

MY BELOVED - An Epiphany!

By Averine Pennington, 02-25-2023

Epiphany – sudden manifestation or perception of the essential nature or meaning of something; an intuitive grasp of reality through something usually simple and striking; an illuminating discovery, a revealing scene or moment.

My dear brothers and sisters, I don't know about the rest of you, but the Holy Spirit has been opening up the Word of God to me in a way I have never experienced before. The upper 'layers' are being peeled away, and many hidden meanings to scriptures are being revealed. These 'revelations' seem to come at the most unexpected moment when I am studying something that I have studied many times before and think I've 'got it all.' Wow! What the Holy Spirit just revealed to me is amazing! This may be old news to some, but to those like me with lingering questions on this topic, I feel led to share the EPIPHANY I was given this morning. I pray you will be blessed.

I was led of the Holy Spirit to study the GREAT COMMISSION in detail from THE GOSPELS and the book of ACTS. The accounts in Luke and Acts seemed to speak the most to my spirit. As I read **Luke 24:45**, I prayed for the Holy Spirit to also 'open my understanding' to what I was supposed to find from these scriptures that perhaps I had overlooked before.

Luke 24:45-49 (KJV) – “Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures. 46) And said unto them, **Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47) And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem. 48) And ye are witnesses of these things. 49) And, behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.”**

Now, would you not expect since an account of the Great Commission is found in the final chapters of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, a similar account would also be found in the finale of the Book of John? Not so! It's not there. Instead, we find a conversation between Jesus and Peter as recorded by John.

John 21:20-24 (KJV) – “Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple **WHOM JESUS LOVED** following; which also **LEANED ON HIS BREAST** at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? 21) Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? 22) Jesus saith unto him, **If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.** 23) Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die, but, **If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?** 24) This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.”

Basically, Peter received a gentle reprimand from Jesus, to not worry about another person's journey but focus on his own walk with the Lord. But what about this mysterious ending to the book of John with no mention whatsoever about the Great Commission? As many of you know who read my posts, I'm often led down rabbit trails for a reason. John stated the obvious in verse 24. He indeed was the author of the book of John and his testimony was true because he was an eye-witness to everything he had written.

What was highlighted to me was the fact that John was often referred to as **‘the disciple whom Jesus loved.’** (See **John 13:23, 19:26, 20:2, 21:7 & 21:20.**) There were three disciples whom Jesus would often call to be separated with Him – what you might call His inner circle. But John had an even closer relationship than Peter & James . . . so close, that he leaned upon Jesus’ bosom at the last supper . . . so close, that he followed Jesus even to the foot of His cross . . . so close, that Jesus entrusted His own mother into his care as if he were her son . . . so close, he was entrusted with “the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to shew unto his servants things which shortly must come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John. Who bare record of the Word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw (**Rev. 1:1-2**). “

I believe it is significant that though the Great Commission was not recorded at the ending of the book of John, it was again recorded on the very next page in my Bible. The disciples as commanded by Jesus tarried in Jerusalem to await the promise found in **Acts 1:8** – **“But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”** That promise was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost (**Acts 2:1-4**). The outpouring of the Holy Ghost brought many new followers of Jesus into the early church. After Peter explained what was happening, he preached a gospel message and about 3,000 souls were added to their number that very day (**Acts 2:38-41**). Hallelujah! Do it again, Lord, in our day!

Now, I am one that is ever looking to find the hidden mysteries of God that are meant to be searched out. I have always thought there might be ‘some deeper heavenly meaning’ to be discovered from those final verses of the book of John. Jesus doesn’t flippantly say something for no apparent reason. Every WORD has purpose. Was he hinting at a mystery not meant to be completely understood at that time, but to be unveiled at His appointed time in the future?

I have just completed a rather in-depth study prompted by a personal word given to me regarding our ‘inheritance’ as the Bride of Christ. During my lengthy 10 day-study with over 30 pages of notes, I encountered many scriptures that prepared me to have eyes to see this new revelation which I share with you today. **John, the beloved, is a representation of the Bride of Christ.** His ears sought to hear the very heartbeat of Jesus Christ. When the other disciples scattered in fear for their lives, John remained totally devoted and followed Jesus even to stand at His feet while He drew His last breath on the cross. I know there is no way I can convey to you, the reader, all that the Holy Spirit has been teaching me. To be honest, it would be hard to put into words. Perhaps this message will give you food for thought to dig deeper in your own study of scripture. John’s COMMISSION is our COMMISSION, the one reiterated in Acts 1. John himself certainly carried out the great commission but the baton was passed to succeeding generations of believers. Read below part of what Jesus prayed to the Father while in the garden when He knew His hour had come.

