

# Eat Your Way to Royalty

Scriptures from NKJV unless otherwise noted.  
Heb/Gr words are given Strong's numbers.

*This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.* Jn 6:58

## Part I From Exodus to the Cross

### Mystery Manna: Key to Spiritual Success.

Did you know that queen bees grow from exactly the same kind of eggs and larvae which produce the worker bees? Queens are not born into royalty; they are *nourished* into it by a diet different than honey and pollen, which normal larvae feed on. Queen's food, called *royal jelly—rich* in vitamins and proteins, comes right from the mouths and glands of plain, humble worker bees. On this diet the larva not only grows faster, but lives (as a queen) 20 to 40 times longer (up to five years), and is the only female able to reproduce, laying up to a million eggs in her lifetime. No queen? No bee colony, and no honey!

In 1 Corinthians 10:1-5 Paul tells us that most of those who left Egypt were "scattered in the wilderness" without ever reaching Canaan. Yet God had made perfect provision for them. He "duralized" their clothing and shoes forty years, and fed them food for the body and spirit right from His mouth (Dt 8:3).

The manna was to God's future "royal priests" (Ex 19:6) what royal jelly is to bee larvae. It contained all the spiritual vitamins and proteins needed to produce leaders like Moses and David, priest-kings who would shepherd the nations of the earth (Ps 78:72, Rev 2:27; here "rule" is *poimaino*, 4165, to tend as a shepherd).

### Manna was not soul-food.

What happened, then? What is the mystery behind Israel's greatest disaster until the Babylonian captivity? Let's examine this strange food.

First, manna is almost always mentioned in connection with complaining (Ex 16, Nu 11, Ps 78, Jn 6). It's bad enough to be hungry and without food. Combine that with 2 to 4 million people crammed into a "terrible wilderness" (Dt 1:19) under a leader without provisions, and any of us would complain, and do complain in far easier circumstances.

Second, it did not meet their mental or emotional (soulish) needs. "Our *soul* is dried up," they grumbled (Num 11:6). Even Moses hit rock bottom over this murmuring, begging God to kill him (v.15).

Third, it was God's intent that the manna dry up their "soul." The manna was a "test" (*nasa*, 5254) to *prove* the quality of their obedience "through adversity or hardship" (*Theological Wordbook of the O.T.*).

To pass the test, God wanted them to handle tribulation the way Job did: "When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold. . . . I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:10-12). Or David: "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn your statutes" (Ps 119:71). Or Jeremiah: "Know that for Your sake I have suffered rebuke. Your words were found and I ate them. And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart" (Jer 15:15b-16a).

When Adam, in disobedience, ate of the tree of knowledge, his spirit lost contact with God. His soul or self now ruled instead of his spirit. The Hebrew word for soul also means "self" (*nephesh*, 5315), which explains why we grumble when of man Self gets frustrated. So God ingeniously used the manna as a roadblock to this "outward man" (2 Cor 4:16). He fed their bodies, but humbled and afflicted their soul (Dt 8:2, Lev 23:29). He wanted to resuscitate their *spirit* through His *revealed* Word (Dt. 29:29), the Word from His mouth: intimate, personal communion again! (Dt 8:3). Selah (chew on that awhile).

When their complaining over the manna reached the breaking point, God reluctantly "gave them their request, but sent *leanness into their soul*" (Ps 106:15). Spiritually empty, they reaped terrible judgment upon themselves (Num. 11:31-34, Ps 78:29-31).

Thus manna is spirit-food; it is weight-lifter's high-protein for angels. In Ps 78:25, "angel's food," can also be translated "bread of the mighty." Mighty ones in the spirit realm are rulers: "principalities and powers" (Eph 1:21; 6:12). Had Lucifer's princes been content with "daily bread" at the mouth of their Creator, they could have conquered the temptation to rebel. The Israelites grumbled because they were blind to the daily *royal* banquet in front of them—spiritual delights that would have made them "more than conquerors" in the land of Canaan.

