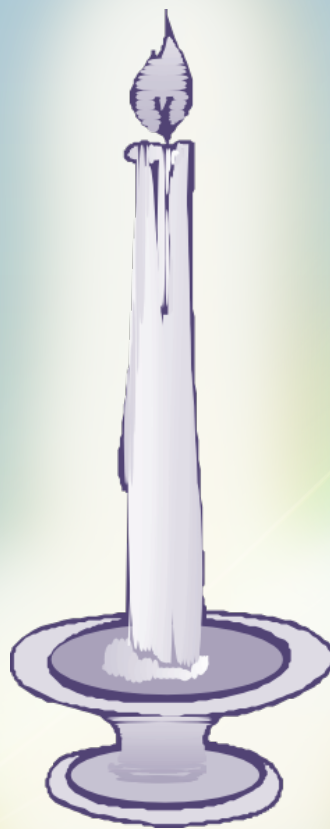


# PIECES

WRITINGS FOR THE MYSTICAL BRIDE OF CHRIST



GREGORY MORRIS

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# DEDICATION

This compilation is dedicated to my children, Sophie and Jonah. May you never stop growing in your own unique expressions of the Divine, and may Wisdom guide you throughout your journey on this earthly plane.

Thank you to my own precious bride, Sarah. Our nineteen-year adventure together has been full of surprises and many challenges, and I am filled with gratitude when I consider your loving support throughout. I have learned much about the Bride by simply being a recipient of your love. I am convinced Proverbs 31:10-30 was written with you in mind.

Finally, to the Bride of Christ abroad who has patiently endured all manner of trials, tribulations, persecutions, and suffering. Your faith in things yet unseen has made you strong in the midst of these troubles, and the promises made to you will most certainly manifest at the appointed time. May you be refreshed, strengthened, and encouraged by the words of your Bridegroom:

*"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16:33*

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## FOREWARD

For the more than 20 years I've known Greg Morris, his vibrant faith and intense yearning to know and make known the heart of God has deeply impressed and inspired me. These pages reveal God's extravagant love for mankind (Christ's Bride) – again and again – through various poetic expressions and commentary. Greg knows not merely *how* God works; he has gained much understanding as to *why* God works and acts as He does. Obviously Greg has become intimately acquainted with our Heavenly Father's heart and ways.

Greg has learned how to comfort his fellow travelers with the consolation with which his Heavenly Father has reassured him over the years. If God truly loves us, if Jesus truly loves us, then why do we sometimes find ourselves in a howling desert place, feeling forsaken, mistreated, and alone – plagued with thoughts of despair?

In his piece “Bride In the Wilderness”, Greg reminds us, “Jesus told His disciples ‘greater things than these will you do’, in reference to His miracles and demonstrations of God's love and power. This promise extends to His modern disciples, and living Bride, and can only be procured by the same path in the wilderness.” For those of us who have spent many years living on earth (and I must humbly admit that I am one of these) Greg's words deeply resonate.

I'm delighted to recommend this intimate collection of writings to all who yearn to know, “Does God *really* love us as a faithful husband loves his bride?” I believe those who contemplate these pages will find abundant assurance and refreshing confirmation that He does.

## **Charles Slagle**

Charles Slagle is the author of several inspirational books, most notably *From the Father's Heart*, *An Invitation to Friendship*, *Abba Calling*, and *Absolute Assurance in Jesus Christ*. He and his wife, Paula, have traveled extensively since 1971 throughout the United States, Latin America, and the United Kingdom. Their passion is to reveal God's true character.

# INTRODUCTION

In 1994, I saw a vision of a radiant bride sitting in front of a mirror as her attendants were flanking her, preparing her for her wedding – and I was among them. She was already in her wedding gown, and the wedding would be in a few hours. I interpreted this vision to mean that I would somehow be involved in preparing the Bride at the end of the age. That was twenty-two years ago.

Since that time, I have not been involved with much in the way of traditional Christian ministry and have felt mostly out of place in churches. Instead, I have relished organic relationships with individuals and families from almost all denominational backgrounds and faiths. I have deeply explored the culture and context of the Messiah's family and early church – Chassidic Judaism. I have been fascinated by the mysterious Essenes, and the Qumran community nearby the Dead Sea which produced the Dead Sea Scrolls, and extra-canonical books such as Enoch and Jubilees. To this day, I continue to seek spiritual community outside the four walls of religion. And even after all these years, the question of what, or who exactly, embodies the mystical Bride of Christ will not let me go.

The Apostle Paul references this as a “profound mystery”, Christ and His Bride, while admonishing husbands to “love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her”. John the Revelator refers to the Bride in terms of the New Jerusalem – a city coming down out of heaven – yet also cries along with the Spirit “Come, Lord Jesus” at the conclusion of his epic prophetic vision. John the Baptist seems to clearly understand that he is a friend of the Bridegroom, and that his role was about to be diminished: “He who has the bride is the



bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine has been made full. He must increase, but I must decrease."

I am persuaded that the Bride represents *a people* in the earth who do not love the world (while living productive lives in it), but long to be with her Bridegroom wherever He is. "Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you – if you find my beloved, what will you tell him? Tell him **I am faint with love**" (Song of Songs 5:8). We are participating in a timeless, Divine romance that began in the Garden of Eden and can be traced throughout human history and the Scriptures. God's love affair with mankind is unrelenting despite our historic wayward tendencies. Will we love Him back?

This compilation of writings primarily consists of inspired pieces - poems, words of wisdom, and short essays from my journals over the last twenty-two years. And though these pieces reflect a personal journey, hopefully they reveal a recognizable landscape not too dissimilar from others traveling along the same inward path. As you read and contemplate these pieces, may your spirit be kindled within you towards the Bridegroom of mankind, Yeshua, the Moshiach (Jesus, the Messiah). You, the Bride, were intended to read this material.

If we will yield to His loving advances and submit to the process of transformation, we will, as the Master prayed, be one with Him and the Father, the Source of All.

*"Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires."*

Song of Songs 8:4

# P OEMS

While there are many poets among us, for some reason, you'll be hard pressed to find a modern book of poetry at your local Barnes and Noble. Most of the songs we listen to are comprised of poetic stanzas put to soul-stirring music. King David was an artist, dancer, and poet. The Book of Psalms was the greatest poetry/songbook ever written, filled with hits that have lasted generations. Not to be outdone, his son King Solomon penned the "Song of Songs" - and of course, it was a love song. Seemingly the most peculiar of all the 'books' included in the biblical canon, it is also perhaps the most intriguing and mystical. There are so many interpretations and commentaries on the Song of Songs, but there is no getting around its significance as an allegorical embodiment of our love affair with the Divine.

Most of us are not accustomed to sitting down with a book and reading a series of poems, in the same way we do not buy a new album and immediately remove the inside cover and read all of the lyrics. Therefore, I would like to help reframe the ensuing section for you. Each piece has its own unique soul and desires to be thoughtfully savored. Hopefully, the result will be contemplation, meditation, and a heart resonance that leads to closer communion with Ein Sof (Hebrew, "Endless One").

Poetry has long been a vehicle of creative expression for me, and when the inspiration strikes, I have learned to honor it. Writing in all its forms is, to me, an act of worship like composing a song or choreographing a dance. The poems that follow were written between the years 1992 – 2004. I have included a brief intro to each piece.

## THE SONS OF GOD

The inherent birthright we have as children of God is greater than what we walk in, and more than we have ever imagined. When we fully awaken, and the Bridegroom comes, the world will never be the same.

*"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. **For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed.**"* Romans 8:18-19

### *The Sons of God*

All creation groans and waits  
While Glory keeps concealed  
Much travail precipitates  
The sons to be revealed.

Dodging spears and dwelling caves  
While being born of Heaven  
Esteeming not what this world craves  
Bewaring of its leaven.

Hidden well from natural eyes  
Discerned only by the Spirit  
Their speech is foolish to the "wise"  
But the humble long to hear it.

To the Heavens, these are violent  
Advancing with every breath  
But like lambs below, are silent  
Not shrinking back from death.

Rejected and despised by men  
Though children of noble birth  
A Kingdom to be ushered in  
Will manifest here on earth.

All creation groans and waits  
With longing felt abroad  
The very ones that this world hates  
Unveiled the Sons of God.

