

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 1 'END-TIME' PROPHECIES – TRUTH REVEALED

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KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART ONE

The mark of the beast. Armageddon. The Four Horsemen. The false prophet. Babylon the great. Falling stars, stinging locusts, and giant hailstones. The seven last plagues. The bottomless pit. The lake of fire. These images of terror and catastrophe from the book of Revelation have greatly influenced the thinking of millions of Christians through the ages. Even the secular press uses images such as "Armageddon" and "four horsemen of the Apocalypse" to describe calamities in our world. Despite 1900 years of fascination with the book of Revelation, John's letter to the seven Churches of Asia continues to be misunderstood. And badly misinterpreted!

One misconception shared by some is that the Revelation has nothing of importance to say to us. It's considered to be merely a bizarre piece of first-century writing with no relevance for today. Another wrong idea is that the Revelation is a code book describing a specific outline of history written in advance. Countless interpreters have tried to "decode" the book from a historical perspective to find all the major world events of the past 1900 years. Others interpret it more literally as a handbook for predicting the cataclysmic events that will bring the final wrath of God and the end of the world. The claims of Christian groups from the early church to the present — that the Revelation pinpoints the events, personalities, and time periods of "the end" — have all failed. This should be a caution to believers for using the book of Revelation as a predictive handbook. Other people's interpretation of the book of Revelation is based on the "Pan Theory" — it's all going to pan out in the end! Beloved brethren, the fact is, it's not panning out the way the end-time prognosticators are projecting!

Through the years I have ministered the Word in Bible studies, seminars, and church services of various types. When there has been a question and answer session, or when opportunity was granted for people to request teaching along a particular line, the most often requested subject has been — THE BOOK OF REVELATION! I have met people who were babes in Christ, carnal Christians whose lives were a mess, they had incredible problems and needs, including deliverance, and instead of prayer or counsel or messages that would help them overcome and grow up in Christ, they wanted me to teach them the book of Revelation! "Yeah, brother, that's for me, lay it on me, I want the book of Revelation!"

In retrospect, in the early days of my walk in God, my desire was no different. I was young, both naturally and spiritually. I knew little about the word of God or the purposes of God, but a call was in my heart. Being unlearned and immature, my very first dream was that I wanted to be a "prophecy" teacher. I imagined that I would be able to so eloquently expound the mysteries of the book of Revelation that great crowds would flock to hear me teach. After all, where do you start when you're brilliant and young in the Lord! Thank God, very few of those who read these lines had to suffer through some of the things I taught out of the book of Revelation! The old adage was surely fulfilled, "Fools rush in where wise men fear to tread." Today it seems to me that the dumber a person is spiritually, the more determined they are to teach the book of Revelation! Those who know nothing are convinced that they know everything, and the first place they head is for deep water. There are depths in God, and heights of revelation and reality far beyond anything that the carnal mind can conceive. The reason people who are spiritually illiterate jump into it with such gusto, and people who have some idea of the majesty and meaning of its message are more hesitant, is because the book of Revelation is the most dynamic, powerful, awesome, devastating book of the Bible! Those who have caught glimpses into the transcendent glories of its deepest mysteries often shy away from it in the light of its loftiness and eminence. What Christians are normally exposed to are the radio and television preachers, the "good ol' boys of religion" who think they know all about it and parrot and elaborate on all the absurdities they have been taught by their teachers.

Today, many Christians are confused. They are tossed too and fro with every new book that hits the market or every new fad end-time scheme introduced by some celebrity preacher. The popularity of the Revelation today is due to man's insatiable curiosity regarding the future, the interest in the unknown tomorrow, which characterizes the restless human soul. To claim that in the pages of the Revelation we can see the signs of the present times and thus predict the tomorrows; to pull back the veil and claim to lay bare the future is to attract an audience, for that is the nature of man — fascination with the future! And that is the thrust of the scores of books always appearing, almost all of them claiming to be able to unravel and accurately predict the great world events about to unfold. Man reveres the past, but he is intoxicated by the heady wine of prophecy. The very claim, then, of these many books — that they can reveal to us things which are soon to come — helps to explain the popularity of those books on the Revelation.

The most popular of the apocalyptic entrepreneurs undoubtedly is Hal Lindsey, the author of the sensationalist book *The Late Great Planet Earth* and other more recent titles. His combination of literalist biblical interpretation and outright scare tactics have resulted in gaining him an extremely wide readership. But — his predictions have continually needed readjustment in the light of deadlines which have come and gone without fulfillment! Also, according to the February/March 1980 "special report to the members of the 700 Club," entitled "Pat Robertson's Perspective," the beast of Revelation was to have been the Soviet Union, which he believed was about to attack Israel "to gain unrestricted access to Middle East oil plus a land bridge to the mineral wealth of Africa." The economy of Western Europe would be doomed by this and the world would then see the rise of a "counterfeit Messiah," a satanic figure "more malevolent than Adolph Hitler," who in 1980 was "approximately twenty-seven years old" and was being groomed for his sinister task. His nightmarish seven-year reign is the time of the "Great Tribulation," which supposedly will come to an end with the second coming of Christ, who will destroy the Antichrist at the battle of Armageddon. I do not hesitate to tell you that all such speculation, which purports to unravel the immediate future of world events out of the prophecies of the book of Revelation, are doomed to failure. None of them will come to pass! Church history is full of these schemes. Every generation, from the early church to the present, has been impacted by prophecies of that sort. I could write page after page, and go on and on, about all the end-time predictions that have been taught out of the book of Revelation that weren't worth the paper they were written on, and often times were proven wrong almost before the ink was dry on the paper!

I am wearied and my spirit vexed with all the newspaper eschatology and comic book theology, with everybody talking about everybody and everything except what Jesus Christ is doing! I've had my fill of preachers trying to figure out what the European Community, the Russians, the Chinese, the Israelis, the United Nations, the Illuminati, the Moslems, Saddam Hussein and everybody else is doing, while they have not the foggiest notion what the firstborn Son of God is doing! Alive today on the face of this earth are more people than have lived in a hundred previous generations. Don't think for one moment, precious friend of mine, that God is going to walk away from the greatest harvest, the grandest opportunity to pour out His love and grace and make known His power and glory, released for man at Calvary. Don't let it even enter your mind that God is about to turn this old world over to the devil to tread down, torment, enslave, ruin, destroy, and damn into judgment and hell. The Antichrist is not a world political leader, the Antichrist is the false religious spirit in the church that has everybody looking at everybody and everything except Jesus Christ!

Go to these so-called "Prophecy Conferences" and all you hear is newspaper clippings, world events, and wild speculations about conspiracies of doom and gloom. My God! It's time to bow the knee, fall upon our faces, and rend our garments, until we receive a revelation out of the heavenly realms about the triumph of our Lord Jesus Christ in the earth in this great and glorious Day of the Lord! God has an elect people in the earth in this very hour who have done, and are doing, just that! We know by the spirit of wisdom and revelation that God is not up in heaven building some kind of Christian Resort for His saints while the world rushes madly onward to hell and damnation. Oh, no! Calvary was for real — the Lamb slain to take away the sin of the world, the sacrifice made to reconcile all things to God, the Christ who came to draw all men to Himself will not fail!

The book of Revelation is THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST. Revelation is a book that teaches who and what Jesus Christ is. It reveals Him in all of His glory, unveils Him in all of His fullness. You will find Jesus the Christ in every chapter of the book, for it is the revelation of Himself. When we read the message of the Revelation with a heart that seeks after Christ, we see in every page His face and hear from every line His

voice. If we do not see Christ in the pages of the Revelation, then all we see is vanity. By drawing near to this book in the power of the Holy Spirit, we draw near to Christ. How beautiful that is! May the elect of God receive much grace to see more and more of Christ in the pages of this book!

The book of Revelation is the Sixth Gospel of Jesus Christ. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John wrote what they saw of Jesus Christ on the earth in the days of His flesh. Luke, in the book of Acts, wrote of the revelation of Jesus that came by the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost and throughout the in-part realm of the earnest of the Spirit during the church age. But John, in the book of Revelation, wrote what he witnessed of the full and complete revelation of Jesus Christ that comes to and through "him that overcometh." It is the revelation of Jesus Christ in sons upon mount Zion, in the manchild on the throne, and in the New Jerusalem come down from God out of heaven. John the Revelator wrote what he saw of the ascended and glorified Christ manifesting out of the heavens of God's Spirit. This book releases the mind of Christ out of celestial realms. We must by the Holy Ghost get on the horse, put our feet in the stirrups, take hold of the reins and ride through this book experientially in the anointing from on High. We must be in the Spirit on the Lord's day to understand it, just as John was in the Spirit on the Lord's day to receive it. And when we do — we see Jesus!

**Walk in the Spirit of the Lord, and you'll see Jesus,
Walk in the Spirit of the Lord, you'll see the King;
Walk in the Spirit of the Lord, and you will find Him:
He's resurrected in His body, He lives in me!**

As dew distilling from the heavens comes the revelation of Jesus Christ from every page of John's vision. It is the drama of God's great plan of the ages wrought out first in the saints, then in the nations, and finally in all the vast creations of God. Everything is viewed from the divine perspective. It is not the history of Satan's activity in men, but the all-conquering power of God's Christ! It is the spiritual drama of Father's dealings in our lives.

In chapter one John gets his first view of the exalted Christ. He sees Him not with the hair, eyes, hands, feet, voice and clothing of the prophet of Galilee. Now he hears a voice as the sound of many waters and, turning to see the voice, he sees God's Christ, God's complete Christ, Head and body, dressed in the garments of a king-priest, with hair like a lamb, eyes of fire, his countenance as the brightness of the noonday sun, with a two-edged sword flashing out of His mouth, and feet like glowing brass.

In chapters two and three John sees the Christ in the midst of the seven churches, representing the whole church realm throughout the present age while God is calling out and forming a people for His purpose. And it's not a pretty sight — for as well as faith and love and patience and good works and the word of the Kingdom, there is also carnality, sin, heresies, apostasy, ceremonialism, false prophets, fleshly control, satanic activity, lukewarmness and abominations of every kind. Who can deny that this has been precisely the history of the church world for all of the past 2,000 years!

In chapter four John sees a door standing open in the heavens. With holy astonishment he beheld an open heaven and a voice bidding him to "come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter" — after the candlestick realm! John was invited spiritually to ascend from the horse and buggy age into the space age! That, I know, is the testimony of a vast company of saints in this generation who are journeying from the natural to the spiritual realm. We have heard within our spirit the voice John heard on Patmos in that long ago, and standing in the midst of the seven-churches-realm we have turned to see a glory high above the candlestick realm, even the surpassing glory of Christ promised to him that overcometh. Do not our hearts rejoice within us, for we have seen the opened heavens, we have seen in the heavens of God's Spirit a throne set, we have seen One sitting upon the throne, and the sovereignty and glory of God's Kingdom realm has shed its transforming light upon our earth, dispelling the mists of natural understanding and religion, making us glad partakers of the mind of Christ, raising us up into the heavenly places in Christ Jesus!

The book of Revelation reveals the centrality of Jesus Christ upon the throne of the universe and upon His throne within our hearts. It gives us centeredness. It gives us something to build our life around. It gives us our proper orbit in the heavens of God's Spirit. In 400 B.C. the philosophers and scientists thought the earth was

flat, and the planets were wandering stars. They had no comprehension of any order of the universe. It was in 340 B.C. that Aristotle first introduced the concept that there was order in the universe and that the earth was the center of the universe. He saw the sun and the stars as lights in the canopy of the heavens that moved around the earth. But for 1600 years they struggled to make sense out of the times and seasons with any predictability. Then, about 400 years ago, Copernicus discovered that the sun is the center of our solar system. As this knowledge expanded it gave stability and predictability to all the events on earth that are controlled by the order of the heavens.

If one does not have the right center, his life will be out of order and out of orbit. There are people who have their job, business, or money as the center of their life. There are others who have their husband, their wife, or their children as the center of their life. Some have amusement and pleasure as the center of their life. Many Christians have their church, their pastor, or their ministry as the center of their life. Some in this Kingdom walk even have "revelation" as their center! Men have different things as their center, but not HE who sits upon the throne! Then all it takes is for their center to be shaken, and their whole world falls apart — their orbit becomes erratic, world's collide, and destruction overtakes them. All it takes is for their center — the preacher — to be caught in adultery or a homosexual act; they lose their job, their business goes under, their spouse leaves them, their children get into drugs and crime, or are tragically killed in an accident, and their lives go out of orbit, emotionally and spiritually they fall apart, go haywire, and self destruct. But when the resurrected, ascended, glorified, exalted Christ upon the throne of our hearts is truly our center, no matter what comes or goes, we will not spin out of orbit! When the mighty Christ within is the sovereign center of our lives, when the One who sits upon the throne sits upon the throne within, heaven kisses earth and heaven and earth intersect within us! And it is just there that there is a mighty REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST!

In the early chapters of the book of Genesis we read that Abel went out and took of the firstling of his flock to offer in sacrifice to God. "The first of his flock" indicates not merely the firstborn, but the very best, a lamb without spot or blemish. But Cain, his brother, took of the fruit of the ground for his offering. In Abel's sacrifice we find a beautiful picture of our Lord Jesus Christ, for Christ was the firstling of the flock, the firstborn of many brethren, the beginning of the creation of God, and out of the whole family of mankind He was the most excellent specimen, unsurpassed in purity of character, excellence of mind and body, and all attributes of divine nature. But then again we still have the same scenario of Cain, people are still offering to God out of the fruit of their human efforts, the best the flesh can produce. It is a great fact, however, that the best we can produce of ourselves is Adam, and old Adam is not good enough, he's not acceptable. In the living out of the life of sonship, which is the life of Christ, we are not talking about modifying the carnal mind, we're not talking about overhauling Adam. The carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be! You can make Adam memorize as much scripture as you can, go to church every Sunday, sing in the choir, learn all the doctrines, do every kind of good work, lay the law on him and force him to act like a saint, but he's still not acceptable in the sight of God. Just as the dog returns to his vomit, and the hog to his wallowing, so the corruption of the Adam man will eventually break out, revealing him to be exactly who he really is. Sonship is not about modifying the behavior of the old man, the man of earth. It's about putting on the life of Christ, the firstling of the flock, a new creation in the image and likeness of God! Don't struggle, dear one, with old Adam with his weaknesses, failures, limitations and corruption. Give yourself to the putting on of Christ and the more you put Him on the more the Adamic nature will disappear as the snow before the noonday sun.

These beautiful representations of divine truth appear in the opening chapters of Genesis and follow through all the wonderful types and shadows of the Old Testament. The Word of God is replete with pictures of Christ — in Genesis He is the seed of the woman. In Exodus He is the lamb whose blood is on the door post. He's the manna that fell in the wilderness, He's the rock that was smitten. In Leviticus He is our great High Priest. In Numbers He is the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. He's the glory over the mercy seat, and He's the mercy seat as well! In Deuteronomy He is the prophet like unto Moses. In Joshua He's our heavenly Commander who is going to take us across this Jordan of death to old Adam and into our inheritance in the Kingdom of God. He is, furthermore, the ark in the middle of the river, He's the ram's horn that's blown to introduce us to the beginning of our inheritance in Jericho, where you don't even have to fight in the battle, all you have to do is blow on the ram's horn, march around the city, and send up a loud shout. All you have to do is sound forth the message that comes from the throne of God, march forward in the consciousness of the presence and covenant of God, and then shout the victory, and God will give you the city! It's not based on you

and me, my beloved, it's rooted in HIM, and HE is the one who will lead us into the fullness of our inheritance in God!

Everywhere in the word of God, matters not where you go, it is a revelation of Jesus Christ! There are thousands of experiences of the people of Israel with their journeys, their battles, their kings, their priesthood, their temple, their offerings, their laws, their rituals and infinitely more in which the work and glory of God's Christ is shown forth. So why is it, when we get to the book of Revelation and read where the Holy Spirit says, "This is the revelation of Jesus Christ," the preachers then proceed to preach everything but Jesus!

It never ceases to amaze me that people read the Bible and never get a glimmer of these mysteries. The reason the Holy Spirit arranged for the book of Revelation to become the last book in the Bible is so that after you have finished reading the other 65 books you should have at least an idea of what some of the types are about, so that when you get over to the book of Revelation and read about a temple being measured, you won't be over in the Middle East somewhere carrying around a measuring stick! Over the past several years a number of people have sent me books and letters and they are all excited because men are raising red heifers to take over to the land of Israel to sacrifice for the purification of the priesthood. I see them as they read these reports and get all excited about these red heifers. As Lynn Hiles has said, I, too, want to shake them and say to them, "If your theology brings you to the place where you go back to outward temples made with hands, and the ashes of red heifers, and the blood of bulls and goats — somewhere you missed the point! There are few things that I will argue with anyone about, but I tell you, if your theology ends with the blood and ashes of bulls and heifers, someone has hoodwinked you and pulled the wool over your eyes! If you think the blood of red heifers will ever purify a priesthood to serve in a temple in Jerusalem, or that some Antichrist will one day sit and reign from a Jewish temple, you haven't learned your ABC's of spiritual truth and divine revelation. I can hear the Holy Ghost saying, What! Are you mad? You mean to say that after 65 books of the Bible you didn't get that point?" **"And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." (II Cor. 6:16) "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out." (Rev. 3:12)**

We might fill this whole article with illustrations of the futility and limitation of the natural mind in comprehending things spiritual, but that is not our purpose now. Our purpose now is to show that the book of Revelation is the revelation of Jesus Christ to, in, through, and as the glorious many-membered son of God! So many truths are in this hour quickened by the Spirit that it seems several lifetimes would be required to expound in depth upon them. It seems to me that for centuries our eyes have been kept holden to the truth and greatness of God's purpose in earth, in His people, and in the universe. We have diligently studied the scriptures, burning the midnight oil, pouring over musty volumes and reference works about the Bible, grasping with the natural mind the superficial, surface meaning, taking for granted that we understood what was written, yet missing completely the deep kernel of truth concealed within. There is no need to mourn this lack of understanding, for the great truth is that God never reveals anything to anybody until He is ready to reveal it, and He is never ready to reveal anything until the time has arrived for a people to appropriate and enter into that truth within themselves, becoming partakers of, participators in, and the very manifestation of that which He is prepared to accomplish.

This is nowhere more true than it is in regard to the book of Revelation! George Hawtin penned words that are still instructive for all today who follow on to know the fullness of God. "No, we need not worry about our ignorance of things. Our only concern should be that when God does send us light that we receive it, for if we reject it, the light we have becomes darkness and we can understand nothing. The moment the Spirit of God begins to shed light on a truth, it is time to begin to ask Him to instruct us in it. Do not submit God's revelation to the criticism of some dead church member or preacher, for they like the birds of the air will steal away the seed of the truth before it has a chance to sprout or take root within you. We are looking for the unveiling of the sons of God. We are looking for the revelation of Jesus Christ. The revelation will reveal what is hidden. The unveiling will reveal what has been kept veiled. As the lightning flashes forth from inky clouds, so the manifestation will disclose that which has been hidden in darkness. 'Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.'" — end quote.

The prophetic word of the Lord is perceptive to the Initiated. The book of Revelation is God's unique deposit of ultimate truth. There is no part of scripture richer or more bounteous in rewards for those who hear and see by the spirit. It is a garden of flowers and nuts, a jewelry box of wondrous pearls and dazzling diamonds. It is a vast and varied landscape of the realm of earth, the depths of the sea, and the glory of the heavens of God's Spirit, filled with beauty and grandeur, the horizon of which is fringed with the bright dawning of eternal Day. Here, and here alone, we can see the real scope and magnificence of God's working and purposes in His sons and in His kingdom. Here, and here alone, we can trace God's redemptive, reconciliative, and restorative plans to their ultimate consummation, and behold the depth and power of the counsels of His love. At every step there is something to encourage and instruct God's elect as we pass through our present trials, testings, purgings, and dealings on to the glory of manifested sonship.

Consider this, dear saint of God — if the limits of our earthly knowledge can be extended and increased by the study of rocks and bones, and beasts, and birds, and stars, how much more profitable in our spiritual life will be the enlightened understanding of those heavenly, divine things set forth in the book of Revelation in the prophetic language of voices, seals, trumpets and vials; of suns, moons and stars; of beasts, scorpions, dragons and colored horses; of horns, crowns, thrones, rainbows and glassy seas; of angels, thunders, lightnings, arks and temples; of earthquakes, meteors, fires, odors, olive trees and candlesticks; of lewd women and chaste women, of a manchild on a throne, of a great city of evil and a beloved city coming down out heaven full of the glory of God. All these things sound very wonderful: but what do they really mean? Can we unravel the story? Can we decipher the strange symbols? Can we unlock the treasures of this book? And what does it mean to us in our journey into sonship in this great Day of the Lord? As in the natural world we must have eyes to see the beauties around us, so in the spiritual world of God's kingdom it is the Holy Spirit's illuminating power that sheds upon our pathway the light of the heavenly realm. My heart sings a thousand hallelujahs, for this is the hour of THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST!

There is no benefit in any knowledge if it merely builds your intelligence, satisfies your curiosity, or inflates your ego. Hear me! I am neither writing nor teaching for the purpose of merely increasing knowledge, of simply putting facts into men's heads. If that was all we could accomplish, I would forever lay down my pen today. It's not that we shouldn't have knowledge, but the point of the knowledge is to define in understandable terms the deeper and higher reality of our relationship with God and the working of His purpose within our lives. Knowledge for the sake of knowledge is vain, pointless, and powerless. "Knowledge puffeth up," the apostle pointedly wrote. To fill our heads with mere information will bloat us like the pompous frog, allowing us to croak loudly, but accomplish nothing. The word that will transform us in this hour does not come by the seeing of the outer eye or the hearing of the outer ear. But just as a warhead is carried by a missile to its target, so is the living word of the Lord borne by that which is communicated in the outward as a written, spoken, or acted word, borne to pierce into the innermost part of our being, that we may be quickened by the spirit of that word in the deepest part of our life. If we receive that word only in our mind, if it never penetrates by the Spirit into our heart as a living power, then it is just knowledge and will never bear any fruit in our experience.

There are levels to understanding the word of God. There is the plain and literal surface meaning; there is the symbolic, figurative, or representative meaning; there is the spiritual or mystical meaning; and these meanings are on an ascending scale in that order. The highest of all meanings is the spiritual meaning, for that is where we meet and touch and experience the reality of God who is Spirit. The beloved apostle John referred to these three levels of truth in these significant words: "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake...I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one...I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning" (I Jn. 2:13). It is the same word, but on different levels to each realm. The word of God will meet you at a different place depending upon where you are in the progression of your spiritual development from babes to young men to fathers. And one can tell where people are in their spiritual stature by the level of the word they are feasting upon! The called-out elect of the Lord today is able to appropriate the truth of God in higher and higher dimensions of reality as we grow up into Christ in all things! We are continually thrust into deeper applications and experiences of God's living word by the renewing of our minds from realm to realm!

Praise God for the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation! It is entirely different from all other books. It is altogether a new book — everything is new! It is a revelation from the Throne! It is a book that carries us

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beyond the church age! It is a book of Ultimates! Just as the book of Genesis is the book of beginnings, so is the Revelation the book of consummations! In this book is revealed a new name (nature), a new song (revelation, message), a new Jerusalem (people), a new heaven (government), a new earth (order, expression), and finally it is proclaimed, **"Behold, I make A-L-L T-H-I-N-G-S NEW!" (Rev. 21:5)**. Hallelujah! The whole purpose of God in this book is to declare the eternal passing of all that is old, and the establishment of ALL THAT IS NEW.

In addition, every utterance to the body of Christ in this book is the utterance of the seven-fold Spirit of God. It is always the Spirit who is speaking! **"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches" (Rev. 2:7)**. Seven times in chapters two and three we read that it is the Spirit who is speaking to the churches. **"Yea, saith the Spirit" (Rev. 14:13)**. How different from the prophecies of the prophets who through the ages have prophesied, **"Yea, my people, thus saith the Lord..."** And how different from the writings of the apostles in their epistles to the churches! **"This I (Paul) say" (I Cor. 7:6)**, or **"I (Peter) exhort" (I Pet. 5:1)**. Here in this superlative book of Revelation it never says, **"Thus saith the Lord,"** or **"This I say."** Rather, it is, **"The Spirit saith, the Spirit saith, the Spirit saith!"** Seven times — the number of completion and perfection — the admonition sounds forth, **"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches."** Why is this repeated seven times? Because of the seven-fold Spirit! He who hears the seven-fold Spirit will be an overcomer! He who overcomes will be a son! He who is a son shall inherit all things! He who inherits all things receives the fullness of the seven Spirits of God! Oh, the wonder of it!

Because the seven-fold Spirit is bestowed upon the overcomers, eventually the entire book is concluded in this way: **"And the Spirit and the bride say..." (Rev. 22:17)**. We read in the beginning of this book that the Spirit is speaking to the churches. But by the end of the book, through the dealings, quickenings, purgings and processings of the Spirit, the soul and spirit of the elect have been brought into union, the masculine nature of the regenerated spirit has wooed and won the affections and obedience of the feminine nature of the soul, and the marriage of the Lamb has come, for His wife has made herself ready. I shall not attempt to develop this thought at this time, for that is not our purpose now, but the Spirit and Bride have BECOME ONE — they speak together! They speak with one voice! The Spirit and the Bride in this passage are a compound subject. The two have been integrated — the two have become one within God's elect. God is making us as overcomers one with the seven Spirits, and the seven Spirits are being fully inworked into the overcomers. This is God's great work! It is experientially taking place within those who follow the Lamb in this great Day! This is the consummation of His eternal purpose within us!

The book of Revelation is a book that is written for kings and priests. It is not intended for the world to understand, neither will it be understood by carnal Christians. To be a king-priest doesn't mean that we will strut around in splendid robes and all who meet us on the street will bow their heads and genuflect, acknowledging that we are great and mighty ones. God is not interested in carnal recognition, neither are those to whom is given the kingly spirit and the priestly nature. At the very outset the book is addressed to a peculiar class of people: **"The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass." (Rev. 1:1)** The term "servants" here does not indicate servants as contrasted with sons, but sons who are servants even as was the firstborn among many brethren, our Lord Jesus Christ. There has never been a greater servant than King Jesus! **"Behold, my Servant shall deal prudently, He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at thee; His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men: so shall He sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at Him; for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider." (Isa. 52:13-15)** What a servant!

When you read the book of Revelation and the book begins to speak to you, that is a good indication that it is for you! The book cannot and does not speak to the individual it is not intended for. Even then, the understanding of the book does not come all at once. You don't open the book at chapter one, verse one, following on to verse two, three, and so on, trying to figure out the meaning of each verse as you go. If you think the message of the book will instantaneously be revealed in your spirit by that method, each event systematically falling into place, you will be greatly disappointed. It doesn't work that way! As you seek the Lord in the book different parts will speak to you that are for you at that appointed time. The book will be revealed in your experience as you grow and progress into the stature of sonship to God. The wisdom of man is

foolishness with God. The wisdom of man would seek an understanding of the book of Revelation verse by verse in the letter of the Word, but the wisdom of God teaches it experience by experience. Don't try to understand it, but pray for obedience, that you might apprehend the ways of the Lord. Seek that your mind and heart (soul) will come into that relationship with God where the Spirit of God in your spirit can reveal. Then the book will commence to speak to you out of your relationship with the Father! Instead of mere head knowledge, the message of the book will begin to apply to your life in the power of kingship and priesthood.

Most of the book is rooted in the symbology of the Old Testament. You will find there the temple, the sacrifices, the worshippers, the ark of the covenant, the candlestick, the city Jerusalem, mount Zion, the prophets, the priesthood, the king and the throne, the archangel, the serpent, trumpets, feasts, and many more. Now by the spirit of wisdom and revelation all these things begin to relate to your experience, your life, and your walk in God. You cross the thresholds of spiritual reality where all that was natural and external to Israel in the Old Testament now becomes spiritual and internal as the revelation of Jesus Christ in the elect. The symbols of the Revelation appear to be highly complicated, and they are to the carnal mind! How crude and presumptuous is the darkened carnal mind that would lift its voice in pretentious wisdom to understand the deep mysteries of God! We must consider such mysteries with reverence and godly fear, remembering above all else that our Father has willed that we be partakers of His mind. I have no hesitation in saying that just as surely and truly as the mind of the Father dwelt in the firstborn Son, Jesus Christ, so also that same mind that dwelt in Him will dwell in all that blessed company now becoming sons of God. The deep mysteries of God and the unfathomable wisdom and knowledge hid in Jesus Christ cannot be discovered by the natural man or the carnal mind, but God reveals them unto us by His Spirit. The secret then is not in studying, burning the midnight oil, pouring over vast volumes searching out information and understanding, but the divine secret that unlocks all the divine depths of divine things is walking in the Spirit and hearing what the Spirit saith. The same Spirit that inspired the book reveals the book, opening the precious storehouse of truths of the Kingdom of Heaven to the sincere and seeking heart.

The visions of the book of Revelation are well-ordered and each of the keys to the book testifies of itself. The idea that the body of Christ is a company of kings and priests, so graphically set forth in chapters four and five, suggests that our ministry is to bring people out of an old world order into a new world. Noah was commissioned by God to bring his family out of an old world into a new world. He passed through the destruction of the flood, stepped out of the ark, and established a new age and a new order in the earth. When we come to the book of Revelation there is so much that looks like judgment, destruction and retribution upon mankind and the earth — the grass, the trees, the rivers, the seas, the mountains and valleys, the cities, nations and peoples — but these are mere figures for the passing away of a realm of life, a sphere of existence and a state of being — old Adam with all the systems, order, society, culture, institutions and ways of the fleshly mind and life. The Spirit is speaking of the coming into being of a new heavens and a new earth within ourselves. God is raising up in the earth today a new people with a new mind, nature and heart, a new spirit, a new temple of God, a new order of priesthood and kingship, a new habitation of God, a new revelation of God, a new city of God, a new government of God, a new order of God within men. Hallelujah!

The book of Revelation is the revelation of Jesus Christ. The word "revelation" means to unveil, uncover or take the cover off. The unveiling of Jesus Christ — that's what is happening in God's elect! That is what is taking place in the earth today! That's what the book of Revelation is all about! As that which has been hidden in Jesus Christ is revealed, uncovered, brought out into the open and exhibited, the glory of Jesus Christ is shining forth from His body in all the earth. Christ is in us! The revelation of Jesus Christ must be within us! Christ in you IS the hope of glory, the apostle wrote. There is no hope for creation in a rapture. There is no hope of glory to be revealed in the earth through dying and going to heaven. There is no hope for a new and bright future for the world in understanding world events. There is no hope for the raising up of Christ in our lives by a Great Tribulation out there upon the nations of earth. Oh, no! Our only hope is Christ in us. Until we grasp the eternal significance and transcendent importance of this wonderful truth, the carnal mind and its silly interpretations of the book of Revelation will lie and cheat and deceive. CHRIST IN US is our hope of glory! And it is the world's only hope! Furthermore, God has now delivered His true elect from the foolish notions of the church systems that God's glory has something to do with some far-off heaven somewhere, streets of gold, walls of jasper, gates of pearl or fluttering around in white nightgowns playing harps! Glory is nothing more or

less than the expression of God's nature through a human vessel. That's what glory is! Christ in us is the hope of God expressing Himself through us to creation.

The book of Revelation gives us the keys that unlock the necessary events within ourselves to bring forth this manifestation of God. Before there can ever be a new heaven and a new earth in all the power of them there will be some mighty dealings of God that will burn up the grass — those surface coverings and masks in our lives; they will destroy the trees — those deeply rooted things that grow out of our earthly nature; they will shake the mountains — those high and exalted kingdoms we have built up from our carnal minds; they will turn the seas to blood until every living thing in them dies — the raging passions, surging emotions, relentless, unsatisfiable desires, and foaming agitations of the Adam nature which we must pass through to get to the other side. When John said that he beheld and there was no more sea, he meant that there was no longer anything within us preventing the pure and full expression of Christ in our earth. The reason there is a new heaven and a new earth is not because there is coming a great cataclysmic destruction in the outer world, but rather, all the walls and barriers that religion has built up in us, that have separated God from the earth, are to be obliterated so that there shall be an expression of God's Spirit through us to creation. Religion has taught people that they have to die to obtain God's fullness, while others have taught that we will fly away to some far-off heaven somewhere to get it while the world suffers the horrors of the damned and untold billions of humanity are consigned to eternal torture in the unquenchable fires of hell. We have been told a thousand things that aren't true and have been used, beaten, threatened, controlled, bled of our money, time and peace, brain washed and deceived by the carnality of the harlot system that calls itself the church. Oh, how men have been tossed to and fro upon the violent waves of the sea of the doctrines, laws, methods, schemes, promotions, gimmicks, deceptions, fraud and foolishness of the church systems! Thank God, the day is coming when there will be no more sea! And for many of us, blessed be His name, it has already become a glorious fact that within ourselves there is no more sea!

God has in these days powerfully spoken to His elect that there is an inner working of His Spirit that leads to the full expression and manifestation of His glory. There must be a new heaven because heaven represents the realm that is invisible, the dimension of spirit and the mind of Christ. We can never change our outer world until we change our inner world. There will never be a new earth (visible expression) until there is a new heaven (inner, invisible reality), for one cannot change what he is outwardly until he has been changed in what he is inwardly. And that's where vast multitudes of the Lord's people are missing it. They are trying to obey some set of rules, the traditions of religion, be faithful to the programs and please the church which makes them appear godly, but works no change or transformation of the nature. These things give no life nor do they in any way help us grow up into the power of the life of the Son of God.

Ask a crop farmer what he does, and he'll say, "I'm a grain farmer," or, "I raise cucumbers," or, "I grow grapes." No farmer sums up his work by saying, "I plow up weeds," or, "I get rid of bad bugs." Although farmers do those things, their main focus isn't what they plow up or get rid of; it's what they produce. God is a farmer! He is working to produce a good crop in His people! We sometimes think of God only in terms of what He is against, but that's a mistake. Of course, God is against carnality and various sins and works to rid us of them, but His main focus is PRODUCING A RICH HARVEST OF CHRIST'S NATURE WITHIN US. For all who are in step with God's Spirit, that is their main focus too!

What's the use of being against things if we're not for anything? If a farmer plows under every weed but doesn't plant good seed, and properly care for and nourish them, he won't get a harvest. In fact, if he plows but doesn't plant, he'll soon have more weeds than ever! Once he plows, a good way to prevent more weeds from taking over is to plant good plants. So, too, God has planted within His chosen elect the good seed of the Christ life and the book of Revelation is the symbolical, illustrative, figurative, metaphorical, and allegorical teaching of how God deals both positively and negatively in His garden to bring forth the harvest of Christ within us!

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, Part 1, "End-Time Prophecies-Truth Revealed' [J. Preston Eby] ~ BIBLE STUDY

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART TWO THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART TWO

THE UNVEILING OF THE SONS OF GOD

The book of Revelation is without doubt one of the most important and wonderful books ever written. It is a work of art, marvelous art, divine art. This remarkable book is written in the form of a drama and is skillfully divided into seven acts with seven scenes each. Scenes of glory surpassing fable are unveiled before us in this book. No other book takes us at once, and so irresistibly, into another sphere. Long vistas are here opened before us that carry us into other worlds and urge upon us the realities of our call into the high places of God's Spirit and purpose. There is one revelation and one only in the whole book — the revelation of Jesus Christ. It is not the book of Revelations as many refer to it. The simple adding of an "s" totally distorts the true meaning of the book! It is not many revelations. Although many things are said in this book, there is only one thing that God is revealing, and that one thing is JESUS CHRIST! John did not reveal many revelations, though there were many visions shown him and many things spoken to him. All together made but one revelation.

I further exhort all who read these lines to never call this book the Revelation of Saint John. It is in no sense the Revelation of John! John's part in this is that of a third party. The revelation is given to Jesus Christ by the Father as His very own state of being — Jesus is the revelation of the Father! The glory of this revelation of God in Christ was communicated to John through a very wonderful messenger, who was so wonderful that he showed John all these marvelous truths and realities in the form of dramatic symbols. It is a powerful series of spiritual revelation unrolled in pictures which John saw in spirit, and which he recorded, and to which he was led by the prophetic spirit. The messenger who showed John these things is none other than the spirit of prophecy which is the testimony of Jesus! (Rev. 19:10). This book is preeminently the revelation of Jesus Christ, for that is precisely what the true title of the book is!

The book opens up the unveiling of Jesus Christ in His person, in His church, in His sons, and in His kingdom. The book can be very confusing unless we find some sense of direction and guidance in it. To help in our meditations, let us take a look at the word "revelation" itself. It is more than a book in the Bible! It is more than a vision given to a man nearly two thousand years ago! Eventually it becomes an inner discovery, an activity within our very own consciousness, in the reality of our own experience, and this is the revelation that we are concerned with! It is not intended to be an outline of outer-world events because it is the revelation of a person, the God-man, the firstborn of many brethren, the beginning of the creation of God, even our Lord Jesus the Christ! Within the lives of those called to sonship Jesus Christ is now being raised up unto a revelation in and out from our inner-world, and I do not hesitate to tell you that it is from there that the prophecy will be fulfilled! All of creation groans, waiting for this glorious unveiling of THE SON in THE SONS!

One of the reasons that the book of Revelation has been so misunderstood is because men have thought it was the unveiling of external events that are in the future. It is not the unveiling of world events but the unveiling of a Person who has not yet been seen in all of His glory, beauty and majesty! Today He is like a statue that has the veil put over it, awaiting the day when the veil shall be removed and He shall be seen in all of His glory. Another reason people do not understand the book is because they read it looking for "a revelation." When it is "revelation" we are seeking in place of the REVELATOR, we will no doubt get our revelation but will miss the reality altogether! It is not a revelation, it is THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST! Should I send you a book titled SPANISH MADE SIMPLE, how many would expect to read in that book how to cook Hungarian Goulash? If the title says SPANISH MADE SIMPLE, what will you expect to learn out of this book? Why, how to speak Spanish, of course! Since the book of Revelation is the revelation of Jesus Christ, why is it that when theologians teach from it they teach about the beast, the mark of the beast, the antichrist, world wars, great tribulation, woes, sorrows, pestilences and devastations, but they never seem to come to

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST! Ah, yes, there are beasts and woes and tribulation in the book, but these are not the message — they are merely the things exposed by the unveiling of Himself — exposed to be dealt with and brought to nought! And sometimes they are the very instruments used to bring forth the unveiling!

When you uncover a thing you don't have to bring it from some other place, you only need to remove the cover, because what is under it is already present. This book reveals to our wondering spirits that Jesus Christ doesn't have to come crashing down through the clouds from outer space in order to be revealed! He is covered up, His glory is concealed in this world by a fleshly, religious mind; His grace and mercy are concealed by a harsh, legalistic mindset that thunders right out of mount Sinai, and is full of death; His love is concealed by false church doctrines of divine vindictiveness, judgment, damnation and eternal torture for billions in hell fire; His righteousness is concealed by human good works, self effort, and outward laws and regulations; His truth and purpose are concealed by natural, carnal understanding; His power is concealed by soulish religious exercises, rituals, ceremonies, programs and promotions. To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life! The Lord is the Spirit! The Lord, the Spirit, dwells within us! To uncover the real Christ has nothing to do with Christ coming from heaven, or us going to heaven — He must be UNCOVERED WITHIN US! "But... it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb (the old-order religious system), and called me by His grace, to reveal (unveil) His Son in me..." (Gal. 1:15-16).

The veil that hides Him is upon the mind. It is not something apart from us or away from us. The veil must be removed from where the Christ is concealed from us within ourselves, for we are the body of Christ, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. The Lord is not hidden in some far-off heaven somewhere, He has already come within us, for Christ is in us, except we be reprobates — counterfeits (II Cor. 13:5). Those who are walking with the Lord in the light of this new Day know that it is not Jesus coming down from heaven that shall reveal Him, but the uncovering of the full reality within ourselves of Him who is our life. The veil has been upon our minds, when we saw Him we looked through all the trappings of religion, the traditions, creeds, doctrines, forms, and concepts of men who know Him only after the flesh. But when you know Christ after the flesh, as He was two thousand years ago, you can never see Him as He is.

Every believer should seek that God would open his eyes to see the glorious Christ of God as He is. The sad truth is that the hope of the Christians in the church systems today is to again see Christ as He was. They cannot conceive that they can see Him, that they can look upon His face, unless they see the form of the man who walked the shores of Galilee. Like Thomas the doubter, they stubbornly refuse to believe that it is the Lord unless they can see the nail prints in His hands, thrust their hand into His side, and gaze intently into His piercing blue eyes. Not having this Jesus of Nazareth to see and know, they focus on the baby in the manger. But if you return to that every December 25, and make Him a baby again, you will never know Him as He is. Christmas is an invention of the carnal Babylonian religious system! Furthermore, it is a commercial season, sponsored and kept alive by the heaviest retail advertising campaigns of the year. The so-called "Christmas spirit" is created each year, not to honor Christ, but to sell merchandise! That is not the path that leads to sonship. It is the path that leads to spiritual foolishness and spiritual stalemate and infancy.

How many who read these lines would appreciate if your friends and loved ones, would every year on your birthday, put you back in the bassinet, dressed in baby clothes, and remember you as an infant? What if every birthday was a celebration of your infancy instead of a celebration of the stature you have attained during the years since you came into the world. Think of it! I do not doubt that most of us would be offended, if not incensed, by such a celebration! Yet religion plays out this drama every December 25 of the baby Jesus in the manger all dressed in swaddling clothes, and that is the level they know Him on. Christians of nearly all traditions today relate to Jesus on the purely human level. They know Him not as He appeared in glory to Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus road, nor yet in His glory as the resurrected, ascended, glorified Lord who lives and walks in His body upon the earth.

When Jesus trod the pathways of earth He called twelve men to be His disciples. They followed Him, heard His wonderful teaching, saw the mighty signs and wonders, and enjoyed communion with Him as no other man or woman on earth. Yet Jesus said to these men, "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him" (Mat. 11:27). Surely these men

knew the Son! No, not at all! Not one of them knew the Son of God. "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father." These men knew Jesus, but they did not know the Son of God. Even in the days of His flesh He could only be known after the Spirit! To know Jesus after the flesh did not qualify as knowing Him at all. One could walk with Him, talk with Him, eat with Him, share His most intimate human experiences, and yet never know Him!

It was many years afterward that one of these disciples, John the beloved, was granted the revelation of Jesus Christ. Only then did John truly see Him as He is! Through the book of Revelation John has shared, in the limited measure any writing can convey reality, that revelation of Jesus Christ. What he really has communicated to us is the way, the manner, the process by which the revelation of Jesus Christ takes place. But it must become our very own personal experience just as it did to John. This revelation doesn't come out of the manger, this revelation doesn't come out from the shores of blue Galilee, this revelation doesn't come from the resurrected One who appeared for forty days to His astonished disciples, this revelation doesn't come from the pages of a book. A mere glimpse of this revelation came to Peter one day when Jesus asked, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" And Peter replied out of an illumination that burst forth from his spirit, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!" In that one brief moment the veil came off of Peter's mind and he saw the man in front of him as He actually is. He glimpsed in that inspired moment the glory of His sonship in all that it means. It was A REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST!