### Spiritual blindness.

"What is it?" they asked, "For they did not know what it was" (Ex 16:15). God brings up the question again twice, calling it "manna which *you did not know* nor did your fathers know (Dt 8:3,16). The very name, manna, meaning "what," or "what is it," implies mystery and provokes inquiry. Jesus revealed the "mysteries of the Kingdom" in parables for the same reason (Mt 13:11-15)—to conceal from the "natural man" what only "the spirit of man" can grasp (1 Cor 2:14,11).

Solomon said this divine process of concealing and revealing is the *glory of kings* (Pr 25:2)! In Proverbs 31:1-9 King Lemuel's mother warns her son about "that which destroys kings"; things which satisfy the flesh but deaden the spirit's sensitivity to God's purposes.

In the New Testament, after a long and painful history of experience with God's ways, one would think His "own" people would have solved the mystery and learned how to eat. Not so. From the first day that Living Manna stood before them in flesh and blood, their "what's" began.

"Who are You?" (8:25) "Who do You make Yourself out to be?" (Jn. 6:53) "We know where this Man is from; but when Christ comes, no one knows where He is from" (Jn 7:27). Like their forefathers in Sinai, they murmured and complained "much" (Jn 7:12,32), judging "according to appearance" (v.24) instead of "hearing" with ears of the spirit-man.

Just as the mundane manna tested Israel, so God sent His Son encased in a plain, earthen vessel to test these Jews. "If any man desires to do His will...he will know—have the needed illumination to recognize" the Source of His Words (v.17, Amplified Bible). Instead they "tested" *Him*, as their fathers did over the manna (Ps 78:18). They wanted Messiah on *their* terms, and attempted to justify themselves and publicly humiliate Him in debate.

But it backfired. His rebuttals, counter questions, and heart-splitting interpretations of the law, "astonished" the multitudes (Mt 22:33) and silenced His interrogators. For "they dared not question Him anymore" (Lu 20:40). He shriveled their soul. No more what's.

### It separates men from boys, princes from paupers.

The turning point had occurred long before, at the feeding of the five thousand, when they tried to force Him to the throne. Here at last was their Messiah. His Kingdom had come.

"Let's get started; we've seen You do God's works; show *us* how" (Jn 6:28 paraphrased). What they couldn't do with such power!

"This is the work of God, that you *believe* in Him whom He sent," Jesus answered.

"Fine; give us a *sign* and we'll believe. Like the manna Moses gave our fathers in the desert" (6:30 paraphrased).

Incredible! They'd had 1400 years to mature as God's "Kingdom of priests," set-apart and disciplined to be God's regal heirs (Ex 19:6,45). Yet they still could not grasp the basis of true royalty: *spiritual* nourishment, the mystery of the manna and now the multiplied bread!

So Jesus explained it in plain Aramaic: "Moses didn't give it to you; My Father did, and I am the *true* bread from heaven. If you eat My flesh and drink My blood, you'll not

only be deeply satisfied, you'll live forever. You'll never die!" (Jn. 6:32, 51 paraphrased)

He may as well have spoken Swahili. They were listening with the wrong ears. "Having ears, do you not hear? . . . How is it you do not understand?" (Mk 8:18,21) Even His disciples *complained*. "Does this offend you?" He asked them. "It is the Spirit who gives life. . . . The words that I speak to you are *spirit*. . . ." (Jn. 6:61,63).

Here was the very "word that proceeds from the *mouth* of the Lord," which Moses had plainly told them the manna represented (Dt 8:3). But sadly, *their very means of kingdom glory now became the point over which they rejected their long awaited King*. [Selah!] "From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more" (6:66). His Life-giving Words, designed to make them spiritual giants, "dried up their soul."