### **COME, LORD JESUS**

What characterizes the Bride in the earth, above all, is her longing for her Bridegroom, the Messiah. In the divine wisdom of God, exile and estrangement serve to cultivate our longing for re-union.

*“Then the LORD said to him (Abraham), ‘Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there.’”* Genesis 15:13

*“The watchmen found me as they made their rounds in the city. They beat me, they bruised me; they took away my cloak, those watchmen of the walls! Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you—if you find my beloved, what will you tell him? Tell him I am faint with love.”* Song of Songs 5:6-8

*“The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’”* Revelations 22:17

## *Come, Lord Jesus*

Our hearts ache with unspeakable longing  
Come, Lord Jesus  
This world does not know You  
We do not belong  
Come, Lord Jesus  
Where do we fit, except by Your side?  
No place to lay our head  
No home that feels right  
Except with You in green pastures  
Come, Lord Jesus  
We are strangers bound in a foreign land  
Deliver us by a strong, right Hand  
We wait for You...  
Though battered and bruised  
We love only You  
Men in high places  
Reject us as You  
What greater joy?  
We belong to You  
Come quickly, Lord.

## **I REMEMBER**

All too often we forget where we came from, who we really are. We easily mistake our identity as a byproduct of our conditioning, culture, successes, and often, our mistakes. The truth of who we are is sometimes too wonderful for us to believe, and difficult to live up to. Nevertheless, it is our calling.

*"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."*  
Jeremiah 1:5

*"We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience."*

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

*"My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be." Psalms 139:13-16*

### *I Remember*

I wake up every morning  
And remember . . .  
This world is not my home  
I am a stranger here.

The best things here  
Are but mere shadows  
Of the reality in heavenly realms  
Where my soul was born.

What was it You spoke to me  
While in the Secret Place  
Before inside my mother's womb  
When you commissioned me?

Now I walk on foreign soil  
Trying to recollect  
All the things we talked about  
Before You sent me here.

Who am I, really?  
Why is the TRUTH so diluted?  
When I hear it spoken  
It rings so familiar.

This world is ruled  
By a displaced prince  
With counterfeit authority  
But I belong to the One, true King.

Come, Adonai, Come!  
The Spirit and Bride say "Come"!  
Let your mystery unfold  
For all of mankind...

## **RESTLESS ON PLANET EARTH**

Jesus says plainly that His kingdom is not of this world, and that we are not of this world. Yet we often find ourselves restless, trying to navigate between physical and spiritual realities.

*"I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it." John 17:14-16*

### *Restless on Planet Earth*

I am keenly aware these days  
That this world is not my home  
My existence is eternal,  
Camouflaged in skin.

Everything seen with natural eye  
Will one day be pulled back  
The present king of material things  
Rallies mankind against the Truth.

Where are others like myself,  
Aware of this world's veil?  
Where are those living opposed  
To this present "world order".

Where are those patiently waiting  
For the One, True King to return?  
Where are those holding out  
While restless on planet earth?

Patiently waiting under daily scrutiny  
Enduring schemes, traps, and wicked men  
Dodging spears and dwelling caves . . .  
Restless on planet earth.

## **BRIDE IN THE WILDERNESS**

A bride takes on the likeness of her husband. In fact, she becomes his mirror reflection according to the mystics. Adam was made in the image and likeness of God. Jesus told His disciples "greater things than these will you do", in reference to His many miracles and demonstrations of God's love and power. This promise extends to His modern disciples, and living Bride, and can only be procured by forging a similar path in the wilderness as the Spirit beckons.

*"Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted"*  
Matthew 4:1



*"The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the wilderness, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach." Revelations 12:14*

*"Who is this coming up from the wilderness leaning on her beloved?" Song of Solomon 8:5*

### *Bride in the Wilderness*

The Bride is led  
To the wilderness  
A secret place  
To find herself  
To be made weak  
To be left alone  
Yet to find strength  
In the depths of her soul  
It is there she must go  
By Divine prodding  
To be humbled, to be tested  
When its purpose is done  
It will be time to leave  
And as Jesus before her  
True ministry will begin  
She will go a different way  
Than the way she came  
A path untraveled  
Its course unknown  
But she will trust the Hand  
Of the One who leads her  
To take her and guide her  
Where she has not gone before  
She will remember her time

In the wilderness  
As the Spirit prepares her  
For marriage with the Lamb.

## **DESERT ROAD**

The path to the Promised Land, and what it represents in our lives, is necessarily forged in the desert wilderness. It is where the Egypt in our heart (ego) dies a slow death. It is where we learn the hard lessons, but reap unparalleled rewards. There are no shortcuts, but He will lead us the quickest, most efficient route if we let Him. Often the landscape is shadowy for the soul and devoid of desirable feelings or the sensation of His presence. Jesus was led into the wilderness, as is His Bride.

*“Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands”.*

Deuteronomy 8:2

*“Likewise, from the aridities and voids of this night of the desire, the soul draws spiritual humility.” St. John of the Cross, Dark Night of the Soul*

*“I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water.” Psalms 63:1*

### *Desert Road*

A desert road bravely plod  
By those who dare to dream  
A way not many applaud  
Too lowly for man's esteem

Strewn with squandered vision  
The desert wasteland sings  
A melody of derision  
Humbling the pride of kings.

Before the feet of mountains  
The desert road submits  
But where are promised fountains?  
Is this as good as it gets?

In the place of seeming impasse  
Compromise tempts our souls  
But daring to look past  
Is the faith which God extols.

A faintly visible path appears  
Hiking upward towards the peak  
Challenging our hopes and fears  
And the purpose which we seek.

The upward climb continues  
It's all we know until . . .  
Gazing down into the valley views  
We see what few have still.

The place where dreams begin  
Will be discovered in the end  
The journey in between for men  
Is to be tested by the Wind.

Before embarking you must know  
The nature of faithless men  
Many will caution not to go  
But these have never been.

A desert road bravely trodden  
A mountain trail endured  
All bitterness forgotten  
Once dreams are well procured.

## LIKE GENTLE THUNDER

Our Bridegroom is safe, strong, and powerful. He proved this to His disciples, and He will prove it to us if we let Him – come what may.

*“Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke him, saying, ‘Lord, save us! We’re going to drown!’ He replied, ‘You of little faith, why are you so afraid?’ Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. The men were amazed and asked, ‘What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!’” Matthew 8:23-27*

### *Like Gentle Thunder*

In the midst of the storm  
To my amazement and wonder  
There is peace in your voice  
Like gentle thunder

Winds rage with fury  
While I fight to stay afloat  
But you quietly remind me  
You are with me in the boat

It is often during storms  
That You decide to speak  
It is then You have our attention  
Which you continually seek

The sky above ripples  
While earth trembles in fear  
With heavenly acoustics  
Your message comes in clear

When the heavy rains come  
We retreat to reflect  
You alone are God and King  
Not president elect

Mighty and resounding  
Tearing nations asunder  
Yet loving and pure to me  
Your voice, like gentle thunder

To the wicked, You are terrible  
But a Father to Your sheep  
Next time the skies look threatening  
Remember Jesus fell asleep

## **JESUS LOVES ME**

Perhaps the most fundamental truth we could ever grasp is also the most difficult to accept: God loves us. It seems unfathomable that the great King of the Universe, in His vast glory, could care about us. Yet, God's eternal, unconditional, relentless love for us is the truest thing in the universe – and we know it deep down when we can manage to get still before Him.

*"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

Romans 8:38-39

*"Jesus loves me—this I know,  
For the Bible tells me so;  
Little ones to him belong,  
They are weak, but he is strong."* Anna Bartlett Warner (1860)

### *Jesus Loves Me*

Jesus loves me...  
In spite of my questions  
Despite my fragile states  
And lack of understanding

Jesus loves me...  
For the man I am becoming  
A son of God unfolding  
One day to be like Him

Jesus loves me...  
More than I can fathom  
Patient and pursuing  
His love does not relent

Jesus loves me...  
This I know, but scarce believe  
If only I could accept each day  
Yes, Jesus loves me.

## INWARD RETREAT

In order to find God, we do not need to go very far. He is within us, having breathed His very essence into our souls. And further, He promises to never leave or forsake us. This is such good news.