After the Lord Jesus ascended into the heavens, He remained hidden behind the cloud that had received Him on the mount of Olives. When He came back in mighty spirit-power on the day of Pentecost to indwell His people on earth, He still, for the most part, has remained hidden behind the veil of the carnal mind, behind the selfhood of our natural life, and behind the traditions and forms of religion. But on Patmos, to John, there comes THE REVELATION to unveil Him! From this we understand that all that pertains to this writing of John is to reveal, to uncover Jesus Christ. All that has been hidden or obscured to our thinking, consciousness, understanding or experience of Him is to be plainly grasped and made a glorious and eternal reality. As the scenes depicted in the book are experienced truly and spiritually within our lives, Jesus Christ emerges within our reality demonstrating in and through us the fullness of His nature, character, love, wisdom, power and abilities. Understood as the revelation of Jesus Christ in and through His body, immediately the book is changed from a prophecy of apocalyptic end-time events, to a progressive unfolding of the very life, victory and triumph of Christ in His elect and unto creation! With the increasing light of the Holy Spirit of Truth shining upon its pages, we are entering into more and more of its hidden truths, howbeit, we have much yet to learn of the full and complete vision. But be assured that in very truth every scene within the book, of the woes, thunders, trumpets, earthquakes, conflicts, vials, beasts, etc., in all their sundry manifestations, serve but one purpose, and contribute but to one end, namely, to bring forth THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST IN ALL THE SONS OF GOD.

As this revelation comes to its magnificent conclusion in this great Day of the Lord, HE shall stand revealed, uncovered, seen, touched, experienced, expressed and manifested unto the unbounded heavens! "We don't know what we shall become in the future. We only know that, if reality were to break through, we should reflect His likeness, for we should see Him as He really is!" (I Jn. 3:2, Phillips). Reality shall break through! And we shall be like Him! "Wherefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (I Pet. 1:13) Paul writes of "waiting for the coming (revelation) of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall confirm you unto the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." (I Cor. 1:7-9) There is a grace that is brought to us by the revelation of our Lord, it is a grace which will climax all the processings and travail, bringing us into the ultimate realm of His glory — the fullness of His abundant life. God is faithful! He is confirming unto the end all those blessed ones who have received the call to separation unto Him, to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, to be conformed to His image, to put on His mind, to be sons who reign with Him in His kingdom. He has confirmed you, precious called one, unto full redemption of the purchased possession — complete salvation in spirit, soul and body — the unveiling of HIS LIFE!

The Greek word for revelation is, as I have mentioned previously, APOKALUPSIS. This word has been translated in the Bible by various English words such as lighten, revelation, manifestation, coming, appearing, and revealed. We can easily understand how the translators could use such a variety of word-meanings to describe the word APOKALUPSIS, but it was not really because APOKALUPSIS held various shades of

meaning in the original tongue. To know the past of an individual helps us to understand him better. To know the life history of a word makes its present meaning clearer and more nearly unforgettable. In English, for instance, the word rostrum is defined as a place where one stands in giving a speech. But originally this Latin word meant "a bird's beak," such as the beak of a hawk or sparrow. But now this meaning does not even enter one's mind when he hears or reads the word. In the days when Rome was a world power naval vessels were constructed with long, sharp prows for ramming enemy ships. Because of the appearance, it came to be known as "the bird's beak," and this portion of the vessel was considered a trophy of war. The captured rostrum was taken to the Coliseum at the time a victorious commander went there to receive the acclaim of the people, and he would stand in the rostrum to receive his trophy and to give his speech.

The Greek word APOKALUPSIS is a derivative of APOKALUPTO. APOKALUPTO is a compound word composed of APO, meaning "off" or "away," and KALUPTO, meaning "to cover up." Thus APOKALUPSIS means to take the cover off, to uncover, unveil, reveal or disclose. It implies the drawing away or removal of everything that veils or hides, and therefore it is always opposed to concealment or secrecy. I know experientially that the process to remove the things that prevent the life of Christ from shining forth in glory and power through our lives sometimes requires the heavy dealings of the Lord in severe purgings, deep prunings, extreme chastisements, uncompromising judgments and the blast of refining fires. God will make war against the carnal mind, God will make war against the religious mind, God will make war against our pride, selfishness, self-will, self-sufficiency and self-righteousness, God will make war against the flesh, the world and the devil in us, until He has melted all arrogance into humility, and all that is self has died in the bloody sweat and all-conquering cross of Christ which will never give up its redeeming power until all that stands between us and the purpose of God in our sonship has no more a name among the sons of God.

I warn you that the heights of sonship, the kingdom, and all the fullness of God are not attained by merely hearing about them. Neither are they inherently ours as a result of the "finished work" of Calvary. Calvary takes care of your past, but your future demands a heart-absorbing, soul-consuming quest. IF we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him! It has always been a vicious trait of man to want everything handed to him on a silver platter. Thousands love to hear about manifested sonship and reigning with Christ, but never raise a finger to attain because they expect it as another of God's gracious "gifts." Salvation is indeed a gift, and there are a great many wonderful gifts of God that are ours merely for the taking, but the high calling of God in Christ Jesus requires a pressing toward the mark for the prize. There is a world of difference between a gift and a prize! A gift is given because of the goodness of the giver, not because of the merit of the recipient. But to obtain a prize one must qualify. Oh yes, there are qualifications to be met for sonship and rulership in the kingdom of God! That is why we read in the Revelation again and again, "To him the overcometh will I give!" The "finished work" of Christ did not secure the throne for you, my beloved! Don't try to persuade me that all we need do is believe. If that were the case all of us would have been manifested sons of God a long time ago! It is still true that **"whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."** (Heb. 12:6) God does not scourge every sinner whom He saves — scourging is not a part of forgiveness and regeneration. One does not need to be scourged in order to receive what is freely given because of Calvary. But chastening, discipline, scourging, purging and refining are a vital part of the process of growing up into the character of God!

With these thoughts in mind we should better grasp the significance and meaning of the woes, earthquakes, burning mountains, hail storms, vials, and judgments in the book of Revelation! These are poured out upon men (Adam, flesh), upon the earth (carnality, souliness), upon the sea (wickedness), upon the rivers and streams (doctrines, creeds, philosophies, mind-sets), upon the beast (natural constitution), upon the harlot (religious systems, spirits), upon the mountains (strongholds, dominions, kingdoms within), and a number of other realms. You will understand a great truth when you understand that all of these things are as truly within us as they are without! These are the very things that must be purged and eradicated once and for all and completely from our lives if we are to share the glory of Christ's kingdom! And what earthquakes shake our lives as God brings His dealing hand upon the citadels of self and flesh and worldliness that dwarf and conceal the Christ-life within! What fires are ignited in our souls as the Lord comes to His temple and sits in His temple as a refiner's fire and as fuller's soap, purging and purifying His Royal Priesthood! What hailstones of a "hard word" fall from the heavens of God's Spirit into our land as He smashes our religious idols and all the things we treasure more than His will and way! Oh, yes! There is an uncovering, an unveiling, a revelation of Jesus

Christ! "We greatly rejoice...that the trial of your faith...might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing (apokalupsis, disclosure, uncovering, revelation) of Jesus Christ." (I Pet. 1:6-7) Prayerful pondering of this scripture is all that is needed to grasp the meaning of the honor and glory that shall be ours, not in being caught up into the starry skies out of the trials, testings and provings which produce the honor and glory, but when He is UNVEILED TO THE WHOLE CREATION IN HIS MANY-MEMBERED BODY bringing deliverance from the bondage of sin, sickness, fear, pain, limitation and death to all men and all realms through the out-flowing of His love, grace, glory and power.

THE UNVEILING OF THE SONS OF GOD

There is a wonderful act of God that transcends by far anything that has ever been known. It is the unveiling of the sons of God. Early in the opening verses of the Revelation we read that Christ "hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father." (Rev. 1:6) As the revelation progresses with the Christ always as the central figure, we next find Him standing in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks with a special message and call to the overcomers out of these various churches. It is significant to note that in the letters to the seven churches hardly one promise is made to the churches themselves — the promises are made to the overcomers! To the overcomer He says, "I will write upon him my new name; he will walk with me in white; I will grant him to sit with me in my throne." Thus, in the unveiling of Jesus Christ, we also come to the UNVEILING OF THE OVERCOMER — those who eat with Him of the tree of life, live with Him free from corruption and death, share with Him a new name, rule with Him over the nations and all things, walk with Him clothed upon with the dazzling brightness of the light of God's glory, dwell with Him in the city and the temple of God, stand with Him on the pinnacle of mount Zion, come with Him to smite all nations with the irresistible sword of the living Word of God, and sit with Him upon the Father's throne from whence He rules over all the vastnesses of infinity for evermore! And so, through the book, again and again, we see this many-splendored unveiling — THE SON and the sons, THE OVERCOMER and the overcomers, THE LAMB and those with Him on mount Zion, THE WORD and they that are with Him who are called, chosen, and faithful, THE KING and those who reign with Him, THE HIGH PRIEST clothed in the priestly garment and those who are in Him made a kingdom of priests unto God.

There is coming a day — and it is the next major event of God's program of the ages — when all the glories of the Son of God will be revealed and manifested in the sons of God. As one has written, "Let us open our hearts that God may speak to us and show us what a son of God really is, for the greater works (Jn. 14:12) of which Jesus spoke are not to be performed by ordinary believers, but by that vast family of sons who are now nearing the hour of manifestation. They are that chosen company, selected from many ages, who through fires and furnaces of affliction have been brought into that same glorious image of Jesus Christ. These sons of God are like Him. They are exactly like Him. They are in His image (Rom. 8:29). They are in His image and after His likeness. They are so completely sons of God, and so completely like Him, so completely born of Him, so completely of His mind and will and purpose their one difference is that He (the blessed Jesus) is the eldest in that vast family of sons and they with Him are the bridegroom, the last Adam in all His completeness" — The Page.

With all emphasis I must declare that we are now hastening toward the hour of the long awaited unveiling of the sons of God! That is the word used in the Greek — "For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the apokalupsis, the unveiling, the revelation of the sons of God!" (Rom. 8:19). For millennia creation has groaned under the thralldom of sin, sorrow and death, and who among us does not in some measure groan with it even now? But our heavenly Father had a purpose wonderful and glorious beyond words to express, for He in hope subjected creation to futility, condemned it to frustration, placed it under the yoke of sin, pain, and death. His hope was that out of this realm He would bring forth sons — tried, tested, proven sons — who out of the crucible of experience with all the negatives, would grow strong and bright and holy, overcoming all the darkness of this dread realm, to stand tall and victorious in the image and glory of their Father. They would be holy, not because they were created holy with no knowledge of sin and death, but out of their experience with sin and death would chose the wisdom and life of their Father, by it throwing off the shackles of weakness, waywardness, limitation, error and mortality. They would then know as God knows! They would understand the true nature of all things! They would perceive the deep mysteries of creation and redemption! They would become incorruptible in mind, heart and nature! These firstborn sons would be the hope of all creation! "For the

creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God." (Rom. 8:21) And because God subjected creation to this gross material realm with all its sorrows in hope of His sons who would first overcome within themselves, and then deliver all creation, we read of that hope which springs perennial within the bosom of every man and all things, because it was placed there by the Creator, "the whole creation waits expectantly and longs earnestly for God's sons to be made known — waits for the revealing, the disclosing of their sonship!" (Rom. 8:19) (Amplified).

Understood as THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST, immediately the book is transformed from a history book into a spiritual book showing forth the victory and triumph of the Christ of God, Head and body. The saints have heard the term "apocalypse" and it conjures up ideas of the wrath and vengeance of God, tribulation, destruction, and the end of the world. Yet the word apokalupsis from which our English word "apocalypse" is derived, carries no negative connotation in the Greek! The whole book of Revelation is the Apocalypse that is so important to us! Whatever is happening, good or bad, sweet or painful, is a part of the unveiling of Jesus Christ! By that unveiling many things are made to appear in their true light. Thousands of God's elect who read these lines today see the church system for what it is — the harlot, Mystery Babylon the Great. Truly we have come to loathe the carnality, shame, self-righteousness, spiritual fornication, uncleanness, lewdness and wanton haughtiness of this corrupt system! Was it not the light of the mind of Christ arising within our lives that caused us to see it as it is? And oh, what struggles and dealings and strippings we passed through as God purged our hearts from the love of Babylon and our lives from its fleshly ways! What earthquakes shook our world, what hailstorms fell in our land, what fires of God burned in our souls! You see, beloved, the vengeance of God is not against His creation, nor is it against men of any nation, ethnicity, character, or religion. "God so loved the world." The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against every evil that pollutes, enslaves, distorts, and destroys His creation and men's lives! That is but one small example of what we see in the Revelation. By the pure and true revelation of Christ within our hearts many things are made to appear in their true light. That means that all the evil things which appear do so because of the true light, and in that light they are made to appear in their true character: JUST WHAT THEY ARE! It is the light of the Lamb which makes this so! As in the holy city, so throughout the book the Lamb is the light thereof. For He is the true light which lights every man, coming into the world.

Let me say again, as I may say a hundred times more, one can never understand correctly the book of Revelation so long as his eyes are fastened on events in the outer world. The understanding of "the beast" and "his image" and "his mark" comes only by the inner illumination that the Spirit brings. That is, they are revealed by the flooding light radiating forth from the indwelling Christ! In that true light of God all that is not born of God appears as it truly is, that it may be duly brought to judgment, dealt with and eradicated from our lives. The fiercest beast I have encountered in my years upon this earth is the beast of old Adam's nature, the carnal mind, the seed of the serpent slithering about within my very bosom. The heart of our natural life is still deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? How I praise God with joy unspeakable and full of glory for the penetrating light of God's Christ which uncovers the subtleness and deceitfulness of this wild beast, the bestial nature lumbering about in OUR EARTH.

It is not getting rid of the "old man" that enables us to blissfully live the Christ life. It is the unveiling of Jesus Christ as the glorious light of life that chases away the darkness of the carnal mind, exposing the flesh with all of its corruption that it may once and for all be dethroned from mind, heart and action. As the dawn dissolves the night, so the light and life which Christ is swallows up the darkness and death within us. The daylight fills the world just as truly as the night darkness ever did! Even so, the light of God shall fill the world, our world, and the world outside of us, as truly as the darkness of sin, fear and death has done. And when it is all over every creature in heaven, earth and hell shall have had a REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST!

Once we see clearly the great spiritual principles in the Revelation of Jesus Christ, the wars that take place, and all the judgments, vials, earthquakes, etc., begin to make divine sense! It is not unlike the conflicts that arise in a home as parents raise their children. There are problems, commotions, disciplines, and sometimes open warfare! There is also love, mercy, forgiveness, admonition, counsel, blessing and sacrifice. What makes it all worthwhile is the finished product — children that grow up with love and respect for their parents, and with purpose, maturity, ability, judgment, and responsibility in the world. God is raising up and bringing forth a new life in the land, a new creation in Him, a new family of sons. And what conflicts, chastisements, counsels, and

corrections, with love, faithfulness and blessings, take place within us as the old passes away and all things are made new!

God makes war because He loves us. All that appears in the book of Revelation as destruction and devastation is but a picture of God's love, correction and instruction that is consuming the ignorance, self-will and foolishness within the heart of a child. The more you love your children the more you will meditate upon how to confront them and deal with them in order to change them from their immature and rebellious state of being to bring them to a higher and wiser state of being as mature and responsible citizens. Your purpose is not to destroy them, but to bring their childish ways into the captivity of obedience that leads to wisdom and knowledge. The childish mind sees instruction and correction as its enemy — the child will huff and puff and chafe under the chastisement, because in his inexperience and ignorance he cannot see the overall purpose. Children can't see why they have to go to bed, why they have to take a bath, why it is necessary to share, why they can't go here or there and do this or that, why they can't hang out with their friends, why the homework must be done first, why there are chores and responsibilities that cannot be shirked, why they must keep their room clean, obey their parents and a hundred other things.

Children fail to perceive the beauty and blessing and purpose of the life you are preparing them for or the realm you are bringing them into. The reason you make war with them is to bring them into a wonderful adult life that will be rich and free and abundant. You are shaping their characters to be honored among men, to be leaders, to have and provide for their own families, to hold their heads high with accomplishment, purpose and dignity. When the course is finished they will rise up and call you blessed and always thank you and honor you for your steadfastness, faithfulness, and persistence in wisely guiding them to that delectable world. But before that comes, there are mighty conflicts— and so it is in the family of God — the Lamb is warring against the beast! The Lamb nature makes war with the beastly character of the carnal mind. This is the supreme message of the book of Revelation! It is the story of God's dealings with sons to bring them to perfection and maturity, to the status of overcomers, to the throne of God and of the Lamb!

How do I know this? I know it because the subject of the book is KINGSHIP and PRIESTHOOD! All the promises to the overcomers, set against the backdrop of the problems, sins, corruption, disobedience, fleshliness, and abominations of the seven churches, speak of this great truth. It is the mind of man that keeps the world in continual turmoil. It seethes and bubbles and boils and erupts like a vast cauldron and the wisdom of man is powerless to help it. The earth abounds in forms of godliness, yet justice and equality have taken wings and righteous judgment is scarcely known. In spite of plenty, hunger stalks the earth because of the misrule and greed of ignorant and covetous men. Men in the church and out of it are lovers of pleasure far more than lovers of God. For six thousand years man has struggled to bring about a sort of Utopia, but the human mind and the fleshly nature, prone as they are to self-interest, self-will, greed, lust, arrogance and violence have filled the earth with corruption and evil. The natural man can never deliver the world or bring in a reign of righteousness!

The world must be delivered into the hands of a new and different and higher race of men! The message of the Revelation concerns the dealings of God by which He raises up that superior race of men, men in the image and likeness of God, men filled with the mind and the wisdom of Christ, men impregnated with the nature and spirit of the Father in heaven. These are the manifested sons of God! These are the overcomers of whom the Lord Jesus testifies in the closing chapters of the Revelation: **"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."** (Rev. 21:7) The book of Revelation is the drama of God's dealings with His sons to make them kings and priests for the deliverance and salvation of the whole world and all men. We must never overlook that fact!

The great truth that is wide open to our understanding is this: No trial that we pass through is merely a trial — it is a battle with God! You will understand that if you are truly called to sonship! The only problem we have is our problem with God. If there was no issue of our will and our ways versus God's will and God's ways, the test would cease to be a test, for there would be no doubt, no hesitation, no struggle, no conflict, no controversy. The issue would not exist or would at once be resolved — swallowed up in the blessedness of obedience! We would all be sons qualified to rule and reign with Christ, delivering creation, just as soon as we truly embraced the "finished work" of Christ!

There are areas of our lives where many who treasure the bright hope of sonship still obey God because of the fear of punishment. That is the knowledge of good and evil! In those areas we are still under the law, untransformed in spirit and nature. There remains a struggle between our will and God's will. Is there, then, no punishment? I tell you, my beloved, the Lamb will make war with us! The wrath of the Lamb will be revealed from heaven — the redemptive judgments of God. It is His all-consuming love revealed in Christ. It works in us a new nature, the divine nature. It creates within us a new mind, the mind of Christ. It puts within us a new spirit, the spirit of the Lord. It makes us the sons of God with sonship understanding, sonship wisdom, sonship love, sonship maturity, sonship power, and sonship responsibility in the beauty of His ways, no longer trapped in the childish mind that still wonders if God is going to spank us. "Behold! I make all things new! Behold! The tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God!" (Rev. 21:3,5).

As you read the book of Revelation with the illumination of the Spirit it will speak to you! You will find yourself experientially in one of the seven churches, with its characteristics either positive or negative; or you will see yourself in the seals, the trumpets, or the vials of wrath; you will discover yourself in the glory of the bride, or in the judgments of the whore; you will lie in the bed with Jezebel, or stand with the 144,000 on mount Zion; you will be cut to pieces by the sword of God's Word that proceeds out of His mouth, or you will ascend to the throne of God to rule the nations with a rod of iron; you will be refined in the burning inferno of the lake of fire, or you will have pouring out of the throne of God within you the invigorating waters of the river of life; your flesh will be served up as food for the vultures (spirits), or you will be clothed in fine linen, pure and white, and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Oh, yes! You are there, my friend, in every verse and every line. Only the Spirit of God can show you to you, and finish the work, that you may become THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST in the earth!

**You are writing a gospel,
A chapter each day;
By deeds that you do;
By words that you say;
Men read what you write,
Whether faithless or true.
Say, what is the gospel
According to you?**

The church today is full of energetic and sincere preachers and teachers who are just full and bubbling over concerning things that are going to happen. Almost daily I receive across my desk their dire prophecies of doom and terrifying predictions of the coming antichrist, economic collapse, world war, assassinations, earthquakes, famines, conspiracies or that this or that is the mark of the beast, often complete with dates and timetables, none of which ever come to pass. It should be very humiliating to have world events continually follow a course exactly opposite to that which has been mapped out by one's prophetic teaching, and to have one's predictions proven false almost before the ink is dry on his paper. But not these false prophets! They are masters at glibly side-stepping their repeated failures with the assertion that they said merely that such-and-such "might" happen or "could" happen, or enough people prayed so that it didn't happen, or their vision of the date involved was a little hazy so that it may have been 2012 instead of 2002! With feigned words and deceit they dupe and delude their sensation-seeking followers.

The world pays no attention to the modern day preacher when he always cries "Wolf." By that I mean that the world today pays no attention to all this "calamity howling" being broadcast by the preachers. It is just something to joke about, or to be endured by the world at large. Prophecies and sermons are given in the thousands of words. Books are published by the hundreds of thousands, giving dates and times and cycles and calamities that are to take place and never do they come to pass. Think of all the prophecies that were written about what the Soviet Union was going to do, and now the Soviet Union doesn't even exist anymore! And it will not be revived! So the world scarcely notices, and goes on about its business of trying to make ends meet and keep up with the demands of daily living in a technological world. People sell or give away all their possessions and loudly proclaim the end of the world or the second coming of Christ, and many times

assemble themselves in various places to await the supposed coming events. And some, even in this word of sonship and the kingdom, secretly wonder, "Could they be right? Maybe it will come to pass!" But the time for their happening comes and goes, and the disappointed and disillusioned people are left destitute. Yet there are countless others waiting to be duped and disillusioned by someone else! Ah, it is high time for all the preachers and teachers and would-be prophets to leave their ignorance of God and His majestic purposes and acknowledge publicly their desperate lack, forsaking forever the delusions of their dead letter-of-the-word interpretations of prophecy, and turning to the Lord for true spiritual wisdom and understanding. Thank God! He is thoroughly delivering every one of His chosen elect from all this carnal tomfoolery, replacing it with the glorious mind of Christ in the Spirit. The change is taking place in some even as they read these lines!

Thank God! The "apocalypse" is a thing of rarest beauty and divine majesty rather than a frightening, dreadful and fearful time as the preachers of Babylon proclaim. True, not all the uncovering is glorious at the time, the woes and thunders are fearful experiences, and the occurrences of the beast and the dragon, with their rise and fall, are shuddering to the natural mind; but viewed from the position that all is the consequence of HIS UNVEILING, and results in a new heaven and a new earth within us, indeed all things new, so overwhelms us and enthralls us that we can but respond in glad unison with the revered Seer of Patmos, "Even so, Come (be revealed), Lord Jesus!"

The book of Revelation sets before us a glorious Person, with the veil removed from Him, and with the veil removed from our eyes so that we may look upon Him and see with the beloved John that the important things are:

1. The Judge — not the judgments!
2. The Lamb — not the dragon!
3. The Seven Spirits of God — not the spirits of devils!
4. The Rider on the White Horse who has Four Names — not the four horses!
5. The Throne of God — not the seat of the beast!
6. The Lion of the Tribe of Judah — not the beast out of the sea!
7. The Faithful and True Witness — not the false prophet!
8. The 144,000 Sons of God on Mount Zion — not the beast out of the earth!
9. Those who have the Father's name on their forehead — not the mark of the beast!
10. The New Jerusalem — not Mystery Babylon!
11. The Bride of the Lamb — not the harlot!
12. The Manchild on the Throne — not the dragon cast out of heaven!
13. The Glory of God — not the darkness that covers the earth!
14. The Overcomers — not the churches whose candlesticks are removed!
15. The Unveiling of Jesus Christ — not the antichrist!

There is a dimension of the revelation of Jesus Christ that transcends the speaking of words, the writing of books, and the preaching of sermons. The unveiling of Jesus Christ is the need of the hour, the purpose of this Day, and the hope of creation! If God does not give a special ministration of the spirit of wisdom, righteousness, and power to meet the need of creation, it will not be met. There are no buttons to press that can deliver mankind from the power of sin and death, or solve the complex and frightening problems that exist in the world today. The "name it and claim it" theology which says that Jesus has done it all, and all we need now is to just believe it, has not and will not produce this manifestation! The further we move in God the more helpless and totally empty we become, for our nothingness is met and satisfied only in the surpassing light and power of HIS GLORY!

The whole earth and all creation is waiting for the glory of the Lord to be revealed in sons. The dealings of God in your life and mine are fraught with divine purpose. There is something far greater ahead of us than walking on streets of gold or flitting about in white night gowns strumming harps! This was the mentality installed in me as a young man. Thank God there is a heaven, yea, there are many heavens, but I want to tell you something. All the dealings of God us-ward, the cross, the suffering, the processing, the blessing, the glory — are intended to put something of His nature and character into us! And this is not to make us holy enough for heaven, but to enable Him to be made manifest in all the fullness of Himself right here in this old dark world in which we live!

God has purposed that righteousness, glory and power shine forth before the face of all nations! This will be accomplished through those who are now being transformed into the likeness of His Son! We are being changed now! A new order is arising in the earth! The kingdom glory of the Lord shall be revealed from the living, completed temple of His body! His righteousness and life shall fill the earth! His power will shake the nations and all nations shall come and worship before HIM! The harvest of this age shall be gathered! All things shall be made new! Creation shall be released from the bondage of corruption! Sin and death shall reign no more! God's elect is being prepared for this even as I pen these words!

The following words by Paul Mueller are so very true and encouraging that I choose to close this message with them: "Although darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the hearts of the people, Christ is being revealed in a great light to His Brethren — to those who are of like calling and spirit. Were it not for the present unveiling and manifestation of Christ within us, the darkness would overwhelm us and cover us in its stifling, oppressive mantle of doom. But Christ is being revealed! Because of Him, the darkness shall not overwhelm us, for the night is light around us (Ps. 139:11-12). We are being sustained by His presence. He is giving us the strength and fortitude to press on to the utmost heights in Him. Christ is the Light; He is the Day Star rising in our hearts, filling us with hope for the greater glory that is to come. While others may be surrendering to the darkness or to anything else that might detract from the kingdom of God, the elect are walking in solitude with the Lord, singing through this night with gladness of heart. Why do we sing in the midst of this darkness? Because we have become the answer and have been given a fore-taste of the restoration to come! We are singing because we are ascending the mount of the Lord, resulting in spiritual growth that brings forth a joy that passes understanding (Is. 35:10)" — end quote.

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 3 THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART THREE

THE REVELATION OF — WHICH CHRIST? TAKING THE COVER OFF

The first thing we should note about the wonderful book of Revelation is what it is about. We're told what it is about! It isn't about the devil, or demons, or hobgoblins. It isn't about the antichrist. Now, you can find antichrist there, if you really want, and you can find the devil described in many shapes, forms, colors, and sizes. But the book isn't about him! Nor is it about Nero, the Jews, Charlemagne, the Roman Catholic Church, the Moslems, Kaiser Wilhelm, Hitler, Mussolini, Communism, the New World Order, the European Community, the Arabs, Saddam Hussein, or laser tattoos.

The very first line of the very first verse tells us precisely what it is about! It is "the revelation of JESUS CHRIST." It is the unveiling of Jesus Christ. It is the presentation to us of the Lord Jesus Christ in all His beauty, majesty, power and glory. That's what the book is about! If you read the book and fail to see Jesus Christ unveiled, magnified, glorified and revealed in all His glorious and eternal reality, then you have missed the whole message of the book!

In the Gospels you have the Lord Jesus as He walked the earth. You see Him not only in His marvelous ministry of teaching and miracles, you see Him in His humanity, in His weakness, in His humiliation, in His reproach, in His rejection, in His suffering, and in His death. But the Gospels aimed at the resurrection and ascension. The last view you have of Jesus in the Gospels is of Him ascending in a cloud, and He was received out of their sight. What happened after that? That is where the book of Revelation begins! It is the unveiling of Jesus Christ as He is! We don't need a revelation of Jesus as He was. That is history. That story is chronicled in the Gospels and has been trumpeted by the church systems for two thousand years. That Jesus is forever gone, never to walk the paths of earth again. "Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth (from this time on) know we Him no more" (II Cor. 5:16). What we need is a revelation of the present glory of Jesus Christ! Where is Jesus now? What is He doing now? What is He like now? This book begins right at the beginning with Jesus alive, Jesus incorruptible and immortal, Jesus ascended, Jesus glorified, Jesus crowned, Jesus enthroned, Jesus formed in His body, Jesus reigning in and through His many brethren, Jesus manifested, revealed, and unveiled in His people, the corporate Son, and Jesus coming and coming and continuing to come from one degree of glory to another, Jesus triumphant as Lord of all!

The revelation of Jesus Christ is also the revelation of the body of Christ, for it is impossible to have a revelation of Christ the Head apart from a revelation of Christ the body. We are members of Christ, bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, mind of His mind, will of His will, nature of His nature, and spirit of His spirit. The book of Revelation is about Jesus Christ raised up in, and revealed in, HIS BODY! That should not surprise us, for "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory." (Col. 3:4) Wherever the Head is, there is the body. If you want to find me, look for my body — I'm usually there! If you want to find Jesus Christ, look for His body! Wherever Jesus Christ appears, His body will appear. In whatever degree of glory Jesus Christ shall be revealed, His body shall be revealed in that same glory, for we are the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. (Eph. 1:23) Christ dwells in fullness in His body, just as you live and move and speak and act in and through your body. A revelation of Christ apart from His body would be a travesty, an incredible absurdity. So in the book of Revelation there is the revelation of Christ in His body. It cannot be otherwise!

THE REVELATION OF — WHICH CHRIST?

We speak too carelessly of the deep and sacred things of God. One of the greatest truths ever kept hidden from the eyes of men is the truth about the revelation of Jesus Christ. I must hastily add, the revelation is not

the revelation of "Jesus" — neither is it the revelation of "Christ." It is the revelation of JESUS CHRIST! Although Jesus and Christ are forever one and inseparable, yet there are distinct revelations and manifestations of each one. Jesus simply means Saviour. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus (Yashua, Yahweh is Salvation), for He shall save His people from their sins." (Mat. 1:21) This was the word of the angel Gabriel to Mary! The name Jesus reveals His Saviourship. Jesus asked His disciples one day, "Whom say ye that I am?" And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!" And Jesus answered and said unto him, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." (Mat. 16:16-17)

The disciples knew that they had been walking, talking, and eating with Jesus of Nazareth. But it took a revelation of the Spirit for them to see that this same Jesus of Nazareth was also "the Christ, the Son of the living God." When Jesus was born, heavenly angels announced His birth to the startled shepherds, saying, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." (Lk. 2:11) You see, despite the fact that a large percentage of present day believers frequently use the word Christ to refer to the Lord Jesus, very few people even know what the word means, much less understand the message behind it. Christ is not Jesus' last name! Christ is not an English word — it's a Greek word. Why translators have neglected to translate it for so many years, I don't know. But because they did not translate it, but merely brought it over into the English virtually in its Greek form, generations of Christians have missed out on its great meaning and significance. For hundreds of years western believers have ignorantly used the word Christ merely as a religious title!

The plain truth is the word Christ means Anointed. Although we generally think of the word anointed in a spiritual context, the word in and of itself isn't spiritual. Anointed simply means to pour over, smear on and rub into. When you go to the beach, you anoint yourself with suntan lotion. So there's nothing particularly special about the generic word anoint. But when you begin to talk about Jesus being The Christ, the One who has been sent by God and anointed with God's reconciling, quickening, saving, transforming power, the word becomes very, very special. It takes on great significance, not just because it's some kind of mystical, religious term, but because of the powerful, practical nature of what the anointing of God is, and can do!

Christ is the transliteration of the Greek word "Christos," which simply means one anointed with holy oil. The Hebrew "Mashiach," from which we get our word Messiah, has the same meaning as the Greek word "Christos," which is the anointed. It comes from a root word which simply means to smear or rub with oil. The first time we meet with holy oil in the scriptures is in the narrative of Jacob's experience at Bethel. "And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place! ... And Jacob took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Beth-el." And from that memorable morning, all through the Old Testament, wherever there was a spot of common earth to be separated unto God and consecrated, or a common object to be dedicated to holy use, or a common man to be set apart and sanctified as a priest, or a sovereign to be enthroned and crowned, Jacob's holy oil was always employed for that sacred purpose. Holy oil became one of the most impressive and important, as well as one of the most universal, of all the sacramental signs and seals in the Old Testament economy.

It continued to be so, till all consecration, and all sacrifice, and all priesthood, and all sovereignty came to their consummation in Jesus, the Christ of God — the Anointed of Yahweh! And thus it is that His Old Testament name, The Messiah, and His New Testament name, The Christ, and His English name, The Anointed One, contain and convey to us the whole heavenly history of His election from everlasting, His predestination, His incarnation, His calling, His consecration, and His complete equipment, in every way, for all the position and ministry and glory and dominion He now fills as the Son of God. When our Lord first announced Himself to Israel, He opened the book of Isaiah, and found the place where it was written of Him: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor: He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty them that are bruised." This, then, is the true Messiah, the true Christ, the true Anointed — the Christ of God! Even as Peter opened his mouth, and began to preach Christ to Cornelius, and to all his house, in these very words: "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him."

And this is how this great name, "The Christ," came to be given to the man, Jesus of Nazareth, above all other men. Almighty God took that chosen man and anointed Him, as man had never been before, with the Holy Ghost. That is to say, God filled the man Jesus of Nazareth as full as human nature could hold of the mind, and the spirit, and the grace, and the glory, and the power of the Divine Nature. And having so anointed Him, God then presented Him to Israel, and through Israel to the whole world, as the Son of God in human flesh.

Some say that Christ is the anointing, but that is not quite the truth. Jesus the Christ is the anointed, the anointed one, and Christ is the one anointed, not the anointing. The oil typifies the anoint-ing, but the one upon whom the oil was poured was the anoint-ed. Others teach that Jesus "had the Christ" or that "the Christ was in Jesus." Those terms are foreign to scripture and make no sense whatsoever. The Christ is not something that came upon Jesus or that dwelt in Jesus — the Christ is who and what Jesus was and is! "Thou art the Christ..." (Mat. 16:16). "God has made this same Jesus both Lord and Christ." (Acts 2:36). "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." (I Jn. 5:1) Jesus was not the oil — He was the prophet, priest, and king upon whom the oil was poured! He is not the anointing — He is the anointed!

While we rejoice in the wonderful fact that Jesus is the Christ, the deeper truth is that as Jesus is the Anointed, or the Christ, even so are we! Contrary to popular teaching Christ is not only the one man, Jesus — not merely one person, but many. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ!" (I Cor. 12:12). In union with Jesus Christ, the anointing which made Jesus the Christ now makes you and me the Christ. It is because "the Anointed" is in us, and we are in Him! We have received of HIS ANOINTING. "But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you...and ye shall abide in Him." (I Jn. 2:27) According to this passage the anointing which we have received from Him has now become our anointing because we abide or dwell in Him. Jesus Christ is THE ANOINTED ONE and we are members of His body — therefore we are IN THE ANOINTED ONE and share HIS ANOINTING. It is not Christ as the anointing that makes us the anointed, it is our participation in the very substance of Christ — the Anointed One — that makes us anointed! He is not our anointing — the anointing which He received from the Father is now also our anointing!

The spirit of sonship from God is the holy oil and Jesus Christ is the Head that was first anointed with that oil. Many do not understand this simple truth! Therefore they try to separate "Christ" from "Jesus Christ." Jesus the Christ is the Head of this body, and the very life and reality of this body which we are. The same anointing that is poured upon the Head-Christ flows all the way down to the feet of the Christ-Body, so that every member of the body is anointed with the same anointing as the Head. The Head is not the anointing! The Head is the Anointed, and as members of His body we have received from Him the same anointing! It is impossible to separate Jesus from the Christ, or Christ from Jesus Christ, just as it is impossible to separate ourselves from the Christ of God. When we are truly apprehended of the Father as sons of God, in the same family and order as Jesus, we receive the same spirit of sonship from the Father, which is the anointing that makes us THE ANOINTED SON! Flesh and blood cannot reveal this truth to our hearts! The Father, from whom issues the spirit of sonship, must reveal it within ourselves by the Spirit! It is the Spirit that searches out the mysteries of the kingdom of God and all the deep things of God, and that same spirit must reveal these truths to His apprehended ones! As I write these lines and make a feeble attempt to set forth to the Lord's precious elect what I see in the Spirit, I sense the presence and power of the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead!

There is no point in over emphasizing this fact, but we want to clearly establish the truth that "Christ" is not something Jesus possessed, but it is who and what HE IS. It is not "Christ" as something or someone separate from Jesus that we have received, and in whom we live, but it is JESUS CHRIST who is our very own reality. Let us note but a few of the many passages that make this truth plain. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into His death?" (Rom. 6:3). "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 8:1) "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 13:14) "Unto...them which are sanctified in Christ Jesus." (I Cor. 1:2) "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." (I Cor. 1:30) "Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (II Cor. 13:5). "For ye are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:28) "And hath...made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Eph. 2:6) "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works..." (Eph. 2:10).

Christ means THE ANOINTED! It will be very helpful if in every place in the New Testament where the word Christ appears we would read it with the understanding that it means the Anointed or the anointed One. Anointed with the spirit of sonship we shall overcome in every area, triumphing gloriously in every situation, and will come forth in His victory over all things! Our lives have been foreordained by the Father to walk this path unto sonship. It is a path that was predestined for us in Christ Jesus before the world began. This path was established in Christ for all who are apprehended of the Father to the glory of manifest sonship. It is not "Christ" as something other than Jesus that energizes us, but it is the risen, ascended, glorified, spiritualized, and universalized Jesus Christ who is the genetics of our very own sonship! Therefore we are assured that we shall be able to attain to the same fullness of sonship as it is fulfilled in our Lord Jesus the Christ! What a word! What a hope! Hallelujah!

With this exhortation fresh upon our minds, let us think a little further about the book of Revelation as THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST. Again I say, it is not simply the revelation of "Jesus," nor is it merely the revelation of "Christ." It is the revelation of J-E-S-U-S C-H-R-I-S-T! Nothing more, and nothing less. There is "another Jesus" and "another Christ" that is proclaimed today by the New Age movement, and the concept of some who call themselves kingdom people and sons of God is not far removed from this other Jesus and this other Christ.

The New Age terminology can be mistakenly taken for Kingdom Truth. They speak much of the kingdom of God within man, of Christ within man, of love, mercy, goodness, and spiritual perfection and oneness with God. The ancient serpent is wise, shrewd, crafty and subtle, and he knows that the most effectual way to instill error into the minds of the unwary is to use old and precious words and put a new meaning into them. So when his messengers, masquerading as "ministers of righteousness," seek to lead, if possible, the very elect astray, they use the old precious words, but put an entirely different and false meaning. When they talk about God and our heavenly Father they don't mean the God of the Bible, the personal God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. They mean the impersonal energy that is resident in all things animate and inanimate. They talk of atonement, but they do not mean at all the redemptive death of Jesus Christ on our behalf by which we are reconciled to God by His blood. They mean the at-one-ment in which we recognize our oneness with all things, a cosmic unity, not with the Creator, but within ourselves and with the creation. Jesus has nothing to do with it at all, except as a great Teacher, a Way-shower, revealing to us the divine potential inherent in every man. They believe there are many ways to God — Jesus is merely a way given to Christians — one of many ways to God.

What do the New Age people look to for salvation? A complete or perfect union with this "inexorable principle" or "divine energy" permeating all things, which is their god! It is the same thing as Nirvana of the Buddhist, Brahma of the Hindu — an imaginary god-consciousness, into which all will finally be absorbed. And this is attained by discovering and developing your "inner self" — which "inner self" is the corrupted soul rather than the regenerated spirit! And when they talk about Christ, they do not mean at all our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the actual historic Jesus who lived and died for us, who rose from the dead, ascended up to the right hand of God, and came back again in mighty spirit-power. Oh, no! They mean an "ideal Christ, or a "Christ principle" that is in every man! They mean the "inner self" of the soul! They see God as the life principle of every man and Christ is the name that is given to man once he has awakened to his godhood. Now, it is true that the seed of God is in every man! But no man is "Christ," that is, an anointed one, until the seed of God in him is quickened, germinated, and empowered by the infusion of God's Holy Spirit! Jesus, in the New Age view, was no more the Son of God than the drunk in the gutter. He was simply a good man, a highly developed man, a "Master-Spirit" who developed the Christ principle within him and showed men how to awaken to their true inner self. According to their teaching Jesus was a man who went through many incarnations. These incarnations of Jesus took the form of Confucius, Buddha, Moses, David, and many others. These lives were his days at school, and he arrived at a state of consciousness, while manifesting as Jesus of Nazareth, where he remembered his past lives. They see no need for Jesus as the Lamb slain, for redemption, justification, regeneration, new birth, sanctification, baptism in the Holy Spirit, or any other New Testament experience. Men don't need to be saved, reconciled to God, or cleansed by the washing of regeneration — just awakened to the god within! What the New Age movement has done in America and other western nations is to combine Christian terminology with the tenets of various eastern religions, wrap them all up in a new package, and put a

label on the package which guarantees everyone salvation without a Saviour! And what some in this Kingdom walk have done is create their own hybrid strain of sonship, speaking Kingdom truth deadly laced with pagan New Age concepts!

The New Age movement is a modern form of eastern pagan religion — mingled with the darkness of the occult. While they do espouse some principles that contain truth, these are at best but half-truths, which are more deadly than the outright lie! All true reality of the living Jesus Christ is missing — they know not the Lord Jesus as Saviour, nor the cleansing power of His blood, nor the quickening, regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, nor the authority of His name, nor the baptism in His Spirit, nor the fellowship of His body, nor the truth of the Holy Scriptures — in short they are at best bastard sons, subtle counterfeits, and there is no light in them for the light they do have is darkness, merely their own supposed inherent godhood, unquickened and unregenerated, which is the godhood of the self, old Adam — not the true and living God! This "inner self" of all men is the "Cosmic Christ" of the New Age!

No truer words have been penned than those by Bob Torango wherein he writes, "I don't care how much it grieves some to think about having a Lord over themselves, no matter how much it makes their flesh to rebel, there is only one Lord over all heaven and earth, and that is Jesus Christ. It is not your perceived higher self, your I Am-ness, your shifted consciousness, your universal oneness, your metaphysical self, neither is it your egotistical, sinless, Adamless, fleshless self. Let me go down on record and say that there is only One worthy of honor and glory and adoration, only One to be worshipped and exalted, and it is not YOU. It is Him. If you cannot see Him beyond YOU, then you have a problem, and we need to talk. We don't have to exalt ourselves to feel better about our status in the kingdom. If we would only exalt Him, then He would lift us above our woeful self and bring us into His glory and crown us with everlasting joy. Isn't that enough? Do you really need to lower Jesus in rank and file in order to set yourselves up as kings? Must you continue to try to find another door, another way into God? He is the door, and it is wide open for all. Walk through Him, sit down with Him and drink the new wine and eat the bread of the kingdom. It is enough."

The book of Revelation is not the revelation of this Cosmic Christ, nor of a Christ principle, nor of the old inner self of unregenerated men — it is the revelation of the crucified, risen, ascended, glorified, spiritualized, universalized JESUS CHRIST who is Saviour of all men and Lord of all! It is the revelation of Jesus Christ as Head and body in the earth by the power of the spirit of His sonship! Remember, dear ones, that there is no truth beyond Jesus Christ! He has been given the name which is above every name in the heavens and in the earth! To Him has been given all power and all authority in heaven and in earth! Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved! He is the Head of all principality and power! He is the prince of the kings of the earth! He is the firstborn among many brethren! He is King of kings and Lord of lords! He is the Mighty God and the Everlasting Father! In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily! We are the body in which His fullness is revealed! Those who seek an ultimate truth beyond Jesus Christ, an ultimate reality beyond Him, will discover to their dreadful dismay that they have taken a fearful detour into the realms of outer darkness!

