The Remnant Church

“And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 12:13-17).

America—A Refuge

In verse 6 we noticed that “the woman fled into the wilderness,” indicating a foot journey. But in verse 14 she is “given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness.” A journey of flight is here portrayed. After centuries of severe persecution in Europe, finally the church was given wings to fly far away to a new land of liberty. “The earth helped the woman,” John says in verse 16. The meaning here is obvious. The faithful church took flight from the persecuting apostate church to a safer part of the earth where she could worship her Lord with freedom. Here Bible prophecy foretold the settling of Christian pilgrims in North America.

In this new land the church would be “nourished,” spiritually strengthened for its mission of evangelizing the world. America would preserve from persecution and doctrinal deception a “remnant” of the woman’s offspring, a remnant church. This end-time church is called the “remnant” because she bears likeness, in faith and practice, to the early Christian church founded by Christ and the apostles. She is the pure remainder of the original church, holding faithfully to all the Bible truths that the apostles taught; and she is preserved from the apostasies of fallen Christianity.

Characteristics of the Remnant

John gives us two unmistakable characteristics of the remnant church: (1) They “keep [the Greek is “preserve” or “protect!”] the commandments of God,” and (2) they “have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

In order to find the true, end-time church of Christ, you must find the one church that possesses these two characteristics. In the midst of hundreds of confusing claims by religious bodies to be the true church, there is only one that upholds or preserves obedience to all of God’s commandments—not eight, not nine, but ten.

Of course, the Bible supports absolutely no changes in or deletions from God’s law. Jesus Himself said, “Think not that I come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Matthew 5:17-18). The apostle James offers us this inspired logic: “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law” (James 2:10-11). To live in disobedience to any one of God’s commandments is sin. So we really are out of harmony with the spirit of the law as a whole, which is loving obedience, when we disregard even one of its principles. The remnant church at the end of time will be a church that upholds obedience to all of God’s commandments—not eight, not nine, but ten.

The second characteristic of the end-time church is just as important as the first. She will “have [possess] the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 12:17). The testimony of Jesus is not, as some have suggested, our personal testimony about Jesus. Yes, Christ’s true followers will have a personal testimony to bear. Revelation 12:11 says they will overcome partly by “the word of their testimony.” But verse 17 says the remnant church will possess in her midst “the testimony of Jesus.” His own word of testimony. Later in Revelation a heavenly messenger told John that “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Revelation 19:10). In other words, Jesus speaks to His people through the spiritual gift of prophecy.

The apostle Paul confirms with John that the gift of prophecy would exist in the church until the end of earth’s history. He said, “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-13).

Christ has a remnant church that upholds His law and possesses the gift of prophecy. Don’t depend on heritage. Don’t depend on human criteria. Don’t depend on your own ability to make a good random guess. Prayerfully look for the church that Jesus identified to John as His remnant. You will find in this world only one church that passes the test. If you sincerely want to be led to the true church, Christ will lead you.

“And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd” (John 10:16).

a spirit of gratitude that would cause the forgiven lawbreaker to willingly obey the law.

Unlocking Revelation

The War Behind All Wars

T he things we see in this world are not the primary reality. Life on planet earth is definitely real, sometimes more real than we would like. But the all too apparent struggle between good and evil that transpires here is merely an extension of a much larger sphere of warfare that began before our world existed. Our planet has become the battleground for a conflict of eternal dimensions. Revelation 12 draws the veil aside to give us an insight into the war behind all wars.

“And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and was in travail, and was in travail, and was in labor, and was in labor, and was in travail to give birth. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto heaven.” Revelation 12:1-5.

The Woman and Her Child

In the Bible a woman symbolizes the people of God, His church on earth. The Old Testament prophet Jeremiah “likened the daughter...
of Zion [Israel] to a comely and delicate woman” (Jeremiah 6:2). In the New Testament, the apostle Paul says that the church is “espoused . . . as a chaste virgin to Christ” (2 Corinthians 11:2). An unfaithful church is symbolized in the Bible by a whore (see Revelation 17:1-6). In the entire history of the church, these two symbols represent the “woman” of Revelation 12:1-6. In the verse, she is described as being “clothed with the sun.” In other words, she is the church, symbolizing the light of Christ. As she is depicted as a “chaste virgin” (2 Corinthians 11:2), an unfaithful church is applicable to her. The beautiful woman of Revelation 12:1-6 symbolizes the true church of Jesus Christ, as he is the “lamp of the world” (Matthew 5:14). The Woman in the Wilderness “And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place预备for her to make her dwelling. And there she continued for twelve months.” (Revel 12:6). This verse refers to the church’s wilderness period, which lasted for 1260 years (538 A.D. to 1798). During this time, the church was persecuted and suffered greatly. The Origin of Evil The devil did not prevail and was expelled from the heavenly kingdom. Now the earth became his battleground. Here he would demonstrate his “better” plan of government. Here he would manifest his true character. He would prove himself a liar and a murderer. In the form of a serpent, the master of deceit accomplished the fall of our first parents and, through them, has ensnared the world in his trap of sin. All the guilt, the sorrow, the degradation and tragedy of our world is the result of Satan’s rulership. For thousands of years Satan wore the mask of deceit, claiming goodwill and charging God as the criminal in the war. The book of Job reveals that Satan presented himself in heaven as the self-proclaimed prince of this world (see Job 1 and 2). There, before the “principi-