Of the twelve, Judas was the most disappointed. Now for the first time Jesus exposed him as "a devil" (6:70). Judas never grasped the *mystery* of Christ, the *what* of the manna. If the first mention of his treachery occurred when Jesus talked about eating His flesh and blood, what was it that prompted him, during the Last Supper, to go to the priest to betray Him? [The "law of first mention" is a principle of Bible interpretation.]

Judas ate physically, *but not spiritually*, the true Manna, the mystical body and blood of Christ (Jn 13:21-30). Spiritually anemic from an impoverished diet, though taught by the Ultimate Teacher, he succumbed to the ultimate temptation.

## Part II The Church Age

### A manual on war rations.

Now, of course, we would never do such a thing. We've had two thousand more years of hindsight. The End is getting closer. With terrorism increasing and crisis after crisis in the Middle East, there's more talk about Armageddon than I've ever heard, and some believe World War III has already begun.

The Body of Christ, His Bride, His blood-washed Church, should be mature and grown up by now. Yet the vast majority of believers are more preoccupied with the world than with the Kingdom of God. We're supposed to be major players (well . . . warriors) in End-times events. Jesus connected "the end" not to "wars and rumors of wars," or "famines, pestilences, and earthquakes," but to the preaching of the gospel "as a witness to all nations, and *then* the end will come" (Mt, 24:7,14).

If that's true, what's hindering us from "lay[ing] hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of [us]" so we can find our calling and walk in it with power (Php. 3:12) ? What keeps us from coming "to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13)?

I believe the answer lies in the mystery of the manna. And to unlock this mystery, God has given us one book of the Bible devoted entirely to its glorious secrets—Paul's letter to the believers at Ephesus. Ephesians is for royalty. The first chapter tells of our enthronement in "heavenly places, far above all principality and power" (20-21). The last chapter tells us to "stand" in spiritual armor, maintaining authority over rulers of darkness (11-12).

Consequently our standing in prayer "for all saints" will open doors of ministry for them, even for great leaders like Paul (19), Thus we exercise dominion as "kings and priests to our God," *reigning* on the earth (Rom 5:17, Rev 5:10). With "the key of David" we open and close doors in the Kingdom of heaven (Mt 16:19, Rev 3:7). But between chapters one and six lies "a great mystery"—the mystery of the Church, the Body of Christ (ch 3). And at its epicenter (ch 4) is the mystery of its *nourishment*!

### Spiritual nourishment from clay pots.

God's Church, "the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (Eph 1:23), the pillar and ground of truth (1 Tim 3:15), receives its nourishment from Christ, our heavenly "Treasure in earthen vessels" (2 Cor 4:7).

The Treasure I can handle. It's the "earthen vessels" that do to me what the manna and Jesus' flesh did to the Jews. I mean, these earthen vessels are chosen literally *because* they are *weak*! (1 Cor 1:28)

And that's not all: Some are even "rebellious" (Ps 68:18 KJ, NAS, Eph. 4:8). Many—most of us—are self-preoccupied, man-centered, earth-focused, divisive "carnal babes"; yet God uses us with gifts of the Spirit to build up His own Body, the Church (1 Cor 1:7; 3:1; 14:4f).

Adding insult to injury, God bestows "greater honor" on the "less presentable" parts of His Body (1 Cor 12:23)! Not outward but *inward* deficiency! I used to think it meant an insignificant but pure, very humble saint. Experience has taught otherwise. And that's an understatement!

One day it dawned on me that we criticize our brethren often for the very reason God chooses them. God does it to prevent their taking any glory for themselves (1:29), and He uses our pride and mistreatment to keep them humble: their gain, our tragic loss! (In my "maturing years" I've discovered that most all the "mighty prophets" God uses seem to be "blessed" with some glaring weakness.)

Throughout Ephesians, written to disclose the mystery and purpose of the Church, I can't find any other way we grow to maturity than through the *interchange of nourishment among these weaklings!* Royal Bread for the mighty from the mouths of plain, humble "worker bees."