TAKING THE COVER OFF

As I write these words I am aware that God's love, wisdom, glory and power are undefinable. No one can estimate or express the limitless love, the unmeasured goodness, or the unbounded power of God in His universe. As I pen these paragraphs I am reminded of the story related by Fred Barlow about what Will Snow did the first time he saw the Pacific Ocean. Will Snow, a Zyante Indian from Northern California, forty-three years of age, in the early part of the twentieth century, had been chosen to be trained to a place of leadership among the Zyantes by the late Dr. Harry Rimmer, scientist and author. Snow had never seen an automobile, a train, electric lights, a city, anything remotely resembling civilization when Rimmer chose him for training. He simply was a native American from the deep forests of the Northern California mountains.

One day Rimmer took Snow to San Francisco, then on to the Pacific Ocean. The sight of that sea staggered the Indian's imagination. He wanted to know what lake that was. The largest lake he had ever seen was Clear Lake back in those northern mountains where Will had canoed and fished for blackfish. Rimmer replied, "Will, this is not a lake, but it is an ocean, the Pacific Ocean." Snow nodded. "How big is it?" Dr. Rimmer knew the

answer — its area, its width, its depth; but how could he explain these figures to an illiterate Indian. Those facts would mean nothing to a man who had known only lakes, rivers, streams, forest.

So he suggested, "Will, you know Clear Lake?" "Yes." "Will, can you imagine ten Clear Lakes in one place?" "Maybe." "Will, can you imagine one hundred Clear Lakes in one place?" "Too much," replied the Indian. "You got that much in this ocean?" Rimmer responded, "That much would only be a drop, Will, if you took it out of the ocean." The Indian shook his head. Then he asked, "Who drinks it?" "No one; it is salty." The Indian stooped down, tasted it, spat it out with a wry face. He walked further down the beach and tasted it there. The result was the same. He waded out in it and tasted it there. Again he spat it out. By now he believed his teacher.

Later in the day Dr. Rimmer was watching Will. Fascinated, amazed by that ocean, and the scope of it, he studied it, waded in it, thrilled to it. About time for them to leave, Rimmer saw Snow go to the ocean again. This time he had a pint bottle. He bent over, filling it with water. "What are you going to do with it, Will?" The Indian held up his filled bottle. "I'm going to take it home. My people will never believe what I've seen today. I want them to see for themselves!" We smile at the ignorance of this poor Indian who thought that pint bottle could capture the vastness, the limitlessness, the surging surf, the thrilling, stirring emotions, sights, smells, and sounds of that greatest of the oceans!

Ah, can we not see by this how it is that not any single one of us contains all the greatness, vastness, glory and majesty of God, but together all the perfected and matured members of the body of God's glorious Christ do contain all the fullness of God! You cannot put all the vastness of the ocean in a pint jar of sea water, yet, within that pint jar of sea water is contained the essence of all that the ocean is. All the ingredients that make up sea water are within that jar! You have the essence of all the ocean is, but you do not have all the ocean. In like manner, every son of God contains within him all that God is, although he does not contain all of God. But there is a majesty in the whole that cannot be known in the measure! That is why Jesus Christ has purposed the increase of Himself, the enlargement of Himself, into a many-membered Son!

There can be no doubt that this is the very truth the apostle Paul was opening to the hearts of the believers when he wrote of Jesus Christ, "God...gave Him to be the Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all" (**Eph. 1:22-23**). "And He is the Head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him (Head and body) should all fullness dwell" (**Col. 1:18-19**). "That Christ may dwell in your hearts...that ye...may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye (plural, you all together) might be filled with all the fullness of God." (**Eph. 3:17-19**)

When you walk through the dramatic, poetic and prophetic book of Revelation looking for Jesus Christ, the symbols and signs literally jump out on the stage of your mind to see a risen, ascended, victorious, conquering, triumphant Christ — Head and body. This Christ is being formed in the life of every son of God, the reality of our life, and here within His temple which we are He reigns and reconciles, transforms and matures, to be revealed in all His glory. Capture the deeper meaning of Jesus Christ. Open your spirit and eyes to see! The earthly body of Jesus of Nazareth cannot contain the magnitude of God's Christ! Let's now see Him no longer after the flesh. We now see Him as He is! Celebrate His awesome presence! Bow within yourself in honor and humility before His majesty! God hath made this Jesus both Lord and Christ! And He is now revealed through the many-membered heavenly man of new creation people! This, my beloved, IS THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST!

I am reminded of the story I read once that related how one day on their way home from a gathering of saints, a little girl turned to her mother and said, "Mommy, the message this morning confused me." The mother said, "Oh? Why is that?" The little girl replied, "Well, brother Smith said that God is bigger than we are. Is that true?" The mother replied, "Yes, that's true honey." "And he also said that God lives in us. Is that true, Mommy?" Again the mother replied, "Yes." "Well," said the little girl, "if God is bigger than us and He lives in us, wouldn't He show through?" Ah, dear ones, that is just the whole matter of the revelation of Jesus Christ — that He might show through!

Charles Weller once illustrated this truth from another perspective. He wrote, "I heard a story once of a brother who God told to cross his legs and sit facing a wall. When he did so, God knocked the wall down. The brother rejoiced that he could see a whole new world out there (outside of himself, for the wall was his body of the outer man holding in the inner man). God rebuked him, for it was not for him to see out that the wall was knocked down, but rather for those people who live in their outer man to see in and see the man who resides inside! How carnal we can be! I, too, identified with the brother and his idea of seeing out, which I, too, thought was spiritual; but it really was a carnal thought when viewed from God's perspective. We aren't to reveal Christ to release ourselves from corruption, rather we are to reveal Christ that creation may see Him and live!"

A missionary in China was telling of Jesus for the first time to a group of people in an inland town. When he had finished, someone spoke up and said: "Oh, yes, we knew Him. He used to live here." Surprised, the missionary said, "No, He didn't live here. He lived centuries ago in another land." Insisting that he had seen Jesus, the man said, "Not so. He lived in this village. We knew him." Then the simple country folk took the missionary out to the village cemetery and showed him the grave of a missionary who had lived, healed, served, and died in their community. And they thought he was Jesus — and he was!

When this experience of the Lord's indwelling truly becomes life to us, the world sees the difference in us. They begin to see Christ shining forth through our vessel. God has purposed from the beginning that He would live inside of man, and be glorified from that place. Christ is beginning to appear on the scene in a greater way in His saints! He is appearing as the dawning of a new Day, and will increase in glory until He is seen as the brightness of the noonday sun from the east to the west. This is the revelation of the Lord to which we are committed to attaining! This is the coming of the Lord to be glorified in His saints, to be admired in all them that believe into this Day! This is the tabernacling of Christ with man! This is the experience of the elect in this hour that is so transforming them that the glory of the indwelling Lord is showing through to the exterior!

We are standing in the hour of a unique revelation of Jesus Christ. The mystery of it is that the revelation of Jesus Christ does not mean the bringing of Christ to maturity and fullness within us, it's not adding something to the Christ that is within us. That must take place before the unveiling, but it's not the unveiling! The unveiling is an uncovering. It doesn't speak of the production or formation of the Christ, but it's the uncovering of the Christ who is already formed within!

Some centuries ago, in the city of Florence, Italy, there was a very famous man who erected a little shack down in the central plaza. For two years, he labored in secret, behind the confines of that little shack. Nobody in the city of Florence had an inkling of what was going on in that shack. Everyone knew who was in there, but they did not understand what was being accomplished there. Most people in the world are aware that there is a God, and they are sure that God is working, and most Christians would admit today that God is in us, and that God must be doing something in us, but very few of them have any idea of what is taking place! So this man labored for two years, and then announced to the citizens of Florence a day of unveiling. All the city gathered into the central plaza and with bated breath, with ardent curiosity and intense expectation, stood waiting for the unveiling. The great painter and sculptor, Michelangelo, began to tear apart the little shack. When it was all removed, there was a veiled object standing in the center. Michelangelo lifted the veil, and the whole city beheld with astonishment and wonder his marvelous statue of David.

I have stood in the museum in Florence, and I have looked upon that statue, and I tell you it's magnificent!. You can see every vein running down the legs of David, every ripple of the muscles, every detail of that exquisite body. You discern the handsome character of the man. Now then, the wonder of the revelation, the unveiling of that statue, was not in the making of it. That work was wrought in secret! When the day of the unveiling came, the work was finished. Every detail was accomplished. Every chip of the chisel had been made. Every sound of the hammer had been silenced. All the majesty and the glory of it had been produced by the skill of one of the world's greatest artists! But on the day of the uncovering, there was a revelation of that which had been accomplished! Can we not see by this that the revelation of Jesus Christ does not mean the production of Christ within us. The revelation of Jesus Christ is the unveiling of the Christ fully formed and matured in every son of God!

I want to share something with those who read these lines today that God has been speaking deeply within my heart. I, together with all God's called out ones who have been pressing on into the kingdom of God in this hour, have been greatly concerned with ministering to the Lord's people, to bring forth an increase of the Christ within us. We have wanted to see growth, we have desired to see change, we have sought to see development and yearned for maturity to come within every member of the Christ body. We have known that God is working, but our testimony has so often been that of the apostle Paul, in which he said, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:12). We have confessed our lack, we have admitted our faults, we have always felt that we come short of the glory of God. And we have looked upon the Lord's dealings with the trials and testings as the work of God to mature the Christ in us, to bring us to the full stature of the Son of God. But I am hearing a word, and the word is this: GOD IS FINISHING HIS WORK! God is putting the finishing touches on the image and likeness of God in our inner man!

I know some, in reading these words, will exclaim, "Who — me? You mean God has done everything in me that He is going to do? Is this all there is? You mean I'm mature? You mean I've got all the mind of Christ? You mean all the changes are in place? You mean I have received unlimited power? You mean I'm a son of God ready to be revealed?" It seems incredible to us! But listen, my beloved, the work of God in sonship is first and foremost in the inner man, the hidden man of the heart! It is the spirit, the deep inward life that God is raising up into His mind, heart and nature. And I do believe that God has a people, gathered out of the ages, and a people walking the earth in this very hour, in whom Christ is formed! It is not the outer man, it is not old Adam, it is not the natural life that God is rehabilitating and perfecting — it is Christ in you the hope of glory! We need to get our eyes on who we are and what we have attained in the spirit, not on how good and perfect the flesh has become!

Let me make one thing very clear. When I talk about "the finished work" I don't mean the same thing that we often hear taught today. I'm not talking about the so-called "finished work of Calvary." There is no finished work of Calvary! When Jesus cried out on the cross, "It is finished!" He wasn't proclaiming that the whole work of redemption and restoration was finished. Not at all! Nothing was "finished" at the cross except His death, the shedding of His precious atoning blood. But that's not all there is to God's great redemptive, restorative, and transformative work! Paul stated it this way: "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Rom. 5:10). You see, we were reconciled by His death, but our full salvation comes by the working of His life! His life is His resurrection. Without His life you have no finished work!

I would never belittle nor depreciate any aspect of the great work of Christ on behalf of man. I am extremely thankful for Calvary and for the death of Christ. But if the work done at Calvary is the finished work, then we are all still lost, doomed sinners. This fact is articulated so powerfully by the apostle Paul in I Corinthians 15:14-18 wherein he writes, "And if Christ be not risen, our preaching is vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God: because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom He raised not up...and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." If Calvary finished the work, then there was no need for Christ to be raised! But if Christ be not raised, we are still in our sins, and those who sleep will remain silent in their graves forever! If the work was finished when Christ died on the cross, then our old man died with Him but we received no new man by the power of His resurrection! "God...when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ..." (Eph. 2:6). "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." (Col. 3:1) If redemption was finished at Calvary our old man is passed away, but our new man, the new creation, has not been raised up in His life, so we are left in limbo, in the twilight zone of spiritual unconsciousness! Oh, no, Calvary did not finish the work! Christ had to be crucified, buried, and raised from the dead in order for us to be fully redeemed and made a new creation in Christ Jesus! But even His glorious resurrection did not "finish" the work! He ascended! He was enthroned! He poured out the Holy Spirit that He might come and dwell within us as our very life! So without Pentecost there is no "finished work." And now we are coming to see that only in the feast of Tabernacles is there truly a finished work!

What, then, did Jesus mean when He cried, "It is finished!" It is my conviction that He could not have meant that redemption was finished! Rather, it was the whole course that He was given to fulfill in the flesh, from the

moment of His conception to the hour of His death that was finished. His walk in this earth realm as a son of God in the flesh, with His life, obedience, and ministry, was brought to an end by His death on the cross. When He arose He would be the Son of God on a higher plain! The sorrows, tears, pain, limitation, and humiliation of mortal existence would be forever over. He finished His course, He kept the faith, He was obedient to the end, and now, dying, He cries, "It is finished!" It wasn't what He was doing for us that was finished, but His own walking out of the Father's purpose for Him in the flesh was finished. The term "the finished work of Calvary" is but a play of words on that cry of Jesus as He died, but it is scripturally unsound and incorrect. But a particular work that God had appointed His firstborn Son to accomplish in the flesh was finished at the hour of His death. And, beloved, we have come to that very point in this hour as we await the manifestation of the sons of God! The seed of Christ has grown within us, we have answered the Father's call to follow the Lamb, we have obeyed the word of the Lord birthed within our hearts, we have endured through the years of testings and provings, we have overcome from realm to realm, and the word I hear in this hour is that same wonderful word — IT IS FINISHED! I feel I cannot be too strong in my earnest exhortation to all who read that God in this Day is finishing His work in a people who are now the sons of God.

I am not interested in eternal processing. Fifty-four years have passed since the revelation of sonship and the kingdom of God burst forth in glory upon the called out of God. Thousands upon thousands have walked with God in separation, dealings, obedience, growth and experience for many years. I have no desire to be among those who are ever learning, but never coming to the experiential knowledge of the truth (II Tim. 3:7). It's not in my heart to forever be a child, to spend all my days on this planet confessing that I have not attained, neither am I perfect, nor have I apprehended that for which Christ Jesus has apprehended me, nor yet have I grown up into Christ. Am I saying by this that I am now a manifested son of God? No way! Manifested sonship is the unveiling, the uncovering. But at some point there must be a work of God, a maturity of the Christ within, worthy of being revealed! That is what I am saying. I do believe that a people has come to a high place of attainment in sonship to God!

Through the years of our walk in the kingdom we have lived in various parts of the country, traveled extensively, fellowshiped with groups of God's elect and listened to tapes of ministry from a great many brethren. There is one thing I hear that has been disturbing. And it troubled my spirit for a long time before the mind of the Lord came clearly to me. I hear brethren saying, "Well, you know, I admit that I still have problems in my life. I still get mad. I fly off the handle sometimes. I say things I shouldn't say. I think things I shouldn't think. I do things I shouldn't do. I struggle with habits and lusts and weaknesses like all of you do. But God is still working on me!" Someone asks, "Well, brother Eby, what's wrong with that? Don't we still have the flesh to contend with? Isn't God still working on all of us?" Listen! Here's the problem. Some of those preachers I was listening to thirty years ago, and they were saying the same thing! I'm not talking about preachers out in the church systems or in some revival realm. I'm talking about kingdom preachers, sons of God, Melchisedek kings and priests, men who proclaim that they will conquer death, by-pass the grave, and deliver creation!! But they continue to zero in on everybody's problems, weaknesses, difficulties, carnality and shame, including their own, and how Christ in you is able to give you the victory. Now, that is true, and declaring it is fine when you're preaching to spiritual babes and adolescents. But thirty years of preaching that word every Sunday to the same people should be enough! How many lives will God give us to attain? How many years will we need to live in order to finally get some victory? One hundred? Two hundred? A thousand? We should not get stuck in eternal processing! There must come a day when we can cry, "It is finished!"

We don't perceive that it is finished because we see the chaff of the outer flesh man and we say, "Something's wrong — this doesn't look right! I know that Christ lives in me, I know that Christ has grown in me, I know that sonship is working mightily in me, I know that the glory of God is bursting within me, but what I see in my flesh outwardly doesn't correspond with what I know is on the inside." Ah, you're seeing the chaff that lies on the surface, but you are failing to discern the fully ripe kernel of wheat that lies within! The chaff is removed on the threshing floor at the time of the harvest. The tares are torn out of the field and burned in the day of harvest. Don't confuse the kernel of wheat with the chaff or the tares with the wheat! Just because we have this treasure in earthen vessels doesn't mean that the value of the treasure within is diminished!

The revelation of Jesus Christ is when the treasure within is unveiled, uncovered, released! The veil is the flesh and the carnal mind. The veil is the outer life of old Adam. The revelation of Jesus Christ is when the almighty

Father comes to separate the chaff, burn up the tares, vaporize the flesh, surgically remove the carnal mind, once and for all delivering us from the outer life and the limitations of this gross material realm, as He did with Jesus when He raised Him from the dead! The unveiling is the removing of all those things that obstruct, hinder, distort, hide, conceal, and frustrate the shining forth of God's incorruptible glory. The revelation is the removal of the outer life, swallowing it up in victory, so that what the Master Craftsman has wrought over many years in the deepest part of our being may be revealed, released, and seen in all of its beauty and majesty! Hallelujah!

When we say that Christ is to be revealed in His body, that revealing does not come by adding things to the Christ within. Truly the seed of Christ does grow up within us, yet all the potential of Christ is within that seed and cannot be added to. How could you add anything to Christ? He is the brightness of God's glory, the express image of His person, and in Him all fullness dwells! For those who are truly sons of God, who have walked with Christ on this path of sonship, learning to suffer with Him and to reign with Him, it is not more of Jesus that we need. It is no longer a matter of more and more of Jesus — it is a matter of less and less of us! The book of Revelation is not about what is added to Christ in order for Him to radiate in fullness from our lives, but the book is about what is removed from us so that this treasure in earthen vessels may be seen.

The type for this is found in Israel entering into their promised land. Christ Himself is our promised land! In the Old Testament Promised Land it wasn't raising a larger army, or giving the soldiers more swords, or giving them special training that gave Israel the land. They entered only by faith and obedience! But they possessed their land by removing the enemy tribes that were entrenched in the land. It is necessary for us to dispossess some things in our lives that obscure, conceal, becloud, cover, veil, hide, hinder and prevent the manifestation of Christ through us. Dearly beloved brethren, you cannot get these carnal, fleshly, worldly and religious things out of your land by any self-effort or religious works! Only God Himself by His Fatherly chastenings, by His parental disciplines, by His husbandmanly pruning and purgings, by His refining fire and redemptive judgments can remove the veil of flesh that restricts and limits the outshining of His glory!

God's method of dealing with "self" is the cross of Christ. The cross of Christ is not the wooden cross, the old rugged cross of Golgotha's hill — it is the principle and power of the cross WROUGHT OUT IN OUR LIVES. The Lamb of God is the Man of the cross, but in the book of Revelation the Lamb is never seen on mount Calvary. The very first view we have of the Lamb is in the midst of the throne! "And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain..." (Rev. 5:6). He is not the Lamb dying outside the wall of Jerusalem, He is the exalted Lamb slain in the midst of the throne! In the midst of the four living creatures (sonship, kingship) and in the midst of the twenty-four elders (priesthood) — in the midst of God's kings and priests the cross is working! It is the cross in the heart of God, the cross in the throne, the death of the outer life that comes to God's elect by the omnipotence of His Lordship!

The next setting of the Lamb in Revelation is on mount Zion. "And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on mount Zion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads" (Rev. 14:1). This again is the exalted Lamb, not now working within His elect, but manifesting and reigning through the sons of God! These have the mind of Christ and the nature of the Father plainly visible upon their foreheads — the outer life has been removed, there is the revelation of Jesus Christ.

The great truth of the rending of the veil is seen in Jesus. The veil in the temple was rent at the precise moment of Jesus' death. But the temple was merely a symbol, a shadow of the greater and true and eternal temple — Christ and His body. Where was the veil rent? "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh" (Heb. 10:19-20). The true veil that was rent was HIS FLESH, for He Himself was the true temple of God, the Holiest of all, the dwelling place of the glory of His Father. His flesh as a man was rent. His human flesh, His natural life, was the veil that covered and concealed the Holy of holies within Him in the same way that the veil in Herod's temple concealed the Shekinah of Yahweh from the priesthood of Israel. His flesh was rent that the glory of God in Him might be seen in the power of His resurrection. I do not propose to discuss here other beautiful lessons contained in the rending of the veil of His flesh, but I would point out that today we are the body of Christ, the temple of God, and the Most Holy Place is in the spirit of sonship within

us. The only way that the glory of God within us can be revealed in the power of His resurrection is for the veil in us to be rent! We must have the same experience! Your veil has to be rent! My veil has to be rent! The veil of the flesh, the veil of the carnal mind, the veil of the natural understanding within us must be rent. Jesus is not only the truth and the life — He is the way. He is the forerunner who on our behalf has entered in to the Holiest of all. But only the forerunner, mark you, for we must follow in His steps and enter in by the power of His blood through the veil of our flesh. Jesus is the Pattern Son! He is the Apostle and High Priest of our profession! He has made it possible for us, He has opened up the way, He has blazed the trail, He has set the example.

Every step of the revelation of Christ is an unveiling. God removes the hindrances and when they are removed we see what God has done. Some of us were in church systems, and God began to stir us. God's work was already there! God had finished a work up to that point in our lives. When He brought us out of the systems of men He burst the cocoon that we were in, so that the thing He had done in us could step out, stretch its wings, and fly away into the heavens of God's Spirit! The work He had accomplished in us was released from man's control and bondage to find expression.

We are now in the hour of the unveiling, the greatest and most glorious of all unveilings, the unveiling of God's sons! All those things you have struggled with and battled with, all the fears, limitations, and lack you have sensed that have been a wall about you and a barrier to the revelation of Christ, shall be broken asunder in this Day that there might be a manifestation of the work God has accomplished in you! The revelation of Jesus Christ has nothing whatever to do with what is happening out there in the external world. It has nothing to do with economic collapse, nuclear war, or bugs the size of Volkswagens. The world God is shaking is our world. The beast God is destroying is the beast of our nature. The locusts that come out of the abyss arise from the abyss of our own hearts, which are deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. The trees that are being burned up are those manifestations that grow out of our own earthiness. The tree of life, on the other hand, grows out of the river of God's Spirit! The tree of the knowledge of good and evil within us shall be consumed. But the tree of life will grow out of the river that flows from the throne of God within us!

Oh, Hallelujah! The revelation of Jesus Christ brings the end of the world, but the world that it ends is truly this world of our outer life. The sign of "the end" is what God has accomplished within us! And my brother, my sister, you will never have a work that is completed without there following an unveiling!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 4 THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART FOUR

UNION WITH CHRIST FROM THE WORKS TO THE PERSON THE APPEARING OF CHRIST IN THE SONS

Fifty-four years have passed since the revelation of sonship and the kingdom of God burst anew in glory and power upon a people apprehended to be the elect of God. Thousands upon thousands have heard the call to come apart with God and walk with Him in the high places of His Spirit, to experience His dealings, to learn obedience to His voice and submission to His will and ways, to partake of His mind and His nature, and grow up into the maturity of the fullness of Christ. Within ourselves we have seen growth, we have experienced change, we have passed on from glory to glory into the wisdom and knowledge of the Lord, we have partaken of the mind of Christ, we have sensed the increase of the life of sonship within, we have been taught of the Father, we have been tested and tried and have overcome many things, and have witnessed a maturity of the Christ coming forth in each member of God's household of sons. I do know that God has a people walking the earth in this very hour, in whom Christ is formed! I am hearing a word from the Lord, and the word is this: GOD IS FINISHING HIS WORK! God is putting the finishing touches on the image and likeness of God in His apprehended ones!

Some time ago Joyce Morris sent out a message, which bore a deep witness within my spirit. She said, "About two weeks ago we heard the Lord say very clearly, 'THE STAGE IS SET!' I said, 'Father, what do you mean, the stage is set?' God said, 'I have a stage. And my stage is set. I'm getting ready to put my performers on that stage. Just as I appointed my first Son...I appointed my Son to come forth in a particular day, at a particular time. When that time came, I announced before man that This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. I am about to announce again — the many-membered corporate son. I am about to announce again, not just my first Son, but that my first Son is the Captain over these sons, in whom I am well pleased. Those who have been faithful unto the counsel of the Lord, and are walking in the obedience of Christ.'

"Again, the stage is being set! When Jesus came forth at that time, no one had ever seen a ministry like that. Man had never beheld such power, or miracles. It confounded religion, it confounded man; it confounded the governments, and it confounded everything that stood around Him. They couldn't figure it out! They said, 'What is this? We haven't seen anything like this before!' Why? Because God had set the stage! Jesus had to go through a time of preparation. And when it was appointed by the Father, God gave Him the Spirit without measure! And God is getting ready to give His sons the Spirit without measure — to fulfill His purpose. This time is upon us. THE STAGE IS SET!

"The Lord began to show me that, even in the natural, a man writes his script; you have a play to put on; each individual has their part, and nobody can perform another's part. God has written His script! Let me tell you — anything in the script that God has written, He is going to carry it out! He told His people, even in the Old Testament, that there was going to be a Holy One born out of Judah, and that He would be the Messiah. God wrote that script, and what He wrote came to pass! And when He came, they didn't know who He was! They asked, 'What thing is this?' What was happening on the scene at that time—they didn't understand! Yet it had been written in the script! It had been written in the script about the Son of man coming. There is a Son of man coming again, and that Son of man is a corporate man. It is a many-membered body. It is a man who has been conformed into the image of Christ. This Son of man is the overcomers on that side (in the invisible spirit realm), and the overcomers on this side (in the flesh). They will be gathered from the four corners of the earth, and they will come as the Son of man — for mankind!

"So we see, the stage is set. I heard the Spirit say, 'THE CURTAINS ARE GETTING READY TO BE DRAWN!' I said, 'God, what do you mean, the curtains are going to be pulled back?' He said, 'Just like Jesus — He was hidden for thirty years until He came to full maturity as the first Son.' But when He came to maturity and the stage was set — guess what God did? God opened the curtains! He let His power, and His splendor, and His glory manifest in one man. I want to tell you, when you begin to see it's in God's corporate man, it will no longer be in just the one man Jesus! That's why Jesus said, 'I'm limited. I have to go to the cross. I've got to go back to my Father. I must make a way so that many sons can come into my nature and have the same power and glory that I have.' He knew that the time would come when God was going to raise up many sons, and that He would be the Captain over all these sons. He would come again as the Son of man, as a corporate, many-membered man, for the whole world to see!

"The whole world shall see the manifestation of the glory of the Lord! The manifestation of Christ is already happening in the invisible realm. But the open, public manifestation to the world, has not been seen yet. You see, the Christ has been hidden in you; and you have been hidden in Christ; in the same way that Jesus was hidden in the bosom of the Father. The Father had a particular time for His glory to be seen. We've seen miracles, we've seen signs and wonders. God has moved in different individuals, and He has revealed Himself to mankind through various ministries; but that has only been a foreshadow of what is about to take place! Some have run here, others have run afar; some have run to this miracle meeting and to that, thinking 'This is it!' But this is not the 'grand finale'! The grand finale is getting ready to take place!

"When God opens the curtains, everyone that has been faithful, that has done his part, and has not broken rank; everyone who knows his part and stays faithful and does his part — when it's time for the grand finale, God is going to have that individual on that stage! The stage is the world. And God will reveal Himself to mankind again just as He did in Jesus. He is coming as Lord, and the Son of man. That corporate man is coming in an open manifestation! The Lord began to speak to me concerning the scripture where it says that the whole creation is groaning for the manifestation of the sons of God. The Father began to show me that there are many kinds of rulers in the world. There are rulers in our government; there are rulers in our educational systems; there are rulers of many kinds all around the world — but these governments have not been effective. They have not worked! And there is a cry in people wanting righteousness, wanting something genuine, something real! Nothing has worked. But let me tell you — the Kingdom of God is going to work! And the stage is set!" — end quote.

The Christ in our spirit is a whole Christ, but the hidings of God's power within this Christ are like the hidings of God's power in nature. We have always had the lightning's flash in the heavens, but we have not always been able to chain that mighty electrical power and make it give us light as we have in our homes and cities today. We have not always been able to make it transmit our voices to distant lands as we do when we talk into the telephone. We have not always been able to use it to transmit pictures from one part of the earth to another as we do today with our satellites and televisions. The lightning was always there. The electricity was always there, but we were not prepared to harness it, apply it and use it. And so it is with the spirit of Christ within us! The dynamic of it has always been there, and it is there today. The almighty Christ is within us! The Son of God dwells in our hearts! We are being conformed to His image, and we are putting on His mind and nature! An explorer of another century said, "We lay down to sleep on beds of silver when we were starving to death." He meant that in the 1800's, when they crossed the Sierra Nevada's into California, they absolutely lay on the top of those great silver beds. They did not know those beds were there, and it is said that they boiled their stirrup straps to get some soup. That is the way with the church systems today, they are lying upon beds of silver and gold, and boiling their old theological and religious program stirrup straps for food!

God has a people in this hour who are getting out of the mines of God's Truth what is there for them. They are going forward to receive the inheritance in God that belongs to God's sons in this great Day of the Lord! Christ is being revealed to us and in our lives more and more! This unveiling of Christ shall continue until He is revealed in all His fullness. The revelation of Christ in 2002 is far greater than the revelation of Christ was to us in 1992. The Lord has not changed. Rather, He has released out of His life within us a greater measure of the revelation of Himself in His truth, purpose, life, nature and glory. We now experience Him in a greater and higher degree than we did in the past. This is a wonderful hour of the greater unveiling of Christ for all the elect

and chosen ones. A new spirit is moving within the elect! A new power of life is being raised up within us! The Christ of kingdom glory is disclosing Himself! He comes in secret and in the silence as a thief in the night! The present, unseen work of the Spirit is resulting in immediate and progressive changes that are preparing us for our full transformation in that moment of time, which is as the twinkling of an eye or a flash of lightning, when He breaks forth out of us in full and eternal salvation. Even our body will be metamorphosed as mortality is swallowed up of life!

Some think we are preaching a "someday" manifestation that, like the old rapture teaching, we are just waiting, expecting to be manifested sons "someday." That is not it at all! There is a bright tomorrow in God! And our today will bring us to that even more glorious tomorrow! Some want "name it and claim it" sonship. They want to believe that all the fullness has always been available and is now available, we just need to believe it, confess it, and appropriate it. That isn't working any better in sonship than it has worked in the revival realms and faith churches! Of those who don't want to wait for anything in God I haven't seen even one moving on a level beyond Pentecost, all their flowery oratory notwithstanding! And that's the truth. Talk is cheap, but the revelation of Jesus Christ is an on-going revelation, from glory to glory and from realm to realm. Nothing in this world comes to us all neatly packaged and completed. Children must grow! Students must learn! Houses must be built! Technology must be developed! Workers must become experienced! The sun shines from the east to the west! As the inner glory broke through the outer form of Jesus on the holy mount, so the full radiance of Christ shall be revealed in the hour of our unveiling. As we approach this wonderful unveiling let us then cast off the lingering fragments of the old order and of lesser realms, and embrace the new with faith and trust in Him who bids us to follow the Lamb to mount Zion!

UNION WITH CHRIST

The body of Christ is a mystery. It is a marvelous temple that God our Father is in the process of building. It is a temple not made with hands! The stones of its all-glorious walls are living stones, each one born of incorruptible seed and knowing within himself the power of Christ's endless life. The Greek passage (Heb. 7:15-17) which speaks of Christ as a priest "made after the power of an endless life," when traced back to its root could also be translated, "after the power of a UNITED LIFE." It speaks of a life that is eternal only because of its union with God. **"I and my Father are one" (Jn. 10:30)**. In that glorious body, that wonderful temple of sons, there never has been any falling away or apostasy, for it is composed of overcomers, and from the beginning of the age until now it has been steadily rising upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets as each new living stone was readied and permanently placed within its living walls. The body of Christ is unhindered by fire, by tribulation or persecution, unaffected by the squabblings of sects and denominations, but rising in the power of incorruption and bound by the everlasting ties of the mind of Christ, it is builded a holy and living temple unto the Lord!

It is from this glorious temple that Ezekiel saw the Living Waters flowing, deeper and deeper, passing through the desolate land and emptying into the Dead Sea of humanity's sin and corruption, bringing life where ere it went. Would you be a part of God's wonderful RIVER OF LIFE COMPANY? Seek, then, to be joined in eternal union with Christ, set your affection on things above, that the things of earth may grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace. Our great High Priest, the firstborn Son of God, is made after the power of a united life! And we, too, are made after the power of a united life in Him! Seek not to flow, seek to abide! Seek not to be a river, seek to be joined in union with the Fountain of Living Water! In intimacy of fellowship and vital union with Him, as sure as the heavens are higher than the earth, so sure is it that YOU WILL FLOW IN HIS LIFE AND HIS LIFE WILL FLOW THROUGH YOU!

Let it be thoroughly known that God flows as life only through those who live in union with Him in the Spirit. The stream of the river of life has in every age flowed out through those who lived in the Spirit. God has always accomplished His work through those who walked in the stream of His purposes. Where the stream flows, there is the work of God! What is that kind of work which is the work of God? Is it toiling to build larger and larger churches, bigger Sunday Schools, more attractive programs? Ah, God's work is always in the stream of living water! God is spirit, and God's works are in the stream of His Spirit. **"And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."**

And God said..." (Gen. 1:2-3). Where the stream flows, there is the work of God! God works by the flowing of the stream of His divine life. On the cross of Calvary blood and water flowed forth from the side of Jesus and redemption was provided for all mankind! On the day of Pentecost this stream of divine life flowed out of God Himself in Christ with transforming power from the throne! It began to flow in Jerusalem. From there it flowed to Antioch, and then from Antioch it turned west; it flowed to Asia, and through Asia it flowed to Macedonia, and onward to Europe. From Europe it flowed to the New World, and it has flowed to every nation, and tongue, and tribe, and people on the face of the whole earth!

This stream has continued to flow right up to this very day, it has finally flowed into you and me, and it shall flow out through us, and from generation to generation, through age after age, until the last enemy has been destroyed throughout all God's vast universe, worlds without end, and there is no more death anywhere, for God is All-in-all! Where this stream flows, there is the life of God! Where there is the life of God, there is the unity of God! And where there is the unity of God, there is the out-flowing of God! And though the city of God is a great and glorious city, the river flows forth from the throne of God. To the overcomer is the promise given, "I will grant to you to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in His throne" (Rev. 3:21). Just as there are saints who are stones in the wall of the city, or pillars in the temple of God, so there are those who become a throne people. These are the ruling sons of God, and it is from the throne of God and of the Lamb that the living stream proceeds! The greatest manifestation of life the world has ever seen shall yet come forth in the earth through a people who become the throne of God in the earth! The glory of God fills the city, and the whole earth is full of His glory, and His glory is above the heavens — yet God sits upon His throne — there is a unique concentration of divine life, power, and dominion from those who make up the throne of God!

To be identified with His throne is the ultimate attainment of union with God. He is making us one with Him to such a degree that when He acts we act, when He moves we move, when He speaks we speak, and when He speaks all will speak because of the united life in the Spirit. It is a unity with Christ and with all who have grown up into the measure of His stature. When God speaks from His throne, it is the voice of the many-membered Son, the voice that is as the sound of many waters, many spirits merged into one gigantic waterfall — ONE GREAT RIVER OF LIFE! Take the shoes from off your feet, oh saint of God, for the ground on which we stand is holy ground! Put away all lightness and foolishness that with heads bowed down, and hearts lifted up in worship, the Spirit of God may reveal how the life of God flowing in the exalted and enthroned Christ and the life of Christ flowing through His many brethren is ONE STREAM OF THE WATER OF LIFE! This is the river that flowed out of Eden's beautiful garden, one river, the flowing out of God Himself as reality and life. As long as Adam walked in the Spirit in the Garden, the river flowed forth out of that dominion which was his!

FROM THE WORKS TO THE PERSON

It should not be difficult to understand that this is the answer to all the worlds needs! For this purpose the elect of God have been passing through all the dealings and workings of God, particularly during the past few years, in order that Christ might be fully formed within as life. We must know Him as life within ourselves before there can be a flowing out of that life from a state of being. We learn to know the majesty of His power within by the crucible of experience so that God may have a people through whom He can manifest Himself WITHOUT INHIBITION, WITHOUT LIMITATION, WITHOUT ANY HINDERING OF THE FULL FLOW OF HIMSELF, SO THAT IT WILL BE THE FULL MANIFESTATION OF HIS LOVE, GRACE, WISDOM, POWER, LIFE, SALVATION, AND DELIVERANCE TO ALL HUMANITY. A people no longer seeking God's works, wonderful though His works are, but conscious of God Himself. A river of life people not proclaiming doctrines, creeds, rituals, experiences, ordinances, programs, or works, but just the Lord Himself as Life and Light and Love, GOD manifest in the flesh!

For years we have been saying, "If the world could only see the works of God!" Well, I tell you now that we have shown them His works and it was not the answer, for far too often the works — the signs, wonders, and miracles — fascinated the lustful eyes of the curious and blessed the people's flesh, but failed to impart unto them the LIFE OF THE SON OF GOD! God did not save the world by works, He saved the world by A PERSON! This life is a Person! **"I AM the life." (Jn. 14:6)** Is it not a miracle that God is bringing us to this hour

when there is that awareness within us that there must be an expression, a revelation, an unveiling, an uncovering, and out-flowing of the Person of God! What a marvelous work is coming in these days! As an evangelist years ago, I loved to travel through the country and tell people that there is a remedy for sin, sickness and sorrow through the blood of Jesus Christ, and an energizing power in the Holy Spirit. People were saved and delivered, healed and blessed, and miracles were wrought. The days which are before us will excel in glory, for now there will be an emanation, a radiation, an out-shining of the very presence and glory and person of Christ, that men may see HIM as He is and be changed into His likeness. They will find they have the full effects of His sacrifice, atonement, redemption, resurrection, ascension, glorification, exaltation and enthronement!

God is breaking forth unto an hour of expression and revelation of Himself. This is the revelation of Jesus Christ! In those heaven blest days ahead at the manifestation of the sons of God the present "in part" realm of the church age will pass away, for it will appear as a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal, and have nothing to offer in the light of HIS FULLNESS. The old order church system will be swallowed up in the out-flowing of the fullness of God in His sons, and in that day people will find themselves moving into salvation and on into the infilling of the Spirit and on into the glory of the Lord in all its majesty, as easily as a man is converted today, because the Person of Christ is coming into focus and He Himself is coming into expression through His chosen ones. The people's bodies shall even be changed to be fashioned like unto His glorious body as the sons of God go forth to DELIVER CREATION FROM THE BONDAGE OF CORRUPTION!

There is a dimension of the revelation of Jesus Christ that transcends the speaking of words, the writing of books, the preaching of sermons, and the manifestation of gifts and works. The revelation of Jesus Christ is the need of the hour! Only a present intervention of the divine Mind and Will, only a present intrusion of the divine Power and Glory, only a present interjection of the divine Spirit of Life will be able to deliver creation. If God does not give a special ministration of the spirit of wisdom and power to meet the need of the world, it will not be met. After two thousand years of church order it has not been met! There are no buttons to press that can solve the complex and frightening problems that exist in the world today! The further we move in God the more helpless we are to ourselves, for our nothingness is magnified in the light of HIS GLORY.

The hour for the unveiling of God's sons is at hand. May God grant to each of His apprehended ones the understanding that from this time on God is not interested in what He has done for you. From now on it must be "When Christ who is our life shall appear..." If there is a mind in us, it must be the mind of Christ, not our religious mind that has been cultivated through the years until it is religious and devoted and full of the Bible and stayed on God. From now on it must not be your mind stayed on God, it must be His mind in you! What we have witnessed to for years was a work of God, His salvation in us, His peace in us, His victory in us, how we had become a product of the work of God; but God's purpose is not that we shall be a testimony of the work of God, but that there shall come a revelation of HIMSELF, that the revelation will BE CHRIST. This is what the Holy Spirit means by the revelation of Jesus Christ! It will not be a revelation of His grace, or His goodness, or His works, or His gifts, or His anything, but the unveiling of the Person of God in us!

God is talking to His sons about PERSONIFICATION, EMBODIMENT, MANIFESTATION AND REVELATION. All who are pressing forward into sonship are going to embody Christ as we have been embodying the works of Christ. Christians represent the work of God: saved from this, having received that, experiencing the other, and changed into something else; but it is still "ME." What you see is a marvelous expression of the handiwork of God. And I would not depreciate this one iota, for it is the handiwork of God! But God intends that the hour should come when there shall be a revelation of GOD HIMSELF! Are you willing, precious friend of mine, to have nothing but the Person? Are you willing to lay aside the work and forget the experience, to have the Person? The hoary headed old prophet took up the baby Jesus in his arms and declared, "Mine eyes have seen Thy salvation!" The salvation He saw was not a work, not a gift, not an experience, it was in the baby. There are thousands of people living in the state of Texas and around the world today who are living witnesses to the work of God, of His handiwork, the power of the blood, His saving grace, the gifts and anointings of God. But what is God still looking for, what is creation yet groaning for, and what is to be ushered in by the manifested sons of God that is any different from what we have had for two thousand years? A PEOPLE WHO ARE NO LONGER WITNESSES TO THE WORK OF GOD, NO LONGER OPERATORS OF THE GIFTS OF

GOD, BUT WHO BEAR THE VERY PERSON OF GOD IN A TRANSCENDENTAL WAY, IN WHOM THE VERY LIFE-BEING OF GOD IS FORMED, SO THAT WHEN THEY BEAR WITNESS TO SALVATION, IT WILL BE BEARING WITNESS TO THE PERSON OF THE LORD.

What the Spirit is saying is that God must have a people in whom the Lord is becoming rather than doing. That is what the manifestation of the sons of God is, that is what the revelation of Jesus Christ is, and there will never be a revelation of Jesus Christ if all I can talk about and demonstrate is of what He has done. His works are not Him — HE IS A PERSON! His gifts are not Him — HE IS A PERSON! Paul said, "It pleased God to reveal His Son in me," not, "It pleased God to reveal some of the works of His Son in me and give me some great experiences." And when He prayed, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again till Christ be formed in you," Paul did not mean that they should receive a little more cleansing, a little greater anointing in the gifts, do a few more good works, die a little more death, and so on. Oh, no! There came an hour when Paul knew that the works of the Lord would not be sufficient, but that the Lord Himself had to be put on in all fullness, so that instead of having a work of peace or patience or power, The Lord Himself would be the peace, the patience, and the power!

The scripture says, "The Lord is my strength." It does not refer to some strength the Lord has dished out to us, but, the Lord Himself has become our strength; not a work, not a gift, but a Person. THAT IS SONSHIP AS A COMPLETED FACT. The revelation now is the revelation of a Person, our witness is unto Him because the Person has become in us. It looks as though you are turning your back on these wonderful works of God, but you needed them to bring you to where you are in God. And I do not doubt that thousands and millions of believers need them still! But now you are "forgetting those things which are behind." From now on, what Christ is, becomes the expression! If at this hour we still need God to DO for us rather than for the Christ to BECOME in us, then we are not ready for the manifestation of the sons of God! When God sends forth His sons, He sends them forth as those in whom Christ is so fully formed that it is not a matter of needing God to do anything anymore, but that Christ has BECOME in them, praise His name!

