

# The Purpose Of the Wilderness

By Dr. Stephen E. Jones

## Table of Contents

David's Wilderness Training .....	3
Knowing By Experience .....	4
The Pattern.....	6
Another Purpose .....	7
It is Not What Goes Into You.....	10
Speaking the Truth in Love.....	11
Going Beyond Pentecost.....	12
Greater Works Than These.....	14

Copies may be obtained  
By writing to the Publishers:

**Port Austin Bible Center**  
**Box 444**  
**Port Austin, MI 48467**  
**USA**

Suggested Price:  
\$2.00 each

Permission is granted to quote freely from this publication  
for non-commercial purposes.

© copyright 2002  
All Rights Reserved  
Printed in USA

# The Purpose of the Wilderness

Before David could rule Israel as king, God trained him in the wilderness for many years. King Saul, without whose training David could never have grown into an overcomer, had been king over Israel for ten years before David's birth. Saul had been crowned on the day of wheat harvest (1 Sam. 12:17), which is the day later called "Pentecost." It was the day that the priest offered to God the new grain offering of wheat, signaling the beginning of wheat harvest (Lev. 23:15-17).

We show in our book, The Wheat and Asses of Pentecost, that King Saul was a type of the Church under Pentecost, while David was a type of the Church under the Tabernacles anointing. We have now concluded the Pentecostal Age that began in Acts 2. King Saul reigned 40 years. It was 40 years from Jesus' ministry (30-33 A.D.) to the Roman War that first destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and concluded with the taking of Masada in 73 A.D.

On a broader scale, it was 40 weeks of years (Sabbaths) or 40 x 7 years from Jesus' ministry to the fall of the pagan Roman Empire in 310 A.D. Forty weeks of years is 280 years. Jesus began his ministry in 30 A.D. after John was cast into prison. Forty "weeks" later was 310 A.D., when Constantine conquered the Roman Empire. Jesus was crucified in 33 A.D., and the day of Pentecost came about seven weeks later. Forty "weeks" (280 years) later brings us to Constantine's Edict of Milan, that formally ended the persecution of Christians.

On the broadest scale of measurement, it has been 40 Jubilees from the events in Acts 2 to the year 1993 A.D. This is 40 cycles of 49 years during which time the Age of Pentecost has run its course. It was the age in which the Church has ruled as King Saul by its Pentecostal anointing.

It is now time for a new move of the Spirit, a full anointing, a greater anointing of the Feast of Tabernacles. Those who rule in the coming Age will be those identified with King David, rather than King Saul. These are not mere Christians; they are the overcomers. There are many who, like Saul, fear the overcomers and force them to

run for their lives into the wilderness outside the denominational structure. Such people and denominations are called to help the overcomers to learn total dependence upon God and to hear His voice. The Sauls in the Church have a sacred calling, and the Davids in the wilderness training owe them a great debt.

Saul was called to be king after just one week's notice (1 Sam. 10:8). God did not take the time to train Saul, for he was of the tribe of Benjamin, rather than of Judah. The scepter was to be given to Judah, not to Benjamin (Gen. 49:10; 1 Chron. 5:2). It was God's will that Saul be king—and even have a perpetual dynasty (1 Sam. 13:13). But it was God's ultimate intention that Saul should fail, for it had already been established that the true King would come from Judah.

Even so, the Church under Pentecost in the past 2,000 years was begun mostly by Jesus' disciples who were from Galilee. Five hundred years earlier the tribe of Benjamin had settled in villages north of Jerusalem (Neh. 11:31-36), while the tribe of Judah had settled in villages south of Jerusalem (Neh. 11:25-30). By the time Jesus was born, Galilee housed most of the Benjamites, while Judea was home to Judah. When Jesus chose his disciples from Galilee, He was choosing men of Benjamin, because the Pentecostal Age was soon to come. Even Paul (Saul) was a Benjamite (Phil. 3:5). Pentecost was the day the new Saul company was crowned King.