I'll admit, it's still often a mystery to me. As a youth my "what's" led me away from God to other religions, philosophies, and "psychological explanations" that made more sense. Anything made more sense than my having to sit at the feet of the "saints" (what?!) for my spiritual growth.

But I hadn't read between the lines. Read this slowly: "The whole body / joined and knit together / by what *every* joint supplies / according to the *effective working* / by which every part *does its share* / causes growth of the body. . . ." (4:16).

I'd failed to recognize the "effective working," the spiritual *energia* (1753) of the *Treasure* within these earthen vessels. I'd failed to heed God's command to "regard no one according to the flesh" (2 Cor 5:16). And I'd failed to *understand* or *refused to believe* that every child of God really is a "new creation" in Christ Jesus (v.17)!

### Partaking of Christ among the brethren.

Look again at 1 Cor 10. From the hindsight of "spiritual food" in the Wilderness and insight on overcoming temptation, Paul goes on to discuss the Lord's supper. "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? *For we, though many, are one bread and one body: for we all partake of that one bread.*" (16,17) In 1 Cor 11:27-34 "discerning the Lord's body" seems to be the New Testament "test" of obedience. Disobedience brings "chastening" like the "plagues" inflicted on those who failed to discern the manna (Nu 11:33, Ps 78:31).

Can it be that Christ, the Living Manna, appears before us daily in our "earthen" brethren? And most of the time we not only fail to *receive* the true Bread through them, we *complain* about it! And then we complain when we're "plagued" with "judgment!"

Think about it: God revealed Himself in flesh, eating and drinking with mortal humans, not a few minutes, but thirty-three years. Through His death and resurrection He conquered the root of sin and ripped away the veil that kept us from His Presence (Rom 4:25; Heb 10:20). And after His ascension He placed His glory right inside the Church (Eph 3:21), in men and women no different than us—*when* they got in *one accord* through prayer (Acts 1:14; 2:1-4).

Not only that, but He has restored *worship* to the Church like we've never had it before, providing the "dew" that accompanied the manna in the desert (Num. 11:9). And we're still grumbling! Over manna. Over God's ultimate, high-tech, quantum age, genetically pure (1 Jn 3:9), real *heart* flesh-and-blood Manna—our Holy Communion—straight from His mouth! Because He wants intimacy with us! Like those who forsook Jesus we grumble, "What?! Who are You? Who do You make Yourself out to be?"

What *else* can God do? If He personally appeared in dazzling light and sat down to explain the mystery to us, we'd only grasp it with our *minds*, our natural man. Do you realize He *must* speak to us through perplexity, in a mystery-parable, in order to *rend the veil of our flesh*, to weaken and confuse the natural man to open up the spiritual?

If He only appeared in perfect, *flawless people, our whole Christian walk would boil down to a religion of performance and attainment. The "mystery of the faith"* (1 Tim 3:9) *would dissolve in the muscle and sweat* (Ez 44:18) *of dead works—the striving of the soul, not the power of the Spirit!*

At the Feast of Pentecost the Jews rejoiced over two loaves of *leavened bread* waved before the Lord (Lev 23:17). On the Day of Pentecost the Jews, "amazed and perplexed," again confronted a mystery: Galileans speaking in the languages of visitors from the surrounding nations—the wonderful works of God." These shocked foreigners expressed their amazement with precisely the Hebrew meaning of *manna*, "What?" "What ever could this mean?" (Ac 2:12)

Manna was difficult, but *leavened* was too much for a Jewish mind! Unleavened bread was to the Jew "pure" bread, not defiled or contaminated with human error. Those apostles were not only clumsily human, they were "unlearned and ignorant" (Ac 4:13 KJV), socially inferior *laymen*. Absolute nobodies! (1 Cor 1:27-28)