*"He answered them and said, 'The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, the kingdom of God is within you.'" Luke 17:20-21*

*"Most Christians do not feel that they have been called to a deep, inward relationship to their Lord. But we have all been called to the depths of Christ just as surely as we have been called to salvation." Madame Guyon, Experiencing the Depths of Jesus Christ*

*"No the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it." Deuteronomy 31:9*

### *Inward Retreat*

Where do we go to look for You  
When the world around us threatens?  
I cannot seem to get away, except...  
Inward retreat.

Everyone says You are somewhere else  
Out there, up there, anywhere but  
Deep inside of me...  
It is there I must withdraw.

My outer courts are trampled  
My soul is in distress  
Your most Holy Place is refuge...  
In the innermost part of me.

The veil has been rent asunder  
Access has been granted  
Your presence within revealed  
It is there I must abide.

## **WELCOME TO CHRISTIANITY**

This next piece needs somewhat of a disclaimer. Organized Christianity takes on many forms and varieties, and the following is not intended to offer a broad generalization, or indictment, of the many faithful sheep who regularly participate in congregational life. In fact, many dear friends and family regularly attend and experience great benefit in their personal relationship with God. However, I do wish to expose some of the attitudes that persist among “church-goers” and clergy which sometimes fly in the face of the early church experience, and unwittingly, place the traditions of men on a pedestal above organic community and the Kingdom of God.

*“You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions.”* Mark 7:8

*“Be careful,” Jesus warned them. “Watch out for the leaven of the Pharisees and that of Herod.”* Mark 8:15



*Welcome to Christianity*

“Let’s go to church on Sunday  
It’s there we’ll meet with God  
Our Pastor says he knows the Way  
He often speaks abroad.

Our worship is the best around  
Many come just to hear  
Our choir brings forth angelic sound  
You’ll feel like God is near.

The Gospel is really preached  
No compromise spoken here.  
Why wasn’t Clinton impeached?  
God loves, but Hell to fear.

Our youth are really growing  
We keep them entertained  
Our young married’s class is showing  
While our singles have abstained,

Our prayer time is so blessed  
For we have so much to say  
Our requests are well addressed  
And there’s platform for the lay.

Our tithing is so critical  
It helps pay off our building  
Our Board can be political  
If short on annual yielding.

Home fellowship is every week  
Bible study to warm your soul  
Accountability you seek?  
Your name is on the roll.

So let's go to church on Sunday  
We're sure to meet the Lord  
If He's not there, we'll still obey  
His work not be ignored."

## **ANESTHESIA**

When we hurt, we don't want to feel it – all of humanity experiences this aversion until we learn that feeling is the quickest route to recovery. When we are free of all forms of anesthesia, then we become the most qualified candidates to assist those who are suffering in our midst.

*"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you... first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye." Matthew 7:1-5*

*"The common tendency is that if you have a little bit of pain in your soul, turn the music louder, eat more food, take some drugs and alcohol...so you can go numb." Rabbi Gabriel Cousens, Torah as a Guide to Enlightenment*

## *Anesthesia*

Anything to numb the pain  
We all cry out when we get still  
We reach for it when it gets quiet . . .  
Anesthesia.

We have all been wounded  
We have all been victims  
Until we find the healing . . .  
Anesthesia.

We were born in a false world  
We all know it somehow  
Until we learn to walk in truth . . .  
Anesthesia.

Suffering is the key to growth  
If we can't feel, we can't learn  
When we get tired, we give in . . .  
Anesthesia.

Sex, drugs, religion  
Alcohol and ESPN  
Acceptable and frowned upon  
Anesthesia.

Judge not your friends' addiction  
Your love will find its root  
We all are alike in this regard . . .  
Anesthesia.

## VETO POWER

God has given us free will, and while in many respects it is illusory, we get to choose from one moment to the next our path. Ultimately we learn that it does not serve us well to ignore His beckoning in our lives.

*"Then he returned to the disciples and found them asleep. He said to Peter, 'Couldn't you watch with me even one hour? Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. **For the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak!**'"* Matthew 26:40-41

### *Veto Power*

As we hear the Spirit leading  
We sense our flesh retreating  
We pray, "Oh Lord, Your will be done"  
Though oft revealed, we choose to run  
And exercise veto power.

The Spirit is willing, the flesh is weak  
We are always ready for God to speak  
But when His words are hard to hear  
We rationalize and turn in fear  
And exercise veto power

While God is seeking whom to send  
We're always quick to self extend  
His ways are higher than our behavior  
And seldom met with worldly favor  
So we exercise veto power

We want to speak His timely word  
We long for love and rest assured  
But as the prophets long ago  
We wrestle with the Truth we know  
And entertain veto power.

We want a name that's well received  
Which often renders us deceived  
For in our vain attempts to please  
We yield the moment for flesh to seize  
Its right to veto power.

Our Lord was sent from high above  
Humbled, he served in holy love  
Never shrinking back from death  
Enduring shame, with His last breath  
He surrendered veto power.

## **MY SHIPWRECKED HEART**

Our lives are a series of buildings, some which stand and some which fall. If you've ever had the experience of seeing something you took time and energy to build (i.e., a career, marriage, bank account) be torn down before your very eyes, then this piece is for you.

*"Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain." Psalm 127:1*

*"But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash." Matthew 7:26-27*

## *My Shipwrecked Heart*

The storm came and the winds blew  
Relentless.

I believed I would survive with my life (ego) intact  
I misunderstood.

My heart has been cast aside  
No one is around, how could they be?  
Abandoned.  
I have never felt so alone.

My neat little life  
So compartmentalized, so busy  
Undone.  
It's time to rebuild.

My hopes and dreams  
Could never quite manifest  
Under status quo  
I understand now.

Lovingly, He tears apart  
What we build outside of Him  
Renewal.  
I surrender again.

## **DICHOTOMY**

It has been said that this earthly plane is a training ground (school) and our number one lesson to learn is how to love. Along the way, we also learn that life is full of apparent contradictions and irreconcilable differences. Jesus came to be our teacher and will one day reconcile all things to Himself.

*"The entire law is summed up in a single command: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" Galatians 5:14*

*"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16:33*

*For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven..." Colossians 1:19*

*Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses." Proverbs 27:6*

### *Dichotomy*

Life is rich  
Full of trouble  
Life is poor  
Rich in love

Love is tough  
Enduring much  
Love is bliss  
Hardly noticing

Friends are rare  
Wounds are many  
Friends are honest  
In time, it's clear.

## MANY WORDS

Have you ever said too much? Sometimes we think that if we explain ourselves well enough, then maybe others will understand what we need or want. We often apply this same logic in our relationship to the Almighty. However, the truth is He knows what we need before we even ask, and it is His delight to give us good and perfect gifts.

*“When there are many words, sin is unavoidable, but the one who controls his lips is wise.”* Proverbs 10:19

*“God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few.”* Ecclesiastes 5:2

*“If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God.”* 1Peter 4:11

*“Be still and know that I am God.”* Psalms 46:10

### *Many Words*

Too many words...

Words, words, words

Deliver me from words

I grow weary from much dialogue

Exasperated from the excessive flow

Proud, lofty, and foolish words

Manipulative, restraining, controlling words

Sin flourishes in many words

I wait for Your power

I wait for Your kingdom

A kingdom of POWER, not talk

A kingdom of HEALING, not sympathies



A kingdom of PASSION, not obligatory response  
A kingdom of ACTION, not idle chatter  
Send me *Your* word  
Let my words be few  
I will sit in silence  
And await Your salvation  
Let Your voice ripple through the skies  
As I am still.

### **FAMILIAR VISIT**

The Apostle Paul exhausted a fair amount of words on the topic of our sinful nature (animal soul) vs. our divine soul. This is an epic struggle within us, like roommates who could not be more contrary to one another and always seek to dominate the other. In fact, the more we desire righteousness, the more we seem to struggle with our Yetzer Hara (Hebrew, “evil inclination”) according to the mystics. Therefore, we can take comfort in the fact that God housed these two together, like Jacob and Esau within the righteous Rebecca, to teach us that there is something about this struggle that pleases God.

*“So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!” Romans 7:18-25*

*“But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.” 2 Corinthians 12:9*

### *Familiar Visit*

Making progress in the glow of freedom  
Drawing closer to love  
Then familiar shadow visits  
Whispering painful memories.

At first, strong and resistant  
Ignoring dogged beckoning  
But slowly breaking down the senses  
Human weakness settles in.