It is vastly more important to reveal the life of the Son of God in meeting creation's need, than to be witnessing to people about salvation, healing, or any other thing. We have become so conditioned to the notion that we aren't doing anything for God unless we are able to get out and witness and skillfully use the scriptures. That is all good, and there is a place for it, but that is not the manifestation of the sons of God! When you are truly helping people you are becoming a living word to them which says, "God cares for you!" That is simply Christ living His life through you. We become a word that is alive to them, not a dead, printed word, or a testimony, but the living manifestation of the Christ. There is something we can do, and it is more important and powerful than witnessing, quoting scriptures, or teaching. Instead of witnessing about God, we become the witness — the embodiment of what Jesus Christ really is!

May Christ be so fully revealed to all of us is my earnest prayer and deepest desire, that in these significant days there will not be any longer a cry in our spirit, "O God, do something for me!" That leaves me with myself on my hands! The secret of Jesus was that for three and a half years He did not have to be more consecrated, He did not have to be more dedicated, He did not have to become more victorious, He did not need another experience, or another blessing; all He had to do was let the Father live out through Him! And may it be so in the days ahead that it will be Christ fully formed in us, Christ living out in all the glory of God, in all the fullness of His life and love and power and victory — HIMSELF! This is the revelation of Jesus Christ!

THE APPEARING OF CHRIST IN THE SONS

The revelation of Jesus Christ is the appearing of Jesus Christ, and the appearing of Jesus Christ is the coming of Jesus Christ. "Who shall abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth?" Ah, Jesus Christ has come as Saviour and has appeared in saving power in the midst of all the saved ones. He has come as Baptizer in the Holy Spirit and has appeared in the glory of the anointing in the midst of all the Spirit-filled ones. He has come as Healer and has appeared in miracle-working wonder in the midst of all the healed ones. But now, in the full manifestation of His Sonship, He must come as LORD, as KING, as PRIEST, as the SON OF GOD!

The world will never know Him as King of kings until there are kings among whom He can stand and reveal Himself as King of the kings. The world will never know Him as Lord, until there are lords among whom He can stand and reveal Himself as Lord of the lords. The world will never know Him as High Priest until there are priests among whom He can stand and reveal Himself as the great High Priest of their profession. Why is God bringing many sons to glory? That in the midst of all Jesus Christ might appear as the pre-eminent One, THE SON among the sons. As long as we remain children, He can not appear as the Son in the midst of children. How are you going to have a Son who is pre-eminent among a group of babies? There is no pre-eminence at all, that gives Him no eminence whatsoever, it gives Him no honor. You cannot say, "He is the first-begotten, the first-born among many babies!" But as our Father brings us to maturity, bringing many sons to glory, He appears as the pre-eminent One, as the first-born among MANY BRETHREN! Why does God want us to grow up into the fullness of sonship? So that the Son of God can be revealed in all His glory, wisdom, virtue, and power in and through the sons. Why does God want us to be king-priests, maturing in the priestly nature and ministry? So that He can appear in the midst as the great Royal High Priest after the order of Melchizedek to bless and redeem and restore all of creation to God!

As long as we remain down on some spiritual plane below this high calling, even though He is greater than we, He has to condescend and limit His manifestation in and through us to the level we are on. It is like a father playing ball with his three-year old! He condescends to that level and manifests on that level, and is glad to do so, but that is not who and what he is! It is beneath him! In like manner, Jesus Christ appears in the midst of WHAT WE ARE IN HIM! He comes as El Shaddai, the breasted one, bearing the milk of the Word in the midst of all the babes in Christ. He appears as the gift-giver to all the children who delight in gifts. But as the sons of God arise to the throne of the heavenlies to occupy the place God has ordained for them, in the place of exaltation, glory and dominion, then Christ can be revealed in greater glory, in greater majesty, and in greater might!

The apostle Paul lived in a dark and treacherous hour at the dawn of the church age. The Roman world was pregnant with difficulties; the Pax Romana was weakening; the barbarians were clamoring at the gates of Rome; Herod, Pilate, and Caesar had conspired to destroy the Christ and His newly budding religion; the religions of paganism had lost their force and were only nominally held by most of the pagan world. Even the religion of the chosen people had degenerated until it was in a deplorable state. The world was half slave and half free. Infanticide was prevalent everywhere. Perversion was approved by the philosophers, as well as the masses. What hope was there for a world in such a state? Things, indeed, looked dark!

They were dark also in the heart of Saul of Tarsus, a Pharisee and the son of a Pharisee. He came in religious zeal breathing threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord. He was a man who was filled with indignity and hostility and bitterness. If he found any Christians, men or women, he sought to bind them and bring them to Jerusalem where they might be tortured and killed, if they refused to recant of this Christian heresy. He went to the High Priest to secure papers to go to Damascus. As he drew near, there suddenly shone a light from heaven so bright as to pale the sun by comparison, and it caused him to be thrown from his horse to the ground! In this blinding light Saul heard a voice which called his name saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Trembling with astonishment, Saul asked, "Who art thou, Lord?" The reply thundered back, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest!"

In that moment Saul saw a vision that was to change his entire life! Everything was changed in the brilliance of that light! His world was turned upside down — rather, right side up! His right, he discovered, was wrong; his faith was unbelief; his earnestness was treason; his truth was error; his zeal was rebellion. Everything suddenly turned topsy-turvy and he realized that this Jesus, whose name just a moment before had been an epithet, an object of derision, of laughter, of scorn, of hatred, now suddenly was the Lord of Glory, the All Holy One, the Altogether Lovely One, the Creator and Redeemer of the world! In that blessed moment Saul was changed from the persecutor to a disciple. He fell to the ground a sinner, and rose a saint; he fell to the ground a sighted man who was blind, and rose a blind man who could see! He saw the greatest sight in all the world! He saw His God for who He really is. In that moment Saul bowed low before the God of grace and power; he was brought to submission to Jesus Christ. It was after this that he testified, "But...it pleased God, who

separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to REVEAL HIS SON IN ME..." (Gal. 1:15). And through Paul's life and ministry the church was established throughout the far-flung Empire, and the course of history was forever altered. Skeptics down through the centuries have tried to explain that conversion and the dramatic events it precipitated. But, precious friend of mine, there is no explanation other than the SUPERNATURAL SOVEREIGN WORK OF GOD! That is our God! And I do not hesitate to tell you, my beloved, that God is getting ready to move again! All over the world in this particular moment in history, the Spirit of God is speaking to His apprehended ones concerning the imminent manifestation of the sons of God! The trumpet has sounded — the appointed time has come! Elect saints in every nation under heaven have heard the voice of the prophets, foretelling of this most awesome intervention of God's power that is about to sweep the earth and shake all nations!

We are now living in the most momentous hours anyone could possibly imagine! In fact, it is beyond the power of human imagination to see and understand the greatness of the things that are happening all about us, and to fully comprehend what God is doing so deeply within His people. There is an awakening among the elect of the Lord that transcends human knowledge! As at a certain time of the year God puts it into the minds of salmon to leave the vastnesses of the sea and start their long journey back to the river in which they were born, so He is putting into the hearts of His chosen people the desire to ready themselves for the sonship He has prepared for them from the foundation of the world! He is putting in their minds and hearts the very nature and spirit of sonship, in preparation for their role as the deliverers and shepherds of the nations!

God has been using people in every generation and in every nation and place to whatever degree He has prepared the vessel as a revelation of Himself. There has been that unfolding of His purpose, that flowing of His life, that manifestation of Himself. Great and wonderful beyond description has been the moving of God from age to age and from generation to generation! God has been using preachers and people in every denomination and movement everywhere to whatever degree He purposed for that season and degree of revelation. But there shall come the ultimate, the total, and complete revelation of Jesus Christ — not a narrow, limited thing, not to get a number of people saved and blessed and healed and filled with the Spirit and used, but the kingdom of God coming with power and great glory, as an expression and manifestation of God in its total capacity with no limitations, with all the glory, all the power, all the might, all the majesty, all the authority, so that nations will be swept into the kingdom of God, and the whole creation delivered from all the bondage of corruption!

A thousand, yea, tens of thousands, a mighty army has been touched by the fire from off the altar of God! A vast company of king-priests has been set ablaze with the life and love and power of God that will cause the nations of the world to turn to the living God! Too long men have occupied themselves in religious efforts to embalm the spirit of yesterday's revival, wrapping it in the grave clothes of ecclesiastical systems and securing it in sepulchers that speak only of the past. We must watch that! If we are trying to perpetuate even the Pentecostal or Latter Rain revivals we are missing God! Pentecost has gone the way of all flesh, and the Rain is over and gone! Even now, a move of God of unprecedented and world-wide dimensions is in the making! It is being formed in a people, in a sonship company that is becoming the embodiment and personification of all He is! Ah, this will not be a revival of healing campaigns, evangelistic crusades, television programs, concerts, bus ministries, coffee houses, or the building of church buildings, but the overflow of divine passion and power from a people so consecrated to God that their minds, hearts, and bodies have been filled with HIMSELF! Already bright clouds are gathering on the horizon, clouds of a multitude of witnesses to the deep and vital work of God in their lives. The work of preparation has been long and meticulous, and it is now drawing to a close. The celestial rivers are running full, and great glory is about to break forth upon the earth! In due time the clouds shall burst and empty themselves upon the earth, and the river of life shall flow in mighty power from the throne of God!

Let your heart be lifted high, for God is on the move, and this can be YOUR HOUR OF MANIFESTATION! Only that will erupt and overflow from God's people which has first been inworked by Father's hand. Do not belittle or depreciate this day when it may seem so little is happening in your midst. The accent of the Spirit is not on the external works and gifts and manifestations in this hour; His concern is with the inner development of the Christ life, the personal appropriation of all He is, becoming the essence and substance of His nature

and character. Right now the greatest service we can give to others is to die out to all our own ego-self that the living of His life becomes its own declaration of all that He is and can do, to His glory and praise!

It is my conviction that all who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship will agree that the manifestation of the sons of God is the next thing on God's agenda for planet earth, and that it must be ONE HUNDRED PERCENT THE WORK OF GOD. But it cannot be one hundred percent God's work when there is still ninety percent of us, or eighty, forty, ten, or one percent of us. If the expression of God that is coming will be "Jesus and me," then we will also give the glory to "Jesus and me." But if it is Jesus alone, I may be the vessel, you may be the vessel, but the manifestation and the excellency of the power shall be of God and not of us. So much manifestation has been "God and us." Our drive, our holiness, our spirituality, our faith, our commitment, our dedication, our fasting, our praying, our ability, our wisdom, our strength, has been mingled with self. But today the Spirit is saying that all our confidence in the flesh must go — Christ in us is becoming the totality of wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption, power and glory, and nothing of us. It is THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST! How can it be us when it is HIM? God shall now be glorified in and through us, by Jesus Christ!

I feel it in my spirit and we are seeking God and praying, crying out mightily unto Him, and waiting on God until that full manifestation of all that God has purposed will come. We cannot continue on with the motions of the old order, for it is a weariness to us. All over the world there are people who are seeking God like this! Many have been drawn away and separated from all their former involvements and religious exercises, the church systems of men, and the old ways of doing things, to wait for His NEW ORDERS! God is making choice among us, reaching down in this hour and choosing those whom He has brought to weakness and nothingness, predestinated for this Day.

Ah, He does not have to use us! We have heard His call and present ourselves before Him for His choosing. I have a deep desire to stand among the company of God's manifested sons! But let us leave the choosing to God. And if God is pleased to choose us, we will give Him all the glory. And if He is pleased to bypass us and choose others, there will be no recrimination in our spirit. We will say, "Lord, Thou art altogether righteous in all things." We are not grasping after the throne, like the mother of James and John, but we are yielding ourselves unto God. In previous moves of the Spirit, God picked me up and used me and He said, "I am not using you because of anything in yourself, but out of sovereign choice." I saw other people that were more ready to be used than I was, not used, and I asked God why, and He answered, "Out of my sovereign purposes I am not using them." That is why I do not criticize anybody who was not in the previous visitations, or in the word God is giving us today. I know it was God who kept many people out, who shut them up and hedged them in to a lesser thing in God, and God brought other people in. God's thoughts are higher than our thoughts! God searches the reins and the hearts of all men! He knows us better than we know ourselves! He knows if there is any wicked way in us that even we do not know! But He is going to use people! People like you and me! This is not daydreaming or wishful thinking, neither are we deluded. God is ready to manifest Himself through all the earth, so let us say, "Lord, let us be among those. We are available."

To the above counsel I would add this word of admonition: No one has to strive to make himself a son of God, for this calling was determined before the foundation of the world when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy. It is not a matter of trying to press (force) your way into something, but of yielding to the sovereign dealings and the divine inworkings of the Father and fitting by His choice into His glorious scheme. We are king-priests by the same oath that made our blessed Forerunner a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. The process has been long, the dealings have been severe, the disciplining has been rigorous, but soon, O soon! shall the day for the showing, the uncovering, the unveiling dawn in all its power and glory! The blessed sons of God shall be arrayed in order with the manifestation of HIS LIFE flowing out from them!

There are no counterfeits in this realm, when God manifests reality. There are no phonies in this kingdom realm of God! When the sons of God arise to bless the nations either you will "have it" or you won't "have it." As long as we remain in preparation there is opportunity for men to proclaim themselves, to jump on the bandwagon, to mouth all the right words and utter all the correct terminology, and appear to be of those

chosen to be sons. These "clouds without water" sometimes teach with flowery oratory, oozing with charisma, and some even lay claim to already being manifested as the fulfillment of their message. Presumptuously claiming that which they do not possess, they make their boasts, and many are deceived by their great swelling words of vanity. But the day of manifestation approaches! The Day will declare every man's work, of what sort it is! There is a remnant in whom the Spirit of God is working a transformation. In due time God shall manifest this many-membered son and their NEW STATE OF BEING shall utterly silence all the false claims of carnal impostors. Conformed to His image, filled with His Spirit, the embodiment and personification of His wisdom, nature, grace and power — no man will be able to counterfeit the reality of this new state of being, and these shall redound to the glory of God. God starts this work, God works it out, and God brings it to its conclusion; it is all of Him and that is why the flesh or any religious spirit cannot duplicate such glorious, divine handiwork!

The revelation of Jesus Christ is yet to have its greatest stage! If you think creation was something — you ain't seen nothin' yet! If you think it was the greatest of all times when Jesus Christ came into the earth touchable and knowable, healing, delivering, teaching, touching, revealing the Father — you ain't seen nothin' yet! On the day of Pentecost Jesus came back in the Holy Spirit speaking in tongues, prophesying, with signs and wonders and divers gifts of power and glory, calling out His elect and forming in the earth a body for Himself — but I tell you, you ain't seen nothin' yet! God has reserved the greatest manifestation of Himself through the many sons He is bringing to glory!

**The sons of God are marching forth: with Victory as their song.
No enemy or foe from North shall change their right to wrong.**

**For in their bosom is a seed more precious than fine gold,
And it shall be forevermore THE GREATEST STORY TOLD!**

**There is no need to speak against the things He hath revealed,
For unto babes and sucklings shall be made known His will.**

**Though they appear as "frail and weak" as some would say they are,
Yet their heart's eye beholds the Bright and Morning Star.**

**And He hath burned within their hearts, a message to proclaim;
For every knee shall soon be bowed, all tongues confess His name.**

**The sons of God are marching forth — His banner to unfurl,
The greatest story ever told — shall be told all the world!**

**For in a lowly manger and a place of secrecy
His first appearing wasn't known; all mankind could not see.**

**Then was the time when some could hear, those having ears, said He;
But...when He comes the second time — not in a borrowed stall,**

**But in a house not made with hands — He'll be admired by all!
In flaming fire and with His sword, He shall eternally**

Destroy the ones who know not God — who are His enemies.

**The sons of God are marching forth — though it may seem to some
That in their battles they have lost, and have been overcome.**

**But doth His Word not even say...that though this be the case,
The pure in heart with victory, shall look upon His face.**

For in His presence they do drink — His blood from Calvary,
They know that He was born to die; but they were born set free.

And in His law both day and night, their thoughts shall ever be
UNTIL THE VISION THEY HAVE CAUGHT BECOMES REALITY!

Until the enemy of death, even death of Adam be
Acknowledged as a death undone, undone at Calvary;

Then shall the saying come to pass, "Oh death, where is thy sting?"
And then the song of Moses shall the saints begin to sing.

Thanks be to God which giveth us victory through our Lord,
He hath divided unto us His swift and terrible sword;

All things that unto Him belong: all things that He obtained;
We are His heirs, joint heirs we are — of us He's not ashamed.

It is not for our righteousness He bringeth us reward,
But for His grace and grace alone, could any man afford;

And judgment shall be given to the Son of God, said He,
For He alone is capable of judging righteously!

I looked! And lo! A Lamb stood! Upon a mount called Zion,
And with Him were the children that are wonders and are signs;

And in their mouths was found no guile, His image they portrayed;
His Spirit led, they followed Him...His light was their array.

Oh! That the wonder of it all might be made known to thee,
That in the New Jerusalem no night shall ever be.

For in the Potter's House...one pearl has groaned in great travail
Until His love is known to be THE ANSWER FOR THE WORLD!

— Charlene Appleby

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 5 THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART FIVE

THE REVELATION WHICH GOD GAVE UNTO HIM

If you believe in the traditional literalist interpretation of the book of Revelation, there are some serious issues you are going to have to face. Teachers like Hal Lindsey and scores of others tell us that the whole book is fulfilled in the brief span of 1260 days, or three and one half years. They tell us that in the days of the Great Tribulation there issues a world-wide famine from which one billion people die, believers are martyred in incredible numbers, a nuclear war takes place, one third of the world's vegetation is destroyed, one third of the world's oceans are turned into blood, one third of the world's drinking water is so polluted that to drink it kills people, horrible locusts (maybe helicopters!) plague the world's unbelievers for a solid five months, and then 200,000,000 Chinese communists, with perhaps Japanese allies, march on Israel, and on their way they kill nearly one billion more people.

By the time these armies reach Israel, the world's oceans have all been turned into blood, the world's drinking water, all of it, has been turned to blood, as the blood of a dead man; there is a world wide epidemic of ulcers and skin cancers under a global heat wave. There is no fresh water to drink anywhere on the planet, and there is going to be a great run on Coca Cola, but even the stores of bottled drinks give out. Then, while there is no water, and no food, and no health, and no ability to work or earn a living, we're going to have this great battle of Armageddon involving 200,000,000 invading soldiers! Now the scene gets even more bizarre! With billions dead or dying, with war and famine and disease and trouble and torment everywhere, if you take the mark of the beast you are given the liberty to buy and sell! Buy and sell what? I ask. There's no water, it's all blood. There are no trees, no grass, no agriculture; there is world war, devastating earthquakes, broiling heat, and nuclear destruction; and while these 200,000,000 soldiers are attacking Israel, there are 200 pound hailstones falling on them!

I'm not trying to be cynical, friends, but it seems to me that anyone with one eye and half sense could see that the logistics of this scheme transcend absurdity — they are impossible! There is no geographical space for 200,000,000 soldiers with tanks, trucks, airplanes, supplies, and all the rest in the valley of Megiddo — not counting the armies of Russia, the United States and their allies who are all supposed to gather there. Hear me, my brother, and my sister— it ain't going to happen! These armies can't fight — there is no geographical space in all of Israel for so many people to even stand properly. So we have a problem! When you calculate the effect of all these events, if they are literal, and all happen at the same time during three and a half years, you really have a contradictory, unreasonable, illogical, ridiculous absurdity. May the blessed spirit of truth help all who read these lines to think soberly, and righteously, and spiritually about what is portrayed here!

The question follows — What do all these things mean? Ah, it's all GOOD NEWS! Our heavenly Father is not some kind of angry, vindictive, psychotic, sadistic monster who is grinning and kind and merciful for two thousand years and then suddenly throws a temper tantrum, becomes vicious and vengeful, turning on that portion of the human race that just happens to be living at that time, pouring out wrath and spewing forth judgment that makes Adolph Hitler look like Santa Clause, and the Second World War appear as a church picnic. IS THAT THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST? IS IT? Is that the revelation of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world? Is that what Jesus Christ is all about? Is that the final word of the One who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to redeem it? Is that the true, hidden nature of the One who has presented Himself as Love, who has posed as the all-merciful, caring, compassionate, Saviour of all men? Is it? Lynn Hiles calls preachers who peddle the foolishness I have spoken of above spiritual terrorists! They scare people to death with a revelation that is supposed to be the unveiling of Jesus Christ! If that is the unveiling of Jesus Christ, then please keep the lid on Him! In my younger years the things I heard taught out of

the book of Revelation would send tingles up your spine and make your hair curl. Thank God! Now we know it is the REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST, God's wonderful, gracious, loving, redeeming, saving, transforming, life-giving Son!

Christ is revealing Himself! The scriptures clearly reveal four stages in the revelation of Christ. First, He reveals Himself to us. Then He reveals Himself in us.. Third, He reveals Himself as us. And finally, He reveals Himself through or out from us. Those are the four dimensions of the revelation of Jesus Christ!

When Christ reveals Himself to us, He seems to us as an external Christ, the man Jesus who walked the shores of Galilee, who died on a cross, was buried, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven. In the beginning of our walk in God there is a revelation to us of Jesus Christ, that He was God's Son, born of a virgin, that He lived and walked here upon this earth for thirty-three and a half years, was baptized by John in the river Jordan, the heavens were opened to Him, the Holy Spirit came upon Him, the Father witnessed by a voice from heaven that this was His beloved Son, and He went about doing good, healing all that were oppressed of the devil, casting out devils, raising the dead, for God was with Him.

Jesus testified of Himself, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (Jn. 14:6). Again Jesus proclaimed, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." (Jn. 10:9) He is the Son of man and He is Jacob's ladder, the bottom of which stands upon the earth and the top of which reaches into the heavens and the angels of God ascend and descend upon Him. He went to the cross of Calvary and there tasted death for every man. God raised Him from the dead, thus declaring Him to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness. When one encounters this glorious Christ of God, when we receive Him into our heart and life, our spirit being quickened by His Spirit, in that blessed moment we receive a supernatural revelation of the life, reality, glory and power of this exalted One and our redeemed spirit bows before Him in adoration and praise as we behold with awe and holy reverence the divine mystery of God's love, redeeming grace, and omniscient purpose in the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God. This is the beginning of the revelation of Jesus Christ to us! Millions of saints, and thousands who now read these lines, bear unimpeachable witness to the wonder of that magnificent moment when Christ the Lord was revealed to them! And I do not hesitate to tell you that I have no time for those who would depreciate, lower, cheapen, detract from, belittle, minimize, discredit, or in any way make light of this precious firstborn Son of God, the Captain of my salvation, the Author and Finisher of my faith, the Forerunner who by Himself has opened up the way into the Holiest of all for every son of God to follow! May He in all things forever have the preeminence, may His name be praised and exalted throughout all ages, world without end! We owe everything to Him!

By the revelation of Jesus Christ in us we discover another dimension of Himself. We find experientially that Christ is not out there beyond the Milky Way someplace — He is right here within our very own reality. Oh, He's out there alright — but not out there for us. God is everywhere, God is omnipresent, but He is not just everywhere to us! We are the temple of God and the body of Christ! And it is there within that temple which we are that we have truly learned to know Him as He is!

Then follows the revelation of Jesus Christ as us. You, precious saint of God, are a location where God has chosen to break forth to express and manifest Himself in personality. You are an extension and projection of the invisible God! He has integrated Himself into your life, not as a separate entity within your personality, but in the union of life He has become the essence of being within you. Incredible as these words may appear to some who read them, it was to Paul that the Holy Spirit gave the understanding of the transcendent significance of Christ in his life, and this is what the beloved apostle said: **"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. 2:20)** When Paul explained, "Nevertheless I live; yet not I," he was setting forth by divine wisdom the fact that he lived, but the life within him was not his own; it was, in very fact, the life of another, even Christ — the anointed Son of God! Can we not see by this that Christ not only lived in Paul — Christ lived as Paul! The personality of Jesus Christ had now replaced and become the personality of Paul the apostle. This, in my opinion, is the only true reincarnation in the universe! The body of Christ is the reincarnation of Jesus Christ the Son of God! Behold what unspeakable honor this is, and consider well what inexpressible, ineffable glory! Why should I seek any other reincarnation!

Finally, the revelation of Jesus Christ through us and out from us reveals us to creation as the Corporate Son of God in the earth! The whole creation is standing on tip-toe, earnestly expecting and waiting with great anticipation the manifestation of God's sons! The sons of God are the sons of love, for God is love. The manifestation of the sons of God is the full and complete expression of the love of God through a many-membered body throughout the whole earth. Some today are trying to sell us a bill of goods, teaching that the present measure of the expression of Christ in His people is the manifestation of the sons of God. Don't buy that bill of goods, my friend, for it will rob you of your inheritance. Some who have wearied with the waiting for manifested sonship have watered it down, and would settle for something less, calling the measure of Christ we have seen for two thousand years — sonship. I exhort the saints of God to be not deceived by that which would entice you to sell your birthright for a mess of porridge! I tell you the truth, my beloved, when manifested sonship comes on the scene the world cannot say, "No," to it — they will not be able to resist the manifestation of unconditional omnipotent love! Unconditional, omnipotent love is irresistible! It breaks down every barrier, it climbs over the walls and goes in at the windows, it conquers every will and melts every heart. There has never been such a people on this planet! For three and a half years there was one! But God is raising up the life of His Son in a people in this new Kingdom Day. He is bringing this life to maturity in the sons of God! When His wonderful work in His called out elect is complete, all phoniness will be gone, all hypocrisy will be put away, all religiosity will be renounced and purged by the all-consuming fire of God, all self-righteousness will be abandoned, all selfishness will be forsaken, all ulterior motives will be discarded, all gimmickry will cease, every manifestation of the flesh and of the carnal, religious mind will forever disappear from the life of each and every son of the Most High; the Lord alone shall be seen in that day in all of His unsurpassable beauty, in all His boundless glory, in all His omnipotent power, through the transformed lives of the manifested sons of God! Some disparagingly refer to these truths as "classical sonship." Let me tell you something. I say it kindly, but I say it with holy boldness and unrelenting firmness. That which they undervalue by this cynical term "classical sonship" is, in all truth, the only true message of manifested sonship God has sovereignly and supernaturally birthed in the earth! Every other edition I have seen has been altered, corrupted, distorted, or diluted. We are at the hour in history when we must not settle for anything less!

All creation will respond to this universal outpouring of God's love, goodness and grace. Every man that has ever lived, does live, or shall ever live, will come into God's great and eternal kingdom — sooner or later! The furniture store says, "Pay now, or pay later." We say, "Come now, or come later." That will be the ultimate and eternal accomplishment of THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST!

THE REVELATION WHICH GOD GAVE UNTO HIM

"The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him..." (Rev. 1:1).

This revelation was given to Jesus Christ and through Jesus Christ! The reality of sonship to God was first revealed to Jesus, then in Jesus, afterwards as Jesus, and finally through Jesus. Now, unto the saints it is revealed by Jesus within His body, and unto creation through His many brethren. The firstborn Son was given a message for all the sons who would follow. Yea, He IS HIMSELF the message!

The origin of this revelation is God. God gave it to Christ — that is, God appointed and anointed His Son to unveil Himself to mankind. This is the revelation of Jesus Christ that God gave unto Him from the time of His birth in Bethlehem, on to the time when His mind began to understand as a young child, until He went forth in His ministry at thirty years of age, until He died, rose, and ascended up far above all heavens as King of kings and Lord of lords. This is the revelation that God gave to Him as the knowledge and understanding of the path of sonship!

When Jesus came into the world He possessed a dual identity. In His spirit He was the mighty God and the everlasting Father! But according to His flesh He was a man, made in all things like unto His brethren. When Jesus was growing up as a boy in the understanding of who He was, He could have chosen one of two ways. He could identify with His spirit, or He could identify with His flesh. Jesus was born in a difficult situation, for no one knew who His Father was. I do not doubt for one moment that as a small child Jesus identified with His flesh. He was just a little boy like all other little boys, and His parents were Joseph and Mary. But in the early years God came to Jesus and gave Him something special in His understanding. It was an unveiling of who He

was! It seems clear that this unveiling began in His life somewhere before or around the age of twelve. From that time, throughout the eighteen years of silence when we have no credible record of Him, Jesus was awakened to His true heritage.

When Jesus was a boy twelve years old, He was taken up to the feast of Passover, and then for the first time He saw the holy city Jerusalem and the temple of Yahweh on Mount Moriah. Young as He was, His spirit was stirred as He walked among the courts of the temple and saw the altar with its smoking sacrifice, the priests in their white robes, and the Levites with their silver trumpets. Though a boy, Jesus began to sense within Himself that He was the Son of God and that this was His Father's house! His heart was so filled with the worship of the temple, with the words of the scribes or the teachers whom He heard in the courts, and with His own thoughts, that when it was time to go home to Nazareth, He stayed behind, held fast by His overwhelming love for the house of the Lord. The company of people who were traveling together was large, and at first He was not missed. But when night came and the boy Jesus could not be found, His mother was alarmed.

The next day Joseph and Mary left their company and hastened back to Jerusalem. They did not at first think to go to the temple. They sought Him among their friends and kindred who were living in the city, but could not find Him. On the third day they went up to the temple with heavy hearts, still looking for their boy. And there they found Him, sitting in the company of the teachers of the law, listening to their words and confounding them with His questions! Everybody who stood near was surprised to find how deep was the knowledge and understanding of this boy in the word of the Lord! His mother spoke to Him a little sharply, for she felt that her son had not been thoughtful of His duty. She said, "Child, why have you treated us this way? Do you not know that your father and I have been looking for you with fearful hearts?" "Why did you seek for me?" said Jesus. "Did you not know that I must be around my Father — about His business?" They did not fully understand these words, but Jesus was saying to Mary, "I know who my Father is, Mama! My father's not Joseph. My Father is God! It's time for me to learn about my inheritance, my destiny!" From twelve years to age thirty He learned. God gave Him an unveiling of Himself, revealing Himself to Himself.

"The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him." These words should speak to every saint of God a great truth — Jesus did not come into the world knowing who He was or what His purpose was — Jesus had to be taught of the Father just as you and I have had to be taught! God gave unto Him an unveiling of His identity and purpose. This unveiling came to Jesus so that Jesus could show it unto His servants. "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants..."

We have thought that the revelation was given on the isle of Patmos, and indeed it was given to John for the churches at that time and in that place. But this is the revelation that God gave to Jesus, and that was given a long time before Patmos! It is the revelation of God in Christ, the mystery of godliness, when God was manifest in the flesh. The revelation that was given to Jesus is the pattern for every son of God that is brought to His glory! The same ministry Jesus had for three and a half years is the ministry of every manifested son of God! His virgin birth prefigures the birth of the manchild! As He grew during His years in Nazareth in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man, so we are growing up into Him in all things! His overcoming in the flesh is the guarantee of our overcoming in the flesh! His triumph over Satan foreshadows the triumph of His many brethren over every satanic thing! His wisdom, understanding, compassion, love, mercy, and power are even now being wrought out in the life of every person who has received the call to sonship! As He went to the cross so are we crucified with Him, so do we know Him in the fellowship of His sufferings, and so do we take up our cross and follow Him! As He died, so we love not our Adamic life unto the death! As He rose from the dead, so has He quickened us together with Him, so that we be risen with Christ; and so shall every son of God step out of the mortality of this physical realm to put on incorruption and immortality! "For we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed!" As He ascended up to His Father in heaven so has He raised us up and made us sit together with Him in the higher than all heavens!

The same teaching and learning experience God sent Jesus through, is the same thing He now brings every son through. The revelation God gave to Jesus is the revelation He is showing us! We must believe as a little child to inherit the kingdom; we must go back to the manger and begin our journey into God. We must be born of the virgin birth within ourselves, born of the incorruptible seed of the word of God which liveth and abideth forever. As Jesus was born of a woman, Mary, so is the manchild being born of a woman, the church. Paul

said to some in the church, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you" (Gal. 4:19). He said that he had come and impregnated into their virgin hearts the incorruptible seed of the word of God, and through the spoken word Christ was conceived in them. But they had allowed someone to come along and cause them to mis-carry, as they listened to a false word and began to fornicate with another spirit. Paul came and cleansed them again with a spoken word and through that cleansing he brought them to a place where they might conceive again, that the Christ-life might be formed in them. How great is the plan and mystery of God!

This is the revelation that God gave to Jesus as He walked with His Father in the earth realm, gaining from day to day and from experience to experience the understanding of who He was, why He was here, the power and glory of the Father's life in Him, and the mission and purpose He should fulfill as a Son. THIS WAS THE REVELATION GOD GAVE TO JESUS! And now on Patmos Jesus gave this revelation to John to show unto the churches the things that were to come to pass in the lives of all who would follow the Lamb to mount Zion! The "things which must shortly come to pass" have nothing to do with supposed events in the outer world; they have everything to do with the mighty processings and deep inworkings of God in His elect! They speak of the outworking of sonship life, victory, and maturity in the lives of the overcomers — many sons brought to glory! That is the reality that was to "come to pass," to be raised up in the earth for the blessing and deliverance of all creation!

Through His learning, His humbling, His sufferings, His disciplines, His obedience, and the revelation the Father gave Him, Jesus attained to the glory of manifested sonship. Now in the book of Revelation we see how we must be dealt with, how we must be humbled, purged of the beast nature, stripped of the spirit of the false prophet, chastened until the flesh is subdued, instructed in all righteousness, taught, matured, and anointed with the spirit of the Father until we find ourselves in the book of Revelation as the manchild caught up to the throne! As overcomers, if we keep our works unto the end, we have wonderful promise and blessed assurance that we will be given power over the nations to rule them with a rod of iron, even as He received of His Father. There is the portion of the sons of God! Just as Jesus the Lamb is in the midst of the throne, having seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God, so shall we share in the glory of the 144,000 lambs that stand with Him on mount Zion, having His Father's name in their foreheads. The book of Revelation is the revelation of the Son of God on the face of the earth, and the works that the Father wrought in Him to bring Him to the end of His ministry and onward to death, resurrection, ascension, glorification and exaltation! THAT REVELATION IS THE PATTERN FOR ALL WHO ARE PUTTING ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST!

Of our Lord Jesus Christ it is written, "Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person..." (Heb. 1:3). The Amplified Bible renders this so beautifully, "He is the sole expression of the glory of God — the Light-being, the out-ricing of the divine — and He is the perfect imprint and very image of God's nature." Christ is the DIVINE RADIANCE of the Father! You can grasp a beautiful picture of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as you consider the sun of our solar system. The sun is the Father, the essence, being, source and origin of all. But we do not see the sun! We see only the sun's emanation, its out-ricing. The light and heat and energy that flood our earth are not the sun itself, but its radiance. And yet, the radiance is the sun! It is the sun shedding itself, revealing itself! That is what Christ is to the Father, He is the Father's radiance, His out-ricing, the Father shedding Himself, revealing Himself, imparting Himself! And then there is a mighty working of the sun's energy in our world. One of those many processes is known as photosynthesis. Photosynthesis is the process by which green plants make sugar and starch from water and carbon dioxide, by the power of sunlight! Can we not see by this that the sun figures the Father, the source; the Son is the radiance, the outricing of the Father; and the Holy Spirit is the mighty working or energizing effected by the light rays! The ONENESS of this is apparent, for the Father finds His expression in the son, and the Son IS because of all that the Father IS. Then the Holy Spirit is the working, energizing, creating and transforming by the power of the Father in the Son! And yet, all three are the very same God existing in three dimensions, for who can separate what is essentially ONE? And then Jesus prayed for us, "So that they all may be one just as You, Father, are in me and I in You, that they also may be one in Us." (Jn. 17:21) (Amplified). The ultimate expression of the corporate man is that we might SHOW FORTH HIS GLORY! Therefore our Father is "the Father of lights (or heavenly luminaries)." Our destiny is to be celestial LIGHT BEARERS after His own kind! This is the revelation of Jesus Christ!

Let us explore a little further the things the Son received of the Father, for they are the things, which the Son shows to His chosen and gives unto them. There are far too many to list them all, but as you read the Gospels you should take note of how many times the Lord used expressions such as, "Thou gavest me" and "I have received of my Father." Notice how many times, just in His wonderful prayer recorded in **John 17, He speaks of receiving from the Father.** "As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given Him." "I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do." "I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest me out of the world." "Now they have known that all things whatsoever Thou hast given me are of Thee. For I have given them the words which Thou gavest me." "Those Thou hast given me I have kept...and the glory which Thou gavest me I have given them." This, and more, is contained in just that one chapter! The Father gave Him power over all flesh. His followers and disciples were given to Him by the Father. The Father gave Him the word to give to those the Father had given Him. The glory He had was given Him by the Father, and He has given it unto us!

We also find that the life Jesus had was given Him by the Father. "**As the Father has life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself.**" (**Jn. 5:26**) The scriptures reveal that the kingdom has been given to Christ. "And there was given Him dominion and glory, and a kingdom." (**Dan. 7:14**) The Holy Spirit, the promise of the Father, was given to Him, "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." (**Acts 2:23**) The love He manifested was not His own love, it was the love of the Father, "For I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (**Rom. 8:38-39**) The anointing He had was of the Father! "For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed" and "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and power..." (**Acts 4:27; 10:38**). The omnipotent power and universal authority which He has now was also given to Him, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (**Mat. 28:18**) Everything Jesus had and everything Jesus was, was given to Him by the Father. It is all a part of that glorious revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants!

Jesus Christ, the firstborn Son of God, received everything He had from the Father! Many scriptures confirm that He received divine life from the Father. He received the living word from the Father. He received His sonship anointing from the Father. He received His glory from the Father. He received His ministry from the Father. He received His power and authority from the Father. He received His wisdom and understanding from the Father. He received His works from the Father. He received His name, His nature, from the Father. He received His mind from the Father. He received His judgment from the Father. He received His kingship and priesthood from the Father. He received His resurrection, ascension, glorification, exaltation and enthronement from the Father!

Beyond all this, wonderful as these things are, lies an even greater truth. All that Jesus received of the Father, He became! How awesome are the words when Jesus declared, "I am the life." He hadn't just received life, He had become the life! He had received the word from God; but He not only received it, he became the word. By receiving the word He received the truth, for "Thy word is truth." So Jesus said, "I am the truth." He received from the Father the great plan of redemption and restoration, to bring all men back to God. However, the Father did not just show Him the way, or make Him a "way-shower," as some say, for Jesus Himself became the way. "I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me."

The question came to me, "Why did the Lord Jesus say, "I am the way" first, and not, "I am the life?" Why first, the way? I will tell you why! Because HE IS THE WAY INTO EVERYTHING GOD HAS FOR US! He is the Captain of our salvation! He is the Author and the Finisher of our faith! He is the great High Priest of the priesthood! He is the Forerunner who has opened up the way into the Holiest of all! He is the Head of the body! He is Firstborn among many brethren! He is the One from whom we receive the anointing! We could never enter into truth, nor into life, nor into any other reality were He not first the way! There are various meanings for the word "way," but the one meant here is: "A means of getting from one place to another, as a road, street, highway, etc." Some time ago a friend asked me how to get to the courthouse in downtown El Paso. I gave him very specific instructions. "Just follow the I-10 freeway all the way in to the downtown exit. Get off on the exit and continue straight until you come to Kansas Street. Turn left on Kansas and drive into the downtown area

until you come to Overland. You will see the courthouse there on the left." Now I knew the way and was able to tell him how to get to where he wanted to go. But I was not the way! There is a great difference between knowing the way, being able to show someone the way, and being the way.

Jesus knew the way — the Father had shown Him. Everything He knew He had heard from His Father. But He did not come to tell us about the way to salvation, or show us the way into sonship. Oh, no! He became the way! What does this mean? Let me make this as clear as I can. Jesus didn't come to tell us about the way into the fullness of God, into our inheritance. Nor did He come to show us the way! He didn't come to take us by the hand and gently lead us to the Father! It is the purpose of "the way" to bring us to God. He came to be the way, not to tell us or show us. He is not giving us directions! He is not drawing us a map! He is not leading us by the hand! When I want to go to the store I get in my Dodge Intrepid and get on the streets that I know will take me there. When I get on the right streets I am in the way. O Lord, give us eyes to see that we are only on the way to the Father when we are in the Son! There is something more than just believing or standing on the promises! We do believe, oh yes, we do! But to come into union and oneness with the Father is more than this — we have to be IN THE SON. He is Himself the way to the Father and we have to be in Him in order to get there! Surely it was with this very truth in mind that Jesus prayed, "That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us." Not one with us, but one in us.

There is tremendous depth here, my beloved, for this is the mystery above all mysteries. The revelation of Jesus Christ is the unveiling of the Christ life within us. It is not a word, a creed, a doctrine, a theology, a truth, or even a revelation. I pray that you would pause here to request the mercies of heaven that God would give you the spirit of wisdom and understanding in the knowing of Him that you may see the glory that is our inheritance in Christ! The great truth is that we also must become what we have received if we are to be sons indeed. We can hear the truth, we can receive the truth and know the truth; but before the truth can become effective in us, we must become the truth. The truth must become our very personality, our state of being. You see, we can hear truth, receive truth, and know truth, but still not walk in the realm of truth! We may speak truth, teach truth, and preach truth, and yet walk in ways that are not according to the truth. But when we become truth, when we are truth, the truth will be manifested out of us as the Christ who is the truth! There was nothing that the Son could do that was not truth, nor could He speak any word that was not truth, for He was the truth.

The oath of God's sons is not the oath of the court room where we swear to "tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." To qualify for the great task the Father has for us in restoring the whole creation to find its one head in Christ, we have to "BE the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth!" Those who come to this are ready to be laborers together with God in the consummation of His great purpose to deliver creation from the bondage of corruption. We have known the revelation of Christ to us and in us, but the hour has come and now is when there shall be the revelation of the Christ as us. When we have become the life, as He is the life, we also will have life to give. We will no longer believe in life, speak life, teach life, or preach life, but we will have life to give to all who dwell in the valley of the shadow of death. The revelation that was given to Jesus is now given to us that in Him we may truly be the way, the truth, and the life for all creation! Oh, the wonder of it!

Let us then with a reverence born of the Spirit of God explore these celestial fields a little further. The writer to the Hebrews says of man, "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He LEFT NOTHING THAT IS NOT PUT UNDER HIM. (Heb. 2:8) Then he makes a statement that appears to be a direct contradiction to all this by saying, "BUT NOW WE SEE NOT YET ALL THINGS PUT UNDER HIM!" In the first statement he says that all has been put under man, and in the next tells us that this has not yet been accomplished. But the writer says that we do see one man. WE SEE JESUS! All of our hope is in Jesus, and we have no hope of attainment outside of Him. Jesus, as the first perfect man and the first perfected son of God, is the evidence and guarantee to us that we also will be perfected as sons of God and attain to the glory of His sonship.

The writer goes on to describe the One who has been through all the pathway of sonship to God. Jesus is our forerunner, our evidence and our guarantee that God will bring us through even as He brought Jesus through! So we read, "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to

glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." (Heb. 2:10) Now if all things are for Him, and if all things are by Him, does this not place Jesus in a prominent and highly exalted position? No other man has ever occupied such prominence as this! There is absolutely no other person who has all things either by or for them! The apostle is actually saying in these words that because of His prominence and highly exalted position of power, dominion and glory, it was necessary that He go through all the things and experiences that all the rest of the sons of God who are partakers of flesh and blood have experienced.