Suddenly the "leavenest" one of them, the one who had shamefully denied his Messiah, spoke. The sword of the Levites that once slew 3,000 at Sinai (Ex 32:28) now became the Sword of the Spirit, the Word from God's mouth in the mouth of the apostle Peter. That Word "cut to the heart" (2:37) and instantly circumcised and purified 3,000 Jews in the deep, impenetrable interior of their being, transforming them from ritualistic, rationalistic Jews into true worshippers. (Php. 3:3)

### Part III My own manna struggle

#### When God opened my ears.

Years ago I was sitting under the ministry of a certain minister. He preached Sunday morning, Sunday night, and taught Wednesday night, and even led the worship service! There were others in the congregation I felt could do as well, including myself. And I had nothing to do but listen to him "drone" on week after week.

On this particular mid-week service he opened by saying, "I believe God has something special to say to someone." I thought, *Yea, right*. Suddenly God rebuked me sharply: *You are doing exactly what the grumbling Israelites did in the wilderness when they failed to "hear" Me in the manna.*

Jolted by the Spirit, I bolted out of my "attitude," and from then on began to recognize God's voice through this earthen vessel! I cannot count the times God spared me from all night prayer vigils to hear from God, when it was there all the time in the mouth of His servant.

You might ask, then, "What is the value of seeking God alone in prayer and Bible study?" The answer is that *intimacy with God illuminates and enlarges fellowship with His Body*. The two are inseparable! (1 Jn. 4:20)

I once pastored a small congregation in the tobacco belt, which bound our spiritual leaders. I had an awesome message against nicotine, but somehow couldn't preach it—probably because I had no idea what the addiction was like.

Then one of my members persuaded me to give a certain evangelist and his group a couple nights of meetings at our church. But I was totally unprepared for their style of music and ministry the first night. I felt angry and betrayed by my congregation for getting excited over "wild fire" after all I'd taught them. I knew I had to wrestle it out with God like Jacob at Peniel (Gen. 32). As soon as I "broke through," I saw the situation with brand new eyes and couldn't wait for the second service.

That evening I was deeply in love with my people and the evangelistic team. Suddenly in the middle of his "wild-fire" message he shifted gears like a semi-truck negotiating a steep hill. And though I'd told him nothing of the problem, he

preached my exact message against nicotine. Only he preached it with powerful authority and a compassion born of experience and anointed by the Spirit, the "dew" from heaven.

You guessed it: God broke that bondage, doing in one night what I had struggled to accomplish for years. For God's Voice is more than Word or words; it is Spirit, and *it must unlock my spirit*. And far from limiting us to our private devotional life, God often entrusts the key to unlikely "Davids" (Rev. 3:7) and Peters (Mt. 16:19). No doubt this accounts for some of the amazing revivals throughout church history and today as humble earthen vessels are moved by the Holy Spirit to be God's mouth-pieces. And often they are right in our own "back yard."

In leading someone to Christ we usually quote Romans 10:9 & 10 about confessing with our mouth and believing with our heart. But the context of this passage is the key to our own personal revival, where Paul quotes Moses saying, "Don't look far off for someone [some great preacher] to bring your spiritual breakthrough. Don't even expect it to come down from heaven! For it is right there in your mouth and in your heart" (Dt. 30:11-14, paraphrased).

#### O for Balance!

I believe most of us fall into one of two categories when it comes to spiritual nourishment. Mature believers rely heavily on private communion with God as we learn to break down the written Word till it becomes the Word from God's mouth, our bread from heaven. There is no substitute for this, for our spiritual life depends on "every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Dt. 8:3).

Immature believers, however, thrive on what others break down for them (Heb. 5:12). They are "dull of hearing" (v.11). Their digestive systems are too weak to convert many of the hard teachings, metaphors, examples, and mysteries of grace and truth into "spiritual understanding" (Col. 1:9) and "Life in His Son" (1 Jn. 5:11). This is why the devotional *Daily Bread* is so popular among jail and prison inmates. For many it is their only "bread."

