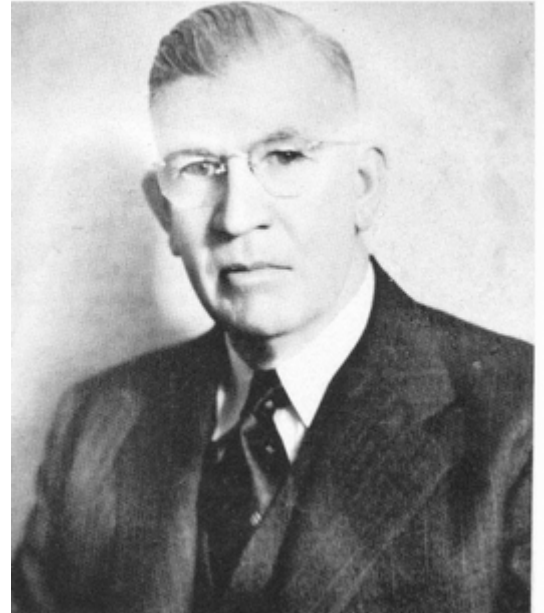


The Prepared City

By
Jack G. Robbins

June 23, 1946



**"There's a land beyond the river,
That we call the sweet forever,
And we only reach that shore by faith's decree;
One by one we'll gain the portals,
There to dwell with the immortals,
When they ring the golden bells for you and me."**

"WHEN they ring the golden bells for you and me." Doesn't that make you homesick for the place Jesus is preparing for you? I believe those bells are really golden! They tell us about the golden city, the golden streets; why shouldn't the bells be golden? It is wonderful to know we have a place like that to go to when this life is over. We hope we will all be worthy and ready when we hear those bells.

There will be many people who are going to miss it. Jesus said to those on His left hand, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." But on the right hand there were those to whom He said, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." God has prepared a City for the people of God. It is already over there. Jesus said, "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." I thought as we sang those songs today of the coming of the Lord: What if it were today?

That is the greatest theme in the world to a child of God; that is the longing of his soul — that the Lord will come. We say, like John in the last Book of the Bible, "Come, Lord Jesus." That old warrior was tired and weary with the battles of life, but he could look up and say, "Come, Lord Jesus." Come quickly! That would be the greatest thing in the world to every one of us — the Lord's coming.

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given."

That isn't anything out of the ordinary. Many sons are given and children are born; but what follows those words makes all the difference in the world. It makes possible what we are hearing today and it is **the reason we are here.**

"And the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

You know who He was. A Child was born, a Son was given. He came into this world as you and I, took upon Himself a form of flesh as a human being, and walked up and down in this earth. He brought the greatest news that the world ever heard — that salvation was free to all men through Christ. We can praise God that we believe that; we believe this whole Word. Although He was a Child born and a Son given, yet hidden away within that body of flesh was the eternal God of the ages.

He was in the world — the world that was made by Him. He was the Creator of all things. We cannot understand that glorious miracle and mystery that God would clothe Himself in human form and walk up and down on this earth and live here — the Creator who made all things, who made the stars, the moon and the sun, and populated the earth. He was on this earth in human form, just as we are.

Isaiah says that His name is called Wonderful. We thank God He is wonderful. Can we realize what He is to us! Because He came to this earth, we have passed from death unto life and we are no more under the iron heel of Satan; we are not in bondage any longer but we are free men and free women; we can worship



God according to the dictates of our own conscience; we are not fettered or bound and shackled by habits that control and master our lives, but we have been loosed from our bonds and we are children — freeborn. We thank God that we are children of the promise, the seed of Abraham through faith. We cannot understand it! It is a mystery, from the foundation of the world.

This is the salvation of which the prophets enquired, who prophesied of the grace that should come to us. Angels desired to look into this wonderful transaction that could come into human lives; but it was hid from the angels and revealed unto us: "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

If God could come down in the form of a little Child, and enthrone Himself in that Child, and grow up in that Child, and live and do miracles, and make the blind to see, and cleanse the leper, and raise the dead, and stop the storms, that same God in you or me can live a triumphant life — a victorious life. And that is the mystery; that is the reason Christians live victoriously. That is the reason they live above sin; that is the reason they have no desire for the worldly things. Their ambitions are not of this world; their affections are not here: they are in Heaven, because their treasure is there. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." If your heart is on the things of this world, then you know where your treasures are, and there is where your heart is; but if your treasures are up there, your heart is there also. That is the reason we long for that glorious City and to hear those golden bells. We long for Jesus' coming.

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father."

We wonder how that could be, but that is so. At one time a disciple came to Jesus, Philip by name. He said, "Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Jesus said to Philip, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?" He was the express image of His person and the brightness of His glory.