Alone as the wrestling begins  
The flesh will not relent  
Taken to the mat so many times,  
Here we go again.

My foe also has a weakness  
Underestimating His strength in me.  
Nothing to fear in perfect love  
I relax and say a prayer.

### **OUR SECRET LOVE**

Self love takes on many forms, and if not kept in check, can keep our Divine soul in exile within. In order to fully mature, we must outgrow this default setting of the heart, and learn to be a consistent vehicle of unselfish, Divine love.

*"The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?"* Jeremiah 17:9

*"They did not love their lives so much as to shrink back from death."* Revelations 12:11

## *Our Secret Love*

Everyone has a secret  
We are all lovers of self  
A scandalous relationship  
Of unashamed affection

Oh do we love ourselves!  
And strive for self-preservation  
Giving requires much loss  
And loving much distress

With masked appearance  
We fool others like ourselves  
With gracious externalities  
We hide our secret affair

Vanity, Pride, Greed and Lust  
Fear and Manipulation  
Lying at the root of these  
Our harbored, secret love.

## **DIVINE ENCOUNTER**

Do you remember a time you sensed the presence of Divine Love? A gentle encouragement from nowhere or a mystical moment that seemed to transcend time and space? It is important for us to remember these instances of grace and hold onto them during seasons of drought. Though it may take a lifetime, cultivating our natural longing for His abiding presence will most certainly lead to mystical union.

*“As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.” Acts 9:3*

*"I will search for the one my heart loves." Song of Songs 3:2*

### *Divine Encounter*

Nameless Face  
Eternal moment  
Warm embrace  
Veil is rent  
Knowing glance  
Appointed time  
Not by chance  
Love sublime  
Lightened chest  
Troubles fade  
Perfect rest  
Changed forever.

## **MY FIRST LOVE**

Early in a love relationship, everything is brand new. As the years go by, and life deals us challenges, the initial attraction can fade and dissipate altogether if it is not carefully nurtured along the way. As the beloved, we have a Lover who will never leave us. It is important for us to keep coming back to Him no matter what trials we endure, or how distracted we become by the things of earth.

*"But I have this against you, that you have left your first love."*  
Revelations 2:4

*"Restore unto me the joy of your salvation." Psalms 51:14*

### *My First Love*

I have long been distracted  
By the allures of this world  
Yet deep within remains  
An abiding love of God

Burning bright, its fire never quenched  
Despite my transgressions  
This love gives me hope  
This Love loves me back

Oh great Lover of my soul  
Fan the flames within  
Let your love wash over me  
And fuel my every deed

May I no longer be preoccupied  
Let my heart be filled with longing  
You, my first and only love  
The Spirit and Bride say "Come".

### **SOMETIMES SHE CRIES**

The marriage covenant is a picture of our bond with the Divine. Of all the relationships we have on earth, which may also serve to be instructive, none can teach us more about our relationship with Him than our spouse.

*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." Ephesians 5:25*

## *Sometimes She Cries*

Sometimes she cries...  
And when she does, I am speechless  
Reason stands corrected  
And pride takes a knee  
When she cries.

Sometimes she cries...  
And when she does, the Heavens stand still  
Angels peer down  
To see what's the matter  
When she cries.

Sometimes she cries...  
And when she does, I am transformed  
Witnessing the sacred flow  
Of blessed tears streaming  
When she cries.

Sometimes she cries...  
And when she does, I receive the grace  
To be the husband she needs  
And the man I want to be  
When she cries.

## MY BELOVED

This last poem was a wedding gift to my wife, Sarah. When a man knows he has met his bride, there is no second-guessing it. It is a recognition that transcends the mind, and causes a great stirring of emotion in the heart. When Jacob saw Rachel for the first time, it was heart-rending. I can only wonder with great anticipation what it will be like when we finally see our Bridegroom face to face.

*“When Jacob saw Rachel daughter of his uncle Laban, and Laban’s sheep, he went over and rolled the stone away from the mouth of the well and watered his uncle’s sheep. Then Jacob kissed Rachel and began to weep aloud.” Genesis 29:10-11*

*“For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.” 1 Corinthians 13:12*

### *My Beloved*

When you danced into my life  
You came unannounced –  
There was no music, no song  
No banners waving  
I was not expecting you  
Though I waited long  
Yet you quietly came  
And awakened my dreams  
Now that you’re here  
My heart is full  
I cannot contain its flow  
With every glance, with every touch  
I know...

You're the one I've been waiting for  
You have ravished my heart  
You're the one I adore  
So let there be music  
Let there be song  
And the let the banners wave  
My beautiful one, come  
And may we dance all our days...



# WORDS OF WISDOM

*“Out in the open wisdom calls aloud,  
she raises her voice in the public square;  
on top of the wall she cries out,  
at the city gate she makes her speech”*

Proverbs 1:20-21

The following proverb-type phrases came clearly over the years, randomly, and without me having to conjure them up. I believe God speaks to all of us, and sometimes we don't necessarily understand what is happening. However, when Wisdom speaks, She does so in a gentle manner, like a small, still voice, that you just intuitively know is not your own. You want to capture this when it happens, and that is what I have endeavored to do. Below each word of wisdom, I have cited one or more scripture references which support the essence of its meaning.

*“For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit...”*

1 Corinthians 12:8

*Words of Wisdom*

**The truths we understand the most profoundly, we can hardly talk about.**

*{Luke 2:19}*

**One need not be a part of the system to affect it.**

*{Daniel 3; 1Kings 18:22; Revelations 18:4}*

**In order to possess securely, one must lose completely.**

*{Matthew 10:39}*

**At the moment a promise of God becomes impossible, it is closer to manifestation than it has ever been before.**

*{Luke 1:37; Genesis 17:17; Exodus 14:10-14}*

**True unity does not necessarily spring from agreement between people, but from alignment with the mind of God.**

*{John 17:22-23}*

**Repentance is not something you say, it is something you do.**

*{Acts 20:21; Matthew 3:8}*

**Be careful not to fight too hard against a thing – you may be unwittingly wrestling against God.**

*{Acts 5:38-39}*

**Boldness and humility together are awe-inspiring.**

*{Proverbs 28:1; Zephaniah 2:3; Colossians 3:12}*

**Never worry about finding the right words – they will find you.**

*{Matthew 10:19; Luke 12:11}*

**To live for the praise of men is to be continually disappointed.**

*{Luke 11:43; John 12:43}*

**There will always be a struggle for freedom at any level.**

*{Nehemiah 4:17-18}*

**Heavenly, eternal realms are more real than this material world.**

*{2Kings 6:15-17}*

**Acquaintance with little prepares one for much.**

*{Luke 16:10}*

**One should never attempt to teach what he himself has not fully learned.**

*{Psalm 78:5-7}*

**As long as we look to men for our standard, we will never be like Him.**

*{Matthew 7:28-29}*

**One can only lead where one has been.**

*{Exodus 15:22; Psalm 78:53}*

**Anxiety stems from having excessive interest in the outcome of any given situation.**

*{Philippians 4:6; Matthew 6:25-34}*

**CREDIT, RECOGNITION, PRAISE, RESPECT, ADMIRATION,  
HONOR...**

**All things we must not seek in order to find.**

**--**

**DESPISED, REJECTED, ABANDONED, UNRECOGNIZED...**

**The path to the aforementioned.**

*{John 12:43; Isaiah 53:3}*

**In order to know true peace one must first know war.**

*{Deuteronomy 31:23; 1Chronicles 19:19; Ephesians 6:10-17}*

**True learning does not originate in the mind, but rather, in the heart.**

*{Proverbs 4:23; 2 Timothy 3:7; John 7:15}*

**The man who desires mercy will find it.**

*{Isaiah 55:7; Psalm 106:1}*

**Every man believes himself to be great, but only those well acquainted with their frailty can truly be.**

*{Job 16:8; Proverbs 21:2}*

**When money is the motivator, there is errant purpose. Love must become our motivation for everything.**

*{1 Timothy 6:10; Luke 9:3}*

**God loves everyone the same. Some of us are not loved more than others, as tempting as that is to entertain.**

*{James 2:1; Acts 10:34; John 3:16}*

**Free will is an illusion of sorts - all our choices have already been accounted for in His divine grand scheme.**

*{Genesis 3:21-23; John 1:29}*

**To know the glory of reconciliation, we must experience the pain of separation.**

*{Romans 5:10; 11:15}*

**We can only give what we have received.**

*{Matthew 10:8}*

**Before greatness comes obscurity.**

*{Proverbs 18:12; Genesis 40:23; 41:41-43}*

**The biggest fight in our lives is over what we will believe.**

*{Exodus 4:5; Numbers 14:11; John 3:12}*

**Loving God and loving one another are intrinsically tied together. We cannot do one without the other.**

*{Matthew 22:40; Galatians 5:14}*

**Don't shirk the responsibility to be who you are.**

*{Exodus 4:13-14; 1 Samuel 3; 1 Kings 19:3-18; Jeremiah 1:4-10}*

**In order for a man to become strong he must face opposition. The greater the opposition, the stronger the man.**

*{Numbers 16:19; Acts 6:9}*

**Work hard. Love extravagantly. Don't complain.**

*{1Corinthians 4:12-13; Revelations 2:2}*

**Always choose your own expression, even if someone has said it best before you.**

*{1Peter 4:10-11}*



# THOUGHTS

*"Then I will pour out my thoughts to you, I will make known to you my teachings." Proverbs 1:23*