But I've found that many so-called mature believers, including myself, have difficulty "eating" from less mature or immature believers." If it doesn't have "depth" or fit some other standard of ours, or we're not of the same "doctrinal persuasion," like those spiritually blind Jews, we simply don't "hear." Or even more subtle, we listen and analyze with our minds, not *receive with our hearts* a word from God's mouth that could meet a serious need in our lives.

For years I secretly took pride in the fact that though "my sheep" needed me, I didn't need them. Yet I wondered why I had no joy, struggled with depression, and deep down, hated the ministry. Eventually God led me to re-examine Romans 3-8 and Galatians 2-5. It took many months to absorb a new understanding of these revolutionary ideas about law and grace, but the end result is that I fell in love with Jesus and had my own personal joy-revival—my life's turning point.

And the love spilled out to the sheep I pastored. They had been my "cross," my nemesis, my "thorn in the flesh" (2 Cor. 12:7). Now I saw them as a gold mine of endless blessing. I wanted to be with them all the time, to listen to them, to love and enjoy them at every opportunity, even at their "unauthorized" home prayer meetings. I was literally "intoxicated" with love for them (Pr. 5:19, literal meaning).

It was the closest thing to heaven on earth I'd ever experienced, having finally grasped the meaning of "the communion of the body of Christ." It is not intellectual but a *spiritual* sharing as we look beyond flesh and blood and see Christ in one another.

True, most of the Church has not come to the place where the members are "teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" (Col. 3:16). Maybe it's because *the dew of the night* (Num. 11:9) has not fallen on the Western church as it has in countries closed to the Gospel. At times I've gotten impatient and critical—until the Holy Spirit again tunes my heart, usually through my personal devotions, to see the manna all around me, right in the *wilderness*. And once again I behold—and

hear—His voice in my brothers and sisters in Christ, lifting me out of the mundane into the heavenly.

#### The warnings of Hebrews

I consider the book of Hebrews to be the scariest book in the New Testament, like that section of the Old Testament between Numbers 11 and 20, where most of the Israelites lost their inheritance, and finally even Moses, because of their unbelief (Num. 14, 20, 1 Cor. 10).

Hebrews builds around five warnings concerning the danger of unbelief (2:2-4; 4:1-3, 11-13; 5:11-6:20; 10:26-39; 12:25-29). In the final warning God contrasts the terror on Mount Sinai at the giving of the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20) to the glory of Mount Zion under the New Covenant. Mount Zion is the *fulfillment* of the "the Ten Commandments—brethren dwelling in loving unity, as in Psalm 133. It is the "heavenly Jerusalem . . . the general assembly and church of the firstborn . . . the spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb. 12:23).

But when we get to verse 25 through the end of the chapter, we find it's not just a contrast from terror to glory, but from terror on a small scale (Mt. Sinai) to major catastrophic events that "shake not only the earth, but also heaven" (v.26).

Why? Because it takes extreme measures to get most of us to *really* love and understand one another. You see, the glory of Mt. Zion was available to the Israelites under the Old Covenant. But the very terror God designed to open their ears (hearts) caused them to reject God's voice for fear of dying. "So the people stood afar off, but Moses drew near the thick darkness *where God was*." God was in the *darkness. That's how and where Moses heard His voice!*" We often can't hear Him speak until it gets "dark" and scary enough to shut out everything but *God!* (Ex. 19:19; 20:18-21, Deut. 5:29-31, 1 Ki. 8:12)

Many of us read that and shake our heads at the dullness of that "stiffnecked people" (Deut. 9:6). Yet the warnings in Hebrews concern the same problem. Three times in chapters three and four God warns, "Today, if you will *hear His voice*, do not harden your hearts" (3:8, 15; 4:7). And in chapter five as the writer (Paul?) attempts to explain the eternal priesthood of Melchizedek, he says it's "hard to explain, since you have become *dull of hearing*." (5:11).