Even as Saul was a good king throughout his first year and into his second, so also the early Church "reigned" quite well in the first century—that is, in the first Jubilee cycle and into the second. They conquered men by love and by the power of the Spirit. Strong enemies were smitten by their tongue, which was a sharp sword that could divide soul and spirit, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. 4:12). They needed no force of physical arms, for they had a better, more powerful conquering sword. No amount of persecution could conquer the Church, though many were martyred, first by the Jews, and later by the Greeks and Romans.

As time passed, however, the Saul Church disobeyed God and refused to repent, even as King Saul did in his second year (1 Sam. 13:1). Eventually, God forsook Saul and told Samuel to anoint a new king—David. Even so, when the Church became a religion and lost its first love, God forsook it and called the next body of believers to be the future king over the earth. This was the David company of overcomers.

During the following centuries, God trained this body of people through persecution at the hands of the Saul Church. Though many were martyred for their faith, they will live again in the first resurrection, for they will be alive on the earth to see and experience the fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles. They will rule in the age to come—the Tabernacles Age.

Some call this the Millennium; others call it the Messianic Age or the Kingdom Age. Whatever our terminology, it is the Age where the Davidic company, the overcomers, bring righteousness into the earth by means of the anointing of Tabernacles. It is their calling as the body of Christ to bring heaven to earth. It is their calling to manifest Christ to the rest of the people of the earth, so that the glory of the Lord covers the earth as the waters cover the sea (Hab. 2:14). What Pentecost could NOT finish—for it was weak through leaven (Lev. 23:17)—the Feast of Tabernacles will complete this task of filling the earth with His glory. The prophets tell us that the Kingdom of God will then grow mightily until it fills the whole earth (Dan. 2:35).

Then will the end come, and God will raise the dead, small and great, before the Great White Throne (Rev. 20:11-15). It would appear that the Age of Tabernacles will last about 1,000 years (Rev. 20:5-7). This fits the prophetic measurement of Moses' Tabernacle, where the Holy Place was 20 x 10 x 10, or 2,000 cubic cubits. This represents the present Pentecostal Age, a period of about 2,000 years. The Holy of Holies, on the other hand, measured 10 x 10 x 10, or 1,000 cubic cubits. This represents the Tabernacles Age in years.

### **David's Wilderness Training**

David was in the wilderness and in the caves in order to bring him to the place of maturity. He needed the character of Christ in order to be able to rule the people wisely and with justice and righteousness. Those who follow in his footsteps as overcomers should not be surprised if they are also expelled from the Church or denomination for a time. This, too, should be viewed as a blessing from God and perhaps an indication of a higher calling.

However, not all who are kicked out of a Church are overcomers. Only those who learn the lessons of David are overcomers. Only those who come into a relationship with God that leads to the manifestation of the Sons of God are of the Davidic company.

David was not in the wilderness forever. At some point he had to return to be crowned king over Israel. He was in the wilderness for training only. His training was temporary. His real ministry was back in Israel. David's inheritance, his ministry, his calling, was not in the caves of the wilderness, but in Israel. Likewise, Israel under Moses was not called into the wilderness to remain there forever. Their inheritance was Canaan, not the wilderness. The wilderness was only the training ground for the Promised Land.

*The purpose of the wilderness is to return to minister.* The wilderness is not an end in itself. It is not the goal, but the means to the goal. It is the place where God teaches the overcomers that He is sovereign, that He is their protection, their refuge and strength. It is the place where overcomers learn that their lives are in God's hands and completely at His disposal. If He wills that they live, they live. If He wills that they die, they die. Overcomers lose their fear of death or circumstances, because they see God's hand in all things. They know that nothing happens behind God's back. Nothing happens except what God has directed or permitted. And above all, overcomers learn that all things work together for their good (Rom. 8:28). They have learned that to live is Christ and to die is gain (Phil. 1:21).