The following pieces fall into the category of "thoughts", but perhaps they would be more aptly described as short essays or commentaries. I like these pieces because they are not limited by rhythm, rhyme, or brevity.

## CHILDLIKENESS

To become a man fully, one must return to a childlike state of heart. Once a man has experienced the sting of his earthly existence; once he has tasted the bitter-sweetness of his nature and been soiled by the world; once he has been bruised, scarred, despised and rejected; and once he has acknowledged that he cannot save himself . . .

Then, he can fully embrace his sonship in heaven; accept the love that has been there all along; be the gift he was meant to be in the world; receive the ointment for the sting of life; find the healing he has long sought; discover that he has already been saved; resolve to make love the highest goal; and rediscover . . .  
CHILDLIKENESS.

## LOVE DISCRIMINATION

I do not get to choose the people in my life. Love does not discriminate – she is an equal opportunity employer. Employing grace to enemies and friends alike . . . the same love.

## **THE BRIDE IN THE EARTH**

The “called out” ones, the Bride of Christ in the earth, are foreigners not of this world. By choosing our Bridegroom, we are choosing to come out of this world system, its trappings, its boastings of what it has and does, and become nothing but faint with love for Him. To die to this world is to live in Him. Our inheritance is like Rebekah’s, who not even knowing what her husband Isaac would look like, left her father and homeland to be married. She simply said, “I will go” - perhaps the most sublime words ever spoken.

## **BUILDINGS**

Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit, and only by providing for one another’s needs do we appropriately give to the Lord’s work. We are a *living* body – why give precious resources to an inanimate building, especially one that is only used primarily 2-3 times a week? Rather, we could align with the spirit of the early church by sharing all things in common and meeting in homes.

## **FALSE PROPHETS**

A false prophet is one who speaks on behalf of, and in the interests of, any institution *not* the kingdom of God. More specifically, any person under the rule or influence of another system will prophesy a “mix”, thus falsely. There are many false prophets entrenched in organized religion today. Similarly, there are many false apostles as well, administering denominational “church-planting” all over the world in submission to U.S. tax code (501(c)(3)) status, rather than the delegated authority of Christ.

## **DISTINCTIONS**

### *Modern-day Pharisees:*

Want to know by whose authority you operate  
Feel threatened by a lack of control  
Seek to influence people against you  
Love to hear praise for their good deeds  
While persecuting you, believe they are doing God a favor  
Attribute authentic deliverance to demonic activity  
Relish their titles and positions, and enjoy hierarchy  
Prefer hands-off aloofness to intimate relationship  
Enjoy hearing themselves talk and pray, while not listening well  
to the needs of others  
Uphold the law, yet deny its spirit (love)  
Esteem the favor of men above the will of God  
Wonder how people can be of service to them, rather than how  
they can be of service.

### *The Righteous:*

Understand that all authority comes from Heaven  
Rejoice in freedom  
Patiently wait for vindication from God  
Humble themselves, and give credit to God for anything good  
Pray for those that persecute them  
Confront demonic activity with genuine deliverance  
Deny themselves titles and positions and do not lord themselves  
over others  
Prefer intimate relationship to impersonal acquaintance  
Speak, when necessary, the words of God – not their own – and  
remain sensitive to their audience  
Uphold the spirit of love over the letter of the law  
Desire to please God above all else, no matter what the cost

Seize every opportunity to be of service, not expecting anything in return.

## **SPIRITUAL LEADERS**

Yes, there is such a thing as spiritual leadership. However, it is rarely “out front.” True spiritual leaders are behind, serving to exhaustion, not asking for anything in return. Spiritual leaders are not ambitious to be known, recognized, seen or heard. In fact, that is immediate disqualification. They have stared face to face with the burden and cost, and would, knowing themselves, rather turn away than pretend they can do anything in their own strength. Spiritual leaders are chosen by God for works prepared by Him at a time when they have traded their knowledge and understanding for emptiness. They are friends, but not the kind that bring comfort to your flesh. Neither do they seek your approval – they already have His. True spiritual leaders can be found when you need them the most. They never represent their own interests, but point the way to God.

## **BEING READY**

What is keeping us from being ready? The Spirit and the Bride agree together when they plead, “Come”. A bride that says ‘come’ is in desperate need for Him to arrive on her scene.

Many involved in religion do not sense urgency, and while they speak of His coming, they are not ready. Why? Because they have their own ministry, following, or wealth. Why do they need a Deliverer if they already have what they want? The true Bride of Christ wants only one thing – her Bridegroom. She is uncaring of the suffering she has been made to endure. Her desire is for Him.

The Pharisees were not looking for Jesus. They did not need him, nor did they desire Him. They already had their places of honor and positions before men. He threatened all they represented. So will the Bride in the earth before He returns.

## **HIS PURPOSES**

He did not come so we could have peace and security within our own kingdoms – He came so that we could enter into His.

He did not come so we could be rich – He came so that we would trust Him.

He did not come so we could pursue our own lusts – He came so that we could fall in love with Him.

He did not come so we could possess everything – He came so that we could give everything up to follow Him.

He did not come to gain political power – He came to be a suffering servant.

When he returns we will reign with Him, if we will embrace His purposes.

## **HIDDEN**

Those who will truly serve the Bride in the earth will do so without fanfare. Those who will lead and operate with His delegated authority do not promote themselves, vie for trust, or attempt to win people over with charisma or natural abilities. These must wait and allow themselves to be hidden. Those who

seek Truth and have become exhausted chasing men and doctrines will inevitably find those not trying to be found.

## **THE KING**

The King of Israel stood up to speak. The whole world held its collective breath. After all this time, what would He say? From the beginning of time, the reign of this King was foretold. From the first man throughout modern history, all of humanity has been waiting...

Standing at the precipice of time and eternity, this moment finally realized the long-awaited heralding of a new beginning, an age of peace. In every generation, there have been forerunners and righteous ones, but never before a King like this One. He embodies the message of all those who have gone before, and there will be no end to this One's reign and rule. It had been rumored for centuries that He came once before, born of most humble circumstances among His people during a time of great oppression. This rumor was widely accepted around the world, except among His own beloved people, who were looking ahead to a time when their King would reign in undisputed power and majesty - a time such as this. In this awe-inspiring moment, it did not seem to matter whether this was his first or second incarnation in time and space. The only important detail to all whose eyes were now fixed upon Him is that he is here, now, and for good.

In the classical sense, a king can only rule with the consent of the people. A king who subjugates the people against their will is no king at all. The kings of the earth have always been measured by their service to the people, and their willingness to sacrifice for the greater good of the least among those they govern. This King of all kings, with piercing eyes and supernal

wisdom possesses these rare qualifications, which have set him apart.

The King of the World stood up to address his willing subjects. As he stood, without any words yet spoken or signal from anywhere, as if everyone was overcome with the same inner compulsion and awareness, every knee bowed and every tongue confessed that indeed this was the long-awaited King among us. HALLELUJAH!!!!!!

## **THE QUESTION OF LEGITIMACY**

All of us question our legitimacy at one time or another. All of us wonder to whom we belong. The sons and daughters of God wrestle with this question more than most, only to be found in warm embrace when all is said and done.

