

*Your message burns in my heart and bones, and I cannot keep silent.* (Jeremiah 20:9)

*The testimony of JESUS is the spirit of the prophecy.* (Revelation 19:10c)

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### ***Shine Forth as the Sun in the Reign***

Recently, the spirit of the Lord pulled from my memory bank an experience I had many years ago. We were in Ghana (located in West Africa) and I was speaking before a group of the Lord's people in a village called *Kudeha*, which was the first village we visited on our first trip to this nation—an experience we'll never forget. I'll share on this trip later, for what came to me was another experience we had on a subsequent trip to Ghana. At the time, Kudeha could best be described as a remote village that had no electricity nor other modern conveniences. We mostly visited the village at night, so I generally stood before the people with very limited light from "torch lights" (flashlights). With no light pollution, looking up at the night sky revealed a vast array of stars, all speaking forth the glory of God. The only other time in my life that I recall seeing such marvelous beauty was, as a youth, standing on a remote shore at the tip of Cape Cod on a clear night. As a young man, I was often awe-struck by God's celestial glory and pondered what it was saying to us.

On this particular occasion, I shared on the coming of the Lord with His rewards and how He is coming for those longing for Him—that is, who love His appearing. As I did this, I pointed to the dark night sky above and, using a comet as a metaphor, described the bright head of a comet as the Lord Jesus and the long trail of light that follows as His people. However, our desire must be to be as close to our Head as possible because, as we move away from Him, the light becomes dimmer and dimmer until it reaches "outer darkness." When I said "outer darkness", in a flash, I realized the meaning of the term in a way I had never known before—it was a revelation to me. I went on to share that the ones nearest to the Head, having drawn near to the Lord Jesus, shine the brightest. The brethren were encouraged to draw close to the Lord as we all wait for His arrival, not being content to be in the dimmest part of His trail. The alternative is "outer darkness".

To confirm the message, I recall that one night I looked up while speaking and saw a large meteor streaking through the sky with its long trail of light. I can't say for sure if it was this night, but my memory keeps telling me it was. At any rate, later, I realized that the Lord put this message on my heart and then arranged the meteor to pass overhead to confirm it. There were no coincidences on these trips.

The verse that comes to mind is: *Draw near to God, and He will be drawing near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, double-souled!* (James 4:8 CLV)

The term *double-souled* (or, double-minded) comes from the Greek word *dipsuchos*, meaning “a person with two minds or souls”. As James says, such a one is *unstable in all his ways* (1:8), which refers to being “unsteady, wavering, in both character and feelings”. Such a person is restless and confused in behavior, actions, and thoughts. Is this not on full display today, especially in those being driven mad by their emotions and feelings? Much could be said along these lines; however, the take-away is that many are living in outer darkness. As a reminder, we are called to be the light in the world because we are in the one who is the *Light of the World!*

Now, back to the first trip, for this speaks to the positive side of the message.

How and why the Lord sent us to Ghana is a story unto itself. On a personal level, we had never done anything like this in our life. It’s no exaggeration that we were totally cast upon the Lord the whole time—knowing Him as our trust. The following is what I wrote when we returned home to recount the time.

We will never forget the experience of that night when we were driven into the bush; we had no idea where we were going and, frankly, I had no idea what I was going to share with these saints hidden away from the city and the lights. Prior to our arrival, a brother in Christ, Stephen, with whom I had corresponded for some time, had arranged for me to speak at a meeting. Again, as it turned out, this would be the first time I spoke in Ghana and the most memorable of the six trips we took to Ghana. Our brother turned off the main road onto a dirt road that had tall grass along the side. It seemed that the further we went, the grass got taller, and the road got narrower. The thought that went through my mind was: “*What have we gotten into? We will never make it out alive!*” Finally, in pitch dark, we arrived at Kudeha. Since there were no lights, I shared that night with one lantern shining on the table next to me. I could not see the faces of the brothers and sisters. In fact, we did not know what *they* looked like until we had the film developed of pictures that we took that night.

What was I to share with them? Well, without knowing it, I was given it days earlier. At the beginning of the trip, when we were flying out of our hometown to travel to Ghana, the spirit began to work a message in my heart, which grew as we flew across the Atlantic Ocean. I did not know where the Lord wanted this message spoken. Even as we drove to this village that night, I was not sure what I was to speak, but I had this new peace in my heart that I had never experienced before. When I stood that night, the holy spirit took over and shared the message given me as we left our home. The message was “***How Beautiful Is the Body of Christ!***”

As the spirit spoke through me that night, I had to contain myself and fight back the urge to weep. I knew that the Lord had sent us there to encourage these brethren

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hidden away in the bush. He sent us, two earthen vessels, all those miles to tell His people how much He loves them, and that, to Him, they are beautiful. They are hidden and, in many ways, forgotten by the world, but not forgotten by the One who died for them and loves them. Our beloved Lord Jesus looks upon His body with eyes of love and compassion. His people are altogether beautiful to Him. As the beloved speaks in the Song of Solomon, so does our Lord: *“How beautiful you are, my darling, how beautiful you are!”* (Song of Solomon 1:15). This is the passion of our Lord Jesus.

Dear saints, given the day of madness that the world is currently passing through, we are being encouraged to draw near to the Lord. Do you know how beautiful you are to Him? He loves His body, and He cherishes each and every one of us who are joint-heirs of His kingdom. It won't be long until we see the love of our life and are transformed into the likeness of the Righteous One—King Jesus.

***Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the reign (kingdom) of their Father. He who is having ears to hear—let him hear*** (Matthew 13:43).