The wilderness puts you alone with God in the midst of hardship. The wilderness is where you learn that He provides for you in the midst of hardship, in impossible situations, so that He can show you that it IS possible, and it IS easy, once we have overcome ourselves and learned to rest in Him.

### **Knowing By Experience**

I have been in many impossible situations, especially involving God's provision. Years ago, God really did prove himself to me, and it got to be where I knew that if I were someday dropped off in the middle of the Sahara desert, somehow God would provide, because He had always done so. He would come up with such unusual ways of providing at the last minute, at the eleventh hour. When everything looked impossible, God did it, and it looked so easy.

When you have some experiences like that under your belt, you just know by experience that He provides. It is not knowing with a head knowledge. It is knowing *experientially*. Everyone needs to come to this conclusion experientially, and not just have a head knowledge about what the Scriptures teach about other saints.

So often, we go through life in our Christian experience, and we talk about the experiences of the great men of God, but it is quite irrelevant to us. We feel that God does this sort of thing with biblical saints, not with us ordinary people. And yet, these men were ordinary people, too. We call them saints today, but any sainthood they may have attained was totally on account of God's training. We need to see them as they were when they were born like we were, when they wet their pants like we did, when they were immature even as we were at one time. We need to bring them down to our level. That is not to dishonor them, but to make the Scriptures accessible to us.

Remember, Elijah was a man of like passions (James 5:17), just like we are. Saul was like we are. Moses was like we are. All of these people were in many ways the same as we are today, and these examples are written for our learning. We undergo the same type of training as that found in the Bible.

So in the midst of hardship, we learn His provision. In the midst of condemnation, we learn mercy and love. In the midst of bondage and imprisonment, we learn the Jubilee of utter forgiveness. Then at some point God brings us out of the wilderness and back into the world or back to those that remain in Saul's household in order that we might minister to those who yet cling to their golden calves of heart idolatry.

So if you have been led out of the Church, do not be surprised if some day God leads you back into the Church. You have to return some day when you can be of help to them and share the truth in love when God gives opportunity.

If you find yourself being kicked out again, it might be that they are not yet ready to hear the word that you have been called to share. But, then, *perhaps you are not yet fully equipped to minister to them either*. It is easy to blame the Church for its immaturity and for its blindness. It is easy to condemn them for not seeing all the doctrinal truths that God has shown to us. But we must recognize that the Christians in the Church denominational systems are precisely where God has put them. If they were not there, you would not have a ministry. If they were waiting eagerly for the truth you had for them, they would not put everything you had learned to the test.

The fact is, you need them as much as they need you. They may need the Word that you have for them, but you need them as your

barometer to know whether you have really learned to speak the truth in love. Chances are, they will not be able to hear any truth you have for them unless it is made palatable by the love of Christ in you and by the power of His Spirit. The more you are like Christ, the greater will be your ability to change men's lives for the better. And this, after all, is what it is all about.

### **The Pattern**

After Israel had been in the wilderness for 40 years, Israel had been complaining almost daily. They had disobeyed and refused to hear His voice. Their record is dismal. Moses himself complained quite a bit. Moses told God, "Why have you given me this job to do? Why this ministry? This is terrible!" But when it was all said and done, Moses recognized that their blindness and their deafness was because GOD had not given them eyes to see or ears to hear. Moses told them in Deut. 29:4 (NASB),

**<sup>4</sup> Yet to this day the Lord has not given you a heart to know, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear.**

Moses could never have recognized the sovereignty of God in this way, had he not spent 40 years in the wilderness in God's training camp before he ever led Israel out of Egypt. That wilderness experience, tending Jethro's sheep, was his wilderness training before God sent him back into the Church to bring THEM into the same wilderness to be trained of God. And who better to lead them than Moses, who had already been there?

