

## HWMR - CRYSTALLIZATION STUDY OF NUMBERS, Book 1, Week 2

### Being Formed into an Army to Fight with God for His Interest on Earth

Scripture Reading: Num. 2:2; Rev. 21:12, 21a; 22:14

Numbers 2: 2 The children of Israel shall **encamp** each by his own standard with the ensigns of their fathers' households; they shall encamp facing the Tent of Meeting on every side.

Revelation 21:12 It had a great and high wall and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names inscribed, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel:

Revelation 21:21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was, respectively, of one pearl.

Revelation 22:14 Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter by the gates into the city.

#### Facing the Tent of Meeting—with the Testimony of God as the Unique Goal

All the children of Israel were encamped "*facing the tent of meeting*" (v. 2b), with the testimony of God as their unique center and goal. The ark within the tabernacle was the testimony of God, and the testimony of God was the law contained within the ark (Exo. 25:16). The **law** is a portrait of God, typifying Christ as the testimony of God, expressing what God is. Hence, **the ark within the tabernacle**, as **a type of Christ, the embodiment of God**, was the center of God's people, who were journeying in fighting for His testimony. For the testimony of God, the tabernacle was called the **Tabernacle of the Testimony**; for the meeting of God's people, it was called the **tent of meeting**. (Life-Study of Numbers, Chapter 3, Section 2)

#### I. In Numbers 2:2 Jehovah said to Moses and Aaron, "The children of Israel shall **encamp** each by his own standard with the ensigns of their fathers' households; they shall **encamp facing the Tent of Meeting on every side**":

- A. In the matter of **encamping in array**, there was **no human choice**; whichever tribe an Israelite was born of, he had to encamp by the standard of that tribe; he was not allowed to have his own choice—cf. 1 Cor. 12:18.
- B. The spiritual significance of this type is that in the coordination in the church, **the believers are not allowed to have their own choice**; their coordination must come absolutely out of God's ordination and arrangement.
- C. There were twelve standards among the Israelites (three on each of the four sides of the Tent of Meeting), but there was only **one central goal**; they took the Tent of Meeting and the testimony of God as their center:
  1. **For the meeting** of God's people with God, the tabernacle was called the **Tent of Meeting**—Lev. 1:1.
  2. **For the testimony** of God, it was called the **Tabernacle of the Testimony**—Num. 1:50, 53.
  3. In the New Testament both Christ and the church, the enlargement of Christ, are the reality of the tabernacle in these two aspects.

The **tabernacle** also typifies **Christ**. The **Tabernacle Of The Testimony** is a **testimony of God**. The **tabernacle** was the **dwelling place of God on earth**; it was the place where God dwelt. This testimony and dwelling place were also the means by which man served God. Where could man serve God, and by what means could man serve God? In the Old Testament any person who wanted to serve God had to go to the tabernacle. All the activities of serving God had to be carried out through the furniture and utensils in the tabernacle. The altar and the laver were in the **outer court** of the tabernacle. In the **Holy Place** of the tabernacle there were the table of the bread of the Presence, the golden lampstand, and the golden incense altar. Behind the veil in the Holy Place there was the Ark in the **Holy of Holies**. These pieces of furniture were the means by which man served God.

The same principle applies to us today. If we want to serve God, **we must enter into the tabernacle of God**. The tabernacle of God typifies not only **Christ** but also the **church**. According to typology, the Ark of the Testimony typifies the individual Christ, but the Tabernacle Of The Testimony typifies not only the individual Christ but also the corporate Christ, which is the church. **Christ** is **the Ark of the Testimony**, and the **church** is **the Tabernacle Of The Testimony**. These two, Christ and the church, are joined together as one to be the testimony of God, the dwelling place of God, and the means by which man serves God. Where do we serve God? **We need to serve Him in Christ and in the church**, that is, in the place with the Ark of the Testimony and the Tabernacle Of The Testimony. In other words, we must be wherever the church is in order to serve God. Christ is in the church. (Praying Unceasingly and Living in the Spirit, Chapter 6, Section 1)

## II. The children of Israel encamping in array typifies God's redeemed people being consummated as the New Jerusalem:

- A. The Israelites encamped facing the Tent of Meeting in four directions: the east, the south, the west, and the north; this means that the testimony of God faced all sides—2:1-34.
- B. There were three camps in each of the four sides; three denotes the Triune God, and four denotes the created man; three times four signifies God in His Divine Trinity being mingled with the created man as one.
- C. Three times four equals twelve, which also denotes eternity and completion as well as administration and government.
- D. Thus, according to the numbers in the Israelites' encamping in array, their formation signifies God in His Divine Trinity being mingled with the created man, forming a unit of eternal and perfect government.
- E. The New Jerusalem in Revelation 21 has four sides, and each side has three gates; the total number of gates on the four sides of the New Jerusalem is twelve, and on the twelve gates are the names of the twelve tribes of Israel—vv. 12-13.
- F. According to verses 2 and 3, the New Jerusalem is the tabernacle of God; the Israelites' encamping in Numbers 2 was around the tabernacle; this picture corresponds to the description of the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21:
  1. Just as the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21 has four sides, so also the encamping in Numbers 2 had four sides.
  2. The New Jerusalem has three gates on each of her four sides, on which are the names of the twelve tribes; similarly, the twelve tribes of Israel's encamping in Numbers 2 had three tribes on each of its four sides.
  3. This all depicts the scene in eternity, showing that God's purpose in the universe is to be mingled with man in His Divine Trinity in order to become a unit of government; this unit of government can fight for His testimony.
  4. When the twelve tribes were encamped, they were like a city; the walls of the four sides of the New Jerusalem are the safeguard of the city.
  5. The twelve camps of the army encamped in array in Numbers correspond to the walls of the New Jerusalem; likewise, the coordination in the church is for safeguarding God's testimony.
  6. The administration of each local church should be "three times four," which equals "twelve," for the divine administration in a locality; this administration is an army that fights for God and maintains God's testimony.

