, and a "master of Israel," the Lord indicated that he was a serpent.

At a certain point in His conversation with Nicodemus the Lord Jesus said, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." What does this mean? It was the Lord's answer to Nicodemus's question. Nicodemus had asked, "How can a man be born when he is old?" and, "How can these things be?" Nicodemus was asking how he could be born again. The Lord replied, "You are the teacher of Israel, and you don't know these things?" Although Nicodemus taught the Old Testament to the people, he did not know the meaning of being born again. Therefore, the Lord referred to the type of the brass serpent lifted up on a pole by Moses (Num. 21:9). The Lord seemed to be saying to him, "Your fathers were all bitten by poisonous serpents, and the poison of the serpents entered into them. Your fathers became serpents in the eyes of God. Because they were dying, Moses prayed to God on their behalf, and God told Moses to lift up a brass serpent on a pole to bear His judgment upon the poisoned Israelites. Everyone who had been poisoned by the serpents and who looked to the brass serpent lifted up on the pole lived." Many of the Israelites did this, and their lives were preserved. This is a type of regeneration. The Lord seemed to be telling Nicodemus, "Don't consider yourself as a gentleman. You must realize that you are one of the people who has been poisoned by the serpent and that you have the serpentine nature within you. Apparently you are a man; actually you are a serpent. In the eyes of God you are one of the serpents. Although you are a serpent, I have come to die for you. I shall die on the cross in the form of the serpent. When I am on the cross, in the eyes of God I shall not only be a substitute for sinners; I shall be judged there by God in the form of the serpent. The only difference is that the real serpent has poison, but I shall only be in the form of the serpent. I do not have the nature and the poison of the serpent. I have come in the likeness of the flesh of sin, in the form of the serpent, to die for all of you who have been poisoned by the serpent."

The first mention of the serpent in Genesis 3 is a seed that is developed in subsequent books of the Bible. We see the serpent in Genesis 3 and also in John 3:14. Nearly all Christians have seen the eternal life in John 3:16, but not many have seen the serpent in John 3:14. However, if we are to

understand what is eternal life, we must also understand what is the serpent. We must see the serpent. The serpent is not only in Genesis and John but is fully exposed in the book of Revelation. In Genesis 3:15 the serpent is a little seed, in the Gospel of John this seed grows, and in the book of Revelation this seed becomes a harvest. By reading throughout the Bible we can see that in every generation God's divine work has had a goal: to build up the Body to express His Son, Christ, and also to eliminate the serpent. God intends to expel the serpent. Therefore, we all must realize where the serpent is today.

A. Having Injected Himself into Mankind

Through the fall of man the serpent injected himself into mankind. Where is this serpent now? He is in our flesh. In the garden, before the fall of man, the serpent was outside of man. However, since the fall, the subtle, crafty serpent is in man, in his flesh.

One day the Lord Jesus asked His disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" and Peter immediately responded, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:15-16). A short time after this the Lord rebuked Peter, calling him "Satan" (Matt. 16:23). Can you believe that one minute he was a holy Peter and that soon afterward he had become Satan? If I had been Andrew, Peter's brother, I would have asked the Lord Jesus, "Where is Satan? I am Andrew, and Peter is my brother, but where is Satan?" The Lord Jesus might have answered, "Satan is here within him. Satan is inside of Peter." When you speak in an evil way, who are you? You are Satan. When you act in a mean way with your wife or husband, who are you? Satan. At such a time the Lord Jesus could say of you, "Satan!" Where is Satan? He is within fallen mankind. Satan today is in man's flesh. We all must be on the alert because Satan, the one who tempted and damaged the first generation of mankind, is now within us.