Moses spent time as a shepherd of sheep in order to learn how to gently lead the flock of God. Moses was sent back into the Church, back to Egypt, back into the world to do a job. It was a tough job, but after all, that was the purpose of his training. Patience, love, and forgiveness are not easily ingrained into us. Like Moses, Jesus went out into the wilderness for 40 days and then returned to minister to the people. It is very much the same pattern. Jesus went out for His final examination, administered by the devil. He passed the exam and returned as a qualified Minister of the Gospel.

This is the ultimate pattern for all who have been called to leave the Church for a time. But leaving the Church is not the ultimate solution. Leaving the Church is for the purpose of getting wilderness training, so that we can be trained to minister to the Church at a future time.

An overcomer is called to rule. A biblical ruler is also a judge. To be a judge, one must know the law and how to apply it in every situation by the mind of Christ. To do this, one must be perfectly balanced in law and grace, in justice and mercy, in discipline and in love. A judge is one who has learned the mind of God and can discern His ways. To judge and to discern come from the same Greek word in the New Testament. We need discernment, so we can see what God is saying and lead the people in God's path to the Promised Land.

### **Another Purpose**

Leaving the Church and having wilderness experience has another purpose. It is not just to train us, but it is for our own weak faith and conscience. We need to be alone with God. We need to hear His voice. When we go into the wilderness, we usually do not know that we need to be trained. Therefore, we strenuously object to this school. I know this from personal experience.

When He brought me into the wilderness in 1981 and 1982, it was a real shock to my system. I thought I was pretty sophisticated in doctrine and quite mature spiritually. I found out then that I knew absolutely nothing. As I look back on it now, I can hardly believe how ignorant I was—and probably still am! Give me about ten years, and then I will know how ignorant I am today.

We are brought into the wilderness, not so much because of the corruption in Saul's Church, but because WE need training. We tend to think that God is going to lead us out because the Church is unclean, and we are not to touch the unclean thing. We think we are to leave in order to remain untainted by the Church. Well, there is an element of truth in that view. However, there is another side to it. If we were to be given a great revelation of truth before our faith and conscience were strong, we would probably do more damage than good in trying to force the Church to see the truth.

Let me explain.

The New Covenant comes with a job to do. 1 Cor. 8 gives us this job description in verses 1-3:

**<sup>1</sup> Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies. <sup>2</sup> If anyone supposes that he knows anything,**

**he has not yet known as he ought to know. <sup>3</sup> But if anyone loves God, he is known by Him.**

Do you see the difference between knowledge and love? Mere knowledge is not enough. If all we have is knowledge, we tend to be arrogant. It is not that knowledge is bad or undesirable. It is actually very good. But knowledge without love is nothing. It is love—not knowledge—that edifies. Wilderness training is not so much to train us in knowledge as it is to train us in divine love.

When people speak the truth without love, they are not only a clanging cymbal, they are actually doing damage to the people's ears. I have seen my share of damage done by zealous people who have some knowledge, and I have done my fair share of this damage, too. Paul says to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15). When we can do that, then we are ready for ministry, because then we begin to know the mind of God. We do not need to teach people facts about the Bible; we need to show them the mind of God. Paul continues in 1 Cor. 8,

**<sup>4</sup> Therefore, concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one. <sup>5</sup> For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, <sup>6</sup> yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him. <sup>7</sup> However, not all men have this knowledge; but some, being accustomed to the idol until now, eat food as if it were sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.**

What is Paul really saying here? What is this meat sacrificed to idols? Let us go back to Leviticus 17:7 to lay the foundations of the law to which Paul was referring,

**<sup>7</sup> And they shall no longer sacrifice their sacrifices to the goat demons with which they play the harlot. This shall be a permanent statute to them throughout their generations.**

You can find another reference to this in Num. 25:2, where the people unlawfully ate of the sacrifices made to the gods of Moab.

Here is what Paul is teaching us: The law says, “Do not eat meat sacrificed to idols.” But what is an idol? There is no idol to someone who has a strong conscience. But to one who has a weak conscience, he cannot eat this meat without feeling defiled. Such a person feels guilty and cannot do so in good conscience.