### Around the Tent of Meeting

The children of Israel were encamped around the tent of meeting (Num. 2:2c). This was for the protection of the tabernacle of the testimony.

### On Four Sides

The children of Israel were encamped on all four sides of the tabernacle. On each side was one camp, composed of three tribes (vv. 3-16, 18-31).

### The Camps on the East, South, West, and North

On the east side, toward the sunrise, was the standard of the camp of Judah, composed of the armies of Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun; these were to set out first (vv. 3-9). On the south side was the standard of the camp of Reuben, composed of the armies of Reuben, Simeon, and Gad; these were to set out second (vv. 10-16). On the west side was the standard of the camp of Ephraim, composed of the armies of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin; these were to set out third (vv. 18-24). On the north side was the standard of the camp of Dan, composed of Dan, Asher, and Naphtali; these were to set out last (vv. 25-31).

### The Sequence of the Four Camps

The sequence of the four camps was not according to birth but according to spiritual condition. Although Reuben was the firstborn (Gen. 29:31-32), because he committed fornication he lost the birthright (Gen. 49:3-4; 1 Chron. 5:1-2). Judah was born fourth (Gen. 29:31-35), but he set out first because he was an overcoming lion among the twelve brothers (Gen. 49:8-9), typifying Christ as the overcoming fighter, the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Rev. 5:5), the One who defeated God's enemy. Ephraim, the son of Joseph, was third because of Joseph. Among the camps, Dan was the last. Dan was also the worst, for he was a "serpent" (Gen 49:17), and he was the first to rebel against God's kingdom and set up a second worship center (1 Kings 12:26-30). (See Life-study of Genesis, Messages Ninety-eight through One Hundred Seven for more concerning the spiritual condition and blessing of the twelve tribes of Israel.)

### Four Camps of Three Armies Each Yielding the Number Twelve

Four camps of three armies each yields the number twelve. This number, composed of three multiplied by four, signifies the Triune God (three) mingled with His creatures (four), forming a unit of eternal and perfect government. The number twelve is the number of God's perfect and complete government. The twelve Apostles, for example, are for God's government.

(Life-Study of Numbers, Chapter 3, Section 2)

### III. The New Jerusalem “had a great and high wall and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names inscribed, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel”—Rev. 21:12:

- A. The wall is for separation and protection; New Jerusalem will be absolutely separated unto God and will fully protect the interests of God.
- B. Its wall will be great and high; today all believers need such a great and high wall for their separation and protection.
- C. In God’s eternal economy, angels are ministering spirits (Heb. 1:14); they serve those who inherit salvation and who participate in the eternal blessing of the New Jerusalem, the center of the new heaven and new earth.
- D. These angels will be the gatekeepers of our possession, while we will be the enjoyers of the rich inheritance in God’s eternal economy.
- E. Israel in Revelation 21:12 represents the law of the Old Testament, indicating that the law is represented at the gates of the New Jerusalem; the law watches and observes to insure that all the communications, the comings in and goings out, of the holy city meet the law’s requirements.
- F. That the names of the twelve tribes of Israel are inscribed on the twelve gates signifies that the twelve tribes are the entrance into the holy city; as such, they lead people, through the preaching of the gospel, into the riches of the Triune God to enjoy the supply in the city—cf. 22:14.

#### For Separation and Protection

Although the wall is mainly for expression, spontaneously it also becomes a separation and a protection. It separates us from everything common (21:27), protects us, and keeps us in the realm of God's appearance. Anything that is separated is also preserved and protected. In the church life we must have God's expression. This divine expression is our separation, and this separation is our protection and preservation. If we all express God, we shall be separated from anything worldly. This is not a mere doctrine. If you live in this manner, you will have the full experience of what I am saying. If I express God in the appearance of jasper, I shall be completely separated from the world. Then I shall be protected, preserved, and kept in the expression of God. Some are captured by the distractions of the world because they do not express God in the appearance of jasper. Instead, they express something else. When we lose the divine expression and express something of ourselves in its place, our separation disappears, and we are no longer protected. As a result, we have no wall. Then there is no expression, no separation, and no protection. Praise the Lord that in the church life today our protection is the expression of God as our separation! (Life-Study of Revelation, Chapter 62, Section 2)