John 17:18-23 (KJV) – “As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. 19) And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. 20) **Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word** [the gospel message]. 21) That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. 22) And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one: 23) I in them, and Thou in Me,

that they may be made perfect [*complete*] in one; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me.”

Don't you find that amazing, that at that pivotal moment in history, Jesus thought to pray for all of us who were yet to believe on Him? That we might be one with Him and the Father! That the world may know that the Father loves us just as He loves His only begotten Son! I have used these scriptures before, but they bear repeating. Paul addressed the book of Ephesians to the saints which were at Ephesus and to THE FAITHFUL IN CHRIST JESUS (that's us). We are **ACCEPTED IN THE BELOVED!** (see **Ephesians 1:4-7**). Here's a few word excerpts . . . chosen, holy, without blame, predestinated, redeemed. Then, look at **Ephesians 1:10-11a** – “That **in the dispensation of the fulness of times**, He might GATHER together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him; 11a) In whom also we have **obtained an inheritance** . . .” Read **Hebrews 11**. It's the scriptures about the Old Testament saints who have gone before us and have obtained their inheritance by FAITH. Let's focus on the last two verses, **Heb. 11:39-40** – “And these all, having **OBTAINED A GOOD REPORT** through faith, received not the promise: 40) God having provided some better thing for us, that **THEY WITHOUT US should not be made perfect [*complete*]**.” If you read the entire chapter, you see in **Heb. 11:16** that God has prepared for them a heavenly city. That city is New Jerusalem. It is not yet complete. Some of her pillars are missing (**Rev. 3:12**) because part of the FAITHFUL (the Bride) have not yet arrived. We've got a few things to finish up down here for God's kingdom. Remember that GREAT COMMISSION is still in effect. But **in the dispensation of the fulness of times** we will be **gathered** unto Him.

Let me say before I continue, that I do not presume to fully understand the book of Revelation. Who does? I'm not sure even the most educated theologian fully comprehends it. It is written in such a way as to keep the enemy guessing, but at the same time its mysteries will be revealed as God sees fit . . . in his timing, to whom He chooses. Much is being revealed now through His servants the prophets (**Amos 3:7**). We are the last generation. Much symbolism is becoming more evident because we are living it! We can see with our own eyes what John saw and recorded. It is quickly becoming our everyday reality.

For the purpose of this topic, I just want to make a few observations gained from my realization that **John symbolizes the Bride**. The **church of Philadelphia** is the only church who **OBTAINED A GOOD REPORT**, which places them 'alongside the saints' of Hebrews 11. Those faithful servants of the church of Philadelphia will one day complete the heavenly city, New Jerusalem. If they hold that fast which they have, and do not allow any man to take their crown, **they have reserved for them 'an inheritance among the saints.'** Another important clue to their identity as the Bride is found in **Rev. 3:8**. **“I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee AN OPEN DOOR, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.”** **Rev. 3:10** indicates that they have persevered and been found WORTHY to escape the things coming upon the earth (**Luke 21:36**). **“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”** There is no question as to the identity of Philadelphia after reading **Rev. 3:12** – **“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him My new name.”** We also find a similar description in **Rev. 14**, identifying the Bride as the 144k, the first-fruits, redeemed from the earth, undefiled, without fault before the throne of God and with His Father's name written in their foreheads.