There is more meat than just physical meat. Biblical teaching and anything that you hear as a Word from God is spiritual meat. But what if you go to a Church and you hear preaching that offers God's Word to the idols of the preacher's heart? The traditions of men which go contrary to the true Word is all “meat sacrificed to demons.” Are you defiled by hearing these traditions? To hear is to “eat.”

Will it defile you if you remain in your seat? Can you stand to hear it, meditate upon it, chew it, and process it spiritually?

If you are defiled by it, maybe you need more wilderness training in order to strengthen your conscience and your faith. Perhaps you are not yet ready to be sent back into the Church, for you are yet weak and would be defiled by all that “false doctrine.” If your conscience is yet weak, and you feel defiled, you will probably get up and walk out in protest, or disrupt the meeting in some other way. The people around you will probably not be very impressed with your behavior. They will lose respect for you, not because of your difference in belief, but because of your attitude and intolerance.

Intolerance comes from a weak conscience and causes men to be offended. Psalm 119:165,

**<sup>165</sup> Great peace have they which love Thy law; and nothing shall offend them.**

Those who lose their temper, or who are offended or angered, usually lose the respect of those around them. Respect may be regained by humbly asking forgiveness, but most people do not do this, for they feel justified in their anger. This is what Paul means when he speaks of a weak conscience. It is easily offended. Before we can be effective in our ministry to others—including other Christians in the Church—we must have a stronger conscience that is not offended by food sacrificed to idols.

Once you have had your wilderness training, and your faith is strong, and you know what the truth is, and you know how to teach the people the truth in love, you can come back into the world or the

Church and listen to any Bible passage that the preacher may sacrifice to the idol of his own heart—and it will not defile you or offend you. In fact, you will be listening to hear the voice of God at all times, and so even in the midst of this unholy sacrifice, you may hear God speak to you some truth you had never known.

### **It is Not What Goes Into You**

In Matthew 15 Jesus gave His disciples this same lesson. This chapter begins with a discussion about the traditions of men. The scribes and Pharisees asked Jesus why His disciples did not wash their hands before eating. They were not concerned with dirt or germs. They had a tradition that they were to purify their hands before eating. They did so by pouring water upon their hands, even as the holy vessels of Moses' tabernacle and other things were purified by sprinkling water upon them.

Jesus' answer was that the scribes and Pharisees were more concerned about their traditions than the law of God. He said that their traditions had actually negated the divine law.

**<sup>10</sup> And after He called the multitude to Him, He said to them, “Hear and understand. <sup>11</sup> Not what enters into the mouth defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man.”**

Jesus was not really talking about physical food. He was talking about the traditions of men as opposed to the divine law. The traditions of men that came from the mouths of the scribes and Pharisees defiled them. These traditions of men are called “dung” in the book of Ezekiel. In fact, Ezekiel uses the term “dung” to mean “idol.” We have taught about this principle in our book, The Laws of Wormwood and Dung.

Jesus later explained to His disciples in Matt. 15:16-20 that whatever spiritual food you “eat” is processed (discerned) in the stomach and what cannot be digested is eliminated harmlessly as dung. But the real problem comes when the food, after it is processed, and after it has turned to dung, comes back up through the mouth and is dispensed to the people as the traditions of men.

We should be mature enough to be able to eat all kinds of food, even that which has been sacrificed to idols. Anything that cannot be digested will be eliminated as dung, and it will not affect us. But if

our stomachs are weak, we will probably “throw up” and begin to spout some traditions of our own.

Do you get the point? We should be able to go back into the world to do the work of God as an ambassador of reconciliation without being defiled by the world's food which has been sacrificed to idols. But if we are sent back while we are yet weak in faith and conscience, the world's food will defile us. That is why God brings us into the wilderness for training.