### IV. “The twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was, respectively, of one pearl”—21:21a:

- A. Pearls are produced by oysters in the waters of death:
  1. When an oyster is wounded by a grain of sand, it secretes its life-juice around the grain of sand and makes it into a precious pearl.
  2. The oyster depicts Christ as the living One coming into the death waters, being wounded by us (cf. Isa. 53:5), and secreting His life over us to make us precious pearls for the building of God’s eternal habitation and expression.
  3. That the twelve gates of the holy city are twelve pearls signifies that regeneration through the death-overcoming and life-secreting Christ is the entrance into the city.
  4. This meets the requirement of the law, which is represented by Israel and is under the observing of the guarding angels; we can enter into the city only through the once-for-all regeneration accomplished by Christ’s overcoming death and life-imparting resurrection.
  5. God is triune in one entrance to bring us into God, into God’s interest, into the kingdom of God, and into the economy of God, which will consummate in the New Jerusalem; the Triune God is our triune entrance—Luke 15:1-32; Eph. 2:18; 1 Pet. 1:1-2.
- B. Pearls signify the issue of Christ’s secretion in two aspects: His redeeming and life-releasing death and His life-dispensing resurrection:
  1. Both kinds of secretion (dispensing) require the seeking believers’ daily experience of the death of Christ subjectively by the power of Christ’s resurrection that they may be conformed to the death of Christ—Phil. 3:10.
  2. We can experience His death only by the power of the resurrection of Christ; by the power of the resurrection of Christ, we have the ability and the power to keep our pitiful self on the cross—cf. S. S. 2:8-9a, 14.
  3. We also should seek the daily experience of the resurrection of Christ subjectively by the bountiful supply of the Spirit (the reality of resurrection) of Jesus Christ that we may be conformed to the image of the firstborn Son of God—Phil. 1:19; Rom. 8:28-29.
  4. Christ’s death can be experienced by us only through Christ’s resurrection, and Christ’s resurrection can be real to us only by the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.
  5. When we turn to our spirit, we meet Christ as the life-giving Spirit, who is the very reality of Christ’s resurrection; we have to touch Christ in our spirit all the time by praying unceasingly—1 Thes. 5:17.
  6. His death applied to us will conform us to the mold of His death, and His Spirit in us will conform us into the glory of His image, the image of the firstborn Son of God.
  7. We all need to pray, “Lord, imprison me and keep me always in Your death; I do not want to leave Your death but to make Your death my sweet and wonderful dwelling place; Lord, I want to stay with You in Your death.”
  8. His death is the place where He has the position to secrete Himself around us, and this is the only place where we can enjoy and experience His resurrection life as a kind of life-sap secreting itself around our being to make us a wonderful piece of pearl for the entry into God’s building.

9. Christ was **wounded** for us in order to have us **imprisoned** in His wound so that He might carry out His secretion over us again and again throughout our entire life to make us pearls for the building of God's eternal habitation.
10. The more we are made pearls subjectively, the more we are in the New Jerusalem, and the more we are in the kingdom—Matt. 13:45-46; John 3:5.

#### **The Old Testament Saints Represented by the Twelve Names of the Twelve Tribes of Israel on the Twelve Gates**

The **New Jerusalem** is composed firstly of the Old Testament saints. This is proved by 21:12, which says that the **names of the twelve tribes** of the sons of Israel are inscribed on the **gates** of the city. **Every gate bears the name of one tribe**. This is also a sign signifying that the gates of the city are living people. We have seen that the significance of the church as a golden lampstand is that it shines for enlightening. We need to know the true meaning and significance of these gates.

The **gates firstly function** as the means of **propagation** for the city and then as the **entrance** into the city. Before anything can enter in through the gates, something must first go out of them. What goes out of them will then bring something back in through them. Therefore, the gates first function as the way of propagation and then as entrances.

Please remember that the gospel was firstly preached and propagated by Jews. For example, both Peter and Paul were Jews. For this reason, the Lord told the Samaritan woman that salvation is of the Jews (John 4:22). In other words, the gospel, the glad tidings, came out of the Jewish people. Therefore, the Old Testament saints, **the children of Israel, are the gates for the preaching and the spreading**. All the Old Testament prophets, including Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, and the minor prophets, were preachers. Isaiah preached a great deal, even proclaiming the unique gospel message recorded in Isaiah 53. And John the Baptist and the apostles were all descendants of the twelve tribes of Israel. Thus, **the twelve tribes of Israel are the gates through which the riches of the New Jerusalem are supplied to mankind**.

The supply that has come out of these gates has had an issue, and this issue is that people have been brought in through the preaching of the gospel. **We all have entered into the New Jerusalem through the Jewish gates**. Although some may not appreciate this term, I certainly do. I did not enter through a Gentile gate; I entered through a gate that bears the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel. We should never say that we came in through a gate that bears a British name, a German name, or any Gentile name. There are no such names in the New Jerusalem. As far as the gates are concerned, there are only the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. They are the gates for propagation and for entrance. As we have seen, these names signify that the Old Testament saints are the constituents of that city. (Life-Study of Revelation, Chapter 60, Section 3)