The discovery of this connection between John (representing the Bride) and the church of Philadelphia which the scriptures above establish as the Bride brought new understanding. Most who are proponents of a pre-tribulation rapture, believe that the rapture of the church is symbolized in **Rev. 4:1** when John hears a voice as a trumpet saying, 'Come up hither.' Sometimes the more we unravel, the more confused we get. That's because as truth is revealed we have to adjust our previous thinking. So now that I see the connection between John (the beloved) and the Bride, and the fact that both are given an OPEN DOOR, I must examine scripture further. The OPEN DOOR is a very big clue. It definitely gives credence to the stance that John's call to "Come up hither," may indeed refer to the catching away of the Bride. **But it DOES NOT confirm the time frame of this occurrence.** The visions received by John are not necessarily in chronological order. For example, the judgment of Mystery Babylon is mentioned in several different places (chapters 14, 16, 17, & 18). So, when exactly does the fall of Babylon occur? Likewise, the last verse of **Rev. 6** says ". . . the great day of His wrath is come," yet reading further in the text we see mention of when the 7 angels are given the vials of wrath (**Rev. 15:7**) and then commanded to pour out the vials upon the earth (**Rev. 16:1**). So, when exactly does God's wrath begin? John's different visions may overlap at times, or he sees bits & pieces of the same thing in different visions. Again, I believe this is purposeful on God's part to keep THE ENEMY confused.

I'm so glad that we have Jesus as our COMMANDER. He's in charge and His battle strategy is perfect. As His sheep, we have the privilege of hearing His voice, so it really is not necessary that we have a detailed timeframe of when everything occurs in advance. We walk by FAITH . . . we TRUST in Him to light the way as needed! Just BE READY at all times! Does a foot-soldier on the battlefield have the same 'intel' as his commander? Certainly not. His job is to follow orders without question (**2 Tim. 2:3-4**).

Please note as you read about all 7 churches in **Rev. 2 & 3**, there is the possibility for each of those churches to have OVERCOMERS. The Bride (Philadelphia) is a part of the church (the body of Christ). But not all of the church will be a part of the Bride. There are three harvests spoken of in scripture, THE BARLEY (which is the first-fruits – the Bride), THE WHEAT (which is the larger Main Harvest of the church), and THE GRAPES (which are cast into the great winepress of God's wrath – see **Rev. 14:18-20**).

From the examples given, I hope you see how difficult it would be for anyone to interpret the full Revelation of Jesus Christ without the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is written in 'code' on purpose. As we draw closer and closer to the fulfillment of ALL PROPHECY, those with ears to hear and eyes to see will be given more understanding . . . **like this EPIPHANY that John represents the Bride.** With just that tidbit of information, other things start to fall into place. I will toss out another rabbit trail in brief for you to consider. Remember the little book in **Rev. 10:10-11**? John eats the little book and is told he ". . . must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and Kings." So, is that a task given to John personally? or is that a task given to who he represents . . . The Bride? His commission? . . . or the commission he passed to us? The very next verse (*without man's divisions*) is the beginning of **Rev. 11** which is about the two witnesses. Look again at Jesus' question to Peter, **"If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"** Was He referring literally to John or to the Bride? Jesus Himself gave a prophecy in **Matt. 24:14** – **"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for A WITNESS unto all nations and THEN, SHALL THE END COME."** Hummm . . . that sounds a bit more like the BRIDE to me. I hope what I have shared will spark your own interest to dig deeper into this topic. Those who read or hear the final book of the Bible are given a specific promise – "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand (**Rev. 1:3**)."

TODAY, it is still not too late to make the first harvest, but time is quickly running out. Jesus is coming soon for His Bride . . . like a thief in the night! Don't you want to be in that number? Don't you want Jesus to claim you as '**MY BELOVED**'? Only the wise virgins will be ready with oil in their lamps and their wicks trimmed. Please don't be a foolish virgin who is unprepared to meet Jesus (*see the parable of the 10 Virgins, **Matt. 25:1-13***). The oil is the Holy Spirit of the Living God dwelling in you. He's waiting to be invited into your heart. Don't wait until He shuts the 'ark door' and you get left on the outside looking in. JESUS IS THE ARK and the ONLY WAY to heaven! Call on Him and He will answer. If you repent of your sins and ask Him to save you, HE WILL! He is not willing that any should perish. Do it TODAY! Before it is TOO LATE!

"And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a BRIDE adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God shall be with them, and be their God (**Rev. 21:2-3**)."

". . . Come hither, I will shew thee the BRIDE, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. Having the glory of God: and HER LIGHT was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal (**Rev. 21:9b-11**)."

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is (**1 John 3:2**)."

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour unto Him: for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb . . . (**Rev. 19:7-9a**)."

I'm so looking forward to that day. How about you?

Harvest is here!

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