Associating with the Babylonians, or with the Canaanites, or the Church, or the world, does not defile us. Jesus did it all the time. He associated with all sorts of sinners without defilement. But the Pharisees could not do this, for they had a weak conscience. They did not want to be tainted by all of those sinners. Jesus went and ate with them. He had no problem at all. Why? Was it because the sinners were so righteous? Not at all. He recognized their problem, but Jesus was able to eat with them and not be defiled, even if they still believed traditions that were of heart idolatry.

### **Speaking the Truth in Love**

And so it should be with us. Eating what men say or teach does not defile us. Only what comes out of our mouth defiles us. But while our conscience (stomach) is weak, we are often called out of the Church into the wilderness to live a separate life. This is as much to protect the Church from our inability to speak the truth in love as it is to keep our conscience from defilement. He removes us for a time, because *the Church needs God's protection from self-righteous overcomers who try to beat up the Church with the truth.*

Is that a hard word? Well, you must recognize like Moses did that God is the One who has blinded men's eyes to the truth. He is not nearly as concerned about their knowing the truth as we are. We think we have a tremendous obligation to force them to know the truth immediately, and so we think we must pry open their eyes even if it kills them. If you pry someone's eyes open when they are sleeping, will they thank you and bless you? Probably not. They will probably slap your face or curse you.

Since God has blinded their eyes, we just need to ask God who is currently being unblinded, so that we are free to share the Word with them in love. We are called to speak, but only the Holy Spirit can lead men into truth (John 16:13). Do not try to force truth upon people

whose ears are not yet opened by the Holy Spirit. Even if they were to hear, they would be incapable of acting upon that Word or of believing it. You would succeed only in making them responsible for a Word that is impossible for them to obey, and they would only come into further condemnation. If God Himself is not so concerned about revealing the truth to everyone at once, why should we be so concerned? Do not take responsibility for something that God is responsible to do. We make poor substitutes for the Holy Spirit.

If we could only rest in this and only do what we see our Father do, and only say what we hear our Father say, then we will be able to leave the blind and deaf alone until God is ready to unblind their eyes and unstop their ears. Yet we ought to be ready always to speak the truth in love. If we do this with an attitude of forgiveness and genuine concern, many people will recognize it right away. They usually reject a Word because it is not spoken in love. That is really what they are rejecting, because their stomachs are too weak to handle truth spoken with a wrong attitude.

I have talked to many people who have said that they tried to tell their neighbors the truth, and it had been thrown back in their faces. One person said, “I tried to tell my pastor the truth, but I was dismembered!” Well, perhaps it is not all the fault of those who rejected the truth. They cannot see until God opens their eyes. Perhaps being “dismembered” was God’s way of bringing another overcomer into the wilderness for further training.

On the other hand, if we are spiritual, if we have been in the wilderness, if we have been alone with God and have heard His voice, then we are the ones who are responsible to be mature enough, loving enough, forgiving enough, to be able to minister the truth to them in love. We are normally far more zealous than God is, far more impatient than God is, but if we truly believe that God is sovereign, we will learn to rest in Him and be concerned only with doing what we see our Father do, and saying what we hear our Father say. We will be the Amen of God, echoing only His voice, even as Jesus did (John 5:19; Rev. 3:14).

### **Going Beyond Pentecost**

Israel came out of Egypt on that first Passover (Ex. 13:3, 4). They left Egypt and came into the wilderness for Pentecost at Mount Sinai.

They were supposed to enter the Promised Land at the Feast of Tabernacles, but were unable due to their lack of faith.

Israel’s trip to the Promised Land is a historical allegory for us all. Nearly all of Israel’s wilderness training reflected the Age of Pentecost from Sinai to Canaan. We see in this that the wilderness is the place of Pentecost. Pentecost is what Acts 7:38 calls “the church in the wilderness.” Thus, Pentecost is not an end in itself, but a purpose to the end. The purpose of Pentecost is the Feast of Tabernacles. The end of the Pentecostal Age is not the end of history; it is the beginning of a tremendous new ministry. It is a New Covenant ministry that will begin to bring all things into completion in the divine Plan.