B. Men Having Become "Serpents"

Because Satan has injected himself into man, all men have become serpents in the eyes of God. Although you may consider yourself a man, in the eyes of God you are a serpent. According to Matthew 3:7, John the Baptist called the religious, Jewish people a "brood of vipers." They were serpents. John seemed to be saying to them, "You think of yourselves as religionists. You are so religious, yet you don't realize that you are a generation of vipers." In His

explanation of the parable of the sower the Lord Jesus used the term "the sons of the evil one" (Matt. 13:38). Who is the evil one? The serpent, Satan—he is the evil one and all his followers are his sons. The followers of Satan are not his adopted sons; they are his sons by birth. Thus, in John 8:44 the Lord Jesus said, "You are of your father the Devil." The Lord appeared to be saying, "Your father is the Devil because you have the Devil's life. The Devil's life and nature are in you. You were born of your father and now you have his life and nature." The Apostle John mentions "the children of the Devil" and says, "He who practices sin is of the Devil" (1 John 3:10, 8). Therefore, Paul called Elymas the sorcerer the "son of the Devil" (Acts 13:10). Even a gentleman such as Nicodemus, who appeared to be such an upper-class person, was a serpent in the eyes of God, possessing the serpentine nature. This is the reason that all the serpentine people need the Lord Jesus to be their substitute in the form of a serpent.

C. Men Having the Serpentine Nature and Life

As children of the Devil, people who have been born of the serpent, we all have the serpentine nature and life (1 John 3:12). No one can deny or dispute this since we see Satan's nature and life in our own children. Apparently little children are sweet; however, the more they grow, the more the serpentine nature within them is exposed. Although they are not trained to display the serpentine nature and life, they manifest it spontaneously. I have observed this in many children including my own. We must remember that we all are like that. Not only are we like that—we are that! We have a serpentine nature and life within us.

D. As the Evil Spirit Working in Fallen Man

Satan, the serpent, is the evil spirit that works in fallen man (Eph. 2:2). This evil spirit does not lie dormant, but actively works in the children of disobedience. Consider, as an example, how Satan worked in Judas, the man who betrayed the Lord Jesus (John 13:2, 27; 6:70). How Satan worked in that pitiful man! We have already seen that Peter was referred to as Satan (Matt. 16:23). If we did not have such a record as Matthew 16, no one would believe that Peter, a leading apostle, could have become Satan. Furthermore, even after the day of Pentecost Ananias and Sapphira were filled with Satan and lied to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3). Ananias and Sapphira were not in a

gambling casino; they were in the church after the day of Pentecost. Nevertheless, they were filled with Satan.

Now we know Satan's whereabouts. He is not far from us; he is within us. Some Christians think to themselves, "After we are saved and are in the Body of Christ, Satan has nothing to do with us." This thought is not the voice of the Holy Spirit; it is the voice of the subtle serpent, and the preaching of this concept is the lie of the serpent. We all must be on the alert because even now the subtle one is still present with us. As long as we are in the old creation, the serpent remains within us.

II. THE WOMAN

A. Signifying All the People of God

Now we need to see who the woman is. Undoubtedly, the woman in Genesis 3:15 firstly is Eve. Secondly, as all the fundamental teachers agree, this woman also refers to Mary, the mother of Jesus, because the seed of the woman was the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus was not born of a man, but of a woman, a virgin. Hence, His title is "the seed of the woman." However, the woman has a threefold significance, not only signifying Eve and the virgin Mary, but also the woman revealed in Revelation 12.

The woman of Revelation 12:1 is a universal woman who includes all the people of God. Therefore, she is a corporate woman. However, some people interpret the woman of Revelation 12 as Mary, the mother of the Lord Jesus. But Mary was an individual, local virgin. If we read Revelation 12, we can see that the woman unveiled there is universal, not local. She has twelve stars upon her head, the moon under her feet, and is clothed with the sun. All of this certainly indicates that she is universal and corporate. The best way to interpret the Bible is to consult other portions of the holy Word. We see a similar vision in Joseph's dream (Gen. 37:9). In that dream Joseph saw the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars. The sun signified Jacob, Joseph's father; the moon signified Joseph's mother; and the eleven stars signified Joseph's brothers. Therefore, in principle, the sun, moon, and stars together represent the entire body of God's people. Thus, the woman in Revelation 12 is not an individual, local virgin. She is universal and corporate, including all the people of God.

According to the Bible, the people of God can be classified into three categories: the patriarchs, Israel, and the church. The patriarchs, who came before the nation of Israel, are signified in Revelation 12 by the stars. Israel, which lived during the dark time, is signified by the moon under the woman's feet. When the Lord Jesus came, the sun shone (Luke 1:78-79), and the church came into existence. In a sense, during the present age the church is in the sun, in the day. So, the church is represented by the sun. Now we can see that this woman is composed of the patriarchs, Israel, including Mary, the mother of Jesus, and all the church people. She includes all the people of God beginning with Adam and continuing throughout the Old Testament period and the New Testament age until the time that the Lord Jesus returns. We are all included in this woman.