## **INSTRUCTION MANUAL**

When we are born into this world, we come assembled: body, mind, and spirit. Yet we do not come with an instruction manual. We are entrusted to a set of parents who, for better or worse, become our initial instructors teaching us according to what they have learned (or not). The package we come in, however, is altogether perfect – designed and created for a unique purpose: to be a gift to humanity.

Though we do not come with an instruction manual, deposited within us is a burning desire to *know*. Unless we are unduly anaesthetized to the pains of life, most of us are desperately seeking to know who we are, why we are, and how to live (product, function, instructions). Without a manual, we must consult directly with the Manufacturer.

## COMPARISON

There will always be someone stronger. There will always be someone smarter. There will always be someone more artful. There will always be someone wiser, more advanced, more knowledgeable, more beautiful, more desirable, more efficient, more pleasant, and wealthier. However, there will never be someone whom God loves more than you.

## THE PROBLEM

The problem with Christianity is that it is a religion. The problem with religion is that God is not religious, and Jesus, the object figure of Christianity, was vehemently opposed to religion. He did not ask to be worshipped, but rather redirected his disciples' adoration and prayers to the Father.

The mission of the Messiah was to reconcile man to God by laying down His life. He invites us to life, love, and passion – not obligatory response. “It is finished” is good news, while modern Christianity is not necessarily. Religion tends to invite otherwise good people to imagine themselves closer to God than others by extolling externally righteous behavior. The opposite of religion is genuine relationship, and this is exactly what we have been invited to. No fear. Come as you are. Romance with the Divine.

## SIMPLE FISHERMEN

*“I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord.” Philippians 3:8*

It has always struck me that it was once said of some simple fisherman, not that they were Torah scholars, nor expert



fishermen, but rather “these men have been with Jesus.” I have a nice college degree, supposedly worth more than I have been able to pay off in twenty years. I have friends with Master’s degrees in this or that, and know innovators who have had business ideas pay off. I do not want to downplay the need for human beings to desire knowledge, excellence, or significance. I simply want to ask: for what are we striving?

Is there anything more important in life than seeking God and knowing Jesus? No amount of secular or rabbinic schooling can substitute for spending time with Him. Do we really believe we can attain satisfaction from anything else this world has to offer? Scholastic achievement, material wealth, or widespread notoriety? I do not wish to pursue anything that does not result in greater intimacy with my Master, and certainly cannot afford to invest time and energy in distractions that take me away from Him. My significance in this world can only come from abiding in His presence.

Should I pursue charity and good works? Yes. Should I strive to learn and work hard at whatever my hands find to do? Of course. However, I want it to be said of me: “this man has been with Jesus.” I want to be like Him. Unfortunately, there is no amount of schooling that can guarantee this. It is not a commodity that can be bought or sold. And there is no amount of bible study that can produce it. I am not sure what the formula is, but I believe it is within all of us - a deep longing for such intimacy that will not be denied if pursued above all else. Once we recognize that everything else must be considered a loss, compared to gaining such intimacy with Jesus, then we begin to have life . . . not of this world.

## SALVATION FROM WHAT?

Our Lord Jesus Christ has come to bring salvation; in fact his name in Hebrew, *Yeshua*, literally means salvation. But what are we being saved from? Most Christians grow up in churches where it is taught that to be saved means to have your sins forgiven and that when you die you go to heaven instead of hell. Is this really what salvation is all about? Praying a little prayer or believing in a Savior to insure your post life destination is “non-smoking”? Perhaps there is an understanding to salvation that has eluded mainstream Christianity?

There is a clue in the very meaning of our modern word “church”. When Jesus coined the term translated *church*, he was prophetically declaring to Peter that “upon this Rock I will build my *community*”. The word for *church* is *ecclesia*, which means “called out ones”. He was not speaking about buildings, meetings, denominations, television programming, or any place that you go. Rather, He was speaking to a man about a worldwide community of people that He would build (Peter would later receive the revelation of living stones fitted together to build a spiritual house). Why would there be a need for such a community of “called out ones” in the earth?

After the ascension of Christ, Peter became an integral part of the first community of its kind in the earth. From his writings, we can deduce that he had arrived at an understanding of God’s people in the earth as being “strangers in the world”, and urged the people to “live as aliens and strangers in the world.” Similarly, the Apostle John writes “Do not love the world or anything in the world.” Before his crucifixion, Jesus states plainly that His Kingdom is *not of this world*, for if it were, his servants would have prevented his capture. Jesus tells his disciples before his arrest: “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own.

As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.”

So there seems to be two kingdoms presently co-existing in this world. There is the Kingdom of God, which cannot be seen with natural eyes, existing in heavenly realms and in the hearts and minds of those who have received the revelation of *Yeshua* (again, literally salvation). Conversely, there is the kingdom of man, our present world system, which operates under the power of *anti-Christ*, literally anti-salvation or bondage. The opposite of deliverance is slavery. Therefore we have competing kingdoms in the earth, one a kingdom of slavery, the other a kingdom of freedom. Let us consider for a moment this present world order, or system of things in the earth.

For those who are intrigued by conspiracy theories, there is indeed a grand conspiracy at work, and has been since the Garden, to separate man from God, and mankind from its potential. The grand conspirator, our enemy, is referred to in the Revelation of John as the “the ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.” What has he been up to since then? Well, he has been busy setting up his system of rebellion here on earth. Nations are his puppets, and systems are his vehicles through which the people of earth are enslaved, and kept in containment and separation from each other and God. This includes governments, health care, schools, and even religions - everything under the sun is subject to a powerful antithesis to the kingdom of God. We are all born into this world system, regardless of our nationality, ethnicity, socio-economic status, or our parents’ religion. We have all been groomed to be fine, upstanding citizens of the world, and to grow up to be faithful stewards of a system designed to keep humanity enslaved unawares. Until, that is, we meet *the Person of Salvation*.

Yeshua came to free us from captivity to a world system and to reveal His Kingdom. When we learn to walk, we quickly realize that the Kingdom observed within is apparently not manifest without. In other words, though we have undergone a supernatural change, the world around us has not changed. As we mature, we realize that we are in a state of spiritual conflict with the world around us, and to the degree we do not conform to the world, the more we are misunderstood. Ultimately, as fully functioning members of the *Community* of Christ in the earth, we understand that the world system despises our freedom. Our Messiah has frustrated the grand conspirator and leads mankind back to our true purpose - unity with Him and with each other.

Back to *ecclesia*, or “called out ones”: What happens when we are born of the Spirit? We are received into a family where Christ is our “brother Lord” and we inherit many brothers and sisters who are also born of the spirit. We may not naturally know everyone in the family, but eternally, we are one. Our new family serves many purposes, both practically and spiritually.

We soon begin to seek out others who can relate to what we are seeing and hearing with our spiritual senses. In other words, the Spirit creates in us both a need and a desire for community with other “believers”. I am not referring here to Sunday morning church meetings, but relationships. As we begin to be fitted together, or assembled, we become nourished by the life sharing and spiritual impartation from others in the family. In short, we mature while we learn about how to be family in a different way than what is commonplace under the umbrella of the world system. In fact, we are a family that transcends socio-economic status, race, and many other factors that bring division in the world. “In Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female.”

As we grow in relationship with one another and with Messiah, we begin to live differently. As in the book of Acts, we love to share meals together, talk about the miracles of God in our lives, share all things in common, and encourage one another on a daily basis. Unlike worldly relations, we experience friendship as unconditionally loving, and come to realize that we have a significant, unique function and gift to bring for the greater good. We desire to come together in the name of our King, to worship Him, and to love one another. We desire to pray for His Will to be accomplished in the earth, through us, and experience the power of His presence. Practically, we become something very peculiar: a model of how humanity ought to relate in a world built upon separation, control, and resistance to such Truth.

As people of Salvation, *Yeshua*, we represent a living, breathing alternative to the present world order. We are a family of organic, Spirit-led people who put faith in our King above anything this world has to offer. Instead of elected officials and the systems of government, our faith is in Yeshua. Instead of money and banking systems, our faith is in Yeshua. Instead of schools and educational systems, our faith is in Yeshua. Instead of pharmaceuticals and health care systems, our faith is in Yeshua. Instead of America, the economy, or the media, our faith is in Yeshua. Instead of bondage, our faith is in *Salvation*.