When John saw Him on the Isle of Patmos he saw Him as Daniel saw Him, as the Ancient of days. His hair was like wool; His eyes were like flaming fire; and His feet were like fine brass, as if they burned hi a furnace; and He had a girdle about His loins. A two-edged sword went out of His mouth, and many crowns were upon His head. He looked like the same Person whom Daniel saw and called the Ancient of days. Why? Because Jesus is the Ancient of days. He is coexistent with God.

**"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
The same was in the beginning with Gad.
All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.
In him was life; and the life was the light of men.
And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.
There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.
He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.
That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.
He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.
He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:1-14).**

We realize that Jesus is God as much as the Father is God. He is the Second Person in the Divine Trinity. There are Three that bear witness in Heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost. That Word was Jesus. He is the incarnate Word; therefore God puts great stress on His Word, and He said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). You cannot go wrong if you believe the Word of God. It will lift you out of bondage; it will purge you from your sins; it will cleanse you, through and through; and it will put something in that life of yours that will make you stalwart and strong. and will give you courage to face the



issues of life and come forth victorious and say, "I know in whom I have believed."

We thank God for the Word, for the doctrine. Paul said,

"Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in, doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (I Timothy 4:16).

That means that those who believe the doctrine of the Word of God receive life evermore. Evil spirits are cast out by the Word of His power. By His Word all things exist, and He upholds all things by the Word of His power. There is no book in the world like this Bible. It teems with life; it teems with health; it teems with victory, with strength and courage for every trial of life — clear down to the grave and to the Pearly Gates. We have the privilege of believing that Word. I thank God for people who do believe it.

We read about these great preachers in the world today who are denying the fundamentals, denying the cardinal doctrines of the Gospel, denying the resurrection, the Atonement; **in** fact, they have taken just about everything out of the Bible that would give a man any hope at all. But, thank God, Jesus is still the living Son of God. Our hope is in Him in this living Word. Thank God, we believe it all, from Genesis to Revelation — every punctuation mark in it. We know that Bible was inspired **of** God. Whether these big fellows believe it or not matters little. I am glad I am simple enough to say that I know it is true!

God said that not many wise, and not many mighty, and not **many** noble are called, but He has chosen the foolish things to confound the *wise*, and the things that are base to put to nought the things that are. Jesus never went out and chose those big educators in His day. He went rather to the Sea of Galilee, along the shore, and called some fishermen who did not know their letters. He put His Spirit in them and told them to preach the Gospel; and that is where we are getting it from today from men who did not have anything to boast of, any natural ability. They had to lean on God. Every man who does that is going to have something that will stand the test.

Paul, with all his education and learning, didn't count on that. He stood before the people and declared,

"And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom . . . but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (I Corinthians 2:1-5).

That is where we want our faith — in God. We do not want our faith in oratory or fine words, but we want our faith in the living Word of God. And if we get the Word of God in our souls and believe it, and walk in it, and line up to its precepts and statutes and judgments and its rule of living, we are going to have a conscience void of offense toward God and man. When the summons comes, we can look up with faith and confidence **in our soul** and say, "Lord, it is well with my soul!" We are trusting **in that** living Word.

"Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."

We know that Jesus has been here on this earth, and He has gone. They crucified Him — and they thought they had ended everything. But don't forget the Scriptures I read. They will stand when all these doubters and liars, and deniers of the truth, and all those murderers of old are in perdition.

There was a man in Old Testament times who said, "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall **I** see God." He knew that even if he went back to the dust, and the worms ate his body, he would rise again and stand in the latter day with his Redeemer. And he added, "Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another."

That is our hope, that we are going to, see Jesus again; and all the sleeping saints who have trusted Him right down to the last moment of their lives are going to come up in that glorious moment with a body Without disease and immune from sickness — a glorified body. That is our hope, that is our great hope today — He is coining again! For that reason we know we can say, like Paul as he looked into the open grave and looked death in the face, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" In Christ the sting is gone, the grave has lost its victory, because beyond all that is the glorious hope that the coming of the Lord

draws nigh.

David, that patriarch of old, said, in the 23d Psalm,

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

He had no fear of death; he knew it was only a shadow that signified the life beyond; for there must be light beyond to make a shadow. My friends, death is only a shadow. The light beyond will sooner or later dispel the shadow, and you will be right in the glorious light of the God of all the earth. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." We thank God, that is the hope that we have in our soul. And more than that, the Lord is going to bring His saints back with Him. We read in Zechariah:

"The LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark:

"But it shall be one day which shall be known to the LORD, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light.

"And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. "And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one" (Zechariah 14:5-9).

Do we believe that? We know it is true! He is talking about the earth. There is no summer nor winter in Heaven; but he is talking about this earth that we are living on. He is coming back with His saints — you, and all the sleeping saints. That day will soon arrive. We have seen some of our beloved friends and loved ones go on before — our precious Mother who proclaimed this glorious Gospel, who preached it without fear and favor, and told us the truth in spite of all the opposition of hell that was arrayed against her soul all those years. But she held her integrity in God and she kept hammering away, and we are glad that some of us had open hearts to receive the Gospel, to embrace it, and to endure as good soldiers of the Cross of Jesus Christ, and not entangle ourselves with the affairs of this life. There are worthies that we have known in our lifetime, ministers and workers who have stood shoulder-to-shoulder with us, who have gone on. You can go back further, down to Peter, James, John, Paul, and those martyred Apostles; and back further to Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, Isaiah, Jacob, Samson; and clear back to Moses and Abraham; and all the way back to Enoch, the seventh from Adam, who said that the Lord God shall come with ten thousands of His saints, to judge the world.