I have stated many times that our position before God is that of a woman. Our status is not that of a man, but of a wife, for we are all a woman before God. Do not consider that you are a wise, strong, capable man. If you assume this kind of position, you are immediately fallen. Whether we are brothers or sisters, we all have the same position before God—that of a wife. We must say, "Lord, I stand on the position of a wife. I know nothing and I can do nothing. Lord, I put my trust in You. You are my husband." Whenever we take such a position, leaning upon the Lord Jesus, we all are a part of the woman. All of the patriarchs were people like this. The genuine Israelites and all the people in the church throughout the generations have been people like this. We also must be people like this. We need to say, "O Lord, apart from You we are helpless and can do nothing. We put our trust in You." We must realize that according to the Bible the woman signifies the weaker vessel (1 Pet. 3:7).

B. Attacked by the Serpent

Throughout the generations the woman, the people of God, has been attacked by the serpent. The serpent attacked Job (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7). He also attacked Israel, David (1 Chron. 21:1), and Joshua the high priest (Zech. 3:1-2). Hence, in Revelation 12 we see that the serpent opposes, persecutes, and fights against the woman (Rev. 12:4, 13-17).

Although the woman is the weaker vessel, within her is a stronger part, the manchild. Now we need to consider this manchild, the seed of the woman.

III. THE SEED OF THE WOMAN

Who is the manchild? As we pointed out in message nineteen, some fundamental Christians say that the manchild is the Lord Jesus Christ. Although I agree with this in a sense, I do not agree with it in every sense. There are two main reasons why I do not believe that, in every respect, the manchild of Revelation 12 refers to Christ. Firstly, I have already mentioned that the mother of the manchild is not a local, individual woman, but a universal, corporate woman. Since the mother is corporate, her child must also be corporate. Secondly, if we read Revelation 12 carefully, we will see that the manchild is raptured in verse 5. He is not raptured to the air, but to the throne of God. Some people say that this describes the ascension of the Lord Jesus into the heavens. However, in the following verse it says that after the rapture of the manchild there will be a period of "a thousand two hundred and sixty days." This denotes a period of forty-two months, for forty-two months multiplied by thirty equals one thousand two hundred sixty days. This one thousand two hundred sixty days or forty-two months is the equivalent of "a time, and times, and half a time" (Rev. 12:14). "Time" means one year, "times" two years, and "half a time" a half year, giving a total of three and a half years, which equals forty-two months or one thousand two hundred sixty days. This period of three and a half years is the second half of the last seven years, the last week of the seventy weeks mentioned in Daniel 9:25-27. The "one week" of Daniel 9:27 specifies an era of seven years considered by all Bible teachers as the period of the great tribulation. The great tribulation will be intensified during the last half of the seven years, referring to the forty-two months or to the one thousand two hundred sixty days. Here is my point in mentioning all of this: if you say that the manchild is only the Lord Jesus, who ascended to the heavens over nineteen hundred years ago, how could it be that after He ascended to the heavens there will only be three and a half years? This is impossible. Nevertheless, after the rapture of the manchild to the throne of God, there will only be the last half of the last seven years. By this we can realize that the manchild must be other than Christ Himself.

The manchild in Revelation 12 certainly is the complete fulfillment of the prophecy regarding the seed of the woman in Genesis 3:15. In message nineteen I pointed out how Genesis 3:15 and Revelation 12 are two portions of the Divine Word which correspond to one another. In Genesis 3:15 we see three main figures—the serpent, the woman, and the seed of the woman. In Revelation 12 we see the same three crucial figures—the serpent, the woman, and the manchild. As we saw in the last message, the seed of the woman