One of the reasons the Jewish people have been so persecuted among the nations throughout history, is that in whatever city they found themselves in, they remained peculiar and different. They continued to worship the God of Israel and celebrated His feasts and Holy Days in the midst of pagan nations who lived differently and worshipped other Gods. The Jewish people are first fruits of God's community in the earth. As the apostle Paul points out, an Israelite is one inwardly, not outwardly. In other words, we are called as God's eternal family

in time and space, to live differently and to be a “peculiar people”, set apart by Him and to courageously live in daily, direct enmity with this present world order.

Salvation is often alluded to in Scripture as being a process, one that is worked out in “fear and trembling”. Coming out of the world system is indeed a process, one that involves being led by the Spirit one step at a time, coming into more and more freedom until we are free indeed. Just as the Israelites were delivered from Egypt, and were led step by step, with a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, so too, are we led by God out of bondage to the world system into the wilderness, and ultimately into the promised land, or salvation. There is no way to avoid the wilderness part of the process, because it is there we meet with God, are provided for supernaturally, and grow in faith. It is there where Egypt is extricated from our hearts. Fortunately, we have an entire community of people who are walking with us in this journey: the “called out ones”. We are a people called out of Egypt, out of the world system, to worship the one, true King, called to love one another, and called to freedom as a holy nation.

Finally, in Revelations 18:4, we read, “Then I heard another voice from heaven say: ‘Come out of her, my people’ so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues.” His “called out ones” are necessarily being led by the Spirit out of *all* world control systems which have been established to limit our potential as sons and daughters of God. When we fully come out from under the world system, and can no longer be contained by the systems in place, the inconceivable begins to take place: Acts happen. Miracles and revivals happen. People are set free from diseases, demons, and hang-ups. People sell everything they have and give to the common good. Multitudes are drawn, communities are revolutionized, and those who disturb the peace, like Peter and John, will be thrown in jail by the authorities (stewards of the world system). These

are the days that lie ahead for the Community of Yeshua in the earth. This is our destiny *and* our salvation. May we truly “come out” and be saved.

## **HOW TO PRAY**

### **Our Father:**

The Father of our spirits, of every human being and every created thing. A loving, compassionate Abba who cares deeply about us, and whose thoughts of us outnumber the sands of the seashores.

### **Who is in Heaven:**

Our Father exists in Heavenly, eternal realms, while our present experience is on earth, in time and space. But though we are in the world, like Jesus, we are not of the world. Our citizenship is in Heaven, just as our Father is in Heaven.

### **Hallowed be your Name:**

Our Father’s name is set apart and alone is holy, above every Name. It is an honored Name, to be greatly revered, praised, and adored by all generations of mankind. How unfathomable that we have access to Him by crying out “Daddy!”.

### **Your Kingdom Come:**

He is not only our Father, but He is our King, the only One and True King. He has a Kingdom in Heaven, which as his children, we are destined to inherit.

### **Your Will be done:**

An expression of our surrender to the King, and of our desire to participate and be aligned with the execution of His Will. What are the chances of His will not being accomplished?



**On earth, as it is in Heaven:**

His Will has been accomplished in Heaven. We are agreeing with its being accomplished where we dwell on earth. How wonderful that Our Father, the King, desires to advance His Kingdom from the highest of Heavens, to the lowest of earth, in order that He may truly be "All in All".

**Give us this day, our daily bread:**

Our Father, the King, is also our Provider, every day of our earthly lives. All good gifts come from Him. Let us not deceive ourselves into thinking that we can take care of ourselves. He knows what we need better than even ourselves, and if we ask him for daily bread, as our loving Father, would he give us a stone?

**And forgive us our debts:**

We have debts in need of forgiveness. No one who has ever taken on the form of man, except the One who instituted this prayer, has ever been exempt from this basic need. We and our earthly fathers have sinned against our Father, violated the laws of His Kingdom, and have injured our brothers during our development on earth. We are indebted, but have confidence that when we ask forgiveness from the King, we find mercy on a daily basis, and are given the grace to continue to live on earth free from indebtedness to God and man. How could we ever repay anyway?

**As we forgive our debtors:**

There will always be those who are in debt to us: those who err, injure, and trespass against us. We must daily expect to forgive if we are to daily expect to receive forgiveness. Our loving Father wants us to grow up to be like Him. He has freely forgiven us in our growing into maturity, so we must freely forgive our fellows during their growth into maturity as well.



**Lead us not into temptation:**

Our loving Father does not entice us to rebellion, but rather desires to lead us onto straight paths and righteous living. We are asking for His power to keep us from temptation, which might otherwise overtake us, given our earthly nature.

**And deliver us from evil:**

We are in need of deliverance. This world (*Kosmos*) is under the power of Satan, who having fallen from heaven to the earth, has set up a system and false order of things in direct enmity with Our Father and His Kingdom in Heaven. Since we have not yet ascended into heavenly realms, we are still subject to the evil forces daily warring against us as sons of the Most High God. Born on enemy soil, we need protection from our Heavenly Father. Growing up to be like our Father, we will crush the serpent's head to fulfill prophecy.

**For thine is the Kingdom:**

There is only one Kingdom, which presently exists in Heavenly realms, but is advancing on the earth, and this Kingdom belongs to our loving Father. His Kingdom is also our inheritance as sons.

**And the Power:**

All power belongs to our Father. There is no power or authority in heaven and earth apart from Him.

**And the glory:**

All glory belongs to our Father. He created all things for His good pleasure and will reconcile all things according to His will. To Him belongs all glory forever.

**Forever:**

There will never be an end to His Kingdom, His Power, or His Glory. There will never be an end to our relationship with Him as His sons, bearing His likeness for eternity.

**Amen.**

So let it be done. We agree.

## **THE BUTTERFLY AND THE CATERPILLAR**

*“For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his.”*  
Romans 6:5

*“And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.”* Ephesians 2:6

One beautiful morning, a butterfly gracefully descended from a nearby flowering shrub to the ground where a caterpillar was plodding along. The butterfly was grand by design. Its elegant wings were black, with periwinkle blue lining, and yellow and orange speckles throughout. He was a flying piece of art, effortless in his movement, and bold in appearance.

The caterpillar was blackish gray, with thin yellow markings, awkward moving, and sincerely unimpressive. Nothing of its appearance was pleasing to the eye, except perhaps the splash of yellow. The land-crawler was both surprised and humbled by the butterfly’s descent. Nevertheless, an encounter with a potential friend was a welcomed sight, especially one whose presence was breathtaking.

The butterfly spoke first, “Be encouraged, my friend, in your daily struggle.”

“How can you speak with such confidence with not even a hint of condescension?”

“I can relate to your suffering and know many of your thoughts.”

“How can that be. You are so lovely and free, and so skilled at navigating wind. I am rather unattractive and bound to the dirt, where by the way, there are seldom any breezes.”

“I have been where you are.”

“That is not possible. You have wings, I do not.”

“You will.”

“How?! When?”

“By submitting to the *PROCESS* at the proper time. I cannot tell you exactly when, but you will know when you get there.”

“What process are you referring to?”

“It is called METAMORPHOSIS and it is like a death of sorts. When you cannot crawl another inch, you will stop and your body will wrap you in a burial garment. You will be asleep for what will seem like an eternity.”

“This process doesn’t sound very exciting at all.”

“Suddenly, you will awake and begin to emerge with a new body. It will be awkward at first, as you will struggle through your cocoon with fragile, untested wings. You will quickly gain confidence, though, as you test them like newfound friends. You will be overcome with joy when you first see them. Most weep.

Anyway, when you are ready, you will burst into the air and simply follow the wind. You cannot fight against it. “

“This sounds all too wonderful. I want this more than anything. Where do I go to submit to the process? I am ready.”

“You are ready when you cannot go any more and no sooner. And where you are at that time is where the process begins.” With those final words, the graceful wonder fluttered its wings and rose upwards and caught a gentle breeze. The caterpillar was strangely energized by the visit from above. Though he did not understand, somehow he knew one day he would.

## EPILOGUE

A collection of writings addressed to the Bride of Christ would not be complete without a thoughtful treatise on perhaps the greatest mystery alluded to in scripture. The “rapture” or “snatching away” of the Bride has certainly been discussed in every generation since the 1<sup>st</sup> century. “Pre-trib”, “mid-trib”, or none at all - these are the camps believers congregate around when discussing the Great Tribulation in the last days before Messiah returns. No one knows for sure what will happen or exactly when.