We have something that we ought to be enthusiastic over every moment of our life. We have the greatest thing in the world! We have a hold on the living God; we have the truth ; we have the Word; and we have a faith in our heart to accept it and believe it. I would rather die a thousand deaths than to deny one part of this Word or go back on it. It is our hope, it is our strength, it is our everything. It is the lamp to our feet and the light to our pathway. He is our Bread. He is more than our necessary food. You can starve us to death physically, but we have the Word. You cannot starve our soul. We will feast and live, inwardly. The outward man may perish, but the inward man will be renewed day by day because we have the Bread; we have the living Word, we have the Holy Ghost. He is the great Teacher, and He takes of God and shows it unto us; and when He shows, we get it right.

That is the reason there is unity here; that is the reason we are not full of all kinds of doctrines, but we see eye-to-eye and stand for the same thing, preach the same Gospel and, by the grace of God, live it. Don't you thank God you are in a place where they are not denying the Word of God? where they believe it all and stand for it and are ready to die for it? That is the old-time religion!

God said that the last days would be like the days of Noah. You know that in the days of Noah, they were marrying and giving in marriage, eating and drinking, building, and planting and going through all those labors. We are right now in that place. They are eating and drinking and gambling. They are eating themselves to death, and drinking themselves to death — filling themselves with poison, ruining their lives, and committing suicide. They are going out on the highways, filled with this intoxicating liquor, and they are not killing only themselves, but they are killing innocent people as well.

The world is in chaos, and men of great minds are confused; they do not know what a day will bring forth. What do we care what a day will bring forth! We know in whom we believe. We do not care if the stars fall and the sun goes out and the land shakes. We will stand on the living Word and go through. We



have something we want to hold on to. I want to read another verse to you:

"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

We have a crown. God has crowns to give us. They are already laid up for us who are faithful. Don't let anyone else get your crown. Let us be sure of our crown, and go through on these lines. God has promised not only that, but if we are faithful He is going to keep us out of the Great Tribulation that is coming upon the earth.

There are many churches in the world today, but we want to be of the Philadelphian church. Just because we call ourselves Apostolic Faith doesn't mean that we are members of the church of Philadelphia; but if we obey the Word of God, and line up to it, and live as God wants us to live, we can claim the promises. **I** am persuaded that not everyone who comes to Apostolic Faith meetings is going to be an overcomer in that great day, because we see many people trifling with the Gospel.

"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth" (Revelation 3:7).

That means He has opened the door to us now; it is wide open, and He has told us to go forth and declare the whole counsel of God and preach the everlasting Gospel. God has given us an open door. We want to be sure we do not lose any opportunity, in this open door, to preach the everlasting Gospel, for the day is coming, He says, when He will shut the door, and no man can open it.

Those antediluvians found that God could open the door of the Ark, and let in His people; and He did. When all the birds and beasts and the people were safe inside, then the great hand of God pushed the door shut. All those multitudes of antediluvians could cry and agonize, swear and curse, and everything else — but the door was shut! They had had their day and they had refused it; they went on in their sins. And God destroyed the whole universe of them.

"I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it : for thou hast a little strength, "

Don't you thank God that you have a door that is open to you? And no man can shut it. There will probably be a lot of people who would like to shut this door that we have open to us, but God says that no man can shut it. When we let down, and pull down the standard, and get worldly if we ever go that route — we can make up our mind that that door is shut, and He is on the inside and we are on the outside.

"I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my ward, and hast not denied my name.

"Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Revelation 3:8-10).

Judgment is coming, but God has promised that if we keep His Word of patience and keep this door open, which He has opened **for** us, and keep on working for Jesus and living clean and right, He will deliver us from that hour of temptation that is going to try all the earth. That is a wonderful hope that we have this morning.

My friends, this wonderful Jesus is right here. He said that when they say He is in the desert, we are not to go out to meet Him; and if they say He is in the secret place, we are not to believe it. No! Bless God, He is here this morning, where you can find Him. How? With a broken and contrite heart — if you are not saved; and if you are saved, and are seeking those deeper experiences of God that are going to make you an overcomer, you can throw your heart open to God and say, "Lord, thank You for the Word that has given me hope. Thank You for the truth that makes men free. *Jesus*, I lay my life at Your feet; all I expect to be I lay at Your feet; I consecrate my family, my everything, and on top of that I lay myself. I present myself a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." And that is Only your reasonable service. Let us come and pray.