mentioned in Genesis 3:15 undoubtedly is Christ. However, once this seed reaches the development of the manchild unveiled in Revelation 12, it is no longer only the Lord Jesus Himself, but the Lord and the overcoming part of His Body. What was once an individual seed has become corporate by the time of Revelation 12. When the Lord Jesus was born in the manger, He was the individual seed of the woman, and when He was crucified on the cross to be our Redeemer, He was still this individual seed. However, after His resurrection He was reproduced and multiplied. The one grain of wheat became many grains (John 12:24). Once He was the unique One, the only begotten Son (John 1:14), but through death and resurrection He became the firstborn among many brothers, the first Son among many sons (Rom. 8:29; Heb. 2:10). The firstborn Son is the Head of the Body, and all the brothers, the many sons, are the members of the Body. Now the seed of the woman is no longer an individual person, but a corporate person with the individual Christ as the Head and with all His members as the Body. Therefore, Christ is the Head of this manchild. He is also the center, reality, life, and nature of the manchild. The Head has gone to the heavens, but His Body remains on the earth. As far as the Head is concerned, He ascended to the heavens more than nineteen hundred years ago. But as far as His Body is concerned, we are still here awaiting the coming rapture. After the rapture of the manchild will be a time of three and one-half years.

The manchild, like the mother, is universal and corporate. The virgin Mary was a part of this universal mother. Therefore, firstly we have an individual mother with an individual seed, but eventually we have a corporate mother with a corporate manchild. We are the same as He. He is the leading overcomer, and we are the following overcomers. He is the Head of the manchild, and we are the Body. He is the center of the manchild, and we are the circumference. He is the reality of the manchild, and we are the expression of the manchild. He is the manchild's life and nature, and we are the manchild.

A. Christ

We have seen that firstly the seed of the woman is Christ. This Christ was born of a woman, even of a virgin (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23; Gal. 4:4). When this seed of the woman was on earth, He bound the serpent as the strong man (Matt. 12:29). When the Lord Jesus was on earth, Satan, the serpent, was the strong man, and the Lord exercised His authority to bind him. Jesus, as the

seed of the woman, bound the serpent and plundered all his wealth. In John 14:30 He told His disciples that the serpent, as the prince of the world, had nothing in Him. Although the serpent tried his best, he could find nothing for himself in the seed of the woman. When the Lord Jesus went to the cross, He bruised the head of the serpent, destroying him entirely. Thus, Hebrews 2:14 says that through death Christ destroyed the Devil who holds the power of death. Christ has destroyed the works of the Devil (1 John 3:8). In the future Christ will rule over the nations with a rod of iron (Psa. 2:8-9; Rev. 12:5).

All of this concerning Christ as the seed of the woman is wonderful, but it is still outside of us. He has not yet come into us. Nevertheless, after Jesus was born, had bound the strong man, had given no ground to the prince of the world, and had destroyed the enemy on the cross, He was resurrected and in resurrection became the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45). Whenever and wherever a person will say, "Lord Jesus," this life-giving Spirit will immediately come into him. This is a mystery, yet it is a fact. By coming into His believers as the life-giving Spirit Christ works Himself into them as the conquering seed.

Christ has been sown into us as the seed. The parable of the sower in Matthew 13 shows that this Christ has sown Himself as the seed into our hearts. As a result, we have been regenerated. Peter says that we were regenerated, not by a corrupted or a corrupting seed, but by an incorruptible seed, the living and abiding Word of God (1 Pet. 1:23). This living Word is Christ, and Christ is the seed. Furthermore, the Apostle John says, "Everyone who has been begotten of God does not practice sin, because His seed abides in him, and he cannot sin, because he has been begotten of God" (1 John 3:9). The seed here is Christ, the seed of the woman. The seed of the conqueror, the seed of the overcomer, is this very seed. The foremost overcomer is the seed. We have a conquering seed within us. If we let this seed grow, it will be victorious. We all must shout, "Hallelujah, we have the conquering seed within us!"

One day I was surprised to see the last stanza of "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing," a hymn written by Charles Wesley over two hundred years ago. In this stanza we see a clear reference to the conquering seed of the woman:

Come, Desire of nations, come!
Fix in us Thy humble home:

Rise, the woman's conqu'ring seed,
Bruise in us the serpent's head;
Adam's likeness now efface,
Stamp Thine image in its place:
Final Adam from above,
Reinstate us in Thy love.