The debate often centers around how much difficulty the saints of God will endure before a rescue occurs, though there is no denying there have been martyrs in every generation since the early Church in Jerusalem. And while trouble is something all mankind endures in varying degrees – it’s a part of our human experience – Jesus himself refers to an epic, unprecedented upheaval which will impact the whole earth before His return: *“For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again”* (Matthew 24:21). Yet, there also seems to be a promise of protection during this time, at least for the Church of Philadelphia: *“Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth”* (Revelations 3:10).

Scriptures do seem to indicate that the rapture will be a separate event from the Day of the Lord. The latter is when our Bridegroom comes to judge the nations and reign from Jerusalem, and is prophetically associated with Rosh Hashanah or the Feast of Trumpets. The former is associated with the

Feast of Firstfruits, and happens sometime prior to the Day of the Lord, when we meet Him in the air along with the “dead in Christ” who are resurrected. *“Look, I will tell you a secret – not all of us will die! But we will all be changed! It will take but a moment, the blink of an eye, at the final shofar. For the shofar will sound, and the dead will be raised to live forever, and we too will be changed”* (Corinthians 15:51-52).

The concept of “rapture” to our modern, sophisticated minds sounds escapist, if not akin to science fiction dreamscape. But it has happened before – throughout biblical history – so there is quite a bit of precedent to draw upon. Genesis 5:24 states: *“Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more because God took him away.”* The writer of Hebrews further attests that Enoch *“did not experience death”* (Hebrews 11:5). This is the first rapture recorded in the scriptures.

When Noah and his family entered the ark, the rains came and the waters of the deep rose to the surface. The whole earth was covered in floodwaters for forty days and nights, but Noah’s family was saved by taking refuge in God’s appointed vehicle of salvation. Jesus said *“as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man”* (Matthew 24:37).

When Abraham sent his servant to fetch a bride for his son Isaac, he met Rebekah at the well. Abraham is a picture of the Father, his unnamed servant is suggestive of the Holy Spirit, and Isaac foreshadows the Bridegroom. The servant bestows upon the chosen bride many gifts, and though her family wants her to stay, the servant insists that she leave with him promptly to go to his master. Her response is sublime: *“I will go”* (Genesis 24:58). What is worth noting in this story is that Isaac has not been seen or heard from since his near-death experience on Mount Moriah where Abraham was asked to sacrifice him. Chronologically within the Torah text, the next time Isaac shows up is when His

bride comes to him: “*Rebekah also **looked up** and saw Isaac*” (Genesis 24:64). Several commentaries suggest that she fell off her camel at the sight of him. This story is a prophetic picture for the Bride today, as we will soon look up and see the One we have been promised.

The Israelites miraculously crossed the Red Sea on dry land. A whole nation was literally delivered or “snatched away” from Pharaoh overnight, and the whole world heard about it. This occurred on the Feast of Firstfruits. Egypt is a type and shadow of the world system, and our slavery to Pharaoh. What is interesting is that the Red Sea crossing literally begins a journey on the other side that culminates in the giving of the Torah, or wedding contract, at Mount Sinai. At this original Pentecost, God speaks to the people and marries the entire nation. The Red Sea crossing is yet another picture of what will happen before the Marriage of the Lamb.

In 2 Kings 2:11, we read the account of Elijah’s rapture as Elisha looks on as a witness. Elijah was carried up to heaven in a chariot of fire and never died. Similarly, the resurrected body of Christ was taken up to heaven while his disciples looked on: “*After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men (angels) dressed in white stood beside them. “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, **will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven**”* (Acts 1:9-11).

In the Gospel of Mark, speaking of His return, Jesus says: “*At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens*” (Mark 13:26-27).

In John's gospel, clearly the most mystical of the four, Jesus has this to say about what lies ahead: *"My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.**"* (John 14:2-4). Further, the writer of Hebrews declares that the Messiah *"will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to deliver those who are eagerly waiting for him"* (Hebrews 9:10).

The Apostle Paul, whose letters comprise the majority of the New Testament, seemed pretty certain of a future rapture: *"According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be **caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.** And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words"* (1 Thessalonians 4:15-18). One must admit, this sounds pretty spectacular.

Clearly, the pattern in Scripture points to a quite literal event, not just an allegorical awakening in messianic consciousness as some today believe. Enoch was literally translated, as was Elijah. Jesus was literally taken up to heaven as his disciples looked on. Noah was literally saved from the Great Flood that submerged the whole earth. Rebekah literally left her homeland to marry a man she had never seen. The Israelites literally crossed over the Red Sea on dry land. Is there any reason to doubt a literal event which rescues the archetypal "damsel in distress", the Bride of Christ?



As I have already referenced, the rapture can be linked with the Feast of Firstfruits. This Feast is the most overlooked of the 7 appointed Feasts of the Lord, in part because it is actually a feast within a feast, always observed during the week of Passover and Unleavened Bread. Aside from its literal, agricultural meaning, it is mystically associated with resurrection and salvation, and commemorates both the day the Israelites crossed the Red Sea and the Messiah being raised from the dead. *“But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, **when he comes, those who belong to him**”* (1 Corinthians 15:20-23). As believers, we too, are a type of first fruit: *“He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created”* (James 1:18).

Yacov Rambsel, a Messianic Jew who has spent much of his life studying the phenomenon of hidden Hebrew codes within the Scriptures (widely popularized by Michael Drosnin in “The Bible Code”, 1997), discovered the following in the allegorical Song of Songs composed by King Solomon: “In Song of Songs 1:1, starting with the third heh and counting every sixth letter from right to left spells *ha’bikurim*, which means the ‘Feast of Firstfruits’” (*His Name is Jesus: The Mysterious Yeshua Codes*, 1997, page 161). He continues with his equidistant letter sequencing analysis of Song of Songs 8:13, at the very end of the book: “starting with the nun in (*hashmi’ini*) and counting **every sixteenth letter** from right to left spells *natzal*, which means ‘rescue, rapture, snatch up’”. Notably, Rambsel also finds the words “Solomon”, “Wisdom”, and “Yeshua” encoded amidst these verses.

Rambsel did not realize, or at least did not mention, that the Feast of Firstfruits is always on the **sixteenth** of Nisan. In other

words, the Feast of Firstfruits is encoded twice in the Song of Songs, and seems to point to the rapture or snatching away of the Bride. The wisdom of God is truly awe-inspiring, embedding this revelation deep within the Hebrew text like a riddle. Solomon, the wisest of all, is known to have composed one thousand and five songs (1Kings 4:32), but this was his tour de force.

Watchman Nee, in the nearly thirty years of his ministry, was clearly an extraordinary gift to the Body of Christ. He was in a Communist Chinese prison when his commentary on the Song of Songs was first translated and published in 1965. The last page in this book, offers the following interpretation of 8:14: *"In the present verse the urgent cry for Him to come to her has to do with His Second Coming which is still in the future, and may be very soon. The emphasis here is not on a restored fellowship but on His coming again, which will bring into manifestation the phenomena of His kingdom. At this point her experience is like a drop of water losing itself in the ocean, mingling deeper and ever deeper with the love of Christ. There seems to be little left in the realm of earth but her physical body. **Her heart's affections are in another world**"* (emphasis mine). This is such a beautiful description of the kind longing we must aspire to.

The Feast of Firstfruits is observed every spring, which causes this prophetic passage in the Song of Songs to come alive:

*"My beloved spoke and said to me, 'Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, come with me. See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come, the cooing of doves is heard in our land. The fig tree forms its early fruit; the blossoming vines spread their fragrance.*

***Arise, come, my darling; my beautiful one, come with me."***

Song of Songs 2: 10-13

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Greg Morris eagerly awaits the coming deliverance from this present world order, and longs to be with the Bridegroom wherever He is. He is available to speak to groups as the Lord lovingly prepares His Bride for her finest hour on the earth. To send a message to Greg, please email your message to him at [pieces@aproposmarket.com](mailto:pieces@aproposmarket.com).

Greg has spent over twenty years working with at-risk populations, including the homeless, persons with disabilities, resettled refugees, and runaway youth. In 2006, Greg developed a nationally recognized re-housing program serving homeless families with children. He has presented to groups in Idaho, Washington, Oregon, Texas, California, and Washington D.C.

*“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world” (James 1:27)*

*A*MEN.