The Melchizedek priesthood is one of grace, not law. But it takes a hearing heart and the fear of God to walk in *true* grace. For when our hearts are hard, "grace" becomes an excuse to use our liberty to walk in the flesh, excusing ourselves for our failures while condemning others for theirs. We allow pockets of resentment in place of "*fervent love*"

that *covers* a "multitude of sins." "For he shall have *judgment without mercy*, that hath showed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment." (Gal. 5:13, Jn. 8:15, 1 Pet. 4:8, Jas. 2:12-13, Heb. 12:15, Jas. 2:13 KJV). Key to the coming "shaking"

The ultimate and final warning in Hebrews boils down to having a heart tender enough to hear God speak "from heaven." When He spoke from Mt. Sinai, the mountain shook. When He "speaks from heaven" the heavens will shake, removing everything that can be shaken, purging our foundation of "wood, hay, and straw," until only "gold, silver, precious stones" are left (1 Cor. 3:10-15; Zec. 13:9; 1 Pet 1:7; 4:12).

But who has ever heard God speak from heaven, if it's that serious? Only those who *hear* Him speak from "the heavenly Jerusalem," Zion, the Church—through *His people*, royal jelly from *plain*, "*worker bees*," as it were.

If our hearts are sensitive enough to hear God's voice even from the "weaker," "less honorable," and "unpresentable" members of His Body, God can "shake out" our impurities very gently in the quiet *transparency* of our hearts as we *humble* ourselves before Him in the fear of God (1 Cor. 12:22-23, 1 Chron. 7:14).

What a wealth of *grace* God imparts to us through "discerning the Lord's body." One who fails to "listen" in this area "drinks judgment to himself" because (1) he fails to recognize Christ in his brethren, and (2) he refuses to be accountable to the only representative God has on earth—his Church. (Cor. 11:29; 10:17)

Why? Because God's purpose for us is summed up in this one simple truth—learning to hear and know God so intimately that we love others exactly the way He loves us. And we'll experience our share in "the fullness of God," the joy of "the city of the living God" *now*, even "on earth as it is in heaven." (Mt. 22:39-40, Rom. 13:8-10, Gal. 5:14, Eph. 1:10, 22-23; 2:20-22; 3:17-19, Php. 2:1-4; 3:10, 1 Jn. 4:7-21; Lu. 11:2, 1 Cor. 3:10-15, Eph. 3:19, 1 Pet. 4:17)

This is the long-range purpose of grace and the reason for the purifying fire: God wants to bring us together as His Temple, His House—*His Home*— and fill us with His glory! (Ex. 40:34-35, 1 Ki. 8:10-61, 2 Chr.5:13-14, Acts 2:1f; 4:31)

"*Therefore . . . let us have grace*, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire." (Heb. 12:27-29, Ex. 24:17, Dan. 7:9, Ps. 50:1-5)

Isaiah 30:25-26 reads, "There will be on every high mountain and on every high hill rivers and streams of waters, *in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall*. Moreover the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun . . . ." And Isaiah 33:17-20, "Your eyes will see the King in His beauty . . . Your heart will meditate on terror . . . 'where is he who counts the towers?' . . . Look upon Zion, the city of our appointed feasts; your eyes will see Jerusalem, a quiet home, a tabernacle that will not be taken down . . ."

If there is a connection between September 11, 2001 and these verses, as many believe, then perhaps the "shaking" has already begun and God longs to open our ears to hear Him, that "He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him" (Eph. 1:10).

*The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars... the voice of the Lord shakes the Wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of the Lord makes the deer give birth, and strips the forests bare!* (Ps 29:5,8,9)

His voice is "bread for the mighty," spirit-food, "royal jelly" lifting us out of worker bee mentality into the glories of our true destiny in heavenly places.

*Can you hear it in it's pre-glorified form, from bodies clothed in humiliation* (Php 3:21)? *If so, welcome to God's royal banqueting table!* What a feast!

What?  
A feast!

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