The Tabernacles experience is, I believe, the graduation from Pentecost, where we are truly qualified to return to the Promised Land—the glorified body—that we all lost through Adam’s sin. This is our true inheritance, the body made of the dust of the ground and yet it was glorious. Paul says we shall all be changed (1 Cor. 15:51), but yet he did not seem to know precisely with what body we would be manifested in that day (1 Cor. 15:35). Even so, Paul knew that we had at least two examples to show us what it would be like. First, Moses’ face was glorified (2 Cor. 3:7), but it was a fading glory, because he was experiencing something that was out of time and before the coming of Christ. Secondly, though, there is Jesus Himself, who shone like the sun before the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:2).

This is our inheritance, our Promised Land. But until that glorious day, we see the sun setting on Pentecost. The old is passing away; the new is dawning brighter. Saul is getting weaker and weaker, while David becomes stronger and stronger (2 Sam. 3:1). Meanwhile, as we go through our Pentecostal wilderness, we learn the laws of God in our hearts. He is writing them on our hearts, so that we can minister and judge all things. He is writing His laws upon our hearts, so that we may minister to others.

This outpouring of the Spirit at Tabernacles is going to be a fresh anointing that the world has never seen, except in glimpses and from afar. It will be far greater than the Feast of Pentecost ever was, and here is where we can finally have the full authority, anointing, and opportunity to complete the work that He said He would do. He is going to do it *through us*. That is the purpose of our training.

The purpose of the wilderness training is to train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old (mature, trained) he will not depart from it. If God does His work properly as the perfect Parent, then when it is all finished, He will bring His sons into maturity.

He started this work, and He will finish it. He is the Author and Finisher of our faith. He is responsible to cause us to grow up often by hard experiences. Often He brings us by way of discipline, but it is all for the purpose of correction. God's law is the thing that serves this purpose of discipline, to bring us into Sonship and maturity. The law cannot save you, nor can it justify you; but the law is what God uses to teach us and bring us to maturity (Gal. 3:24). Then the fullness of Sonship, the placement as Sons, is the reward, the inheritance, where we fully become joint heirs with Christ.

### **Great Works Than These**

I believe that the world will see miracles that they have never seen before—the greater works that Jesus said would be done (John 14:12). This will result in the greatest harvest of souls that the world has ever seen. Just when most Christians think the harvest is finished, they will find that it has just begun.

The overcomers have another thousand years in which to teach the world. In the coming Age the nations will flow to Mount Zion in the heavenly Jerusalem to learn the law of the Lord (Is. 2:2-4). They will not need to travel to the old city of Jerusalem to a physical temple, for Christ will be manifested in the overcomers, who will be His Temple. They will be the “Zion” of prophecy as well, for Hebrews 12:22 says the new Zion is not the old Zion, any more than the New Jerusalem is the old city.

Zion is the city of David from which place he ruled Israel. Those who attain to the first resurrection are the David company that are called to rule (Rev. 20:4-6). It is not based upon genealogy, but upon character and relationship with Jesus Christ. One must be like David, “a man after God's own heart.”

There will be a new Melchizedek Order that combines rulership with priesthood, even as Jesus Christ is both King and High Priest. “Melchi” means *King*. “Zadok” means *Righteousness* and refers to the high priest under Solomon, the “Prince of Peace.” The rule of Solomon portrays the rule of peace in Jerusalem, the “City of Peace.”

So if YOU are part of that New Jerusalem, if YOU are part of that Mount Zion, people will come to YOU and ask, “What is God saying?” You will be able to share with them not only what the Word of the Lord is, but also teach them how to hear the Word for themselves. You will teach them the divine law and administer justice according to the mind of Christ. And as they learn to hear the voice of the Spirit for themselves, this law will begin to be written on their hearts, for they will not merely hear it externally, but internally. Not merely their actions will be changed, but also their hearts, their very nature, until all come to the place where they all put on the mind of Christ and manifest His character.