

# 'Clear as Crystal'

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*The Lord's end toward which He is working is the expression of His own Divine nature in His people, which is the end toward which the Lord is working.*

**Topics:** "Christ Formation", "Divine Nature"

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## Description

T. Austin-Sparks preaches on the importance of understanding the great end toward which the Lord is moving in the lives of His people, which is the expression of His Divine nature in them. The sermon emphasizes that God's work in His people aims to manifest Christ through the Church, with the Christian life being a progression in the increase of Christ. The message delves into the significance of judgment according to the jasper stone, the abomination of lies to God, and the historic impact of the lie in the world, culminating in God's answer to the lie through Jesus as the embodiment of truth.

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## Transcript

"...and he that sat was to look upon like a jasper stone and a sardius" (Revelation 4:3).

"Having the glory of God: her light was like unto a stone most precious, as it were jasper stone, clear as crystal... And the building of the wall thereof was jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto pure glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper... and there shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie" (Revelation 21:11,18,19,27).

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and stood not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof" (John 8:44).

"And as for you, the anointing which ye received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any one teach you; but as his anointing teacheth you concerning all things, and is true, and is no lie" (1 John 2:27).

We have now passed the half-way line of this consideration, and it is very important that we should understand clearly what it is that the Lord is wanting to show us. There are many words, and there is much teaching, and we just ask ourselves: 'What is it all about?' The one thing about which we shall have to be clear at the end is: 'What is it that the Lord has really said?' Therefore, leaving all the symbolism, that is, the means the Lord uses to lead us to the truth, let us seek to understand exactly what the Lord is saying.

## THE END TOWARD WHICH THE LORD IS WORKING

It can all be gathered into a few words: The Lord is trying to show us what is the great end toward which He is moving in the lives of His people, and that end is the expression of His own Divine nature in them. That Divine nature has been brought to us in His Son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit has come to reproduce Jesus Christ in the Church, so that when God's work is done in His people there will be a manifestation in His universe of the Divine nature in a people. God is not doing two things, but one thing. Evangelism is just the gathering of the people, the adding of believers to the Lord Jesus. From that time it is the work of the Holy Spirit to conform those believers to the image of God's Son, and the end of the work of the Holy Spirit is the manifestation of Christ in and through the Church.

The Christian's life is progression in the increase of Christ. That explains all the dealings of the Holy Spirit with us, for His one object is to bring the Church to the fullness of Christ. If you want to know what the fullness of Christ is, then you have it in this symbolic presentation of the holy city, the new Jerusalem. Every aspect of this city represents some spiritual feature of the Lord Jesus, that is, it represents some feature of the Divine nature which is to be reproduced in the Church, the people of God. Is that quite simple? Now do you understand what it is all about? If you do, we can go on.

## JUDGMENT ACCORDING TO THE JASPER STONE

We will come to another feature of the Divine nature to be produced, not in some imaginary thing called the Church, but in you and in me.

We have already seen that the all-inclusive character of the city is gold. Pure gold is the dominating presentation of this city, and we have seen that in the Bible gold is always the symbol of Divine character, especially love. We considered that last time. Now we are going to look at the first feature of that Divine nature. If you have read carefully those passages cited you will have noticed that there was one idea in all of them - that which is "clear as crystal". It says that the city is like "a jasper stone, clear as crystal." Jasper, as a symbol of clearness, is mentioned in all the main connections of this book of the Revelation. Immediately the Lord has dealt with the seven churches in Asia, the second part of the book begins, and the Apostle John says that he saw "a door opened in heaven... a throne set in heaven... and he that sat was to look upon like a jasper stone" (Revelation 4:1-3). The churches have been judged, and now all the world, and everything else, is going to be judged, for the throne means judgment. It is the governing of everything from heaven, and everything is going to be judged in the light of the jasper stone, that is, according to that Divine nature which is absolutely clear. The churches have been judged in that light, and the world is to be judged in that light. It is judgment according to what is absolutely TRUE. Did you hear that word? Transparent - you can see right through it. There is nothing here that is not perfectly clear and true. There is no darkness whatever in the Divine nature - it is perfectly transparent. There is nothing false about God, nothing that is not real. There is no mixture of two contradictory things in the nature of God, nothing that is imitation or artificial. There is no hypocrisy in the nature of God and nothing that deceives or pretends to be what it is not. It takes all these words, and many more, to get to this characteristic of God, which is complete purity, clear as crystal.

## THE LIE AN ABOMINATION TO GOD

In this description of the city John says that nothing can enter in that makes a lie, and he calls the lie "an abomination". That which is not absolutely true is an abomination to God. In this way the Lord Jesus showed what God's nature is like. The strongest and most terrible things that came through His lips were

against hypocrisy. I would not like to have been there on that day when He looked at the Pharisees and said: "Ye hypocrites!" "Hypocrite" just means "play actor" - he is on the stage of this world playing a part which is not real and true. In the face of the Lord Jesus there was anger against what was not genuine. We read those terrible words from John 8 when He said to those Pharisees: 'You are of your father, the devil, and the works of your father you will do. He is a liar and the father of lies. When he speaks a lie he speaks of what he himself is.'