Let us put it this way. If Jesus did all things that He did by reason of His being in some unique or transcendent way the divine Son of God; or by reason of the fact that He Himself was the source of power and glory, then He very definitely had some advantage over us! If such were the case, then He had access to resources that are denied us, and He possessed attributes and qualities that are foreign to us now and always will be. He was indeed the Son of God, but because of His heritage as a divine One and the fact that all things were both for Him and by Him, God put Him through just the same experiences that the children must experience and suffer. He had no advantage over us because of who He was or what He possessed! He was made as weak as us in that He said, "I of myself can do nothing."

A brother used the following example, which I find wonderfully illustrative of the truth. "We see a man who has built a great business and financial empire. There may be thousands of employees, but only one son. Naturally this son is in the line of inheritance and is to receive all that the father has. This son could have the privilege of stepping into all the advantage and all the resources possessed by the father. It is rightfully his! Thus he could become the owner and head of all the father has built up, and be the one to run it. This could happen whether or not the son had any knowledge about the management of the business, or any experience in it. By right of the prominence of his position as son of the head of that great empire, this son could step into it and possess it.

"But this father has different ideas for his son! He makes conditions such that if the son desires the father's place, he must start from the bottom, and learn the business from the ground up. He must start at the bottom and come up through the whole business as any ordinary employee would do. He is put in a position where he cannot take advantage of the fact that he is the son of the owner or that the business is his by right of inheritance. No one could keep him from inheriting — but the father causes him to become eligible for the supreme position by taking him over the same pathway that any employee would be expected to travel in order to reach the top. This is exactly what the scripture is telling us concerning Jesus! Because Jesus was the Son of God, and because that by Him and through Him and for Him are all things; and because all things were made by Him, He would have the right of authority to step into the position of the Father unquestioned by anyone! But God chose that this firstborn Son would not attain in that way, but He would come the way of all other sons and be one of them.

"Now consider this. A man, the head of a great business, has a son, and he gives him a thorough education, and upon graduation he brings this son right into the company and makes him president of the board without any practical experience. The employees of that company would know that the son received that position merely because he was the father's son! They would also understand that they knew more about this business than the son does! But because he is the son of the president, he gets this high position, for he is the heir. If Jesus steps into the throne of the Father under such conditions, he would be open to many criticisms from the principalities and powers in the heavenly places! We know that He has been exalted to the Father's throne for He tells us clearly, 'To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne.' (Rev. 3:21) We are called to sit in the throne and power of the Son, even as He sat down in the throne and power of the Father.

"If Jesus attained to this highest position without going through all that the children do, there would be the possibility of some saying that He attained to that position simply because He was the Son of the Father. He would not have done anything to give Him a right to it except the right of inheritance. And the children would know within themselves that Jesus had an advantage that they never possessed! The children could say that Jesus never did experience all the things they have, yet these children are expected to be sons of God just as Jesus is! The truth is that Jesus never did take advantage over any of the rest of the children because He was the Son of God. He came the same route that the rest of us have to come! We have been given the same spirit

and anointing and life that indwelt Him from His birth in the hills of Judea. Because of His prominent position it was only right that he come into this death realm and share its weakness, limitation, temptation and sorrow with every man. In bringing many sons to glory, it was only right that God make the firstborn Son or the chief Son to be perfected through the things He suffered and experienced.

"When we all stand before the Father, including the Lord Jesus Himself, there can only be one cry. There can be but one message and one song, and that will be that we have all come the same way! No flesh shall ever glory in the presence of the Father! Even Jesus will not be able to stand out and apart from the other sons and say that He got to that place by His own inherent merit as the firstborn Son. Consider the words of the apostle in Romans 1:4. 'And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, BY THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD.' Jesus had to be resurrected just like any of the rest of us! We used to have the idea that He raised Himself, but He did not. For we read, 'If the spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you...' (Rom. 8:11). 'Whom God hath raised up...' Many other passages, too numerous to list, bear witness to the fact that it was God, the Father, who raised Jesus from the dead. Jesus was as helpless in the hand of the Father as we are! He had to be, so that He might be made like unto His brethren. And then this amazing and encouraging word: 'For both He that sanctifieth (Jesus) and they who are sanctified (the many brethren) ARE ALL OUT OF ONE: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren.' (Heb. 2:11) There is no denying that we all have come out from God. Jesus said that we all came from the same source and He testified that He came forth from the Father, so we also came from the Father. Jesus did not come from Adam, yet He was made in all things like unto His brethren. He came from God, but clothed in a body and life situation just like ours."

If God's people could comprehend the fathomless depths of the book of Hebrews, they would find themselves well on the road to understanding the magnificent glories that belong to the sons of God! I would draw your reverent attention to another verse in the second chapter of Hebrews wherein we read, "I will declare Thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee." (Heb. 2:12) Now I do not know what you have seen in this passage, but I know how I have understood it in the past, and to many of us, I am sure, it spoke of an expression of glory in worship and praise. We had the idea that when we gathered together and entered into the spirit of worship, singing praises unto the Father, that Jesus would come into the midst of the congregation and He, too, would lift up His voice. Many times we felt that we could actually hear a heavenly sound in our praises which we believed was the voice of the Son of God singing praise to the Father.

I do not deny that that can happen, and I know we have experienced supernatural dimensions of praise and worship unto God. We have sung the song of the Lord by the Spirit! The spirit of praise has caught us up into heavenly places! Yet, beyond that, I see in the verse we have quoted a definite, specific event taking place. There is something here of tremendous importance that is taking place! This phrase "in the midst" literally means in the middle. Also, we must bear in mind that the punctuation in the King James Bible or in any other version is not inspired. The punctuation has been put there by the translators according to their understanding of what the original is saying. Let us quote this verse in this way, "Saying, I will announce Thy name unto my brethren in the middle of the church — I will sing praise unto Thee!" Jesus is saying that He will come in and make an announcement concerning a great reality in the middle of the church. HE WILL ANNOUNCE TO HIS BRETHREN, THE NAME OF THE FATHER! Jesus had already told us in Matthew 11:27, "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and He to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." Jesus Christ is the only one who knows the Father, and no one else is able to know the Father unless the Son reveals Him. "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants..." Do you get the connection between these profound and enlightening statements? Jesus is saying that in the middle of the church He will reveal the Father to the sons, His brethren. Not to the whole church! To His brethren in the middle of the church! Surely you will have noticed that John in His heavenly vision on Patmos saw the seven churches, representing the whole church throughout the church age — and what did he see "in the midst" or "in the middle" of the churches? Ah, he saw ONE LIKE UNTO THE SON OF MAN! God's people are greatly hindered from seeing the truth of what John saw, because they continually confuse the traditions of the church systems with the revelation of God. It is not the Son of man that John beheld in the midst of the churches, but one like unto the Son of man! This inspired statement reveals the great truth that this one is the complete Christ, the whole Christ, the many-membered body of Christ, the corporate man, composed of all His many brethren who have been conformed to the image of the Son of God! "We know that we shall be like Him..."

This company that is like unto the Son of man, this company that is like Him, exactly like Him, is the company of "His brethren" and they are in the middle of the seven churches. "I will announce Thy name unto my brethren in the middle of the church..." There has surely come a time in this church age that is now ending when Jesus, as the first begotten Son, and the one who knows the Father, who is acquainted with the Father and has the Father fully indwelling Him, has revealed or unveiled the name, or the nature, of the Father to the sons! We can repeat a thousand times the words, "I know the Father, I know the Father." But until Jesus Christ reveals the Father in the power of the Spirit within our hearts, we do not have any true knowledge of the Father. We say, Father, because Jesus taught the disciples to pray and to begin their prayer by saying, "Our Father..." We say, Father, because of our having been instructed to do so. But when the spirit of the Son, the spirit of sonship, comes upon us we cry "Father!" from the depths of our very beings because it is the call of the Son. In the middle of the church we sing praise unto the Father! While all the baby Christians and all the carnal Christians in all the seven churches are crying, "Jesus! Jesus!" the Lord Jesus stands in the midst of the church announcing His Father's name and nature unto His brethren, the sons of God in the middle!

Let me ask you, precious friend of mine, where were you when Jesus first announced the Father's name to you? At what stage of your development into Christ did the Lord Jesus begin to reveal the Father within your heart? Most of those who read these words had not yet come out of the church systems of man when the revelation of sonship burst within their hearts! The vast majority of us were right there in the middle of the church when Jesus announced the Father's name and nature to us! Was it not after this that we heard the call of the Spirit to **"Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partaker of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."** (Rev. 18:4) Which church was it in the book of Revelation that had so many sins that the Lord warned again and again, "I have somewhat against you...remember therefore from whence thou art fallen...repent...or else I will come unto thee quickly, and remove thy candlestick...repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against you with the sword of my mouth... behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except she repent... if therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief... repent!... because thou art lukewarm I will spue thee out of my mouth!" Every one of these indictments is made against THE SEVEN CHURCHES! Can we not see by this that it is the seven churches that become that great city Babylon that is thrown down and burned with fire! Mystery of mysteries! Yet, has it not been "in the middle" of that church that Jesus announced the name of the Father and revealed the Father to His many brethren, the sons of God! And before we left from the middle, we sang praise unto the Father in the midst of the church! Verily, the One like unto the Son of man stood in the midst of the churches, just as John saw in spirit in that long ago! Oh, the wonder of it! And it is very significant that no promise was made to any of the seven churches — each and every promise was given to a particular company within the church, to — him that overcometh — the company in the middle!

It should be abundantly clear that most of the seven churches were not truly walking in the Father's name or nature. The overcomer, the one like unto the Son of man, in the middle, alone had taken upon him the Father's nature. There is much contained in that one word name. We speak of the name of the Lord, the name of Jesus, the name of the Father, and the name of God. There has been a great rift in the Pentecostal movement over the name of Jesus. Men become enemies over the use of the name of Jesus versus the titles of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Men argue and fight over what name or formula is used in water baptism. Men dispute over the various spellings and pronunciations of the name Yahweh, or whether we should use the term Lord in referring to God. I have my own thoughts on those things, but name means far more than a grouping of letters of the alphabet or a sound of utterance! We know that there are literally millions of boys and men in the world today who bear the name of Jesus. Here on the border of Mexico there are many men named J-E-S-U-S. But their name Jesus has no more meaning to God than the name Harry, Sam, or Jack. If such a man came before the Father and said, "I am Jesus," the Lord would pay no more attention to him than if he had said, "I am Bob." In the scriptures the word name indicates NATURE, CHARACTER, HONOR AND AUTHORITY.

Does not Jesus have an honor that no one else has ever possessed? Is He not honored of the Father as none other ever was? Does He not possess an authority that no one else ever had? Does He not now possess a nature and character above all the sons of men? He has received a name, a nature, a character, an honor and an authority far above all other names! And His name is the Father's name, for the Father has bestowed on Him the name that is above every other name in heaven and in earth. "I will announce Thy name unto my

brethren in the midst of the church..." Suppose that a number of God's people are together, and Jesus stands in their midst and says, "I am come to announce the name of my Father to you who are my brethren." Does that seem strange to you, my brother, my sister? Yet it has happened thousands of times all over the earth! He has come in our midst to reveal the nature, honor, and authority of His Father that we may see and know the Father, and become like Him in all of our ways. We are sons because we have known the Father!

We know Jesus, we know God, we know Holy Spirit, we know Lord, and we know Master. But now we know the Father! Jesus has announced the Father's name to us! Most of the Lord's people know Jesus, or Christ, or the Lord, or God. But the sons know the Father! The announcement, the proclamation, the revelation has been given! Jesus said He would sing praises unto the Father. To sing praise literally means to sing an ode. An ode is a song or a poem concerning a marvelous and highly esteemed person and the deeds he has done. Some one sings this ode and they tell of his life and all his accomplishments. They extol all his good points and the great benefactor he was to mankind. Jesus said that He would stand up in the midst of His brethren in the middle of the church and SING AN ODE UNTO HIS FATHER! It is the sons who know the Father's nature, the Father's heart, the Father's ways, the Father's will and the Father's plan and purpose. The sons are telling of all the wonderful, glorious works of the Father! The sons are telling of all His marvelous goodness, His mercy, His grace, and His love! The sons proclaim the Father's power, authority and honor as He moves to set all creation free and restore all men and all things unto Himself. The sons declare the omnipotent love that the Father has bestowed upon His creation in Jesus Christ! Those who do not sing this ode unto the Father do not do so because the Son has not revealed the Father unto them! Men who cannot sing this ode do not know the Father!

The firstborn Son of God has announced the Father's name unto His brethren here in the close of the church age. It is a GREAT ANNOUNCEMENT! This very thing is a signal or sign that the great world-wide and universal manifestation of the sons of God is ready to begin. We have had the revelation of the Saviour, the Healer, the Blessor, the Baptizer, the Deliverer. But now it is time for the Father to be revealed!

"The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass."

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 6 THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART SIX

THE BONDSLAVES OF JESUS CHRIST THINGS WHICH MUST SHORTLY COME TO PASS THESE ARE THINGS THAT MUST SHORTLY COME TO PASS

Every man needs the spirit of revelation from God. I do not mean that childish spirit found among many who aspire to be sons of God that is always striving to come up with some new and far-fetched idea that they can call a revelation. As George Hawtin once said, "It is not a flurry of fantastic fancies that we need, but a great spirit of wisdom and understanding given by God that will unfold to us the immutable almighty omniscience of God's eternal purpose." The blessed book of Revelation is not a series of fantastic fancies, but it is the heart of the Father giving to His elect the ability to receive and understand the purpose of His divine mind which has been planned from before the foundation of the world.

THE BONDSLAVES OF JESUS CHRIST

"The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass..." (Rev. 1:1)

During the historical period in which the King James Version of the Bible was translated, the word servant carried the same meaning as our word slave does today. The Greek word *doulos*, rendered servant is better translated slave or bond slave. In olden times a household servant was chattel. He was like a horse or cow in the sense that he was owned "lock, stock, and barrel" by his lord and master. He could not determine his destiny in this world any more than a Southern slave before the Civil War. *Douloi* were the property of their masters and their calling was to obey the will of the one who owned them.

It is remarkable to notice the frequency with which the New Testament writers insist on the use of that word "bondslave" as describing their relationship to Jesus Christ! It is the favorite designation of the apostle Paul who began a number of his epistles with these words, "Paul an apostle and bond slave of Jesus Christ..." He even gloried in wearing the bondmarks of the slavery of Jesus! The apostle Peter describes himself in the very same terms. And the book of Revelation rings with the word, touched by heavenly light, transfigured and glorified! This wondrous book is prepared for bond slaves — they are the ones for whom is reserved the unveiling of Jesus Christ! The bond slaves are the ones who are shown "the things which must shortly come to pass!" They are the ones sealed in the forehead with the Father's name! They are the ones who receive the rewards! They see God's face! Heaven takes our most dreaded terms, and makes them sparkle in its own celestial light, till what had seemed the synonym of terror becomes the goal of our fondest hopes in the kingdom of God! The bond slaves of the royal house of Christ are the kings and priests upon God's throne! That is what the book of Revelation reveals. Oh, the mystery of it! Oh, the wonder of it!

In that old Hebrew world which lies so far back in the dim twilight of the past, there is one custom given to the people by Yahweh Himself which claims our attention and scintillates beneath the light of the Spirit's words as the snow upon the mountains when smitten by the rising sun. God made provision that if an Israelite, through the disaster of bad fortunes and disappointing harvests, were to fall into deep debt to some rich neighboring creditor — so much so that he owed him more than even the land of his inheritance was worth — he was permitted to deed his property over to his creditor until the year of Jubilee. But, in addition, if the debt were larger still, he could deliver even himself up to his creditor to be his servant, his slave, so as to work off his debt. In such a case he was required to serve his master for six years. He was to go free in the seventh year.

It must have been a painful and heart breaking thing for that land owner to say farewell to his cherished homestead and beloved possessions, upon which his forefathers had bestowed their diligent labor, to go away into servitude to another. Tearful and heart touching must have been the farewell walk around his beloved home, which he and his might not ever claim again during his lifetime. But yet there was blessing out of the sorrow — freedom from anxiety and foreboding, no more struggling to make ends meet and to keep their heads above water, no more fear of the creditor breathing down his neck each year, confronting his inability to pay. All responsibility for food, clothing, shelter, and the welfare of himself and his wife and children was now transferred to the shoulders of another.

So the appointed years passed away. When the debt was satisfied, the master would call the slave into his presence, to give him his release. But a wonderful provision was made if the man feared to again try to make it on his own — if he truly loved his master, if he enjoyed the labor he had done, if he was pleased with the master's provision for him and his wife and children. He could at that moment bind himself to that master's service forever! If he decided to leave, he could only take what belonged to him before he became a slave. Whatever was given to him by his master stayed behind. If he was married when he became a slave, his wife went out with him when he left. However, if his master had given him a wife and she had given birth to sons or daughters, they could not accompany him.

"But if the slave shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free..." (Ex. 21:5). And if his master was also pleased, they could call for the elders of the city, and there solemnly before the judges, his master bored his ear through with an awl to the doorpost, creating the mark upon the slave that sealed his relationship to his master forever (Ex. 21:6). From the moment that the ear of the slave was pierced he was a marked man! The ornament which was usually inserted in the hole of the lobe of his ear bore testimony that he was the slave of another by his own choice, and, furthermore, that he had a desirable master! It declared that his owner took better care of him than he could of himself. His pierced ear was a way of saying that his lord had his ear, which meant that he willingly chose to obey his master's voice! From henceforth he no longer served his master to pay off any debt — he served him willingly out of a heart of love! He had stood meekly and voluntarily at his master's door, and gave himself in love to serve him forever! And from that day forward he was no longer merely a slave — he was a bond slave, a loveslave!

These things bear faithful witness to the great truth that now we, the elect of the Lord, by such a love and commitment have become the bond slaves of Jesus Christ! How significant are the words if the slave plainly says! Alas, believers say many things with their lips which they do not really mean with their hearts. On the way to Jerusalem, a man came up to Jesus and said: "I will follow you wherever you go. **"But the Lord saw through the man's words and replied, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay His head."** (Lk. 9:57-58) On another occasion a young ruler ran up to Jesus and, falling at His feet, asked, **"Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" But when told what to do, his countenance fell, and he went away sad and dejected.** (Mk. 10:17-22) Only if the slave plainly said, "I love my master, my wife, and my children," was he allowed to become a slave for life. Love for his master had to supersede all other loves! The slave's giving up of his freedom had to be the result of genuine love for his master, and not of any sense of duty or obligation for favors or benefits received. The piercing of his ear against a doorpost was done before God in the presence of the witnesses and confirmed that he was now a slave of love. Those whom God has called to the Kingdom will only be confirmed in their calling if they, like the Hebrew slave, are willing to give up all their rights and as bond slaves of love are disposed to be subject to Jesus as absolute Lord and King of their lives!

Is that how you feel about the Lord? Then the book of Revelation is addressed to you! If you're a bond slave and love your Master, and you've made the choice, "I want to serve you forever. I'm not leaving your house, nothing else in the world holds any attraction for me, there is nothing for myself I wish to fulfill or accomplish, I want to stay in your house, hear and obey your voice, do all your will, abide there forever because I love my Master," then you have to have your ear nailed to the door! Beloved brethren, is this not what the Lord means when He admonishes time and again throughout the book of Revelation, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Through the dealings of God revealed in the book of Revelation our ear is nailed to the door! Jesus said, "I am the door," and it is to Him that the ear of every son of God has been nailed that we might hear only His voice and serve Him forever, not after the law of a carnal commandment,

but after the power of the eternal Spirit! All the voices of the world have passed away, every voice of the church systems of man have been turned aside, the voices of our own will, hopes, plans, ambitions and desires have been hushed! John himself was the one who put his ear to the door for it was he who leaned upon the breast of Jesus. He knew His heartbeat, He knew His heartthrob, He knew what He was feeling, He had heard His voice and His heart as none other had heard it, his ear was nailed to the door and he received a revelation of Jesus Christ! John represents all of God's elect who have had their ear pierced by the awl of Jesus! I tell you today, I love my Master! I love my Master's family! My Master takes better care of me than I could ever do for myself! I refuse to go out free! My ear has been bored through, I live only to hear my Master's voice, to do my Master's will! I am committed unrevocably, fully and eternally to the high purposes of His Kingdom!

A further exhortation along this line has been found in a writing received many years ago from our friend Connie Asbill. She wrote, "We find, then, that God has called us out of bondage and into bondage! The Word says, of course, that God has called us to liberty! And so He has. The seeming conflict between the two thoughts is cleared up when we consider Paul's explanation to the Romans. Hear it! 'Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey his servants (Greek: slaves) ye are to whom ye obey: whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness? ... Being then made free from sin, ye became the slaves of righteousness...for when ye were slaves of sin, ye were free from righteousness...but now being made free from sin, and become slaves unto God, ye have your fruit unto holiness and the end life everlasting.' (Rom. 6:16-22)

"Did you hear it? 'Ye were slaves of sin — but have become the slaves of God.' Beloved, that slavery is a nature, and we were once slaves to a nature. Now, however, we are becoming slaves again — to a new nature! God has called us unto liberty, but He has said that when you are a slave to sin, you are free from God! When, on the other hand, you are a slave to God, then you are free — free from sin! Free from Adam! That is why Paul said, 'The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law (nature) of sin and death!' Are we grasping the significance of this? We must see that in order for the spirit to be free, the flesh must be bound. There cannot be liberty for both the flesh and the spirit, for the two are enemies and will create continual warfare if both are free. If we would have a freedom of spirit, there must come a bondage to the flesh. When the flesh is free, the spirit is bound, and when the flesh is bound, the spirit is free! Oh, can we pray with the songwriter, 'Set my spirit free that I may worship Thee,' though we realize that in the asking we plead with God for a bondage to be placed upon the flesh man, Adam? There are many forms that the nature of bondage God is working into us will manifest itself. If we are to respond to Him in every circumstance, we must settle beforehand that we do not want to be free!

"This was the law of the Hebrew slave who had served his master for six years and the time came for his dismissal. But he loved his master and did not want to go out free! If the slave plainly said, 'I love my master...I will not go out free,' then his master brought him to the doorpost and bored his ear through with an awl; and he served him forever. Here we see a beautiful picture of our own relationship to our Master, Jesus Christ. Bought with His blood, the slave is brought into bondage for 'six years.' Six is the number of the flesh, and this time element, therefore, represents the length of time that, though bought with His blood, we live in the bondage of the flesh. As the slave allows Christ, however, to chasten, to discipline, to bind and to bring him into servitude to Himself, he is, in that six years being changed from glory to glory until there comes an end to the fleshly appetites, an end to the rule of the ego-man inside, an end to the 'six years.' The Lord will then declare to him, 'Now you are free! You have overcome!' The slave is free to go — to live his own life — to be his own man — but so thoroughly has the Master's way of life become his own that he finds at the end of that time he is bound by a greater bondage than the law of commandments which held him for six years, for now the slave says, 'I LOVE!' Hallelujah! Something has been worked into him. 'I LOVE MY MASTER! I LOVE MY MASTER'S FAMILY! I WILL NOT BE FREE!'

"Ah, he knows the price of such a declaration! 'Then his master shall bring him unto the judges...and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall serve him forever!' It was of this slave that the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, 'The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.' (Isa. 50:5) The true hearing of the word of God will work a death in a man and will bring him into the bondage of the obedience of faith. This slave was a hearing one, for it was the hearing that brought

him to the place of such love that he would deliberately choose bondage rather than liberty. He received, then, the eternal seal of a hearing one, scarred for life through the wounding of the master's tool, having his ear circumcised to hear only that which the Father is speaking! Jesus said, 'The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself...but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.' (Jn. 14:10; 8:28) This is that final bondage to which the slave came in the piercing of his ear. Do we desire that bondage, and can we pray...

**I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem,
Restrained by His holy word.
Though I'm freeborn, I'm a bondslave son,
Bound by the Spirit of the Lord!**

**Bind me with fetters from above,
Let Thy rod now fall on me.
Kept in chains by Father's love,
Thy slave-son I would ever be!**

"Let us yield ourselves to His discipline, allow Him to work that bondage into us, lay that rod upon our flesh, for we will find, in the end, that it has been HIS OWN NATURE that we have received! There is no place, now, for self. We must submit ourselves, yea, even seek out, the restraining influence of the Spirit and the Word. Do we love our Master?" — end quote.

Would you remind me that you are a son and not a servant? Some say this as though being a son is a higher calling! But I would kindly remind you that Jesus, the firstborn Son, "Being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a slave, and was made in the likeness of men: and being in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. 2:6-7) And we are counseled in the verse just preceding these to "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus!" Don't think for one moment, beloved, that there is any conflict between being a son and being a bond slave! The inspired statements above show clearly that though Jesus was, as a Son, in the form of God; though He was not robbing God in any way by His own equality with God; yet, He made Himself of no reputation, He willingly and voluntarily took upon Himself the form of a slave, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto the death of the cross!

I would draw your attention to the fact that these are all things JESUS DID TO HIMSELF! Just as the Hebrew slave willingly stood at the doorpost to be made the bondslave of His master, so the Lord Jesus willingly walked this earth as the bond slave of His Father! A true slave lays down all self importance and recognition. He surrenders without reservation to the master's plan. Jesus of His own volition became obedient to all the word, way and will of His Father. Now hear me! Herein lies the difference between being a son and being a bond slave. A son is what the Father makes us! Sonship is the work of God! We have not called ourselves to sonship! The Father Himself has birthed us and laid His hand upon us! We have no other option! "According as He (the Father) hath chosen us in Him (Christ) before the foundation of the world...having predestinated us unto the placement as sons by Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." (Eph. 1:4-5) On the other hand, a bond slave is what we make ourselves! "Paul, a bond slave of Jesus Christ..." (Rom. 1:1) Today we may also cry with the apostle, "From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear branded on my body the slave marks of the Lord Jesus!" "Mine ear hast Thou bored!" "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God!" And the response comes resounding from the heavens of God's Spirit, "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His bond slaves things which must shortly come to pass!" You want to be a son, but not a bond slave? Then forget the book of Revelation! If we are one of His servant-slaves, the secrets contained in this book are ours to understand, appropriate, and apprehend! They are our possession! They are our destiny! The revelation of Jesus Christ belongs to His bond slaves!

THINGS WHICH MUST SHORTLY COME TO PASS

"The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass..." This passage would better be translated, "...to show unto His bondslaves things which must occur swiftly." The Greek term is "en taxes" which means "in haste — quickly or swiftly." It refers not primarily

to the soon-ness, although it can be inclusive of that, but to the rapidity of execution once something starts. Scientists use the word as the name of a technical instrument — the tachometer — a device for measuring velocity, and is what might be called a "speed meter."

We need no greater evidence of the meaning of a word than finding where the same expression is used in other places and seeing its meaning there. Speaking of the justice the Lord measures out to those of His elect who in faith and expectation persistently cry unto Him, Jesus said, "And shall not God vindicate His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will vindicate them speedily (en taxes)." (Lk. 18:7-8) When the Lord was delivering Peter from prison we read, "And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly (en taxes). And his chains fell off from his hands." (Acts. 12:7) The apostle Paul related his experience of when the Lord appeared to him in a vision, warning him to flee from Jerusalem, saying, "Make haste and get thee quickly (en taxes) out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me..." (Acts 22:18)

The Lord Jesus is showing to His bond slaves things, which must speedily come to pass! It may not seem quickly to us, by man's reckoning of time, but it is quickly by the Lord's time! It means that when the Lord sets His hand to accomplish something in our lives, He will not rest until the work is finished! Nothing and no one can deter Him! The flesh cannot hinder Him, our own will cannot resist Him, the world cannot withstand Him, the devil cannot frustrate His activity — He will work ceaselessly, persistently, powerfully and swiftly until His purpose in us is fulfilled! When God's work begins it runs with absolute certainty and is accomplished with great rapidity. What hope and expectation this evokes in our hearts!

Many people interpret the book of Revelation in one of several ways. Some view it as a history book outlining the rise and fall of empires with all the great world events and spiritual movements of the past 2,000 years. Most evangelicals today think that it had no relevance at all to the Christians to whom John sent it 2,000 years ago, or to any believers that have lived from that day to this — it is only a prophecy that would be fulfilled in the "end time" two millenniums later! Any man or woman who has even in the least partaken of revelation should be able to see that neither theory stands up to the words of inspiration: "To show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass!"

A brother gave a beautiful illustration of this truth. He said, "Suppose that Gary were to invite me to his house, saying, 'My wife is going to cook some hamburgers for us,' and I say, 'Good, let's go.' I go to his house. We sit there — half an hour, forty-five minutes. Still no hamburgers. And I say, 'Gary, check with Carol about the hamburgers.' He comes back out and says, 'She said they will be ready shortly.' We sit there another half hour — and no hamburgers. He checks on her again and comes back and says, 'She said they will be ready shortly.' Pretty soon my wife and I get up and go to McDonald's and buy us a hamburger because I don't understand that kind of word, 'shortly.'"

We may have read this beautiful passage ten thousand times, but today it holds new meaning. How it warms and strengthens my heart to read that one little word "must." "To show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass." Must! The word is important. The concern of this revelation is not with things which simply will happen, or may happen, or that depend upon some action on our part — if we pray enough, fast enough, study enough, work enough, listen to enough tapes, read enough papers, attend enough seminars and conferences, and believe hard enough. Oh, no! These are things, which must happen, the outworking of the Father's purpose! John is not writing about matters of chance, or the product of somebody's free will, but of glorious things that God almighty will bring to pass because He has foreordained and predestinated them! If the Father has truly called you to sonship, dear reader of these lines, your heart will be greatly emboldened by these words of inspiration: "Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it." (I Thes. 5:24) Sonship is as certain as the power of God! Just as surely as He created the billions of galaxies, with their trillions of stars and suns and planets and moons, so certain is it that He will manifest His sons in this great Day of the Lord!

Brother Stacy Wood shared the following word, which masterfully sums up the point I am making. "Two millenniums ago God began a work in His people, and in the book of Revelation He recorded it through His servant John. 'These things,' He says, 'must shortly come to pass.' The Greek word here translated 'shortly'

doesn't mean that these things would come to pass within a few days; it means that when they begin they will continue until they have been fulfilled or brought to completion. I am persuaded that we are in the fulfillment — we are in the days when things are 'shortly' coming to pass — when the purposes of God are marching forward to their fulfillment or completion. We are in the days when things are suddenly happening about us, God has set into motion events which have been progressively unfolding in His body from age to age, each age becoming brighter and brighter and better and better until finally God pulls the veil off from whom we really are and causes us to BE. God started something that He is completing, and that is where our confidence has to be!

"Being confident of this very thing, that He which has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.' (Phil. 1:6) It is GOD who began the work in you, beloved. I did not begin it, it was not a preacher that began it, it wasn't our ability to grasp hold of some light that began it. It was the Light Himself, who is the Light of our being, who dawned upon our consciousness and began a good work in us! Since He began it, we must trust Him to finish it! We may think we know what He has in mind for us, but the One who drew up the plan and began the work is the One who really knows what the finished product is all about. So we must rest upon, confide in, and trust that the One who began the good work in us will bring it to completion!

"I do want to define this term 'good work.' In the English language when we think of 'good' we relate it to that which feels good, tastes good — what we like. If we don't like it, it's not good. If it pleases us, it's good. But that would be an inaccurate understanding of this word 'good.' A better English rendering of the word would be WORTHWHILE. God has begun a WORTHWHILE work in you! And He will complete it! The word worthwhile bears wonderful significance for me because I realize that with the good there is also the bitter and difficult, but it all works together for good. I do not look at everything that comes my way as being 'good.' In fact, the vast majority of things that come my way, if I were to judge it as being good or bad, I would say is bad, not good! But you see, now I've learned that it's not a matter of good and bad — it's a matter of worthwhile or worthless. I'm learning that everything that comes my way by the hand of the Father is certainly WORTHWHILE! Sometimes it's very bitter, but it's worthwhile. So God has begun a worthwhile work, a worthwhile endeavor — in us! And He is capable of bringing it to its fullness, its completion, unto the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" — end quote.

How that word "shortly" or "speedily" contradicts everything that most of us have been taught! We were told that, at least to John, the coming of Christ, the great tribulation, the beast, the 144,000, the New Jerusalem, and myriad other things are way out in the future somewhere! But "shortly" would indicate that these things are here upon us now! In chapter five of the Revelation we see John weeping as he received his revelation. He was weeping because the revelation was sealed with seven seals — a perfect, complete sealing. Wouldn't it have been foolish for him to weep over things that were going to happen two thousand or more years in the future! Obviously, he was weeping over things that were pertinent to him then and there, just as they are pertinent to us today! These are great spiritual principles and realities that have been wrought out in the lives of God's people throughout the age! Spiritual realities are eternal! Oh, that all who read these words could understand the "now-ness" of God and the immediacy of all things that relate to the revelation of Jesus Christ! These events are not way out in the future — nor have they ever been! God's remnant throughout the age has tasted of, and experienced, the deep dealings of God revealed in this book. Yes, there is a culmination, a full consummation at the end of the age! That day is even now upon us as God's elect! It is at our very door! It is a present reality! The unveiling must come within each one of us as we experience the Lord Jesus Christ raised up within us from glory to glory! God is doing His strange but quick work within His chosen ones! The hour of manifestation is nigh at hand!

The book is saturated with the spirit of immediacy. Nothing is to be long deferred. The creak of the oxcart is never heard in this book! Everything moves with rapidity! Horses gallop in cavalry charge. Lightnings flash, thunders boom. Seas swallow ships at a gulp. Fire and earthquake strike suddenly. Hail crashes through the atmosphere. Pestilence flies upon the wings of the wind. Flying messengers flash their wings over earth and sea. The eonian gospel is carried swiftly through the mid-heavens by a winged angel. Everything is in rapid action. Nothing is static. Scenes are constantly shifting. The sense of rapidity is everywhere. "Delay shall be no longer." "The hour to reap is come." "The grapes are fully ripe." "In one hour thy judgment is come." "In one day her plagues shall come." "The marriage of the Lamb is come." "His wife hath made herself ready." The

New Jerusalem comes down from God out of heaven. Four angels hold the four winds of the heavens until the bond slaves of God are sealed in their foreheads. Sons come up upon mount Zion. A man-child is born and immediately is caught up to God's throne. Woes tread upon each other's heels. Seal not the words of the prophecy, for the "time is at hand." The reaper rides a cloud. The woman who birthed the man-child escapes a pursuing dragon on the wings of an eagle. Saints, sanctuaried under God's altar, cry out, "How long?" They are told to "rest yet a little time." The mystery of God is "finished." The devil is "cast down." Merchant princes plead for rocks to "fall" upon them. A flying eagle pronounces coming woes. Stars fall like blazing torches. Horses rush to war. Islands flee. The heavens are rolled up as a scroll. Satan, sullen of anger, begotten of defeat, moves swiftly in the earth realm because he knows his time is "short." Christ is urgent. He breaks unannounced into a scene proclaiming, "Behold, I come quickly." Everything moves with rapidity. And all these things must "swiftly come to pass!"

God is moving swiftly as this new Kingdom Day comes upon us! The manifestation of the sons of God has not yet taken place. I know there are those who have grown weary with the waiting, for God's "quickly" does not always fit our perception of time. Some have watered down the revelation and have reduced the manifestation of the sons of God to the limited level of our present experience of Christ. A special outpouring of love, an abundance of grace, a sovereign moving of God in a situation becomes "the manifestation of the sons of God." If that is what it is, then the sons have been manifested for two thousand years! The early church had more power, more miracles, and more grace than most of us have witnessed in our life times. And yet Paul said in Romans chapter eight that the whole creation is waiting, groaning, travailing for the manifestation of the sons of God! And we ourselves are groaning within ourselves for our unveiling as God's sons! Paul goes on to say that when the sons are unveiled, the redemption of our body will signify the adoption, our placement as sons! Then the whole vast creation of God, by the superlative ministry of a glorified, transfigured, metamorphosed, incorruptible and immortal company of sons in the power and glory of Christ's resurrection, shall also be delivered from the bondage of corruption and brought into the glory of the liberty (from sin and death) of the sons of God! I must tell you, my beloved that I know of no man or woman on earth today who even remotely resembles a manifested son of God! But God has meticulously laid the groundwork in the hearts and lives of those He has called and chosen, and when it does spring forth, it will spring forth speedily!

There are the "normal" workings of God — as if anything God does could be considered "normal!" But there are the on-going, day to day activities of the Holy Spirit — all of them supernatural happenings, but all of them that which we are accustomed to experiencing. The ongoing salvation of souls, the continual manifestations of gifts and ministries among the Lord's people, the healing of sick, answers to prayer, meeting of needs, changing of lives, the progressive revelation of truth, the processes of God to conform us to the image of the Son. Then there are the "interventions" of God! The interventions of God are sudden happenings of God above and beyond the norm, in which the course of human history is literally changed because God comes on the scene in an unexpected and accelerated fashion. The scriptures usually announce an intervention of God by using the word "suddenly."

In the Gospel of Luke we read the record of the events at the birth of Jesus: "...and suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host." (Lk. 2:13) The annunciation of the Incarnation was a divine intervention. Here's a great one: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2:1-4) There in that upper room, united in their faith in Christ and in their holy mood of expectancy, these humble disciples received their marching orders and were empowered to carry them out. They had had a long period of teaching and preparation; they had spent many hours in prayer and holy waiting. The great day came for them on Pentecost, and they were ready to march. March they did, straight into the heart of the pagan world! The Holy Spirit guided them step by step. He told them where to go, what to say, what to do. He walked in them and worked with them, confirming their word with mighty signs, wonders, and miracles. Armed with the word of God, the love of God, and the power of God, they were unconquerable and turned the world upside down and changed the course of history!

Then there was poor Saul of Tarsus, who ran headlong into a blinding suddenly. "It came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light around me." (Acts 22:6) We all know how that "suddenly" impacted the world! In Malachi 3:1-3 we read of another intervention of God, involved with the preparation of the sons of God, the royal priesthood of the Kingdom. "And the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple...and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." This is a divine intervention — when God suddenly comes to His elect in a manner different from, and infinitely more powerful and glorious than His normal workings throughout the past age.

We stand today in an hour not unlike the days preceding the day of Pentecost. The next great feast, the feast of Tabernacles, is about to "fully come." The Christ is among us in a fresh manifestation, there is a new message and a unique dealing of God going forth, a declaration and preparation concerning the next great step and phase of the kingdom of God on earth. The greater glory to come, the manifested sons of God upon the heavenly mount Zion, the manchild caught up to the Throne, the City Foursquare coming down from God out of heaven, the tabernacle of God among men, the new order for the new age, will be birthed suddenly and sovereignly BY GOD HIMSELF when the fullness of time has arrived. Let no man deceive you! The feast of Tabernacles has not yet begun! The revelation of it has come, just as the revelation of the promised Spirit came to Jesus' disciples before the day of Pentecost! The hope of the new order of Tabernacles has been birthed, the preparations are in progress among a people who have heard the Spirit's call. But all who currently are moving in the "church order" we have known all of our lives while at the same time proclaiming the arrival of the new order of the feast of Tabernacles, are in very fact still walking in the old order of Pentecost! There is no new order that transcends Pentecost in manifestation today! Some will disagree with me, and I will incur the wrath of others, but it should be very evident to all that you have only to visit the church meetings, home gatherings, conferences and conventions, with their songs, praise service, announcements, teaching, preaching, pastors, elders, traveling ministries, prophets, gifts of the spirit, laying on of hands, word of knowledge, healings, and all the rest to see that there is no new order! Ah, there is a new message! There is a new hope! There is a new expectancy! There is a new word from the Lord! There is a new dealing of God! It is true, God is purging from the hearts of His true remnant every vestige and all the ways of the old order church systems of men! And He is establishing the new order of His kingdom in our hearts! But I declare unto you that I have neither witnessed, nor received testimony of, a truly NEW ORDER any where that is saving the world or delivering creation! And don't tell me that I am putting off into the future that which may be claimed today. Jesus could not come into the world until the fullness of time came! He could not die as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world until the evening of the Passover arrived! The Holy Spirit could not be poured out until the day of Pentecost had fully come! In the eternal realm of God's Spirit all things exist in God's now. But in the outworking of those things in the earth realm God has a time and a season for every work, and each will arrive right on schedule!

When the feast of Tabernacles has fully come, the Lord of Glory will suddenly appear in His temple of sons in the manifestation of incorruptible life and nature, of omnipotent, immortal power and glory — with no carnal efforts, advertising, programming, church meetings, song services, or any kind of soulish works to produce it! In the fullness of time God will suddenly change and transform us in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. He will then send forth His sons in the power of incorruption and immortality, in the sovereignty of the throne of the Father, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed before the face of all nations, tongues, tribes and peoples! The sons of God shall arise on the scene out of a sudden, powerful, sovereign, transcendental move of God! These are glorious things beyond the ability of my poor tongue and my faltering pen to describe! These are divine unspeakable things revealed in the mysteries of the book of Revelation — things which must hastily, quickly, speedily, and shortly come to pass! Whatever your stage of development, my dear brother or sister, wherever you are in the outworking of the book of Revelation, the work will be completed swiftly!

God's people are still prone to think with carnal minds. When they hear about things that will "shortly come to pass" immediately their attention is focused on world events rather than on the things of God! This fallacy-ridden practice has given rise to what has been rightly termed "newspaper eschatology" — studying current events in the arena of "this present evil world" rather than searching the mind of the Spirit for the wisdom and understanding God gives of the true thing He is doing in the earth by His Spirit! The work of God is not

currently outside of us, not out there in the world of darkness with all of its plans and efforts and shamefully fleshly and wicked activities. The work of God is within His elect! "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." (Phil. 2:13) Sons of God do not derive their theology from the newspapers nor the television news casts. What you read and hear there is not what God is doing! That is not where God's work is seen! The Holy Spirit of God has not come to show us what the world system is up to — He has come to "take the things of Christ and show them unto us!"

When the Holy Spirit gives us revelation it is not to bless us with juicy tidbits of information about Saddam Hussein or Yassar Arafat! Let us seek to abandon all such side issues and seek diligently to concentrate on Christ! Those who will possess the mind of Christ will find in Him the source of all reality and the culmination of all purpose. We hear a great deal today about many wonderful things. As we draw nearer to the manifestation of the sons of God, and the full light of God's new day sends its illuminating rays upon our waiting souls, there will be an ever-increasing flood of light and revelation. This we must certainly expect and accept, for every new day brings new things, and new dispensations are sent to flood the world with greater light and greater experience in God. But the "new things" are God's things — not the world's things! The things that must shortly come to pass are spiritual things, divine things, heavenly things, supernatural things — not the things of the world, the flesh, and the devil! "As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (I Cor. 2:9-10)

During the days of His flesh Jesus had this to say about the work of the Holy Spirit within the believer: "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come." (Jn. 16:13) And just what are those things to come that the Spirit shows to us? The very next verse plainly tells us! "And He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of mine, and show it unto you!" Some of God's people today are being guided into all truth, and they are seeing things to come, by the Spirit! It is clear that the Holy Spirit is working within us the way Jesus said He would. Others are unaware that a new Day has come to earth, and what this new Day is all about. But Father has a chosen and elect remnant in the earth today who have ears to hear Him! They are hearing His voice and receiving His word, and are getting spiritual glimpses of some wonderful things yet to come in the kingdom of their Father!

These are challenging but glorious times! The close and consummation of God's age-long purpose in the church is now upon us and it is time for the sons of God to be revealed unto creation. The great purpose of the bride-church has been to birth in the earth a many-membered son! We know that the church age is ending, not because of any time-prophecy in the Bible we can interpret, nor by any events in the outer world that herald this fact. We know that as the church age is ending the new age of manifested sonship is dawning because our Father has sovereignly and powerfully revealed by His Spirit to His called and chosen remnant that it is now the hour for the sons of God to be unveiled in the earth! The birth of the manchild, the sons of God, is the supreme purpose and grand finale of God's age-long activity in the church. To love and covet sonship is to love and covet the very purpose of God from timeless ages. Just as the crowning achievement of a man and woman who have joined their lives together in marriage love is to bring forth sons and daughters in their own image and likeness, so the matchless outcome of Christ's eternal love for the church is the birthing of the manchild.

