

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#03-09190

***New Jerusalem #29.
Abundant Divine Life***

December 28, 2009

The city was pure gold, like pure glass. (Revelation 21:18 LITV)

(1) And he shows me a river of water of life, resplendent as crystal, issuing out of the throne of God and the Lambkin. (2) On each side of the river are trees [the tree of life] that grow a different kind of fruit each month of the year. The fruit gives life, and the leaves are used as medicine to heal the nations. (Revelation 22:1-2 CEV [NASB])

It only seems right that, as we come to the conclusion of John's vision of New Jerusalem, the key word to describe this glorious city is *life*. The city itself is life, and it extends life to and influences all that it touches. But the question is: What kind of life exudes from the city, and whence does it come?

It is the divine life, the very life of God and of His Son, and it comes from the very throne of God and the Lambkin.

In relation to judgment, Daniel saw a river of fire flowing forth from the throne (Daniel 7:10), and John saw the river form into a lake of fire (Revelation 20:14-15). But in John's final vision of New Jerusalem, there is no longer a river of fire but rather a river of water of life. Judgment according to the law is no longer in view, for the law is written on the heart of New Jerusalem, and there is no more need for judgment; all is done according to the perfect will of God.

When God's perfect government goes forth as depicted by His throne, it brings life to all that it touches, which means that the new earth and, by extension, the new heaven will be filled with the very life of God or, if you will, with divine life. All will come to know the mind, the will, and the love of God, for this speaks of divine life.

I have not mentioned it in previous issues, but the city is made of pure transparent gold, like clear glass. In other words, this gold is so refined that you can see through it. In the physical realm, most gold has some impurities in it and is seldom transparent. For it to become transparent, it must be worked into extremely thin sheets; only then will light shine through it. But God's city is depicted as huge, and it is transparent; nothing is hidden. The entire city shines forth as gold, and absolutely everything about the city speaks of transparency. The transparent gold speaks of divine life just as the river of water of life does. However, the gold speaks of the very character and essence of this life, which is love. **God is love** (1 John 4:8, 16) is **the gold of God**. The whole city is the love of God. True love is always transparent and never fails (1 Corinthians 13). Think about!

Consider the streets of gold; streets signify fellowship and commerce. People travel and meet one another on streets, and they conduct business on streets. New Jerusalem is the perfection of commerce and fellowship because the very life and essence of the city is divine life and love. It is a pure and transparent relationship between God and His sons, as well as between and among all the sons of God, and all that is outside the city experiences this same transparency when in contact with it.

Returning to the water; today, the water that we drink is often filled with impurities, but not so with the water of God. It is pure; it is refreshing; it is fulfilling; it is life itself. It too is transparent, for it is crystal clear. The end of the Revelation calls out for all who are thirsty to come and take of the water of life without cost, just as Jesus cried out on the eighth day of the feast of Tabernacles (John 7:38).

But what is this water? It is the life of the spirit of God, for **it is the spirit that gives life**, and the words that Jesus spoke are **spirit and life** (John 6:63). Let us not forget that **in Christ all will be made alive** and that **the last Adam became a life-giving spirit** (1 Corinthians 15:22, 45).

God is spirit (John 4:24) and, to commune with God, that is, have fellowship with Him, we need to be in spirit. Also, let us not forget that New Jerusalem is a holy temple in the Lord, the dwelling of God in spirit. So, the river of water of life speaks of the spirit of God that gives life. Need we be reminded that those who are in Christ are a temple of the Holy Spirit, and when they are transfigured, they will occupy immortal, glorified, spiritual bodies in the image of the Son of God?

But there is more, for John saw the tree of life on each side of the river. The Concordant Version translates the tree of life as trees, which makes sense, since there must be more than one tree for it to be on each side of the river. There was one tree of life in the Garden of Eden, but here there are twelve trees lining the river of water of life. The spirit of God flows from the throne as signified by the water of life and feeds the trees with the divine life.

Of course, we must understand this by combining spiritual thoughts [pictures] with spiritual words [understanding, truth] (1 Corinthians 3:13). The Son of God is the tree of life, but how we are to interpret more than one tree. We could say that it is one tree, for there is only one divine life; however, this life is expressed by 12 trees that speak of **the abundant life of Christ** (John 10:10) and perfect communion with God. It is one tree, yet it is expressed in 12 ways as depicted by the 12 kinds of fruit given forth by the trees. This means that this life never ceases; **it is immortal and eternal**.

Again, there is more, for in Scripture, the word *tree* can signify a *nation* (Judges 9:8-15), which refers to a community of people under one government. As such, the tree(s) of life signifies the nation that sustains the life of all other nations on the new earth. If you recall, Jesus told the Jews—the bad figs or the Judahites, according to the flesh, who rejected Him as Messiah and the King of Judah—that the kingdom of God was being taken away from them and given to a nation [ethnos] producing the fruit of it (Matthew 21:43). This nation is New Jerusalem, the tree that produces kingdom fruit. It is the nation of abundant life manifested in and through the immortal sons of God.

As presented in issue #28 of this series, the throne of the Lambkin speaks of the rule of God's Son along with all the sons of God; they are the Christ and the Lambkin, just as Christ is both Head and Body.

We could say that the nation or people of life will be the fruit that sustains life, and its leaves will be medicine to the nations. There are twelve kinds of fruit, for New Jerusalem is made up of twelve tribes of the sons of Israel (Revelation 21:12), which, as we have seen, also speaks of the perfection of government. I believe that every nation on earth will be governed by one of the tribes.

It is interesting that the first mention of leaves in Scripture is the fig leaves that Adam and Eve used to cover their naked bodies after Adam's one transgression (Genesis 3:7). In Hebrew, the word for *leaf* is *aleh*, which comes from the root word *alah*, which has many meanings, one of which is "to ascend or arise."

Since the tree of life first appears in Genesis, perhaps, we can apply this same meaning to the tree(s) of life in Revelation. If so, then the leaves speak of the ascended life of the nation or New Jerusalem. It is the ascended life of Christ in an immortal people called New Jerusalem that will bring healing to the nations, those that are outside. The healing comes through New Jerusalem, that is, the complement of Christ. They have ascended to the throne, and, in their ascendancy, they will bring life and healing to all.

Finally, the fruit and leaves of the trees could be seen as divine influence. Life influences that which it touches. If we see that New Jerusalem signifies a people, that is, the sons of God conformed to the image of Christ, the Son of God, we must see that these partakers of the divine life influence all that come in contact with them.

This is the spiritual picture we need to see in the conclusion of John's Patmos vision. It is summed up with three words: **ABUNDANT DIVINE LIFE!**