## THE ENTRY OF THE LIE INTO THIS WORLD

That brings us to an issue which has a very long and terrible history. Jesus was thinking of what happened right back at the beginning in the Garden, when Satan told a lie about God and Adam accepted it. The whole history of the terrible tragedy of this world came from that lie. There is a lie right at the heart of this universe, and there is no truth in this universe outside of God. The history of this fallen creation is the history of a lie.

Jesus said of Satan that he "abode not in the truth". Therefore he must have been in the truth at some time, and at some point he abode not in the truth. He departed from it and the terrible judgment of God fell upon him and all those who shared the lie with him. So he came to impart his own lie and nature to man, God's creation, and the Apostle says: "The whole world lieth in the evil one" (1 John 5:19). This is a very long and terrible history, but it is coming to its climax now. One of the most powerful influences in this world today is that which does not believe there is truth. It says with Pilate: 'What is truth? There is no such thing as truth. It is just as good to live by lies as it is to live by anything else.' That ideology is spreading over all the world - cynicism as to truth. This world is a deceived world, and Christians know how artificial, unreal and empty this world is. Here we are face to face with one of the most solemn issues in the whole history of this world.

## GOD'S ANSWER TO THE LIE

It was in relation to this historic lie that the Son of God became incarnate in this world. Jesus said: "I am the truth" (John 14:6), and "To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth" (John 18:37). Jesus is the embodiment of the great answer to the history of the lie. That is why the devil hated Him so much, and why those who were children of the devil, according to His word, hated Him so much. He tore the mask of their hypocrisy and their play-acting in religion off from them. He exposed their true nature and, driven by the devil, they took counsel to destroy Him. Truth with the Lord Jesus was not just some abstract thing. It was not just that He spoke the truth - He WAS the truth. He became a personal power in this universe, a mighty, effective witness against all that was not true. When Jesus came into this world the battle was on between the truth and the lie, and He was only just born into the world when that great hypocrite, that false man, Herod, sought to destroy Him.

Jesus is the truth. In Him there is no darkness at all, and that is why He could also say: "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12).

## THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

The Holy Spirit is called "The Spirit of Truth" (John 16:13). Jesus said: "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth", and: "The Spirit of truth... for he abideth with you, AND SHALL BE IN YOU" (John 14:17). Jesus was saying: 'What I have been outside of you the Holy Spirit will be IN you.' "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32) - free from the lie. So John

says: "As His anointing teacheth you concerning all things, and is true, and is no lie."

Now you can see how we are coming to the city. Dear friends, do try and be patient with me, for I am dealing with something of very serious consequence and this is God's solemn truth. If this city represents any great spiritual principle of the Divine nature, and if the One upon the throne of government is as a jasper stone, we are all going to be judged according to what is now being said.

## A GLORIOUS CHURCH

Well, then, here in the symbolism of the city the Church, in relation to Jesus Christ, is presented. The Apostle Paul said that He is going to "present the church to himself a glorious church" (Ephesians 5:27), and here it is at last, "having the glory of God". But then the Apostle defines what he means by "a glorious church" - "not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing." That means not having any dark thing in it, or any of the marks of this deceived creation - in a word, nothing that is not absolutely true.

All this may sound very terrible to you, and I expect some of you are saying: 'Why is he talking to us like that?' Well, I am talking to myself just as much as to you. What is the Holy Spirit seeking to do in you and in me? He is seeking, on the one side, to deliver us from that nature of ours which is so impure, and, on the other side, to bring into us the nature of the Lord. The Lord, the Spirit, is trying to purify the gold until it is like transparent glass, that is, a gold which is quite different from what is natural. Is there anyone who has seen transparent gold like glass? A piece of gold which you can look right through as you can look through a window? Well, I have seen a lot of gold in many parts of the world, but I have never seen any like that! This is something that is not natural: it is Divine. This is not what we are by nature, but it is what we are going to be by grace. To change the metaphor: 'Whiter than the snow'. That is why I chose that hymn this morning. I had been looking out of my window upon the Blümlisalp and I saw that perfectly white snow glistening in the sun. I said: 'Is there anything whiter than that snow?', and then the Word of God came: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" (Isaiah 1:18). Later on we shall have to see the place of the Lamb in the city and then we shall see why the city is transparent like pure gold.

You see, this book of the Revelation gives us a picture of the Church at last arrayed in white robes, clothed in that pure, righteous nature of God and "they shall walk with me in white" (Revelation 3:4).

The message of this book of the Revelation comes from one who says: "He that is true" (Revelation 3:7).

Dear friends, the Lord wants us to be people who are real, genuine and transparent. You know, fellowship is impossible unless there is absolute transparency. It says that the street (and there is only one street) of the city is PURE gold. It is going to be the fellowship of the Lord's people in absolute transparency. You cannot have that fellowship while you are suspecting one another, while you are not sure about the motive of the other person, and while you have to say: 'Now, I wonder what he - or she - is after! I wonder if he is trying to find something out! I wonder if he is trying to get hold of something that he can use against me! I don't trust him. There is something about him that is not transparent.' You see, that is the world. You cannot have fellowship when it is like that, and if you want to mingle on the golden piazza it will only be if all that is not true, real and genuine has been removed.

The Lord cleanse our hearts and our minds from all that is not true!

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