This stanza opens with an appeal for the "Desire of nations" to come, an allusion to Haggai 2:7. Christ is the desire of all nations. The writer does not ask Christ, the Desire of nations, to come to die on the cross for us, but to "Fix in us Thy humble home." The next line does not say, "Rise Emmanuel, rise Jesus Christ, the Son of God." It says, "Rise, the woman's conqu'ring seed." I like this line. The writer then beseeches this "conqu'ring seed" to "bruise in us the serpent's head." Although He bruised the serpent on the cross, He must now bruise the serpent's head within us. Furthermore, Adam's likeness must be effaced because it has been filled with the serpentine nature. Then Wesley says, "Stamp Thine image in its place," which means to transform us into the image of the Lord. The hymn ends with a prayer that the "Final Adam" would reinstate us in His love. We all must praise the Lord that He has fixed His humble home in us and that He is now bruising the head of the serpent within us. He is "the woman's conqu'ring seed."

B. The Overcomers

This conquering seed also makes us overcomers. We are the co-overcomers with Christ because we have the over-coming seed within us. In Romans 16:20 we have the promise that God will soon crush Satan under our feet. Nevertheless, as co-overcomers with Christ, we are attacked and accused by the serpent (2 Cor. 12:7; Rev. 12:10). The serpent will also try to devour us (Rev. 12:4), but we can overcome him. We do not overcome by our merit; we overcome by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of our testimony (Rev. 12:11). We must declare the word of our testimony, telling the serpent, "You have been bruised." We should not only preach the gospel to human beings, but must also declare to the serpent the facts regarding the conquering seed of the woman. If you are tempted to lose your temper, do not try to overcome it. Simply speak to Satan, "Satan, don't tempt me. Don't you know that you have been bruised?" Say this the next time Satan entices you to lose your temper. Do not pray, but remind the serpent that he has been bruised. Say to him, "Satan, read your Bible. Read Hebrews 2:14. I want to remind you that

you have been destroyed." We overcome him by the word of our testimony, by declaring what Jesus has done. This is our victory. Moreover, the overcomers do not love their soulish life even to the death.

Eventually, we will be co-rulers with Christ, ruling over the nations with a rod of iron (Rev. 2:26-27). Revelation 2:26-27 is a quotation from Psalm 2, a prophecy concerning Christ that predicts His rule over the nations. However, the fulfillment of this prophecy concerns the overcomers. By this we can see that the Bible actually combines Christ and all His overcomers as one body. This gives us further ground to say that the manchild in Revelation 12 is not only Christ Himself, but Christ as the Head and all the overcomers as His Body. In the prophecy of Psalm 2 Christ is prophesied as the One who will rule over the nations with a rod of iron. In the fulfillment in Revelation 2:26-27 the overcomers are revealed as the ones who will rule over the nations with a rod of iron. The prophecy and its fulfillment bring together Christ and His overcomers as one manchild. Therefore, Revelation 12:5 says that this manchild will rule all nations with a rod of iron. Hallelujah! We are co-rulers with Christ. According to Revelation 20:1-6, we will also be co-kings with Christ to rule with Him in the millennial kingdom.

IV. THE RESULT

Now we come to the result. The seed is in Genesis 3:15, and the result, the harvest, is in Revelation 20 through 22. Each of the three items has grown from a seed into a highly developed form. The serpent has grown into a dragon (Rev. 12:9; 20:2), the individual woman has grown into a corporate woman, and the individual seed of the woman has grown into a corporate manchild.

A. The Serpent to Be Cast into the Lake of Fire

Revelation 20:10 declares that the serpent ultimately will be cast into the lake of fire. This is the harvest of Satan. Satan's destiny and destination is the lake of fire.

B. The Woman to Issue in the New Jerusalem

The woman herself will issue in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2, 9-10). This is the harvest of the woman. The destiny and destination of the woman is the New Jerusalem.

C. The Seed of the Woman to Be the Center of the New Jerusalem

What about the seed of the woman? The seed of the woman will be the center of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:22-23; 22:1). This is the harvest of the seed of the woman. The destiny and destination of the seed of the woman is to be the center of the New Jerusalem.

I believe that the Lord has shown us clearly the serpent, the woman, and the seed of the woman. The seed of these three items is in Genesis 3:15, and the harvest of them all is in Revelation 20 through 22.