Sonship is dearer to God's heart than any other thing! God the Father has carefully planned this glorious consummation of the church age from before the foundation of the world. Every detail of the process by which, when the time was ripe for it, the sons would appear on the stage of history was laid down in heaven's blueprint before there was a world, an age, or a dispensation. There has never been a people that has been so blessed as we have been, or that has come to such a high degree of maturity, by the leading of the Holy Spirit. Our Father has called us to be kings and priests after the order of Melchizedek! His Spirit is ever urging us onward and upward, that we might attain to that high calling of God in Christ for which we have been apprehended!

The firstborn Son lived, manifested the glory of His Father, and ascended to the throne of His Father on high. Now, a vast company of sons is to follow Him in His regeneration, be changed into His likeness, and conformed into His image. There is nothing static nor stagnant about our life in Christ nor in the processes by which His purpose is fulfilled in us. We must be changed! We are being changed! We must grow up into Him in all things! We must attain to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ! We must be filled with all the fullness of God! We must be fully and forever sealed in our foreheads with the mind of Christ! This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality!

THESE ARE THINGS WHICH MUST SHORTLY COME TO PASS!

Oh, yes! The Holy Spirit is showing us things to come! These things have nothing whatever to do with what is happening in Washington, D.C., London, England, Russia, China, Israel, or any other place on earth. They have everything to do with who and what we are becoming in Christ! **HERE ARE THINGS TO COME:** A people out of whom the Father has burned, by the holy fires of His presence, all of their old empty religious works! A people that desires to do only the will of their Father! A people who overcome all things! A people that has put on the mind of Christ! A people conformed to the image of the Son of God! A people that has grown up unto a perfect man, in the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ! A people to whom is given all power and all authority in heaven and in earth! A people that sits down with Christ in His throne! A people that has become incorruptible and has put on immortality! A people that has put every enemy under their feet! A people qualified to reign over the earth and deliver the whole creation from all the power of sin and death!

What glorious things are these! They are things to come that even now are becoming reality in God's elect. When the blessed Holy Spirit shows us things to come; when the mighty unveiling of Jesus Christ shows His bondslaves things which must speedily come to pass, these are the "things" spoken of! It is hard to understand how the true intent of the Spirit has been overlooked and missed for so many centuries. I do not know how or why Christians came to the conclusion that the "things to come" have something to do with the events of "this world" or the "end" of the world. Thank God, the Holy Spirit of truth is now taking the things of Christ, and is showing them unto us! What a Day!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 7 THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART SEVEN

SIGNIFIED

There is an Eastern saying that goes like this: "When the sage points to the moon, all the idiot sees is the finger!" Truly we are learning that as far as the heavens are above the earth, so far does the understanding imparted by the spirit of the Word transcend the understanding gleaned from the letter of the Word. The letter is merely an indication or sign pointing to the reality, not the reality itself. One must go far beyond the letter (the finger) and experience the reality in the spirit (the moon) if he is to know truth! If we involve ourselves only with the letter of the Word, we will soon be quagmired in external applications and surface interpretations devoid of any spiritual significance in our lives. But if we are attuned to the spirit of the Word, then God Himself becomes known to us as the inward nature, life, power, wisdom and truth that enables us to walk as the revelation of Christ in the earth! Nowhere is this more true than when we come to the book of Revelation! The book of Revelation is written in code. If we try to literalize the book with the understanding of the carnal mind, we will have an incredible horror show on our hands! And we will miss the reality of what the Spirit is saying altogether.

Early in the book we meet a lamb. Even the literalists have enough sense to understand that the lamb is not a four-legged woolly little creature romping through the pasture squealing, "Baa...baa...baa...!" It is, in fact, Mary's Little Lamb, but not the one in the nursery rhyme! We could preach on the "lamb" of God in any church in America and everyone would agree that this lamb is not a barnyard animal. But what amazes me is that they use an altogether different rule of interpretation on almost everything else in the book of Revelation! They spiritualize what they like and literalize what they don't understand. Preachers have been preaching from the book of Revelation for centuries, identifying the lamb as a symbol for the man Christ Jesus who came to die for our sins, then proceed to assert that the throne of God is a seat somewhere out beyond the Milky Way that actually has a rainbow around it; the mark of the beast is an actual imprint on people's foreheads; the blood flowing up to the horse's bridles is literally going to happen over in the valley of Megiddo; and the New Jerusalem is a huge monstrosity that will one day come floating down out of the sky and land on the earth like a bump on a little boy's head!

If John was in the Spirit when he saw these things, it seems to me that we are going to have to get in the same Spirit John was in to see the same things that John saw! John was not ignorant of Old Testament types and shadows. Once a man is able to identify the symbol he sees in the Spirit, for the first time in his life he will understand what it is that the Lord is saying. He will no longer beat the air like a blind man in a pillow fight, spewing forth spiritual absurdities in the name of the Lord. Make no mistake about it — every spiritual thing that a child of God learns, he must learn by a revelation from the Spirit of God! Any other understanding is fleshly, carnal, and devilish.

Jesus, in the days of His flesh, spoke often in the language of symbols. All of His wonderful parables were given in symbolic and allegorical language. But He also used symbols in His speech on many other occasions. The disciples were showing Jesus the temple and its grandeur. The gifts of the ages were repositied there, and the whole temple was built with the greatest cost and magnificence, so that nothing was more stupendous in all the nations. It was adorned with gold and silver and the whitest of marble, some of the foundation stones were more than sixty feet long, seven and a half feet high and nine feet broad. Jesus stood taking it all in, and gazing at the temple, said, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up again!" This totally "blew" the carnal minds of those standing there who heard these words! They were incensed and were ready to kill Him. With countenances distorted by anger the Jews replied, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?"

It wasn't what Jesus said that upset them, it was what they thought He said! They were good "Fundamentalists," and they believed in taking the word of God literally unless God clearly specified that He was speaking figuratively or spiritually! Even the disciples, still concerned with the natural, were understanding with carnal minds, unenlightened by the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God. They failed to discern that He spoke of the temple of His body! These men in their then unspiritual state, could not be expected to understand what Jesus spoke by the Spirit. They were more concerned about the outward edifice of stones than the living temple not made with hands! They were more concerned about the passing, than the permanent. But the Master had finished with this. The time had come for God to raise up in the earth a glorious temple of living stones, of which the temple of the Old Covenant was but a faint type and shadow. So He had little interest now in that which represented a fallen order, devoid of God's presence and power and majesty.

What Jesus was really saying was, "The temple of God is standing in front of you, ladies and gentlemen!" He was saying, "Here's the tabernacle of God, and if you destroy this living temple I will raise it up in three days." He was taking a literal picture from an Old Testament reality, bringing it out of the realm of shadow and enigma, into the realm of spiritual reality. By these words and many others Jesus was establishing His own principles of interpretation in the new order of the kingdom of God! If we were to take even half of Jesus' words in the natural by literal, carnal understanding, we would be in deep, deep trouble! So if you feel we are wrong in speaking spiritual truths from literal pictures, you are going to have to deal with Jesus, for He is our Teacher, and that is the style He preached in. Many years later He came to John on the isle of Patmos and He was still proclaiming the power and glory of the kingdom of God in the same metaphoric pattern. But the Fundamentalists just didn't get it! And they still don't, today. That's why they have a literal antichrist coming, sitting in a literal temple in Jerusalem, stamping a literal mark on literal foreheads, and fighting a literal battle in a literal valley over in the literal state of Israel in the literal Middle East. Their spiritual comprehension is no brighter today than that of the Jews who stood with Jesus that day on the temple mount before the buildings of Herod's temple!

The seemingly strange language of the Bible is, in reality, picture language. Such expressions as, "the earth melted" at God's voice, the earth reeling "to and fro as a drunkard," or the idea of those cast into "outer darkness" as "weeping and gnashing" their teeth are misleading to the carnal mind. The Bible is literally filled with symbolic language! Symbols or pictures are intended to clarify what the Lord wants to convey to us — but only to the one who hears by the Spirit! All others are confused. Some want to interpret the scriptures literally, and say that the spiritual interpretation is to change or "spiritualize away" the plain word of God. How can you spiritualize away that which is spiritual! Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." Little wonder that years later on the isle of Patmos, among the visions He showed to John, He should say again and again, "He that hath an ear, let Him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches!"

Some of the most beautiful and well-known promises in the scriptures, by which the Lord assures His people of His care for them, are presented in very colorful, pictorial language. The 23rd Psalm, known and loved so widely by Christian people, is a classic example of this. When David writes, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters," none of this passage is literal! David put himself in the position of a sheep, and Yahweh as His shepherd. Certainly no one would argue that David was actually, literally a sheep! We may not care to lie down in green pastures, or be led about by a rod and a staff! But without these thoughts being illustrated for us, God's leading, God's direction, God's discipline, and God's provision of all spiritual things in our lives would not be nearly so impressive and comforting!

Another wonderful word that is deeply meaningful for every son of God is found in the 91st Psalm. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust. Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust: His truth shall be thy shield and buckler..." This is a wonderful promise made more understandable and forceful through the use of symbols. God is likened to a "refuge" and a "fortress." He is also spoken of as having "feathers" and "wings." No one would want to say these words were to be understood literally. We have meaningful illustration in this Psalm! It is a vivid word picture of God's deliverance and

protection of His sons who dwell in the secret place of the Most High, in the Most Holy Place of our spirit, where God dwells within as life, beyond the veil of flesh! None of our enemies can penetrate that high and holy realm of His blazing glory! All of the emotions of the flesh, the powers of the carnal realm, the pressures of the world, the snares of the devil, the seducing allurements of the harlot religious systems, and the very powers of sin and death themselves are neutralized here within our "refuge" and "fortress," and beneath the "feathers" and "wings" of our heavenly Father's power and nature! What a dwelling place! And all God's sons are learning to dwell there, to make the Most High within our habitation!

I hear about people who have visions on their death bed of mansions and golden streets in that bright glory-world above. Some have died and have come back, imagining that they have walked with Jesus on the golden streets of heaven! I will tell you what they are seeing. They are seeing a vision. But you see, beloved, visions require an interpretation. When Peter was praying on the roof-top he saw the vision of the sheet let down from heaven full of all manner of unclean beasts, birds, and creeping things. The voice of the Lord spoke to him, saying, "Rise up, Peter, kill and eat!" Peter, as a good Israelite, was repulsed! He could not understand the vision, and objected, saying, "By no means, Lord; for nothing common or unclean has ever entered my mouth!" With his natural mind he supposed the Lord was tempting him to eat meat that was unclean under the law. But in visions you usually don't see the thing the vision stands for — you see only the representation, the figure, the type, the symbol that stands for the reality being conveyed. In Peter's case, the unclean animals stood for the Gentiles who were outside of God's covenant. God was telling Peter that the Gentiles were now cleansed by the blood of Jesus, to be received in one body as the people of God through faith. So the vision had to be interpreted! Only the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God could unfold the meaning of the vision!

Many times visions have been given and men accept the visions as the reality (literally) rather than a picture or symbolic representation of the truth God is revealing. Millions of Christians are expecting a mansion over the hilltops of Glory with a gold street out front, with a lawn that never grows and never needs mowing, off on some planet called Heaven. This hope is based on the visions seen by dying men, or the visions received by the apostle John on the isle of Patmos. But all these are merely visions and they must be interpreted! What you see is not what you get! What is seen is not what God is showing! It is merely a symbol of the reality, not the substance! There are no literal streets of gold any more than there are literal beasts rising up out of the sea, or literal horns of the head of the Lamb of God! These are all word-pictures portraying spiritual realities. Dying men see pictures of a physical paradise because they are unprepared for the spiritual realities themselves, so as they pass from this gross material realm the Lord presents those realities to them in a way their minds are able to comprehend — the images of a vision!

If you want to experience the true heaven of God's Spirit then you must awaken to the place where you are seated together with Christ — now! No word written or spoken could hold more truth in this regard than the words of Paul when he speaks of the power "which God exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named..." (Eph. 1:20-21). These terms used by Paul are figures of speech! God is omnipresent spirit — He doesn't physically sit on anything, nor does He physically have a right hand! It means that Christ is raised up permanently into that highest spiritual realm where He has all power and authority! The "throne" spoken of in other scriptures and throughout the book of Revelation refers to His omnipotent power. So now we know where Christ ascended! HE ASCENDED INTO THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION OF ALMIGHTY POWER AND AUTHORITY! And that is where we are raised up and seated in Christ! "And He raised us up together with Him and made us sit down together — giving us joint seating with Him — in the heavenly sphere by virtue of our being in Christ Jesus." (Eph. 2:6) (Amplified) It is a blessed day for us when God makes it clear to our hearts that all who are in Christ have been raised up and given joint seating with Christ in the very same heavens of God's Spirit where He sits enthroned with His Father! That is the true heaven — not visionary mansions with gold bath tubs, earth-like flowers that never fade, or a river running out of a throne. Every son of God is receiving a clear and powerful understanding by the Spirit of what it means to live in heaven, walk in heaven, and reign from heaven! Most Christians have no idea of where heaven is, what heaven is, or the realm out of which they should be living. They think they are where their natural mind tells them they are. Heaven seems a far-off place. They have missed the spirit reality altogether and understand not that they are born from above and that their citizenship is in heaven. That high and holy realm is not away off beyond the galaxies, but a place in our spirit where we rise up above our earthiness and

learn to compare spiritual things with spiritual things. It is there that we touch reality! God is in heaven, and God is in our spirit!

In this world we live by symbols. We use either written symbols or sound symbols to express every thought or feeling, to identify every person, place, or object. Words are only symbols. Names are only symbols. Numbers are only symbols. Our alphabet is only a group of 26 small symbols that can be organized into words — then words into sentences — sentences into thoughts — and thoughts into knowledge. You read a book and you take a journey to far away lands with exotic scenes, smells, and noises. But all you have really done is sit and look at thousands of symbols on a couple hundred paper pages! But the symbols have conveyed to your mind the reality! Our Lord Jesus Christ claims the title of the "Alpha and Omega," or "A" and the "Z" of the alphabet, which includes all the other letters in between and can contain and express all knowledge. In Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge! To be in Christ is to dwell in that dimension of life where all reality lies!

Symbols only represent the things for which they stand, not the reality itself. Money is considered the most important factor in human life by many because it represents power and security. Of itself, money has no value whatsoever more than the paper or metal it contains, though through it, it is possible to purchase the comforts and luxuries of earth. There is as much difference between the symbol and the reality as there is between the letters of the alphabet and the great thoughts that can be expressed through those tiny little letters. There is as much difference between the symbol and the reality as there is between the money in your pocket and the actual things that money can buy. The man who settles for a mansion in the sky or a stroll down the street of gold with the blue-eyed Jesus is like the man who reads a book about Arabia but never goes there. He misses the reality! How much greater is the reality! The reality is those things, which God is now showing unto us by His Spirit!

When our Lord said, "Ye are the salt of the earth," He was speaking quite obviously in figurative language. He did not mean that believers were to be put into a gigantic salt shaker and shaken over the globe! Nobody would be so ridiculous as to believe that. The sons of God today are indeed the salt of the earth! God's elect is that spiritual power which gives flavor and preservation to all things. We are the guarantee of the world's glorious future! The whole race of mankind and all nations are being lifted, raised up into a new state and condition by the life that flows out of the Lord's people! And when Christ said, "Ye are the light of the world," He didn't mean we had to be lit like a candle and put up someplace where we could shine! God has chosen to speak to us through the scriptures by the use of symbols. Consider the implications if Jesus had meant it literally when He said, "**Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.**" (Jn. 6:53) If this statement had been intended literally Jesus would have become the founder of the world's most bizarre religious cult — cannibalism! But beyond these physical figures lies the glorious reality of which He spoke, the reality that His flesh means His Word and His blood means His Spirit-life! And yet — people have the audacity to accuse us of spiritualizing away the word of God! The Bible is a spiritual book! The words that Christ speaks into our hearts are spirit, and they are life! There is only one sure way to distort and destroy the meaning and message and power of God's eternal truth, and that is by carnalizing it away! To carnalize the word of God is simply to interpret it by the superficial reasoning of the carnal mind. The whole church world today has created its entire system — rituals, ceremonies, ordinances, creeds, doctrines, methods, programs and promotions — by the carnalization of the word of the Lord!

SIGN-I-FIED

Late into the night a schoolboy struggled over a mathematical problem given to him by his teacher. He checked and rechecked his figures. He could find nothing wrong, yet the proper answer to the problem was not forthcoming. At last, his brain weary with the effort, he decided to retire for the night. The next morning, rested, and ready to try again, the schoolboy took another look at his figures, and to his surprise discovered that he had completely overlooked a very vital factor, not taking it into consideration at all. When this factor was restored to its proper place in the solving of the problem, the correct answer at once appeared. Naturally the boy wondered why he had been so dull as not to make this discovery the night before!

This is a simple story, but it illustrates a great truth. It shows why the book of Revelation is so often misinterpreted, and why in all the ages there has been so much confusion and controversy, the reason being that an important feature of the Revelation has been overlooked by the tired, carnal mind; and without this all the efforts of man to discover its truths have failed. The one simple factor is this: REVELATION IS A SPIRITUAL BOOK COMMUNICATED IN SIGNS AND SYMBOLS!

The apostle John begins the Revelation with these words: "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John." (Rev. 1:1) The word "signified" is the Greek word *semaino*, which is a derivative of the word *semo* meaning a mark or sign, or to indicate by signs or symbols. The English word could be written SIGN-I-FIED — demonstrating that it means to communicate by means of signs and symbols. We understand, of course, that is exactly how the Revelation was communicated to John and the whole book is a book of pictures and symbols!

You will understand a great truth when you see that a sign is never the reality — it merely points to the reality! The fact that the revelation of Jesus Christ was communicated to John in the form of signs and symbols shows clearly that there is no "literalness" in the book. When you read of mountains, earthquakes, beasts, horns, rivers, seas, stars, sun, moon, heads, marks, horses, wars, floods, angels, books, etc., NONE OF THESE WILL EVER BE SEEN OR FULFILLED LITERALLY OR PHYSICALLY UPON THE EARTH OR IN HEAVEN ABOVE. These, with all the other signs in the book, are communications of spiritual realities expressed in the form of symbols. We have entertained such carnal notions about the book of Revelation! The book of Revelation is a book of revealing — and we are in an hour of revealing! The Holy Spirit must teach us the first principles of this wonderful book. The first key to understanding the book is the fact that the book is, in its entirety, a book of symbols. Any other approach will leave you hopelessly lost in a sea of confusion, or muttering like a mad man about things utterly ridiculous. I may be mistaken, but it is my opinion that there is not one single literal reference in the whole book!

A stranger in a town many years ago was looking about as he walked down Main Street. Soon a gentleman accosted him and asked what he was looking for. "A Barber's Pole," came the reply. "Do you need something to lean on?" "No — I want the Barber Shop — I was merely looking for the sign." It was not the Barber's Pole he sought — the Pole was but the symbol pointing to the reality — the Barber Shop! Never forget as you read the book of Revelation — the sign is never the reality! When it says an angel flew through heaven, you will never see the angel for he never flew and never will. He is a sign! Angels are messengers, they represent a message! When God sends forth a message out of a heavenly realm it is portrayed as an angel flying through heaven. The literalization of the book of Revelation has given rise to all the popular myths promulgated by the preachers and teachers of the church systems. "End of the world" stories have been circulating ever since there have been human beings on earth. Tribulation, Antichrist, Armageddon, and mark of the beast theories have been spawned in practically every generation for the past two thousand years. None has ever come to pass! And none will ever come to pass! People like to be scared, and some like to scare others. Movie producers make horror pictures to scare people who love to be scared, and preachers preach their terror sermons from the book of Revelation for the very same reason! Fear is one of the most powerful tools known to humanity, and has often been as misused by religious leaders as by politicians and movie makers. Notwithstanding its mysterious nature, the book was not written to frighten or bewilder its readers, for, not scared, but "Blessed (happy) is he that readeth, and they that hear (with the spiritual ear) the words of this prophecy...for the time is at hand." (Rev. 1:3)

The book of Revelation is not a book of fantasy or science fiction, but of spiritual realities in the kingdom of God. The symbols are but the outer covering under which exalted mysteries are concealed. These symbols were familiar to the people to whom John was writing, for they are all rooted in the history, language, and prophecies of the Old Testament! The truth is that the book of Revelation is a gathering up, or summarizing, of the whole core message of the Bible in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. Sometimes a very crude illustration helps. This book of Revelation is like nothing so much as a big knot tied in the end of a long skein of yarn, or bundle of threads; every thread in the long skein of yarn is in the knot. And every thread in the knot is in the bundle of threads! Every principle thread in the whole Bible fabric comes into this Revelation knot, and every thread in this Revelation knot can be traced back into the rest of the Bible.

This serves as a key to the symbolism of the book. Its symbolic language has seemed like a foreign language to which we had no dictionary or grammar book, and so we have spent our time guessing and speculating about what it means. But this symbolic language, instead of being a hindrance and a puzzle, is really meant to make it an open book, able to be understood! It is a revelation, an unveiling — not a concealing, an obscuring or a confounding! For every bit of symbolism, and every strange allusion or phrase, can be found somewhere back in the pages of the Old Testament or in the New, in such a way as to indicate just what it means! The language of symbolism is meant to make the book more easily understood, but — there's a "but" here — but understood by one who is familiar with the images of the scriptures and anointed by the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God!

What are the symbols? Numbers like three and seven always mean completeness or perfection. In the scriptures the word mountain often symbolizes a kingdom. By the letter of the word it can mean an external kingdom, and by the spirit of the word it indicates an internal stronghold or kingdom in our life. When John spoke about a mountain in the Revelation, those who knew the scriptures and were spiritual understood what he meant! "Speak to this mountain (kingdom, stronghold in our life) and it shall be removed." The disciples of Christ were familiar with the use of the trumpet to herald important proclamations and events, so when they read, "I, John, was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet," they knew that God was going to speak and reveal an important message to His people, or announce a new and significant move of His purpose in the earth. We, too, have heard that trumpet in our day! Beginning with the glorious coming of Christ as Latter Rain in 1948, the life-changing message of sonship, reconciliation and the kingdom of God began to sound in our land! A mighty change came in the earth as the Spirit of the Lord moved in the presence and power of God among His people to direct God's called out and chosen people into new paths of His leading. We began to be drawn out of the religious systems of man; the refining fires of God began to do their purifying work in our lives, transforming us into the image of Christ; we were quickened in spirit and caught up into new and unspeakable heavenly places in Christ Jesus; divine mysteries which had been lost and hidden from the Lord's people for long centuries were opened up within our raptured spirits; and we started on our march into our promised land of the fullness of Christ and onward to the heavenly mount Zion where the sons of God shall rule and reign over all things! That mighty message from the Lord that has sounded in our spiritual ears and brought great change and new direction to the elect of God, is a voice as of a trumpet — just as John heard in the long ago!

We must pass beyond the signs in order to get to the message of the Spirit! The Lamb has seven horns — not literal horns, of course — for the horns are mere figures representing the seven-fold spirit of power and life which emanates from the mind and nature of the Lamb. May I reverently inject another thought? The "dead" who "stand" before God and are "judged" out of the "books" are not the physically dead in the outward cemeteries, nor are the books such as you have in your library. If the "Lamb" who opens the "book" in chapter five is not a four-legged lamb, it should not be difficult for anyone to understand that the "book" is not a two-covered book! People do such sloppy thinking about such divine and exalted things! If that "book" is one of the Revelation's wonderful symbols, does it not follow that the "books" in chapter twenty are likewise word-pictures in the form of symbols? The religious commentaries that have been written on this book will avail you nothing, for they have been written as an attempt of the natural mind to decipher the meanings of the symbols rather than discovering the language of the Spirit and understanding out of the realm of the Spirit.

"I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened," John declared. When Jesus came this world was spiritually a cemetery. ALL were dead! NONE were living! "To be carnally minded is death," is the Spirit's own graphic and accurate definition of what it means to be dead. (Rom. 7:6) "And you hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." (Eph. 2:1) To the spiritually dead the apostle commands, "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." (Eph. 5:14) Let us with pure minds and an understanding quickened by the spirit of revelation consider these meaningful words: "And I saw the dead...stand before God." I saw the DEAD — S-T-A-N-D! And immediately the "books" were opened.

Heaven keeps a record of the deeds of men, and all the thoughts and emotions under which they act. Myriads of human beings have lived and died of whom the world knows nothing; but the lives they lived, the deeds they

wrought, the thoughts and passions they indulged, still stand written where the memory of them cannot perish. Not a human being has ever breathed earth's sweet atmosphere whose career is not traced at full length in the books God has ordained. Yes, O man! O woman! Whoever you may be, your biography is written. An unerring hand has recorded every item, with every secret thing. There is not an ill thought, a mean act, a dirty transaction, a filthiness of speech, or a base feeling that ever found entertainment in your heart, but is there described in bold letters, by its true name. Thank God, all the good, and all the spiritual is recorded there too!

Where is the record? And what are these "books" where the secrets of your heart are meticulously inscribed? My words may come as a shock to some, but I do not hesitate to assert that they are nought but the BOOK OF YOUR OWN NATURE — THE GENETIC PATTERN OF YOUR VERY OWN BEING! In the sight of God you, and each and every man and woman on this planet, are a book; and indelibly inscribed within your mind and character is everything that you are. "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh." (Mat. 12:34) When your mouth speaks, the message inscribed in your inner nature is exposed and read by all who hear. Every outer action is a word, a sentence, a paragraph, a page of your book — the book which you are — known and read by all men.

And think not, O man, that should your earthly body be laid in a silent and motionless tomb, that the Almighty must then resort to some celestial scrolls wherein heavenly angels have faithfully recorded your every thought and deed. NO! All is accurately recorded in the law of your life, deep within the recesses of your own nature, in your spiritual condition and soulful state of being. We do not awaken on the other side a different person or in a different condition than we were in the flesh, for the record is in our very nature. In order to deal with you in judgment, in the flesh or out of the flesh, God has but to "stand you up" and prompt you to speak or act — and immediately you will manifest exactly what is inscribed in the constitution of your inner life. At once your "book" will "open," each line being made clear, and you will be judged by the things written in that book which you are. When God, either now or in ages yet unborn, lays His mighty hand upon you, my friend, and summons you to stand before Him, your book will open, and you will not then manifest anything other than what is written in the book of your own nature. How truly it is written, "For the word of God is living, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature (dead or alive, visible or invisible) that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." (Heb. 4:12-13)

Does this trouble you, my brother? Ah, but I have good news for you! The grand purpose for this "opening of our book" is so that all that is written therein may be exposed, revealed, uncovered, displayed, and brought to judgment, dealt with by a concentration of divine discipline and instruction, as the Father processes each individual. Someone says, "I don't believe in processing — I believe in the finished work!" Let me tell you something. Your spirit doesn't need any processing! Your spirit is the offspring of God. Your spirit has been quickened by His Spirit, you have been regenerated, born again of the incorruptible seed of the word of God which liveth and abideth forever. Your spirit is pure, holy, undefiled, the dwelling of the Most High God! But your soul does need some processing! If there were no processing, if the so-called finished work took care of everything, there would be no work of sanctification, no cleansing by the washing of the water of the word, no discipline or chastening of the Father, no putting off of the works of the flesh, no mortifying of our members which are upon the earth, no purging of the old leaven, no refining fire by which the sons of Levi are purified that they might offer and an offering in righteousness unto the Lord, no washing of our robes to make them white in the blood of the Lamb, no pruning of the branches that they may bear more fruit — and we could go on and on! The soul-bride must make herself ready for her marriage union with Christ, the spirit-bridegroom. We need to think spiritual sense about these things, beloved! I do not believe in eternal processing — there should come a time in our lives where we have been conformed to the image of the Son! Yes, God is finishing His work, a people is coming forth in the likeness and fullness of Christ in this very hour! But to maintain that there is no processing, that the "finished work of Calvary" takes care of everything, is to deny the testimony of scripture and the experience of every saint that I know. We might as well tear our Bible to pieces and send it out with the trash.

The procedure whereby God brings His judgment into our lives is simple, but very effective. The person abiding in some realm of soulful or fleshly death is caused to "stand" before God — brought directly into

relation to the countenance of God who is the Judge of all! God arranges the circumstances, places him in a situation or circumstance, and his "book" is opened — the inner condition uncovered, the secrets and intents of the heart manifest in such a measure and expressed to such a degree that there need be no other record or evidence of his state appealed to. As it is written, "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccl. 12:14), for, "God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ." (Rom. 2:16) That doesn't mean that this will happen some fearful day out in the future before a great white throne out in space somewhere! Oh, no! These are spiritual realities, my beloved. They speak of the dealings of God in judgment right now, today, in the life of every son of God who shall be conformed to the image of God's Son, brought unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ! The throne of God is a white throne. White bespeaks of righteousness, and the throne of God is a righteous throne of love, grace, salvation and power unto mankind. But you will never see this throne, for it is established in the lives of those who rule and reign with Christ!

Ah, you will despair and shrink before God's judgments until you clearly understand that God does not open your book to either embarrass or destroy you — but to deliver you! God brings no man to judgment apart from the opening of his book. That is the true spiritual message conveyed by these beautiful symbols in the book of Revelation! It is a divine law — God can never deliver you, or any man, until the carnality and corruption in your heart has been drawn into outward manifestation, exposed, to be dealt with by God's stern and tender hand. When the inner nature erupts in some outward uncleanness, do not despair! Thank God for exposing the deceitfulness and wickedness, cast yourself upon the tender mercies of the Lord who judges you in unconditional love and infinite goodness, and yield yourself under His mighty hand that He may bring forth victory in your earth. We must never be discouraged nor feel condemned when God reveals the man of sin who sits in the temple of God which we are, but neither should we become complacent about it! God will send forth judgment unto victory however long it takes and however severe the dealings. He will never abdicate His throne, He will never terminate His judgments until every man is conformed into the image of God's glorious Son!

"And another book was opened, which is the BOOK OF LIFE." (Rev. 20:12) This must be opened too, for the book of life is the nature of the Lamb inscribed by the Spirit in the life of the New Creature. The book of life is called "the book of the life of the Lamb." (Rev. 13:8) If I were to give you a book entitled THE BOOK OF THE LIFE OF GEORGE WASHINGTON, you would understand at once that it a biography of the life of the first president of the United States, George Washington. That book should contain everything you always wanted to know about George Washington! Every detail of his life would be there. The portrait of his character and accomplishments would be drawn there. In the same way, THE BOOK OF THE LIFE OF THE LAMB is the autobiography of God's Lamb, the expose of who He is, what He is like, what He does. Everything you ever wanted to know about the Son of God is contained in this wonderful book of the life of the Lamb! It is not a literal book, of course, for the sons and daughters of the Most High are the LIVING RECORD AND REVELATION of the life of the indwelling Lamb! It was to the apostle Paul that the revelation was given that the book of life, the book of the life of the Lamb, the book which draws the portrait of the life, nature, character and accomplishment of the Son of God — IS A PEOPLE! "Foreasmuch as Y-E are manifestly declared to be THE EPISTLE OF CHRIST ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart." (II Cor. 3:3)

How tragic that the people of earth for the most part have never read this beautiful epistle of Christ, this glorious book of the life of the Lamb. They have poured over the books of religion, the commentaries of learned scholars who write out of carnal minds with the words of man's wisdom, the books of hypocrisy, the books of forms of godliness that deny the power thereof, the books of dead doctrines, empty rituals, lifeless ceremonies, and man-made rules and regulations of self righteousness. But precious few have ever seen the BOOK OF THE LIFE OF THE LAMB! Oh! What a wonderful gospel shall fill the earth beneath and the celestial realms above when God fully opens His holy book of Life! The book of Life is that blessed company of the sons of God in whom the life of the Lamb is fully and eternally formed! This book is being carefully written word by word, sentence by sentence, paragraph by paragraph, page by page, and chapter by chapter in the nitty-gritty of our daily experience with God until the full revelation of the Christ shall be written therein. Time's clock is striking the hour for the manifestation of the sons of God, the opening of God's book of life people, and what a

manifestation it shall be! That book is being opened within us even now, for it is the spirit that giveth life. As Christ in our spirit is opened within ourselves, the life of the Lamb is released to swallow up all sin and death. God has a message for the world — the revelation of Jesus Christ! The message is being written in flaming words of glory upon the pages of the lives and hearts and minds of men and women who are dying to that impudent and death-dealing devil of self, in order to walk and live by the spirit of HIS LIFE. I am terribly at a loss of words to express the glory of God's BOOK OF LIFE COMPANY, but I can assure you that once it is fully ready, prepared, and finished, it shall become the world's "best seller" throughout the ages to come! As the pen is mightier than the sword, so this book, above any that has ever been written by the finger of man, shall alter the course of history, and the dark covering that has been cast over the minds and hearts of the people for ages and dispensations will be completely destroyed by the flood of transforming light and wisdom and knowledge and glory and power shining forth from the living pages of God's eternal and incorruptible BOOK OF LIFE!

The idea behind each and every word of holy writ is to convey a higher meaning than the literal words contain, the truth of which must be seen and experienced by man spiritually, internally. This higher, concealed, inner, spiritual meaning, cast in the words and sense-images of ordinary events, can only be grasped by the quickened spirit and the renewed mind, and it is exactly here that the difficulty lies in conveying the deep spiritual things of God to the natural man. A person's human level of understanding, regardless how educated or intellectual he may be, is clearly not equal to grasping spiritual truth. This is why Jesus, after speaking a parable, so often said, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." (Mat. 11:15) Let us be absolutely certain of this one momentous principle of the kingdom of God: It is not the surface meaning that has any importance, but the golden nugget of spiritual truth which lies in the mine beneath the surface is that alone which is able to enrich the inner man of the spirit.

It is written of our Lord Jesus Christ before He ascended to the Father: "Beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the scripture the things concerning Himself." "Then opened He their mind, that they might understand the scriptures." (Lk. 24:27,45) One blessed moment spent in the dazzling light of the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God will teach us this eternal truth: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (I Cor. 2:14) As nuts cannot be eaten in the shell, neither do they show the sweetness of the meat within until the shells are broken, so it is with the precious truths and realities of the word of God! Unless the Lord opens up our understanding, it is impossible to know those things that pertain to the kingdom of God.

It is from man's carnal-minded interpretation of the word of God that so many strange and hurtful doctrines have been brought forth in all ages. When man brings his human reason and wisdom to bear upon the Word, and the Word is not spiritually discerned, it can be made to prove almost anything! All the gross foolishness of the religious systems with their candles, crucifixes, incense, altars, images, robes, programs, ordinances, missals, ceremonies, and creeds are but products of carnal minds applied to the word of God. And all the stupidity of everlasting damnation, mansions over the hilltop, the rapture of the church, the removal of the Holy Spirit from the earth, the restored Roman empire, the antichrist sitting in a temple in Jerusalem, and all the supposed horrors that the great God of love, mercy, redemption and salvation is to pour out in vengeful fury upon the inhabitants of the world — all that, too, is hatched out of the perverseness of the carnal mind of religious spirits! When the blessed spirit of truth, however, who is the Teacher and the one who leads into all truth, reveals God's thought and purpose to the man or woman who humbly waits in God's holy presence, such treasures are uncovered as "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man." And the heart rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory at the unfolding of divine wisdom and the Father's magnificent purpose of the ages! God reveals to those who love and fear Him, the deep and wonderful REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 8 BLESSED IS HE THAT READS

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART EIGHT

JOHN THE APOSTLE OF LOVE
THE SPIRIT OF THIS PROPHECY
BLESSED IS HE THAT READETH

The beloved John begins the A Revelation with these words: "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John." The word "signified" is the Greek word *semaino*, which is a derivative of the word *semo* meaning a mark or sign, or to indicate by signs or symbols. The English word could be written SIGN-I-FIED — demonstrating that it means to communicate by means of signs or symbols. We understand, of course, that is exactly how the Revelation was communicated to John and the whole book is a book of pictures and symbols!

You will understand a great truth when you see that a sign is never the reality — it merely points to the reality! The fact that the revelation of Jesus Christ was communicated to John in the form of signs and symbols shows clearly that there is no "literalness" in the book. The idea behind each and every word is to convey a higher meaning than the literal words contain, the truth of which must be seen and experienced by man spiritually, internally. This higher, concealed, inner, spiritual meaning, cast in the words and sense-images of ordinary events, can only be grasped by the quickened spirit and the renewed mind, and it is exactly here that the difficulty lies in conveying the deep spiritual things of God to the natural man. A person's human level of understanding, regardless how educated or intellectual he may be, is clearly not equal to grasping spiritual truth. This is why Jesus, after speaking a parable, so often said, "**He that hath ears to hear, let him hear!**" (**Mat. 11:15**). Let us be absolutely certain of this one momentous principle of the kingdom of God: It is not the surface meaning that has any importance, but the golden nugget of spiritual truth which lies in the mine beneath the surface is that alone which is able to enrich the inner man of the spirit!

When John stood that day on the lonely Patmos and received the revelation of Jesus Christ, He wrote that it was given to him in signs and symbols by the angel of Jesus Christ. "**And He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John.**" (**Rev. 1:1**) Who is this "angel" of Jesus Christ? You will find this angel appearing all the way through in almost every chapter of the book of Revelation. "**I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches.**" (**Rev. 22:16**) But you will not recognize him yet, so I will tell you where you will recognize him. If we are to understand the deep mystery here, we shall have to open our hearts to a completely new understanding of God's revelation of Himself. We shall have to see that the word "angel" is itself a symbol of something spiritual, just as are all the other figures in the book! We are inclined to lightly pass over the fact that the book of Revelation is written in symbolic language, using elaborate figures of speech to convey spiritual truths and realities. I think this should be obvious to every spiritual mind, but some of our brothers and sisters in Christ try to use the "literal method" of interpretation (the letter rather than the spirit) — even within this book of symbols! A statement like, "The Bible means just what it says and says just what it means!" sounds good, perhaps even spiritual, and often brings some hearty "amens," but this cannot apply when the Holy Spirit speaks and conveys truth through symbols. The very nature of a symbol is that it means something else! Otherwise it would not be a symbol!

Can we not see by this that the spiritual meaning of "His angel" or "Mine Angel" is something higher and grander by far than a bright creature with wings from outer space! There is no value whatever in the letter of the Word. It is when a man begins to see the spirit of the Word that truth and reality are quickened as life within. My spirit rejoices today in thankfulness to my Father in heaven for that divine, eternal, life-giving wisdom which is the secret of His own heart! Therefore, the angel of Jesus Christ cannot be an angel as we think of angels! All the heavenly angels in the book of Revelation are representations of messages sent to us from

God. In the Greek language the word angel means messenger and in the book of Revelation the angel stands for a message!

"The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John: who bear record of the word of God..." (**Rev. 1:1-2**). Notice the steps of revelation — It originated with God! It was given to Jesus Christ! He gave it to His angel! His angel gave it to John! And from John it goes to His bond slaves! It comes to the servants of God that they might know what is coming to pass — their destiny in God. And that is the way it has come to you and me today!

Now let's use a little bit of spiritual sense in understanding who this symbolical "angel" is. The most obvious clue is found in **Revelation 22:16** where we read, "**I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches.**" This should help us see that the angel is one "sent" by Jesus, and his mission is "to testify unto you these things in the churches." The question follows — Who is the One Jesus has sent to testify unto us the things that concern Himself — the revelation of Jesus Christ? The Bible interprets itself, and the answer is in the clearest of language where there is no symbol! Hear it! "**Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear (from me), that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you.**" (**Jn. 16:7,13-15**) The identity of the "angel of Jesus" should be evident to all who compare the words of this wonderful passage with the words of John in Revelation 1:1-2 and 22:16. The same John was the scribe who set down both in writing.

To these things the word of the Lord bears faithful witness again, "**But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me.**" (**Jn. 15:26**) Then Peter adds this testimony: "**Unto whom...was revealed...the things...reported unto you by them which have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven...**" (**I Pet. 1:12**). And finally Paul confirms this same blessed truth: "**As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.**" (**I Cor. 2:9-12**) And again, "**How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery...whereby...ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ which in other ages was not made known...as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.**" (**Eph. 3:3-5**)

The angel of Jesus Christ who is sent to show us the things of Christ, to bring the revelation of Jesus Christ, to show us things to come, and to testify of Christ and these things in the churches is none other than the Holy Spirit! Oh, the mystery of it! The world cannot receive the Spirit because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him. Because the world is carnal and lives in the realm of the flesh, it can accept only those things that can be analyzed by the outer senses. The world receives not the Spirit because it sees Him not; but he who believes God sees and knows in a realm unfamiliar to the natural man. Once you believe but the simplest things of truth, then the Holy Spirit is able to begin to open to your heart the vast storehouses of God's unsearchable riches. That is what the book of Revelation is all about!

Some may wonder, If God revealed Himself and His eternal purpose in Jesus Christ, why then is another light, another teacher, another revealer, after Him, needed? Why did the Holy Spirit have to be sent to teach, lead, and reveal Christ? If Christ within us is our life, why then does Jesus send His angel to testify of the things that pertain to Himself? This is a deep mystery! Look for a moment at the disciples of our Lord. They were drawn to Jesus by the Father. Their knowledge that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, came not by human nature, but came from above. They loved Jesus with all of their hearts, cleaving unto Him with all the powers of their affections. And yet, while He was here in the flesh, they understood not the scriptures, nor did they understand His mission, His death, resurrection, ascension, nor yet the nature of the kingdom He should bring into existence. Even the personal teaching and instructions of the Lord, received with their most intense interest and admiration, were not sufficient to open their understanding to the glorious and eternal realities set before

them. Only their subsequent infilling with the mighty life and power of the Holy Spirit could finally cause them to comprehend this one eternal fact: THE HOLY SPIRIT ALONE CAN LEAD US INTO ALL TRUTH! God is in Christ; Christ is the truth; but the Holy Spirit alone reveals Him who is God manifest.

God in His great love has purposed to reveal Himself fully and perfectly to His creation. It is His gracious will that we should know Him! In Christ Jesus He manifests Himself perfectly. Jesus is Light, full of brightness and glory. And yet we require another Light to see the True Light! How is this? How can this be? It is simply because there is no other God but the One — who has revealed Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These are not three Gods in one; these are three progressive manifestations of the ONE ETERNAL GOD by which He reveals Himself to man. Father speaks of God in heaven, in the invisible, unseen realm of spirit. "When you pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name." Son speaks of God manifested. "No man has ever seen God at any time; the only unique Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him — He has revealed Him, brought Him out where He can be seen" (Jn. 1:18, Amplified Bible). Holy Spirit speaks of the energizing, quickening power of God moving and working throughout the universe and in the hearts and lives of His people, revealing the invisible God who has been manifest in Jesus Christ. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in Him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." (I Cor. 2:11-12)

The Spirit has brought into the life of every son of God a living knowledge, the knowing and experiencing of God in Christ. It is not information, not an insight into doctrines and creeds and ideas of religion, or an appreciation of their beauty and grandeur. Men have such knowledge vast and deep, and yet are destitute of the grace of God, ignorant of the purposes of God, and untransformed by the Spirit of God. To know God is life eternal. The great truth is this: There is One that Christ has sent into the world to fully, powerfully, and profoundly reveal the Christ to the elect members of His body on earth! The One whom Christ has sent into our hearts to reveal the Son of God within ourselves is His "angel," His "messenger," the One who teaches us all things and guides us into all truth!

Before we leave this thought, I would like to point you to another significant internal evidence within the book of Revelation which indicates with divine clarity just who the "angel" of Jesus is. Jesus sent His angel to testify in the churches of the things that are written in this book. Notice now exactly who spoke and who testified to the churches! "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches!" This admonition is repeated seven times in chapters two and three, once to each of the seven churches! Then we read, "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." (Rev. 14:13) And again, "And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come...for I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book..." (Rev. 22:17-18). It seems to me that to further emphasize these passages would be to do an injustice, for the plainness of their meaning transcends the argument of man. The book of Revelation interprets itself when we have eyes to see and ears to hear.

The angel that Jesus sent to John was the Holy Spirit as the prophetic spirit. All spirits, or all operations and manifestations of the Spirit, are not prophetic. There is the spirit of wisdom, the spirit of understanding, the spirit of counsel, the spirit of burning, the spirit of judgment, the spirit of grace, the spirit of glory, the spirit of sonship, and scores of other spirits mentioned throughout scripture. But here we read, "The Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show unto His servants things shortly to be done." (Rev. 22:6) These words signify the prophetic spirit! Every prophet that has been sent into this world has had upon him an anointing of the spirit of prophecy or the prophetic spirit, which led him and revealed matters to him. Other men were anointed by the Holy Spirit as kings, priests, warriors, artisans, and various other callings. Each had his particular and unique area of anointing, or the moving and enablement of the Holy Spirit. But only the prophets receive the prophetic spirit and to John was sent a special dispensation of the prophetic spirit symbolically characterized by Jesus as "my angel." I truly believe that the sons of God are today receiving the fullness of that prophetic spirit by which the Lord is making known to us the great and mighty things that pertain to this glorious Day of the Lord! I speak not of the "gift of prophecy" of the in-part realm of the passing church order. There has been a prophetic voice in every generation and that prophetic voice proclaimed the Present Truth for that day. What the prophetic voice is saying today is not the same as what the prophetic voice was saying

in the days of Noah, Moses, Samuel, David, Isaiah, the early church, the reformation, the Pentecostal outpouring of the 20th century, or the coming of Christ as Latter Rain in 1948. Can we not see that there was a different word from the Lord in each generation and at each stage of God's dealings with His people? We don't need to hear the same message Noah heard! The Lord is not sending a flood today! The instructions God gave David are not for us today! We don't need to drive out the Philistines or capture Jerusalem from the Jebusites! What the Lord was saying to His people a hundred years ago is not what He is doing today! To hear what the Spirit saith (is saying) unto the churches is a flowing, living reality, not a doctrinal statement set in concrete! Every church denomination has its written "Articles of Faith," but those are merely the record of what the Spirit was saying to the church, not what the Spirit is saying!

To John was revealed the magnificent glory of seeing the fullness of Christ as He would stand in completeness on the Lord's day. In the midst of this surpassing revelation John declares, "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth..." (Rev. 19:6). John is standing there in the desolation of Patmos, caught up into the high realm of the Spirit, and he hears the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings. Can we not see that this is a corporate voice! It is this same corporate voice that John is hearing when he declares, "And HE saith unto me, Write..." (Rev. 19:9). All this multitude, all these voices as many waters, all these mighty thunderings are called "HE." The multitude of voices is HE! The Christ that we being many are, is but one Christ. The mystery of the many-membered Christ! What could be more solemn or sacred than that?

This Voice of the Corporate Christ is the testimony of Jesus which is the spirit of prophecy! The spirit of this prophecy is the testimony of Jesus! The Spirit testifies of HIM! Yet — does not the Spirit speak and testify through men? Truly we are the temple of the Holy Ghost! This Spirit, this Spirit which testifies of Jesus, is the voice as of many waters, and is also the "angel" of Jesus Christ! How wonderful that these tremendous and almost incredible statements concerning the body of Christ reveal that God's elect are the voice of the Christ, for we bear the prophetic anointing!

The prophetic voice speaking out of God's sons today is not speaking the same things nor in the same way as the prophetic ministry we have known in the past. The prophets of this new Day are not prophesying about the mundane things of our lives, whether we should live here, or move there; hold this job, or that job; marry this man or woman, or remain single; go to this church, or the other church; be a Sunday School teacher, deacon, pastor or apostle; fulfill this or that ministry. That is how we have known the prophetic ministry in the past and we have all been blessed out of that realm as our ministries have been confirmed and the will of the Lord made known to us. I do not say that the Spirit cannot or will not still speak in that way! But it should be evident that the voice of the Lord in the midst of His elect is concerned with higher things in this Day! God is doing a deeper work in the lives of His called out and chosen ones in this hour!

All across this great land of ours, and around the world among every tongue, people, tribe and nation, the Spirit is bearing witness to God's ultimate purpose as He prepares for His master stroke as the curtain rises on creation's greatest drama — THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD! Those prepared for sonship in this Day are past all the little baby steps of the church systems and are now growing up into the fullness of Christ! Praise His name, once the finishing touch is put on the last stone of His living temple of Kings and Priests, the firstfruits of His redemption, we shall step over into our full redemption in spirit, soul and body! In this new age and in the glorious ages yet to come, God shall put His grace and kindness and wisdom and righteousness and power on display through His sons so that the entire creation may walk across the stage of His cosmic theater and behold and see and come to understand and appreciate what God has provided for all men in Christ! That is what the Spirit is saying to the called out in this great Day of the Lord! Our ears have heard the sound of the trumpet and we cannot, dare not, settle for anything less, we must follow on to know the Lord in all His glorious fullness, to put on the mind of Christ, to be transformed into His image, to drink deeply of His incorruptible life, to overcome all things, so that we may in turn be the manifestation of Himself unto all mankind. Let us not sell creation short in these days! All creation is travailing and groaning together in pain to be delivered from the bondage of corruption. Let us not deny the Lord who has purchased us to be kings and priests to reign over the earth by settling for something less, a comfortable position in the church realm, or a

mansion over the hilltop. While we seek no glory of our own, there is, nevertheless, great wealth and heavenly glory for all who fulfill the will of God in His kingdom! You never lose with God!

When I say that the "angel" of Jesus Christ is the Holy Spirit as the prophetic spirit of this Day of the Lord, I can hear someone say, "Now wait just a minute, brother Eby! Doesn't Revelation 22:8-9 tell us that this angel is a man, a prophet, even one who keeps the sayings of this book? Did not John fall down to worship this man-angel? And didn't the angel forbid him, saying, "See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God." Ah, yes, but there is a deep mystery here! How does the Holy Spirit speak? We cannot deny that He speaks in the depths of our being — out of the most holy place of our spirit. But have you not heard the Spirit speak through man? Peter said that we proclaim the good news with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven! Not only do spiritual men read by the Spirit, hear by the Spirit, see by the Spirit, and know by the Spirit — they also speak by the Spirit! "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." (1 Pet. 4:11)

When the voice of that one like the Son of man rang out in the midst of the churches, it was not the voice of the lonely Galilean, not the voice of one son of God speaking by the Spirit, not the voice of a singular man-angel from heaven, but the voice as the sound of many waters. Many waters means many peoples, and the peoples here are the sons of God. The vision is recorded for our knowledge and inspiration that we might know that the One testifying of these things in the midst of the churches is the Son in the sons! The "angel" was sent to testify of these things in the churches, and it is the "one like unto the Son of man" who speaks in the midst of the churches! It is the voice as the sound of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings that speaks to the churches throughout chapters two and three, and to John on through the book of Revelation. Can we not see by this that the "angel" and the "one like unto the Son of man" are one and the same? Yet — it is the Spirit! It is the Spirit speaking through the sons of God!

The great lesson here is that God speaks through man. I have heard the voice of the Spirit through a great many men and women during my lifetime. The word of the Lord and the revelation of God has come to me through many chosen vessels. Almost daily I hear the voice of the Spirit through precious letters we receive from members of God's elect all across the land and around the world. I have both seen and heard great and mighty things from the Spirit of God in His people! But we are never to pay homage to the vessel, we can never fall down to worship the person through whom God expresses Himself! We have to watch the esteem we give to the man God uses — for many have become followers of men rather than followers of God. John fell down to worship the man — and that is an object lesson for us out of this book of pictures and symbols! He was straightway commanded, "See thou do it not." And I command you today — never get your eyes on me, beloved, nor on any other of the voices of God in the land today! I am but a vessel, a voice. The voice is that of the Spirit, the testimony is of Jesus Christ, it not my voice or the testimony of myself. The sincere love and steadfast faithfulness of all those precious ones who esteem and value the ministry the Lord has been pleased to bring through us is truly appreciated on our part. But do not esteem us too highly, beloved! Be not followers of men, but be a follower of Christ Jesus the Lord! Do not worship at the shrine of any man, whether he calls himself an apostle, a bishop, a king-priest, or any other title. All — if indeed they are the messengers of Jesus Christ — are but your fellow servants, of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the saying of this book. Worship God! That is what the Spirit is teaching us in these things.

JOHN— THE APOSTLE OF LOVE

"The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him...and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John." (Rev. 1:1)

The apostle John was one of the "three mighties" who walked with the Lord in the days of His flesh. In his boisterous youth he was called "the son of thunder," but his experience with Jesus transformed his life. He saw Jesus raise Jairus' daughter. He saw Jesus calm the raging sea and feed the multitudes. He was with Him in the holy mount and was an eye witness of His majesty. He heard the Father's voice declaring Jesus' sonship. He lay in the Lord's bosom and heard the inmost beating of His heart. He received the distinctive title as "that disciple whom the Lord loved." He it was who penned the immortal words, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...all things were made by Him; and without Him was not

anything made that was made." (Jn. 1:1-4) John beheld in spirit the deep mystery of creation. He saw Jesus in His creative power, where galaxies were formed and worlds were made. In Jesus John saw the mighty God and the everlasting Father in a form He could understand, touch and love. He was in the garden agony with Him. He and Peter prepared the last Passover. He was the only apostle at the crucifixion. He was the first apostle at the tomb the morn of the resurrection. He escaped martyrdom in Rome, being cast into a caldron of boiling oil and escaping untouched, so Tertullian writes. He was banished to the isle of Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. John returned to Ephesus at the death of Domitian in A.D. 96 where he wrote three epistles centered in the love of God. Was it not fitting that the man who had leaned upon the breast of God's Son and heard the inmost beating of His heart, should become the depository of His most intimate thought in respect to His divine purposes to be wrought out in His many-membered body in this age? And such is the case! This picture is found in the book of Revelation!

Christ's peculiar love for John was a prophetic love, which had to do with John's special relation to the overcomers throughout the age. Next to love, overcoming was the theme of all of John's writings! John was peculiarly designated "our brother and companion in tribulation and in the patience and kingdom of Jesus Christ" because of the special message he was raised up to give the elect in the five writings which came from his pen. His was the last voice to echo across the abyss of the two millennia between the manifestation of the firstborn Son and the manifestation of the many sons brought to His glory. There is a special sense in which the beloved apostle is with us still! He never dies! "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" (Jn. 21:22). A saying arose in consequence of these mysterious words that John would not die. But John teaches us that the meaning of Jesus' words is otherwise. "Jesus said not, He shall not die, but..."

History elucidates the meaning. John is with the overcomers in a prophetic sense in all their tribulations and in the patience and power of the kingdom! On our behalf he was a prisoner in the isle of Patmos. On our behalf he received the Revelation which is the chart of the overcomer's journey through the processings of the Father to the fullness of God. On our behalf he weeps in chapter five of the Revelation till the answer to all that is sealed up in Christ in us is made clear. On our behalf he "ate the little book" of divine testimony, sweet in the mouth but bitter in the bowels, denoting that the experience of all that God reveals to us in our walk into sonship is sweet in our mouth as we eat the word and revelation of Christ, but leads through the bitterness of testings, purgings, strippings, chasenings, sorrows, and tribulations as it is digested, wrought out, and made flesh within us. It was the overcomer, as represented in John, whose head lay in the comfort and love of that bosom where beats the heart of the Eternal, filled with compassion, mercy and truth. We can think of John as representing love! This is the revelation that comes through the activity of love! We are blessed and happy as we receive the prophecy, and we are prepared at this time to experience in our lives the full message of the revelation. Because it is truly a revelation of love, it can begin to happen only in the very special environment of love! God is Love! And we are the sons of Love!

THE SPIRIT OF THIS PROPHECY

The book of Revelation is without doubt one of the most important and wonderful books ever written. It is, in my opinion, the most important book for all who are called and chosen as God's government of kings and priests! It is difficult for many people to understand because it is written in highly symbolic language, understandable only to the spiritual mind. Long millenniums ago Joseph spoke a wonderful truth when he asked the burning question, "Do not interpretations belong to God?" (Gen. 40:8). Moses said, "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this teaching." (Deut. 29:29) Many preachers spend far too much time delving into future speculations about world events. Time invariably repudiates their futile predictions. God did not give us a heavenly version of NEWSWEEK magazine, but the Book of Life!

When the book of Revelation was written, John was in the Spirit! This is a fact of extreme importance. The realm of the Spirit is a realm beyond the reach of the natural. Spiritual things are all about us to such an extent that we live and move and have our being in them, yet the natural man can never see them until the Spirit draws aside the dusky curtains of our carnality and opens our eyes to the realities of the spiritual world. Thus it was with John, in exile on barren Patmos, a place of few inhabitants and always swarming with pirates and banished criminals of various sorts, but the record says of him, "Who bare record of the word of God, and the

testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw...for the testimony of Jesus IS THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY." (Rev. 1:2; 19:10) Preachers and teachers ought to heed this wise counsel and concentrate on the testimony of Jesus which is the spirit of prophecy, rather than futuristic forecasts of earthquakes, plane crashes, riots, nuclear disasters, political coups, invasions, wars, terrorist attacks, foreign policies, world government, etc. When God gave us the Holy Spirit, it was not to take soundings of uncharted depths into the future of America, Russia, China, Europe, or the Jews, but to develop a SPIRITUAL CHARACTER, to put on the mind of Christ, and follow the Lamb whithersoever HE goeth!

The ministers of God were not meant to be soothsayers but truth-sayers. We were not called to predict all the changing events in the kingdoms of this world, not to herald a future antichrist, but to proclaim the ETERNAL PRESENT CHRIST! The book of Revelation is not primarily intended to teach world events. It is intended to teach the purposes of God and spiritual realities! Men have put so much stress on outward things, so much carnalizing of the word of God which is spirit and life, that when we read the scriptures we oft times overlook the real truth the Spirit is speaking.

The world is full of people today who are prophesying about a great many things. I never cease to be amazed at those who prophesy world events that are to come to pass. So many of them have prophesied and they were not right; their prophecies failed! Some of them have never prophesied anything that has come to pass, yet they keep right on prophesying, and their followers quickly forget the things that didn't happen and continue to cling tenaciously to each new prediction. Some have called me a prophet. I don't claim to be a prophet, though I have prophesied through the years, and do believe that my voice is a very small part of the many waters of God's corporate prophet who speaks in this new kingdom Day. I know what prophecy is. I know Jesus who is the author of all true prophecy, and IS HIMSELF THE TRUE PROPHECY. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy!" (Rev. 1:2-3; 19:10).

In the spirit of Jesus is the real truth and it cannot be found in any other place! Jesus is alive in you, my brother, my sister, and He is alive in me. God has given us the spirit of His Son! The testimony of Jesus within ourselves is the spirit of prophecy! The spirit of prophecy most often speaks of Christ — of that of Christ which is becoming reality within us. Yes, the Spirit of God can reveal things to come in the outer world of politics, economics, warfare, the rise and fall of nations, disasters, etc. God has on occasion revealed such things to me. But those things are only incidental to the great spiritual realities of the kingdom that God is raising up within His elect! THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS IS THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY! The Spirit bears witness to God's Christ — that is where true prophecy will be found! A true prophecy contains the testimony of Jesus — the word which energizes and causes the life of the Son of God to be raised up in us! It is a spiritual testimony, therefore its fulfillment does not come literally — it comes spiritually and is realized in Jesus Christ! Jesus Christ has come within us to reveal in us the unseen things of the kingdom of God!

Some people contend that the book of Revelation cannot be a spiritual book because the spiritual interpretation takes away from the true prophetic nature of this book. I ask, however — How in the world can spiritual understanding take away from the prophetic nature of the book when the book itself declares that "the testimony of Jesus IS the spirit of prophecy." The testimony of the antichrist is not the spirit of prophecy! The testimony of the beast is not the spirit of prophecy! The testimony of the false prophet is not the spirit of prophecy! The testimony of the dragon is not the spirit of prophecy! The testimony of Daniel's 70th Week is not the spirit of prophecy! The testimony of the rapture is not the spirit of prophecy! The testimony of what is going to happen in Israel during the tribulation is not the spirit of prophecy! The testimony of the Third World War is not the spirit of prophecy! It is the testimony of JESUS CHRIST which is the spirit of prophecy! And Jesus Christ is the glorious, risen, ascended, exalted, spiritualized, omnipresent, omnipotent, eternal GOD-MAN! We are the body of Christ, and the testimony of Jesus Christ is within us!

It is also important to note that John is seen to have the testimony of Jesus in addition to the word of God. "Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ..." (Rev. 1:2). Then in Revelation 19:10 the application of this expression is given a more specific meaning by both Rotherham and the Emphatic Diaglott when they translate the Greek as saying, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of this prophecy." The fact that it reads "this prophecy" instead of merely "prophecy" indicates that there is a special relationship between the spirit of Christ and the words of this prophecy. The definite article is found in all the oldest

manuscripts discovered, even though it is not expressed in the King James Version. In other words, a special work would be performed in relation to this prophecy. The prophecy itself is the word of God. But the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of this prophecy! The letter of this word is a lamb with horns, beasts, elders, locusts, women, angels, cities, wars, etc. But the spirit of this word is JESUS! The spirit of Christ within us is that which bears witness within ourselves to the true message of this book! And the spirit of Christ within us is that which accomplishes within us all the truth and reality of this book! The end of everything you will learn or experience out of this book is Christ! It can only be understood, known, and experienced by the spirit of Jesus Christ within us!

Understanding the book of Revelation spiritually is the only view by which you can interpret the book by the Bible. Every other view requires one to understand history, geography, politics or world events; and to have access to Newsweek, Time, USA Today or CNN in order to compare contemporary happenings with the symbolisms of the book. I have made the necessary discovery that the book explains itself, and I do not hesitate to tell you that this is the only view that makes the book relative to our spiritual life today as well as to the spiritual life of the saints of every generation. It is the only view that makes the book relative to anyone, anywhere, at anytime who reads or hears the prophecy of this book and keeps the things that are written therein (Rev. 1:3).

"The time is at hand" for all who come into an experiential revelation of Jesus Christ! When the unveiling of Jesus Christ within us becomes the power of our life, the book of Revelation becomes a NOW book! Every other view makes the Revelation either a past book, or a future book. Let every child of God know for a certainty that it is now, in our today that we are experiencing the unveiling of Jesus Christ! We will not be helped spiritually one iota by an understanding of what Titus did to Jerusalem in A.D. 70, or what the Moslems did in the eighth century, or by what the Pope did during the middle ages, or by what some future antichrist will do after the church has gone to heaven. Those are, one and all, exercises in carnal minded foolishness that have absolutely nothing to do with THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRTIST!

BLESSED IS HE THAT READETH

"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand. " (Rev. 1:3)

There are seven "beatitudes" in the book of Revelation. There are also seven great "songs" and seven "overcomeths," and I often think that the seven blessed of the Lord are to start us into the seven songs — the perfect becoming of praise in our lives — and that will bring us out as a perfect overcomer! Let us now meditate upon this thought, "Blessed is he that readeth." Until I heard the story in which a self-educated man told of what his life was like before he learned to read, I had never thought much about how illiteracy affects one's perception of the world. He knew very little about life in his own neighborhood. Although he had occasionally met people from other cities, he had little idea where those cities were in relation to his own little world. Knowing only how to live by crime, he ended up in prison, where he finally learned to read. This opened up a whole new view of the world — a world he'd never known before, even though it had existed about him all his life. He discovered new options and began to make better choices about how to live. Crime was no longer his occupation, and he turned to productive pursuits. Learning to read words redefines our understanding of the world around us.

There is another kind of illiteracy that has an even more profound impact on our comprehension of reality. This could be called SPIRITUAL ILLITERACY — that is, the inability to read — to perceive and understand the language of the Spirit, the realities of the spiritual world! When we lack this ability to make sense of the broad vistas of spiritual truth, we are left trying to interpret spiritual realities from the ignorant, limited, and distorted perspective of the carnal mind — natural reasoning and human understanding. It is like an ant trying to understand the world of men! And I tell you that the world and the church today are literally filled and overflowing with SPIRITUAL ILLITERATES! Oh, they can read with their human ability. They understand with the carnal mind, the Adamic intellect. But when the beloved John says, "Blessed is he that readeth," he doesn't mean that every unregenerated sinner and every carnal baby Christian who picks up the book of Revelation and peruses its pages is blessed thereby! Not at all!

Rather, blessed is he that readeth with the understanding of the Spirit! Blessed is he that readeth the divine language of heaven! You may have that beatitude of God as a continual vision before your eyes, as the constant voice of the Spirit in your ears, and as an everlasting inspiration in your heart, if you will diligently seek the Lord in the pages of this book. May God flash this "blessed" promise before your eyes, sound it in your ears, and cause your heart to swell with the inspiration of it until Jesus Christ is fully revealed in your life!

We must now prepare to launch out into deeper waters. The word "read" is a special word in the Greek, it is *anaginosko*. *Ana* is "re" or "again" and *ginosko* means "to know." The meaning is simply this: Happy is the one who remembers or by reading knows again the message of this prophecy! You will not be able to hear with natural ears nor understand with natural minds what I am now going to say. It is my deep conviction that the book of Revelation is already recorded within you in the Christ! It is not enough to say that we are called to sonship and that God is today giving us great and wonderful revelations of His purposes. We must also recognize by the wisdom of the eternal Spirit that we were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4). Then we are told also in verse four, "...having PREVIOUSLY marked us out for sonship through Jesus Christ for Himself according to the good pleasure of His will."

Not only were we chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, but God put a mark upon us then, that secured us for our role as sons of God, that we should be separated and blameless in this world. Paul adds another dimension to this beautiful truth in his words to Titus, "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." (Tit. 1:2) Thus we have a ray of insight into the fact that we were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, previously marked out for sonship, and promised eternal life before the world began! We were chosen in Christ in that long ago beginning and known by the Father in a way that goes far beyond a mere "twinkle in the eye" or a "thought in God's purpose." We did not exist simply "in the mind" of God. Oh, no — we were there — a reality! Chosen — marked out — promised! Before! In due time we were made subject to vanity, lowered out of our pure spirit existence, into this world of limitation and testing, for Father's wise purpose.

Each and every son of God had his beginning in God and existed in Christ before time began, before ever we came to this earth to be perfected by the knowledge of good and evil, knowing both by experience and suffering. Our coming into this dark realm was with the purpose that through the desperate furnace of trials, suffering, and experience in this shadowy land of sin and death, we should come to the knowledge of good and evil, fully overcoming in it, to stand at last before our Father in a perfection and power like unto His own. God did not desire robots or untested children who were like Him apart from the wisdom, understanding, righteousness and nobility of character that come by experience. There is no other way! We were sons of God even then, but nothing of the dimension we shall be when our salvation is complete, for we are being transformed into the image and likeness of the firstborn Son who is the Prince and Captain of our salvation. Of Him it is written that He was made perfect through suffering, and being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation, called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

In the long, long ago, before the earth was graced with light or ever stars twinkled in the night sky, there was a day when God revealed His glorious plan of creation and redemption to His spirit-children who were chosen in Christ and predestinated to sonship as part of that marvelous purpose. On that holy occasion the morning stars broke forth in rapturous chorus and all the sons of God shouted for joy at the revelation of the Father's will! We do not shout unless there is something to shout about, and those young sons of God lifted their voices with the morning stars in contemplation of the marvelous purpose they would fulfill. I do not doubt that they understood that the sufferings of this world would work in them an eternal weight of glory that would redound to the honor of the Father and be the firstfruits of deliverance for all God's vast creation to be born in this universe of sin and salvation. So shall it be for each of us, my beloved, when the purpose of God is complete, for we came out of the loins of our heavenly Father a very little son at first, to suffer the humiliation of temptation, sin and death, to be at last fully redeemed and matured into the character, wisdom, and power of our heavenly Father, presented faultless before the throne of His glory with exceeding joy!

The time of our birth, who our parents would be, what life experiences we would pass through, were all foreordained by the Father. And those sons who have entered upon the stage of action in this present

generation stand at a special and significant juncture in God's great purpose of the ages! Truly this is the Christ generation, we are the firstfruits people, that we may enter our promised land of God's fullness even as we stand upon our two feet! It is my conviction that the mental-spiritual faculty which was present with God before the ages began, became a dormant portion of our being when we were born into this realm of the flesh. Ray Prinzing wrote so eloquently of this great truth that I am compelled to share his words here.

"The Psalmist knew what it was to have the Spirit of God breathe upon him betimes, and with that Breath came new understanding, such as when he wrote, 'Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God. Thou turnest man to destruction: and sayest, RETURN, ye children of men.' (Ps. 90:1-3) Past, present, future, HE alone has been our HOME, our dwelling place. Outside of a CONSCIOUSNESS OF HIS PRESENCE we are but homeless wanderers, seeking to return into Him. This, too, has been expressed in verse:

**In Thy holy habitation did my spirit once reside,
In my first primeval childhood was I nurtured by Thy side.**

**For a wise and glorious purpose Thou hast made me here on earth,
And withheld the recollection of my former friends and birth.**

**Yet at times a secret something whispers, You're a stranger here!
And I feel that I have wandered from a more exalted sphere.**

"In Intimations of Immortality William Wordsworth also writes:

**Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting, and cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness, and not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come FROM GOD WHO IS OUR HOME.**

"A meaningful incident was once related by a Radio Commentator, reporting on how a young couple brought a new baby brother home to his four-year-old sister. The little girl kept begging to be allowed to be left alone with him. Finally the parents gave permission. There was an intercom in the baby's room, so they listened closely so if necessary they could rush in. The little girl walked quietly to the crib where her baby brother slept, and her parents heard her plead, 'Tell me about God. I'm forgetting.'

"Ah, how quickly we have forgotten our Father, and home! Being conscious of the world around us causes us to forget — yet do we not hear the Spirit calling? And in the words of Paul, 'Now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.' (Rom. 13:11) It's time to awaken to the realm from whence we came, that we might return. And as the song expressed it so beautifully, 'The Spirit is drawing us upward and onward to the place from whence we came.' Praise the Lord!

"He has made everything beautiful in its time; He also hath planted eternity in men's heart and mind (a divinely implanted sense of a purpose working through the ages which nothing under the sun, but only God, can satisfy), yet so that men cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.' (Eccl. 3:11, Amplified) Ah, that sense of a destiny that nothing under the sun, but only God can satisfy! Having come from Him, once shouting for joy at the purpose to be wrought out, in our spirit there lies buried a sense, a knowing that we do belong to another realm, and nothing of this earth realm can satisfy. Men may try to fill their lives with the pursuit of fame and fortune, or just settle for the proverbial 'wine, women, and song,' but none of it satisfies for God has linked us to a higher realm. And when finally He awakens us to heavenly things, immediately there is a response, 'This is it! This is what I have been searching for!' Or again, to borrow the words of a hymn, 'ALL that I want is in Jesus, He satisfies, joy He supplies, life would be worthless without Him, ALL that I want is in Christ.'

"In every generation there have been those who 'confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.' (Heb. 11:13-14) A country — the Greek word is patris meaning: a father-land. They sought for the land of their Father, the land of their begetting, their home-land. IF you were of this earth-realm only, you would not desire another land for your roots would hold you to the fleshly, earthy. But because you have come from afar, there is that deep (though perhaps unrecognized) desire to return. For when HE turned you to destruction, He also implanted the command deep within your being, 'RETURN, ye children of men.' 'For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.' (Rom. 8:29) The word "foreknow" is from the Greek word proginosko meaning 'to know by experience beforehand.' HE KNEW US BY EXPERIENCE, and PLACED HIS MARK UPON US, a sure word that we would ultimately return to be conformed to the image of His Son" — end quote.

Now our Father is calling us to a remembrance! We do not remember the former glory of our existence in the presence of the Father in spirit, but we do have fleeting glimpses of it! Our elder brother fully came to this remembrance and said, "And now, Father, glorify Thou me with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." In our longing for the Father's love, in our yearning for His presence, and the ecstasy of it, as we put on the mind of Christ, we are able to see our beginning in God before the ages began, and having this vision, we are awakened more and more to reality!

When each of God's sons is born into this world there is encoded in the depths of our spirit the secret knowledge of why we are here and what path the Father has marked out for us in our journey through this realm. Only by the quickening and enlightenment of the blessed spirit of truth within us is this dark veil of the conscious mind pulled apart that the hidden understanding of the deep things of God may spring out of the most holy place of our spirit. We think of it as a new and glorious revelation — but all divine revelation is but a REMEMBERING! That secret knowledge of heavenly things, which were given us in Christ before the foundation of the world, is called THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST! It is the same divine knowledge that is written in code in the visions of John on Patmos! And this information, this sacred secret, is also encoded within our spirit — we are "knowing again" the revelation of God's Christ! "Blessed is he that readeth, blessed is he that by reading knows again (anaginosko) the words of this prophecy!"

Let the reality and power of this prophecy open within you, beloved, for it is already recorded there! Once the understanding of this prophecy comes to you by the Spirit you will know what you knew before the ages, and what is hidden in the depth of your spirit! Don't look to me to understand the words of this prophecy, look within yourself! On bended knee, and with a broken and contrite spirit, seek the face of your heavenly Father for the light that the Spirit brings. It is there that the book will be revealed, and it is there that it will be experienced! Our awakening to these holy things is but a remembering, a knowing again of mysteries we once heard in Christ before the foundation of the world!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 9 BLESSED ARE THEY THAT HEAR

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART NINE

THE SEVEN CHURCHES

"Blessed — happy — to be envied — are they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand." (Rev. 1:3) These opening words of the Revelation, following the salutation of the writer, set forth the clear objective of the book. What words are these! What spirit do they breathe — fear and anxiety, doubt and uncertainty, patient resignation, or understanding, hope and confidence? One might expect an exhortation such as this: "Beloved brethren, the end is at hand! Darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people. Judgment and destruction await the world. The beast government is rising up in the earth and the antichrist is at hand. The dragon stalks across the earth's valleys and over the mountains. Resign yourselves to the inevitable! Defeat and martyrdom await us. We may have to flee to wilderness areas and hide ourselves from the fury of the dragon. The will of the Lord be done. Wherefore comfort one another with these words!" But when we turn to the book of Revelation, we find nothing of the kind! It is not a call to resignation or escape — it is a proclamation of victory! Its tone is joyful! Its prayer is thanksgiving! Its song is heavenly! Its spirit is praise and worship! Its cry is Hallelujah!

The book of Revelation is a prophecy. Prophecy is a Voice — in this case, the voice of God's Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ is three things — Prophet, Priest and King. Prophets speak, priests reconcile, and kings rule. Prophecy is the word of God — not merely a foretelling, but a forth-telling. The book of Revelation is undoubtedly the hardest book in the New Testament to understand. However, I also believe that once you grasp by the spirit of wisdom and revelation what it's talking about, it is the most thrilling book of all! Even though the book is puzzling to the natural man and bewildering to the carnal mind, yet the apostle John wrote with blessed assurance to the inChristed these words of divine surety, "Blessed — happy — to be envied — is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand!" (Rev. 1:3).

That is one of the most amazing things about this wonderful book — it is the only book in the Bible that promises a unique blessing or happiness to all those who read it, to all who truly hear what it is saying, and to those who keep or have fulfilled within themselves the things that the book has to say. There are many other books of the scriptures that are easier to understand, but they don't contain that beautiful promise! This book promises you, before you begin, that if you read, hear, and keep the things written therein YOU WILL BE BLESSED! Immediately that gives me a clue to what this book is about. Obviously the book is written to a people who will "keep" its sayings, who will have fulfilled within themselves its message, who will be enabled to experience in their very own lives the things it proclaims! How else could those who read and hear be said to "keep" all the things that are written in the book? If the panorama of events that unfold within these pages are merely external events, historical events, or future literal world events, then how can those who read "keep" or "fulfill within themselves" all those things?

It should be clear even to a child that the events of the Revelation happen within God's people! Some people's interpretation of Revelation says that the church disappears from the earth at the beginning of chapter four, and that after the church is out of the way — raptured — the rest of the book happens to the world of unbelievers left on the earth. If that be the case, then I'm not interested! I'm not concerned with events that transpire on earth when I'm gone, after I'm out of here forever! The knowledge of those things would be of no benefit to me, nor would they serve any purpose. I wouldn't even be here to find out if it was a true prophecy! Therefore, the message of the book of Revelation cannot be limited to events at the end of the age, nor can it concern events that are to transpire after the saints have flown away to that bright glory world above. It cannot have to do with events in the outer world with its masses of unregenerated humanity. It can only concern a

special class of saints who are able to read what it says, hear with the spiritual ear, and become glad partakers of those blessed realities it proclaims! This book is speaking to me if only I can hear what it says!

Now honestly, if this book is primarily about an age that hasn't yet dawned, do you think that the poor persecuted believers in Asia in John's day (A.D. 90) would be the least bit interested in it? Come with me to the churches in that long ago. We come into their midst as ambassadors of the apostle John who has been banished to the desolate slopes of the isle of Patmos, and we are going to share with them the message of this fantastic Book, which promises them a blessing in the midst of their trials and pain. When you get there where all the persecuted people are meeting together, and who will lose their lives, and you with them, if you are caught meeting together, and you get out a long chart and begin to lecture about the antichrist and his covenant with the Jews in Israel in the last days — do you think that is going to be a blessing to those dear saints? Are they going to somehow be able in some mystical way to "keep" or have fulfilled within themselves the things you are telling them about? NO WAY! You see, my beloved, when I come to this book the first key to understanding it is the great truth that it is addressed to me. And it is addressed to you! It is not a book to be just read and heard, but a book to be EXPERIENCED! Its reality is being fulfilled in those elect saints who are the bondslaves of Jesus Christ, who are becoming overcomers, who are being made kings and priests unto God, and who read, hear, and keep the things written in the book! These are also the sons of God!

It is instructive to note that the word "keep" means "to guard or tend," as Adam was commanded to dress the Garden of Eden and to "keep" it. When the Lord declares in various places throughout the scriptures that His people are His vineyard and His garden, we should understand that His purposes are the same now as they were in the beginning when He placed man in the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. The Garden of God always represents the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. The thought is not only of the Lord's great Garden; but the life of every child of God is a garden within God's Garden! In the beginning Adam failed to dress and keep the garden of his own soul, and what a pitiful thing it is to see that men through the long millenniums since that day have also wretchedly failed and the world has endured a long night of sorrow and pain. The Shulamite, in the Song of Solomon, at the outset of her relationship with the King confessed her own neglect, saying, "They made me keeper of the vineyards; but my own vineyard have I not kept." (S. of S. 1:6) Though the Lord may let us tend a portion of His great Vineyard, though He may let us minister to other souls in different ways, there is a part of the Vineyard of the Lord which He actually gives to each one of us; and that is the vineyards of our own lives.

He would have us care for and guard our hearts above all that we treasure and protect, for out of them are the issues of life. It is this hidden place of our innermost being that must be watched and tended more than all that appears on the outside! Those who are following on to know the Lord in this new kingdom Day are learning to guard and protect the roots and hidden fibers of our beings, our thoughts, our impulses, our desires. Adam was a son of God (Lk. 3:38) and was placed in the garden of Eden to dress and to keep it. Can we not see by this that all who would be sons of God must put away everything that is not of God that is hidden and unseen, as zealously as we put away the defects that appear on the outside, which humble us when they are seen by others?

My brethren, if we cannot tend the gardens of our own souls and lives, we must not think the Lord will entrust us with greater gardens! How can a man rule over other men's souls, how can he judge angels, how can he rule the nations with a rod of iron, how can he exercise dominion over the vastnesses of the universe, yea, how can he rule over ALL THINGS as God hath spoken — if he cannot rule his own spirit? "He that ruleth his own spirit is better than he that taketh a city," said the wise man. There are literally thousands of men and women running about over the face of the earth doing what they call the work of the Lord, but it is distressing to see that the vast majority of them were never called nor commissioned by the Lord of the Vineyard in the first place. They are busy doing a great many things for God, but they are not becoming overcomers that they might truly reign! I am convinced that the first work of the Lord's Vineyard, which He entrusts to us and calls us to do, is to care for our own spiritual lives and to first partake of the fruit. We will understand the Father's priorities when we see that Jesus gave no promise to any of the seven churches of Asia — but He made great and glorious promises of life and glory and power to him that overcometh!

The blessed age of God's kingdom over the nations which is now dawning shall be governed by those saints who have become overcomers, who have sanctified the Lord God in their hearts, who have put away all carnality, foolishness, and evil, who have put on the mind of Christ, having the Father's name written in their foreheads, who have arrived at maturity of sonship, who have come to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Not those who tend the Father's Vineyard negligently, shall be in this company; not those who pamper their flesh and let it overrun their lives, shall be in this company; not those who examine their vineyards only now and then shall appear with the Lamb on the holy mount Zion; it is those who dwell in their gardens and tend them day and night, those who ever keep them before their eyes, that shall be well-pleasing to the Owner of the Vineyard and shall be given dominion over all things. You can count on it!

As I mentioned earlier, the gardens and vineyards of the scriptures are synonymous, meaning THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN ON EARTH. That is the meaning of the Garden of Eden! In this very hour the hand of God is planting the plants He chose in Christ before the foundation of the world, each a tree of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified (Isa. 61:3). Consider now how great are the words of the prophet: "And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and thou shalt be like a watered garden...for the Lord shall comfort Zion...and He shall make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody." (Isa. 58:11; 51:3)

Ah, yes, the whole earth has been sown with men of various kinds, but in the blessed revelation of the book of Genesis we see that "the LORD GOD PLANTED A GARDEN eastward in Eden" and this Garden bespeaks a special and most favored "planting" of the Lord — the sons of the kingdom! The soil of this blest Garden of God is neither uncultivated, stony, nor thorny, for it has come under the hand of the Husbandman, being dealt with that life may spring forth abundantly. Thus the prophet by inspiration wrote, "Doth the plowman plow all day to sow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground? When he hath made smooth the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the seed...this cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working." (Isa. 28:24-25,29)

Truly this explains much of the processing through which God's elect has been passing, for the Lord purposes to bring forth a crop, full fruitage, even to an hundredfold, therefore there have been these tremendous crushing experiences which have broken up the hard clods of our pre-conceived ideas and opinion, the rocks of our stubborn self-will, and the inbedded roots of our own fleshly desires and ways, and the carnal traditions of religion which resisted the inworking of truth. Deeper and deeper have dug the plowshares of the Spirit, breaking up the fallow ground, grinding, smashing, tearing, loosening, breaking up the self-life until all is subdued before Him, until nothing remains but the fine soil for the seed to grow in. The plowman has not been plowing in us all this time just for the sake of plowing, but the preparation is that there might be the sowing of HIS LIFE, that there might be brought forth a harvest of the same kind. That's what the Garden of God is all about! The Christ-life is being sown, and this means the growing up of a whole new species, a new creation which shall ultimately come forth in the image and likeness of God, to the praise of His glory. Many of the Lord's precious apprehended ones have wondered why we were plowed so deeply, why God allows us to be broken up to the deepest recesses of our beings, until every way within us has been tried, but it is that HIS LIFE MIGHT FASTEN ITS ROOTS DEEP WITHIN US, so that from deep within, from our very nature, would spring forth the fruitage of Himself.

In order that we may be able to "keep" the words of this prophecy, to guard and tend and have fulfilled within us all that it teaches, we have first been enabled to "hear" what it says! I am reminded of the story of two old Dutchmen, sitting on a park bench. The night had come and the moon started to shine. Not far from the bench where they sat, a river flowed, and from the river came the chorus of the crickets. Pete, the first old gentleman, listened to the crickets and said, "Crickets sure do sing." John, sitting next to him agreed, saying, "Yep, they sure know how to sing." Just then he heard the voices of the choir coming from the nearby church and remarked, "Beautiful music, isn't it?" Pete said, "Yeah, and to think they do it just by rubbing their legs together!"

Each heard a different music — one was listening to the crickets and one was listening to the choir. What you hear depends on where you're coming from and what you're tuned in to. When the disciples asked Jesus why

He spoke to the multitudes in parables, He answered by saying, "This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand." He then reminded them of Isaiah's prophecy wherein he said, "You shall indeed hear, but never understand, and you shall indeed see but never perceive." It almost seems that Jesus was acting vindictively, but He was not, for He also explains why those who saw Him failed to understand. **"For this nation's heart has grown gross — fat and dull; and their ears heavy and difficult of hearing, and their eyes they have tightly closed, lest they see and perceive with their eyes, and hear and comprehend the sense with their ears, and grasp and understand with their heart, and turn and I should heal them."** (Mat. 13:15) (Amplified) Had they wanted to hear, they could have, but they chose not to see or understand. Eight times in the book of Revelation the Lord Jesus says, "He that hath an ear, let him hear!"

In our day Bibles can be bought at Wal-Mart and almost any department store, and sermons can be heard any hour of the day or night, but practically no one, the preachers in particular, is hearing the word of God! Multitudes read the words of the Bible and do not hear them! Intellect may grasp what is written there...but that is not a hearing. Hearing the word of God will work transformation in a man! A true hearing of the word will reveal the Father's heart and uncover His ways and give understanding of His purposes. Hearing the word by the Spirit will bring obedience to the word — the obedience of faith — and things will begin to happen! Taken by the Spirit to the valley of dry bones, Ezekiel was asked, "Son of man, can these bones live?" "O Lord God," was the prophet's response, "Thou knowest." He was then told to prophesy to them: "O dry bones, HEAR THE WORD OF THE LORD!" The prophet obeyed, and as he declared to them the word of the Lord, they came together, bone to its bone. Covered first with sinews, then with flesh, these lifeless bodies were also quickened by the breath of divine life, which entered into them. (Eze. 37:1-10) The quickening of the dry bones was effected by their response to the Lord's word! As they kept hearing what He was saying to them, the Holy Spirit kept working within them until they were made alive by His breath and stood up, an exceeding great army. In like manner, as we keep hearing and keep responding to the kingdom word the Spirit is speaking today, the army of the Lord shall stand up in the earth to bring deliverance to all creation! Oh, ye sons of God — HEAR THE WORD OF THE LORD!

Shortly after becoming king in Israel, Solomon traveled to Gibeon to offer a sacrifice to the Lord. Here the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Ask what I shall give you." Though grateful to the Lord for having chosen him to succeed his father David, Solomon was keenly aware of his inadequacy to govern the people without divine help. "Give Thy servant therefore," he implored, "an understanding heart to govern Thy people that I may discern between good and evil." Pleased by such a request, the Lord replied, **"Because you have asked this, and have not asked for long life, or for riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to recognize what is just and right, behold...I have also given you what you have not asked, both riches and honor; so that there shall not be any among the kings equal to you all your days."** (1 Kings 3:11-13) The expression "an understanding heart" is in the Hebrew text A HEARING HEART. And in **Isaiah 50:4-5** we read of the inner discipline which Jesus and all the elect sons experience. **"Morning by morning He (the Father) wakens, HE WAKENS MY EAR TO HEAR as those that are willing to be taught. The Lord has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I turned not backward."**

A. B. Simpson was a man of deep spiritual experience. I quote the following from his article Listening. "A score of years ago a friend placed in my hand a book called True Peace. It was an old medieval message and it had but one thought — THAT GOD WAS WAITING IN THE DEPTHS OF MY BEING TO TALK TO ME IF I WOULD ONLY GET STILL ENOUGH TO HEAR HIS VOICE. I thought this would be a very easy matter and so began to get still. I had no sooner commenced than a perfect pandemonium of voices reached my ears, a thousand clamoring notes from without and within, until I could hear nothing but their noise and din. Some were my own voices, my own questions; some were my very prayers. Others were suggestions of the tempter and the voices from the world of turmoil. In every direction I was pulled and pushed and greeted with noisy acclamations and unspeakable unrest. It seemed necessary for me to listen to some of them and to answer some of them; but God said, 'BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD!'

"Then came the conflict of thoughts for tomorrow and its duties and cares; but God said, 'BE STILL.' And as I listened and slowly learned to obey and shut my ears to every sound, I found after a while that, when other voices ceased, (or I ceased to hear them), there was a still small voice in the depths of my being that began to

speaking with an inexpressible tenderness and power and comfort. As I listened, it became to me the voice of prayer, the voice of wisdom, the voice of duty, and I did not need to think so hard or pray so hard or trust so hard. That still, small voice of the Holy Spirit in my heart was God speaking in my secret soul; was God's answer to all knowledge and all prayer and all blessings, for it was the living God Himself as my life, my all.

"It is thus that our spirits drink of the life of the risen Lord and we go forth to life's conflicts and duties like a flower that has drunk in through the shades of night the cool and crystal drops of dew. But, as dew never falls on a stormy night, so the dew of His grace never comes to a restless soul. Oh, the calm! The rest! The peace which comes as we wait in His presence until we HEAR FROM HIM!" — end quote.

Hearing by the Spirit. This is the revelation of Jesus Christ in you! The glory of this revelation was passed from Jesus to John. John wrote down the wonder of what he saw so that we could hear the same thing that Jesus spoke to him. One can only understand this prophecy as he becomes still enough to hear the voice of the Son of God within himself! If we do not hear by the Spirit the true spiritual message of the book of Revelation we are like the man I read about who went to see a play one time and recommended it to a friend. It was a play in three acts. He said to his friend, "It was a marvelous play. You will love it. It is so uplifting and exhilarating. You will be greatly encouraged." He was astonished when his friend later reported: "I hated that play. I thought it was terrible. Why, the child was kidnapped, the father lost his job, and the mother was in the hospital. It was so depressing. How could you have thought that a play like that was good?" The man said, "But that's not the way it ended!" He said, "Oh, I don't know how it ended. I got so depressed I left after the second act."

Well, my friend, if you mistake the literal letter of the word understanding to guide your thinking you will leave the book of Revelation in deep depression after the second act! You will never pass through the veil to the spirit of the word understanding that leads to eternal glory! The "end" of this drama is not in chapter twenty-two. The "end" is in the spiritual reality that all the signs and symbols are pointing us to! I have found that even among good men, even among spiritual men, there is a tendency to miss the deep inference of the Holy Spirit's words repeated again and again in the Revelation, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith!" Those words always accompany statements of profound spiritual significance. The Spirit is here admonishing us that the astonishing visions described in the Revelation are the unfolding of spiritual mysteries. Those who interpret these beautiful visions according to the literal, surface appearance, do not have "an ear to hear," nor are they able to perceive the spiritual concealed in the external. If the events portrayed in the Revelation are to be fulfilled literally and outwardly, then we must read the words with natural eyes, hear them with natural ears, and understand them with a natural mind. But if the message is deeply spiritual, it will be understood only by "He that hath an ear to hear!"

The overcoming sons of God are not distinguished by their much speaking, nor by their great works, but by their hearing. The book of Revelation is the unveiling of God's Christ, the complete Christ, both Head and body. The purpose of God that was first expressed in Genesis is fulfilled in the unveiled Christ of the Revelation. The anointed prophecy given us through John, when wrought out in our lives, will take us to the fullness of the image and likeness of God! It tells of that which shall take place in each of our lives to transform us into the fullness of Christ to manifest the power and glory of the kingdom of God in the earth! It reveals the exact process of our change from natural to spiritual, from corruptible to incorruptible, and from mortal to immortal! It is the book of our overcoming! It is the book of our metamorphosis! It is the book of our completion! It is the book of our maturity! It is the book of our full stature! It is the book of our destiny! It is the book of our manifestation! It is the book of our exaltation! It is the book of our enthronement! It is the book of our sonship!

Blessed — happy — to be envied is he that reads (understands the symbols), and they that hear (get the deep spiritual message the symbols represent) the words of this prophecy, and keep (have fulfilled experientially in their lives) the things that are written therein: for the time is at hand! Those who read, hear, and keep these things are prepared to rule and reign with Christ in His kingdom!

TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

The risen and ascended Lord descended in a vision of glory on the isle called Patmos, and there meeting His startled disciple, John, gave him a communication concerning the church, the called out, commanding him to

write it in a scroll and send it to the seven churches in Asia. The book of Revelation is addressed to Christ's "servants" and to "the seven churches." This great truth is emphasized, it is stated in the plainest of language, both at the opening and the close of the book. "John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace..." (Rev. 1:4). "What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia" (Rev. 1:11). "The Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show unto His servants the things which must shortly be done." (Rev. 22:6) "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches." (Rev. 22:16)

On reading these distinct declarations it should be clear to every discerning mind that the outward nations and the unregenerated people of the world have no more to do with this prophecy than they have with the epistle to the Ephesians. They may possibly be alluded to in the one, as in the other, but it is not for them, and it is not mainly concerned with them. IT IS FOR US, the people of God! The prophecy is for the bondslaves of Jesus Christ, and for those who are called out and separated unto Him, and to apply it to anything other than God's dealings with His elect saints is to take the children's bread and give it to dogs. It is no use to say, "Yes! But though given to the church, it might still be a revelation of the counsels of God about the kingdoms of this world." It might. The epistle to the Ephesians might have been a letter about the lost tribes of Israel in the British Isles, but it was not! The visions of Daniel might have been visions of the seven churches of Asia, but they were not! Jesus could have sent a message to His servants about the final judgments on the world, from which they were already delivered, but He did not! Jesus might have communicated to His elect how He, who is the saviour of all men and the reconciler of the world, would one day turn on the world He so loved and cast them all into eternal damnation, but He did not!

We should notice carefully and reverently the words of the angel to John: "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand." (Rev. 22:10) The angel's statement stands in stark contrast to the command Daniel received at the end of his book: "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end." (Dan. 12:4) Daniel was specifically ordered to seal up his prophecy, because it referred to "the end," in the distant future. But John was told not to seal up his prophecy, because the time of which it speaks is at hand! To have sealed those precious sayings would have been to hide them, to pull a veil over them, to shut them up as if they stood for some kind of hidden wisdom or impenetrable mystery. But they are not! The message of the Revelation is concerned with great spiritual principles and divine dealings which have been operative in the lives of God's elect throughout the age, and are today. The time is now! The place is here! The people is us! The revelation of Jesus Christ is an on-going unfolding until HE is formed and revealed in all the glorious and eternal fullness of Himself in His body on earth! The totality of the mighty workings and processings of God portrayed by sign and symbol within this wonderful book must be fulfilled within the life of each son of God!

The book of Revelation is not concerned with worldly kingdoms and empires except as they become linked with the affairs of God's people. The book of Daniel, written under the Old Covenant, addressed to a natural people living in a natural land, ruled by outward laws, with a natural worship in a physical temple with external rituals and ceremonies, is therefore a natural book dealing with outward earthly events, the rise and fall of empires, rulers, with literal wars and fleshly conflicts. For example, the eighth chapter of Daniel contains one of Daniel's visions. His vision there is of a ram and a he-goat. The ram and the he-goat represented empires and kings that came on the scene not long before the birth of Jesus. There is no question that this prophecy is speaking of literal nations and kings, for those nations are actually mentioned in the text. And so it is throughout the book of Daniel! I wonder sometimes that if it were possible for Daniel to be here listening to the "end-times" prophecy teachers in the church systems today, if he would recognize his own prophecies, because of the grotesque way they have been distorted in their interpretation. Most teachers of Daniel can't even get the "literal" right! The book of Daniel was not a revelation or unveiling. It was a SEALED BOOK!

The book of Revelation, contrary to common thought, is not the sequel to the book of Daniel, nor is it a parallel revelation! In fact, it has almost nothing in common with the book of Daniel! The book of Revelation was written under the New Covenant, the administration of the Spirit, and is therefore a spiritual book, addressed to spiritual people, born of the heavenly Jerusalem, who live and walk in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, are ruled by the indwelling spirit of Life, who worship in the true tabernacle not made with hands, and offer up spiritual sacrifices unto God by Jesus Christ! The book of Revelation is not, nor has it ever been a SEALED

BOOK. Nor does it speak of natural, fleshly, physical, literal, outward things of this world. It is the unveiling of Jesus Christ!

I have no desire to contend with any man about these things, for we can safely leave this in the hands of the Lord. However, just as the book of Revelation is not the sequel to Daniel, neither does its message parallel the Olivet Discourse — Matthew 24! With true spiritual perception we must understand the great difference between these prophecies! Whereas the prophecies of Matthew 24 were directed to the Jews and concerned the Jews and pointed to the end of the Jewish kingdom of the house of Judah, the book of Revelation is written to the church, the called out, and concerns the church, and points to God's ultimate purpose in and through His elect body. Matthew 24 is natural and earthly, the book of Revelation is spiritual and heavenly! Matthew 24 sets forth literal, carnal, outward, earthly conflicts that occurred in all their horrible fury with the destruction of Jerusalem, the temple, the priesthood, the sacrificial system, and the entire Old Testament economy. All these horrendous events took place in A.D. 70 when the Roman general Titus besieged Jerusalem and brought it to total desolation.

There is neither time nor space to go into detail concerning those matters in this writing, but in our Lord's words in Matthew 24 we have one of the most explicit and unusual forecasts of events to be found anywhere in the scriptures. It is unusual in its simplicity and in the exactness of its detail. Every word of it has already been fulfilled and is now history! It was fulfilled with absolute precision right down to the last jot and tittle. The Jewish historian, Josephus, records a great deal of this history in his writings. It is remarkable to note that Jesus told His disciples, while standing before the temple in Jerusalem, **"Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."** (Mat. 24:2) Josephus records how the desolation of Jerusalem was so complete that the site looked like a plowed field, and those who later passed by wondered that it had ever been inhabited by man! Those who study the history of these things know that the "end time" of Daniel's prophecy, and of Jesus' Olivet Discourse, was in fact the "end time" of the Old Covenant with its outward nation, temple, priesthood, sacrifices, laws, rituals, and ceremonies. That "end time" came in A.D. 70! It had nothing whatever to do with the present "end" of the church age! And contrary to the teachings of religious Babylon, there is not one word of Matthew 24 that remains to be fulfilled! Years later the glorified Lord Jesus appeared to John on Patmos and gave him the greater, higher, more glorious spiritual revelation for His heavenly people! This revelation concerns those who are citizens of the NEW JERUSALEM, who eat of the hidden manna and the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God, who are clothed, not in the garments of Aaron's priesthood, but in the white robes of Christ's righteousness, who are called to sonship on the heavenly mount Zion, destined to reign in the kingdom of Jesus Christ upon His throne in the heavenlies, and are becoming kings and priests after the order of Melchizedek!

God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom dwelleth wisdom and knowledge, flood Thou our souls with understanding from above! Open now our eyes that we may behold the depths of truth that can be known only by the quickening of Thy Spirit! Remove the dark veil from our hearts, the veil of natural understanding and religious tradition cast over our minds by the carnal church systems of men, that light divine may shine upon us! Grant to our spirits the breath of inspiration that we may know as Thou knowest, and see as Thou seest! Amen! The book of Revelation was not sent to Israel nor to the nations. It was sent to the church, the called out elect of God. The only "end" referred to in this book is JESUS! **"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."** (Rev. 22:13) The Revelation is not about "the end times;" it is about a NEW DAY, it is the REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST!

If by the grace of God the truth of this holy vision can burst upon you, you will see that the book of Revelation is a spiritual book! The Revelation cannot be understood in any natural way. It's a spiritual book and requires spiritual understanding! It's a book of spiritual events, spiritual experiences, spiritual conflicts and triumphs, and spiritual principles — not events you will read in USA Today! Some people say, "You spiritualize everything!" Do you not know that God is Spirit? If the Holy Spirit, sent forth from the resurrected, ascended, glorified Jesus wrote a book, what kind of book do you suppose it would be? Why, bless your heart, it would be a spiritual book! "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life," declared the Son of God. What kind of mind do you think it would take to understand a spiritual book? Ah, a spiritual mind! **"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy**

Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (I Cor. 2:12-14) The very plain teaching of these words of Paul is that we are not to try and understand the revelation of God in a literal, outward sense. All divine truth is spiritual and must be spiritually discerned.

Well did a precious brother write: "If the book cannot be taken literally, then we must spiritualize it by the Holy Spirit. Trying to spiritualize with your natural mind is worse than logic and reason. Spiritualizing with your natural mind is just plain fantasizing! Real spiritualizing is done by the Holy Spirit and when He does it, it is real and it is true! It is sad and a tragedy, but most so-called teachers of prophecy have very little of the Holy Spirit working in them. And, some of them are down-right scoundrels! They wax eloquent and write many books to explain Revelation by their natural minds. Without the Holy Spirit, what they say is a pile of nonsense and fantasy. There are very, very few sermons or books on prophecy that do not fall into this category! The pastors, the teachers, the bishops, the apostles, the presidents of universities, the chancellors of theological seminaries, or whoever they may be, without the Holy Spirit, are spiritually ignorant. It seems the higher an individual ranks in the hierarchy of today's churches, the less he knows of spiritual things. God does not reveal spiritual things to the wise and prudent, but unto babes. We have listened to the highly esteemed prophetic teachers, but we hear only fantasies and traditions that are spawned in the womb of natural minds. Such ones have little or no truth.

"Years ago I read the writings of a woman who had trouble spelling her words and mimeographing her copies. Her workmanship was very inferior, but her message was a tremendous revelation of The Voice Of God Who Speaks In Me! Probably this woman could not preach a homiletical sermon or explain one Greek tense from another, but she knew the voice of God and she walked in a glorious light of divine revelation. On the other hand, the learned leaders who take the Revelation literally, grope in the darkness of their own natural minds. This simple woman — humble saint of God — knew more about God, His will and purpose than the pompous chancellor of a theological seminary who recently was introduced on a TV network as probably the greatest theologian on earth. This woman knew more about the things of the Spirit than the learned ministers who wrote books out of their natural minds. She knew because she walked and talked with God! He lived in her and He talked to her from His abode in her. The learned chancellor wrote books, preached sermons, and conducted schools that turned out literate ministers of prophecy who knew little or nothing of the spiritual meaning of the prophecy. The chancellor tried to explain prophecy. He informed us Jesus was far off in heaven. We could get to meet Him some day if we made 'The Rapture.' This man knew little about spiritually interpreting God's word. He misquoted and misapplied scriptures like a novice. He insisted on taking the Bible literally in every place possible and he spoke against spiritualizing it as if spiritualizing it were an evil thing! He looked and acted as if he knew many things, but I will take the simple woman's position in preference to the highly esteemed theologian. This learned man knew a lot of things, but this woman knew God!" — end quote.

If you will allow the Holy Spirit of truth to draw you away from the mish-mash of human theology as taught by the messengers of Babylon, you will discover that they have mis-matched the prophecies of the Revelation with other prophecies in the Bible and created a hybrid, confused, misshapen, deformed, distorted, grotesque monster called "eschatology." I do not like the word "eschatology" because it is chiefly a theological term of the carnal church system. The so-called "end time events" taught out of the book of Revelation are contorted theories pieced together by carnal minds. Pieces are taken from Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah, Matthew 24, and other scriptures and put together in order to create a particular "spin" of it. Oh that men would awaken to the truth that they might see the Revelation as a sovereign revelation to the sons of God that is not mixed up to be revealed in a puzzle of other prophets. It stands alone! True, it uses Old Testament language and employs Old Testament illustrations, but it raises them up to new levels and transcendent heights of spiritual experience in the celestial world of the kingdom of God within. You don't go back into the Old Testament and piece things together in order to give the Revelation validity and meaning. Let it stand alone — and when you do it becomes, not the revelation of mere chaotic outer world events, but truly and preeminently THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST! It becomes a book you want to read with every wink because you want to remind yourself who you are, who is working in you, and how He is working in you to bring forth the unveiling of Jesus Christ in your own experience.

Many who study this glorious Revelation are more interested in finding possible references to space travel and nuclear weapons than in discovering the deep inworkings and mighty dealings of the Holy Spirit in the lives of those who are becoming God's Christ. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of this prophecy! To ignore Jesus in favor of atomic blasts is a perversion of the spirit of truth. It is a prophecy to the church — God's called out elect! As a prophecy, it's to the Lord's spiritual people, the body of Christ, the ransomed of the Lord! There is not a chance that the apostle John, standing in the blinding glory of Christ's majestic presence, would have thought it important to prophesy about Cobra helicopters, space shuttles, computers or laser tattoos. Nor would he have been interested in foretelling the future of the United States of America, Russia, China, Iraq or the European Community. Not that these things are not important, or that the sons of God should not be concerned with the destiny of nations in God's great plan of the ages, but the book of Revelation is about God's purposes in His redeemed, called, and chosen people! It is concerned with matters of far greater importance and consequence than satisfying our curiosity about the Common Market or the secret, sinister schemes of Saddam Hussein or the Illuminati. It was written to show what the Father has done to save and transform His people and to glorify Himself through His sons!

You will not read the fulfillments of its prophecies on the pages of Time magazine, but you will see them manifest in the lives of men and women! The word of the Lord in its spiritual meaning does not describe for us the carnal warfare between nations. For what have wars between nations to do with the kingdom of God? The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but are mighty through God! The kingdom of God comes not by the sword, so of what importance in the outworking of God's kingdom on earth are the conflicts between nations and empires? These have no meaning whatsoever! The battles beheld in spirit by the eagle-eyed seer of Patmos signify spiritual combats, combats between light and darkness, between spirit and flesh, between truth and error, between righteousness and unrighteousness, between the precious mind of Christ and the carnal mind, between life and death. A man must experience this combat within himself to become a spiritual conqueror and gain the crown of life! A war in the Middle East has absolutely nothing to do with this! Our Lord, in the days of His flesh, carried on such spiritual warfare in an infinitely greater way than others, overcoming the compounded powers of the world, the flesh and the devil — and finally death itself! What a warfare! What a victory! How the mighty battles of the Roman empire pale in contrast with this! The first and second World Wars accomplished almost nothing for humanity compared with what Jesus won! He has opened up the way to victory and triumph over every enemy of sin, sorrow, limitation and death for all who are willing to follow Him into the power of the kingdom of God! Our Lord is a spiritual conqueror! And the book of Revelation is addressed to him that overcometh! That should reveal within every heart what kind of warfare the book presents!

I have often been encouraged by the messages from brother Paul Mueller, and nowhere more than by the following words: "The book of Revelation is clearly declared to be The Revelation of Jesus Christ. It is a book of symbolic truths revealing the Christ, both Head and body. And the revelation of the Christ has nothing whatever to do with literal nations involved in literal wars. But the revelation of Jesus Christ has everything to do with the manifestation of Christ in His corporate body of sons, and their spiritual growth. Therefore, we must understand the message of the book of Revelation to be spiritual. We are engaged in a war in the realm of the spirit, where all evil and carnality is being dealt with. This war is about our coming to perfection and dealing with the carnal, Adamic nature within us. I have said that this battle is a war to end all wars for the age, and I believe it! When we, as the firstfruits, are free of our carnality, a pattern will be established for the deliverance and freedom of many others! And when the carnal nature is removed from all mankind, the cause of all wars and violence in the world will also end.

"What wonderful spiritual truth is revealed when we understand and interpret this book in the Spirit of the word rather than with the dead letter of the word inspired by the carnal mind! The carnal nature has enclosed itself behind all manner of high-sounding religious doctrines, where 'HE' has found refuge during the previous six days of man. Old Adam would like us all to believe that this prophetic word is referring to a literal war and not to a spiritual war that will destroy 'HIM'. All during the six days of man, old Adam has been hiding behind 'HIS' false doctrines. And this is the way God ordained it to be for a time. The wisdom and anointing of God is sadly lacking in man's carnal interpretations of the God-given and God-anointed prophecies of the book of Revelation. What good would another literal war do for the world? Is there any real, divine purpose in another literal war that would destroy multitudes? None whatsoever! If the majority of literal, sinful human beings were

destroyed in another violent world war, as some suggest, the old, corrupt, Adamic nature would still plague mankind. And so would the devil!

"The truth is, the carnal, Adamic nature is responsible for all the wars from the beginning of time. What the creation needs is not another literal war, but a spiritual war that will end all wars! God knows this better than we do! His omniscient wisdom is far superior to the ideas and opinions of the religious theologians. And He has set forth a plan by which the present warfare, which we are now engaged in, shall destroy the man of sin and bind Satan for the age. This is indeed a war that shall end all wars and violence in the world for the duration of the kingdom of God on earth!

"Then the firstfruits, which we are, shall be holy, resulting in a world that shall become holy also. The principle of the kingdom of God is: 'For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy.' (Rom. 11:16) Also, the kingdom of God 'is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened' (Mat. 13:33). As the firstfruits of the kingdom of God, we are becoming holy. We are mixed into the lump of the world, and shall change the world even as we have been changed! Therefore, the entire lump, the whole world, shall become holy, just as we have been made holy, not by our own works of righteousness of which we might boast, but by the abundant and transforming grace of our God!" — end quote.

As I mentioned earlier in our series on The Kingdom of God, I was once among those who believed the negative predictions of men. But through the years of walking with God something wonderful has happened to me! I spent several years of my early life and ministry with what I call an "apocalyptic mentality." By that term I mean that mind-set that is always looking for the "end" of the age with great cataclysmic upheavals and tremendous earth-shaking events — kingdoms falling, economies crashing, nuclear warfare erupting, and all those violent, catastrophic happenings that are supposed to take place in the world at the end of time. I was expecting that! We watched the Soviet Union, we watched events in the Middle East, we watched the stock market, because if crashed, we felt the "end" was certainly upon us! We were concerned about a one world government, invasion of the United States, the Illuminati, and a thousand other earthly things.

God delivered me from that apocalyptic mentality! He showed me clearly and powerfully that it was founded upon a web of lies! It was rooted in the spirit of fear! Its origin was right in the hallways of Mystery Babylon! It takes the same power of God to deliver one from that spirit of delusion that it takes to deliver one from any other demon. You see, every nation on earth has already experienced economic collapse at some time, including ours. Every nation has had war and destruction. The terrorist attack on the United States last year was indeed horrible, but not even to be compared to the horrors visited upon Europe and Japan in the Second World War. Great empires have risen and fallen throughout history, and none of them heralded the end of time. Plagues, pestilence, earthquakes, storms, and disasters of many kinds have killed millions of people in hundreds of nations and devastated whole civilizations, but none ever brought the end of the world. All of those things have been happening out there in the external world since the beginning of time, but let me tell you, none of them have anything whatever to do with the coming of the kingdom of God! Only the nature of the Father formed in His elect, only the full measure of the stature of Christ formed in God's New Creation Man, only the power of God upon His people, only the glory of God in His manifested sons, will signal the hour of transition into the greater glory of the kingdom of God upon the nations of earth!

The mind of Christ is now being imparted to God's elect in greater fullness. By the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the glorious mind of Christ we are beginning to see all things as they really are. We are now seeing new things, a new heaven and a new earth! This holy knowledge comes not by any outward observation, but by the mighty working of God in our lives. This is a mighty transition for me and for the body of Christ, as I trust it is the reality of all who read these lines. Christ is revealing Himself, His mind, His heart, His glory and His purpose in the midst of His chosen ones. I hear the witness of this from thousands of saints all over the world! There are many groups with whom we have no direct connection that are now speaking these same things! None of us were taught by man, we held no council to agree on doctrine or formulate a teaching, nor did we receive it by reading one another's writings or attending gatherings, meetings or conventions. It is the sovereign work of God among those who have been called and separated unto God in this new kingdom Day!

The hope and promise and power and glory of the kingdom of God is more clear and focused in my spirit today than at any time in the past! The earnest expectation of the manifestation of the sons of God burns more brightly in my heart now than it ever has! I rejoice that this is the DAY of the manifestation when Christ with His body shall see the triumph of His life within, bringing blessing, life, light, love and full and complete deliverance to all mankind! This is the Present Truth. This is what the Spirit is saying to the overcomers in this great hour! Great and glorious things are at hand! THIS IS THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 10 HE WHO IS, AND WAS, AND IS TO COME

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART TEN

GRACE AND PEACE FROM HIM HE WHO IS, AND WAS, AND IS TO COME

John was exiled to the isle of Patmos. While on that island he had a marvelous experience with God! He wrote down the revelation that came to him in that experience. After his encounter with the resurrected, ascended, and glorified Christ on Patmos he was released from his island prison and carried this message back to the church. This wonderful message has been going forth to the church for two thousand years! Not only has it been going forth, but it has been working, accomplishing, fulfilling itself within a people gathered out of this age. This revelation is not an ancient history, nor is it something to take place in the future — it has been happening ever since the time that God gave it! The book is a prophecy, and this fact is stated again at the end of the book (Rev. 22:19). Prophecy for the church, the called out, is for edification, exhortation, and comfort (I Cor. 14:3).

Many people want to make the book of Revelation correspond to, and be parallel with, the book of Daniel. The book of Daniel, however, was an Old Testament prophecy. It was a book prophesying of literal, physical, outward, earthly events transpiring in the world of literal, physical, natural peoples and nations, the chief of which was God's own nation of Israel. Under the Old Covenant God's people was a natural people, with natural, physical, outward, earthly laws, rituals, ceremonies, customs, priesthood, temple, and government. They fought physical wars with material weapons against natural armies. Under the New Testament, however, God's people is a spiritual people, born from above, walking after the Spirit and living in the Spirit. The law of God is an internal law, written in the heart and inscribed upon the mind by the Spirit of the living God. The book of Revelation was not sent to God's natural people, Israel after the flesh. It was sent to God's spiritual people, His called out who are born from above, citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem!

The book of Revelation is, therefore, a spiritual book sent to a spiritual people, involving spiritual events and experiences in the spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ! The book of Daniel ended when Jesus Christ came into the world proclaiming the kingdom of God. It reached its final consummation at the end of Daniel's Seventieth Week, when the Lord turned from the natural Israel nation to build His spiritual house and temple made of living stones. Jesus brought a new order into the earth, the spiritual order of the kingdom of God! Therefore, the battles, upheavals, judgments, dealings, and everything else written in the book of Revelation are spiritual, for under the new order of the kingdom of God "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:4-5).

GRACE AND PEACE FROM HIM...

John begins the salutation of his letter to the churches by saying, "John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come." (Rev. 1:4) Of the many truths God has made known to His people none shine more brightly or more frequently from the pages of God's Word than the truth that our salvation and calling, from start to finish, are totally and fully products of the Grace of God. This word grace is translated from the Greek word charis, which not only means "unmerited favor," but really carries the deeper meaning of "an influence that produces a result." Thus, grace is not merely the kindness of God in doing something for us which we have not deserved, but it is the essence, the energy, the power and working wrought within as HE DOES for us, to us, in us, and through us! God's grace, divine grace, then, is DIVINE ENABLEMENT!

In grace God does something more for us than just showing mercy or unmerited favor — He works by His mighty power within to do in and through us WHAT WE OURSELVES CANNOT DO! What a blessed truth this is, and how wonderfully it reveals the graciousness of God! Ah, yes, weak carnal men need mercy — but do you not see, my beloved, that men need something more than mercy. They need HELP! Mercy covers my weakness — but divine enablement overcomes it! Mercy forgives my sin — divine enablement conquers it and supersedes it with righteousness! Mercy overlooks my faults — divine enablement causes me to rise above them! Mercy means that God will do for me in spite of myself — divine enablement means that what He does changes me and makes me something more than I was!

Can we not see that when Paul said, "For I am the least of the apostles, that am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me," (I Cor. 15:9-10) he pointed us to the fact that his apostolic ministry was entirely the result of DIVINE ENABLEMENT! It wasn't just "unmerited favor" that made Paul a great apostle, it was something more, it was a mighty power working within him, and that power was grace! To ever be anything in God Paul needed more than mercy — he needed enablement, divine enablement! I pray that the truth and force of these things may grip your heart! Have you ever wondered, in the light of your own apparent weakness, whether you could ever really, truly attain to the high calling of sonship? Let me tell you, my brother, my sister, not only has the Father saved you by His kindness, and called you by His own sovereign choosing, He now giveth more grace, more and more and more of His DIVINE ENABLEMENT to bring you unto His purpose! As we consider the tremendous challenges, battles, prunings, purgings, processings, victories, glories and spiritual heights of attainment outlined in the book of Revelation, how fitting that John should preface this great revelation with these words: "Grace be unto you!"

And then follows peace. To be filled with God's peace, to be fully at peace with God, with ourselves and others, to have peace in every situation and circumstance of life, and with everything else in this world and throughout the unbounded heavens is the goal of sonship! You will never get through the experiences of the book of Revelation without peace! So John begins, "Peace be unto you!" That is what the kingdom of God is all about in our lives! If there is any one thing, within or without, that troubles us and denies us His peace, then the kingdom of God is not fully established within us. The Lord is now establishing peace among His elect in Zion. He is now publishing peace and salvation in Zion, and is bringing good tidings of great things to us, by His Spirit. "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem...how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" (Isa. 52:1,7).

In Hebrews 12:22 we read that we are now come unto mount Zion. To correctly unlock the great revelation and reality of this mount Zion we need to go back and look at the shadow. Israel was God's land, the whole nation of His people. In Israel there was the city of Jerusalem, the capital city, the seat of government comprising all the ruling class. Yet in Jerusalem there was only one who, with his household, dwelt on mount Zion. He was the king! Mount Zion is the highest mount in Jerusalem, and David the king established his throne there. He was the highest pinnacle of glory attainable. But that Zion was only a shadow of the true mount Zion to which we are come in the Spirit. David was king over natural Israel. Christ is king over spiritual Israel. David dwelt on the natural mount Zion. Therefore Christ dwells on the spiritual mount Zion. And this spiritual Zion is composed of those who in union with Christ the Head have reached the very highest pinnacle attainable in the heavenly Jerusalem, those who have followed the Lord all the way to His throne. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne." (Rev. 3:21)

In Revelation 14:1-5 we find a company of 144,000 standing with the Lamb upon mount Zion. By the grammatical structure of the Greek we are assured that not only is Jesus the Lamb, but the 144,000 are lambs! There are 144,000 lambs standing with the Lamb on mount Zion! This company standing with their Lord can represent nothing other than those who have followed the Lamb all the way from death on mount Calvary to the glory and exaltation of mount Zion! They are lambs, and if there is any characteristic that identifies a lamb, it is peace! That is the lamb nature! "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened He not His mouth." (Acts 8:32)

God has but one throne, and those who share that throne share it in the heights of the spiritual mount Zion! All who are dwelling in the high and holy realm of Zion, are hearing the voice of the Son of God! Good tidings of great things, of full salvation, of perfection of holiness and power, the reign of Christ, and the peace of the kingdom of God are now being declared in Zion. "For the Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation. This is my rest forever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it. There will I make the horn (kingship) of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed. His enemies will I clothe with shame: but upon Himself shall His crown flourish." (Ps. 132:13-14,17-18) When that word becomes life to us by the Spirit, the Lord then fills us with the joy, peace, holiness and power of mount Zion. Then those qualities, including His peace, shall flow out of us to fill, first, the city of God, then the whole land of God's own people, and finally the whole earth and all nations. Haggai prophesied, saying of the glory of the latter house, the spiritual temple of living stones, each stone a quickened, living son of God, "And in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts" (Hag. 2:9) When the peace of God has filled the house of the Lord, His peace shall then flow out of the house, bringing true and lasting peace to all the peoples and nations of the world!

The peace of God can only be ministered to the inhabitants of earth by the authority of Christ in the glory and power of His kingdom of sons and daughters. Another prophet prophesied, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, THY KING COMETH unto thee...and He shall speak peace unto the nations, and His dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth." (Zech. 9:9-10) Christ our King rules from the top down, from the height of His throne in the heavenlies down to the lowest valley and the deepest hell. Our King comes first to mount Zion, the sons of God; then to Jerusalem, the whole church, the bride of Christ; next to the land of Israel, that is, all the people of God on whatever spiritual level they may be; and finally to the rest of mankind in the ends of the earth. To all realms His word is peace! "Peace from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come..."

HE WHO IS, AND WAS, AND IS TO COME

"Grace be unto you, and peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come." (Rev. 1:4)

In the realm of the Spirit the past, present, and future co-exist. It is high and lifted up in the throne realm that we are given the ability to see the past, the present, and the future all at once. Again and again in the book of Revelation, where our Lord is mentioned, He is spoken of as He who is, He who was, and He who is to come — meaning that when we leave the earth realm we transcend time as we know it. Planet earth is but a tiny speck in the eye of God's infinite greatness. We live out our natural lives on a virtual reality machine called Earth. The five senses manipulate us into believing that what we see, hear, feel, taste, and touch are real — but what you see and touch and feel are not real, they are not objective, they are not abiding realities at all! They are merely a passing phenomenon. People often say, "I want something solid, I need to see the facts, I need something that's real — I'm a realist!" In our journey from the natural to the spiritual realm we learn, however, that were it not for a power beyond the things we see, none of them would exist. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." (Heb. 11:1-3) That which we perceive as reality is temporary and passing and has been established out of something eternal that your eye cannot see! If we want to walk with God we must be willing to jump out of the boat of the five senses and learn how to let our spirit gravitate into what God is, and then bring it back down into this earth until it takes on manifestation.

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." (Rev. 1:8) That is awesome! You see, every time Jesus is mentioned in this book He is never mentioned in the past, or just the present, or in the future. Every time we meet Jesus in the book of Revelation it is the Jesus who is, and who was, and who is to come. The reason is that the book of Revelation gives us a view of the kingdom of God from the divine perspective — as God views it — and the past, the present, and the future encompass the outworking of God's purpose in the earth through His wonderful plan of the ages. That is what is so powerful — in the Spirit you can see the whole plan of God from beginning to end! The purposes of God in the earth embrace past history, present awareness, and future consummation.

Everything in the universe, and everything in your life, precious friend of mine, exists in the past, the present, and the future. Jesus was doing something two thousand years ago, Jesus was doing something five hundred years ago, Jesus was doing something fifty years ago, Jesus was doing something yesterday, Jesus is doing something right now, and He will be working His great work in all of our tomorrows!

The Lord which is, and which was, and which is to come is God expressed in the dimension of time. This is not talking about the eternal Lord who is without beginning or end. Certainly God is the eternal One! But the verb "to be" relates to time. Was, is, and is to come are all time expressions. You will not find this Lord who is, and was, and is to come, in eternity! This is the God of the ages revealed in a unique Lordship within those ages. A concept we must immediately grasp in order to understand God's plan of the ages is that time is a created phenomenon consisting of past, present, and future just as man is a created phenomenon having youth, middle age, and old age. No, you cannot smell, touch, or feel time, but it is there, ever-present, always marching into the future. Time was created; it had a beginning, it shall have an end. This Lord who is, and who was, and who is to come, is the beginning and the end. He is God working out His purpose and revelation in time. Time is only one thing among countless other things that are part of the entire created universe. It is as much a "species" of creation as, for example, rocks, elephants, trees, and water are species of creation. Before the creation of the universe, there was no time; at the end of the ages when the present material universe is dissolved and replaced by a new, spiritual universe, time as we know it shall cease to exist. It will be swallowed up into eternity just as all death will be swallowed up into victory, and there shall be no more death! No more time and no more death! Time was created in the beginning, and will be dissolved at the end of the ages. This Lord who is, and who was, and who is to come, is the Lord we meet in time, in His purpose of the ages!

I am compelled to state that the Bible says very little by way of a definition of eternity, because the Bible is essentially a book of time and for time. It was written for man who lives in a temporal state and who is not yet a totally eternal being. Only as we enter that state of being called eternity...only as HE who IS ETERNITY becomes "All-in-all" within us...only as we are spiritually metamorphosed into our eternal condition...only as eternity becomes an absolute reality to us...only then will formerly temporal beings such as we now are, truly comprehend and understand eternity and things of an eternal nature. This marvelous work has now begun within our spirit as our spirit has been quickened by His Spirit! I stated that the Bible is relatively silent about what eternity is; that is not to say that human teachings and theology haven't taught us a great deal about eternity, but, alas! much of it over the past centuries has come from the carnal minds of Babylonish theologians and not from the mind of the Eternal One via the Holy Spirit.

Eternity is a state of absolute timelessness, not of unending time. Eternity is a state of being without change, fluctuation or progression, resident in the very nature and person of God in which such concepts as past, present, future, before, after, change, transition, growth, birth, death, beginning, end, etc., do not exist. Do you see? Time is not part of eternity. Eternity is not composed of segments of time. Eternity is not time standing still. It is simply not time at all! Eternity doesn't go on and on and on, ad infinitum. Eternity doesn't go anywhere, nor does it do anything. Eternity simply IS. It is just a glorious experience of BEING! Eternity simply IS, just as God simply IS. Jesus said, **"Before Abraham was, I AM" (Jn. 5:58)** — not "Before Abraham was, I WAS." There are no past or future tenses in eternity. There is only one eternal NOW!

Now the eternal God has injected Himself into time. "In the beginning God created..." Since that wonderful dawn God has been the God of His creation, the God of heaven and earth, the God of the ages, the God of history, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of His people, the God of our salvation. The great revelation of the scriptures is that this universe and this world is governed by a throne, and that throne is not in London, it's not in Rome, it's not in Washington — it's in heaven, the eternal dimension. Time is being governed by eternity! Ultimate reality sits upon a throne and governs galaxies, solar systems, planets, creatures, time, and history. Generation after generation, through the rise and fall of empires, and the shifting sands of history, God remains. He works all His purposes in all things, but HE changes not! Yet — God in Christ became a man! God as man has tenses to His being: the yesterday of the past, the today of the present, the tomorrow of the future. This is not the eternal God, but the God who has dispensed His eternity into time. **"Jesus Christ the same — yesterday, today, and for the ages" (Heb. 13:8)** (literal). **"And the four beasts had**

each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." (Rev. 4:8) Day and night do not exist in eternity nor in the heavenly realm of God's Spirit! Is it not clear that this scene is not set in some far-off heaven somewhere. In the heaven the preachers preach about there is no day and night! There is no sun or moon or stars, and there is no night there! This scene is set in time! HE is praised and extolled both DAY AND NIGHT, this God who WAS, and IS, and IS TO COME! HE is worshipped and adored both DAY AND NIGHT, this God of the ages, this Architect of history, this Lord of time, this King of the universe, this Most High who "liveth for the ages, whose dominion is an age during dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation: and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Dan. 4:34-35, Literal & KJV).

Oh, take me not back through the long ages to a Christ that walked the shores of Galilee, to a Christ that was! He is! He lives! He is here! In my today! I can never be alone, never grope in the dark for a hand, never be forsaken, never lack in the hour of need, never fail in His on-going purposes, never need a Saviour, a Guide, a Brother, a Head, a Leader, a Captain, a Father. I have Him, He who was everything in the yesterday of the past, and who will be everything in the tomorrow of the future, is mine today; and in each conscious moment of my existence here, and throughout all the ages, He is my life, my all! He is not a far-off, untouchable God, "inhabiting eternity," as the King James Bible erroneously states, but a God made nigh, INHABITING THE AGES, involved in His creation, working tirelessly and unceasingly and unfailingly until His wonderful plan is brought to a successful conclusion and HE becomes gloriously ALL IN ALL!

The life we now have is a progressing, growing, conquering life — the life of the ages. It is life that has come through the quickening of our spirit by His Spirit, giving a new beginning, and the potential to become, in due time, all He is. I am sure my readers, with myself, must confess that there is some progress still to be made, growth still to be experienced, transformation yet to be wrought before we stand in Him in the fullness of that life that needs no change, no further development, no additional experience, no fuller stature, no added triumph, no increase of wisdom, knowledge, or power — that state of being as unchangeable as He is unchangeable, eternal as He is eternal! Only faintly now do our eyes behold the splendor of that eternal realm which lies before us, but as we approach reverently and with godly fear, not disrespectfully and thoughtlessly as nosy children prying into some sacred thing, the Lord of glory is meeting us and is becoming a Father unto us and we are the sons of God in whom the Father shall unfold the fullness of His life, mind, will, and glory. Thus are we coming into that same image and we shall share with Christ the glory He had with the Father before time was — ETERNAL GLORY!

What Christians for centuries have called "eternal life" is in the Greek "life aionios" — the life of the ages! How I thank God that my present state of being is not eternal! There is more! The new man in me is changing, growing, increasing, maturing unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ! Some entertain the notion that once they have received Christ within them they have the whole Christ in all His fullness and that's all there is. But in the scriptures there is the growth and the formation of Christ in us, and the increase of God! To those in whom the Christ life is but a babe within them, Peter writes, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby." (I Pet. 2:2) To those pressing on to maturity Paul wrote, "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." (Eph. 4:15) Some would rather ignore this growing, changing, increasing life of the ages, somehow projecting themselves into that life which is eternal, claiming "by faith" the finished product, while by-passing the tedious processing that develops and matures that life. Ah, dear ones, it doesn't work that way! Christ is being formed in us and it will take "the ages," my friend, to unfold it all. As long as there is need for growth, change, and advancement, there is need for time. Until redemption is complete its work will proceed in time, but the finished work of redemption stands at time's end. Thank God! There is an end — then eternity, God all-in-all! "I am the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come."

As God's plan of the ages has progressed there has been a level of life, a spiritual vitality, for each age. Each age has been different. Men in antediluvian times knew God in a certain way and received life of a particular order. Israel, under the law, and the ministry of the prophets, entered into another degree of spiritual life.

Perhaps I can give you a simple illustration in this way. There is a difference between "fetus" life, "baby" life, "child" life, "adolescent" life, and "mature" life. There is a difference between "youthful" life, "middle age" life, and "old age" life. Can we not see by this that there is a continuing development of God's life within us, until HIS FULLNESS is attained, and there shall be a continuing development of His life in the whole human family throughout the age and the ages to come until God becomes all-in-all!

God is cultivating within His sons an eternal nature! The thoughts of God's people are becoming boundless and eternal, no longer controlled and motivated purely by carnal memories of the past, by present events, or by dim hopes for an endless future in "mansions over the hilltop." The fledgling spirits of God's sons are fast growing up into the limitless expanses of God's own changeless, eternal spiritual state of being. Yes, the whole man is becoming a new, eternal creation, no longer limited by the space-time-continuum. Even our present vile bodies shall be changed, fashioned like unto His body of glory! God's maturing sons see the reality of a state of being called eternity, and their hearts strain and leap upward toward that "plane" in God!

Now let us consider for a moment the Lord, which IS. Who is this Lord which IS? In what way does He differ from the Lord, which was, or the Lord which is to come? Someone says, "There is no difference — it is all the same Lord!" Ah, yes, it is the same Lord, but there is a difference in His administration and manifestation! As startling as it may seem, this Lord which is — is YOU! If He is not you, who are you? The Lord which is, is the same Lord which was, but with a difference. Let us look at the Lord who was! **"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." (I Tim. 3:16)** Let us look closely at what Paul is saying! Great is the mystery of godliness or God-like-ness. God was...God was...God was... MANIFESTED IN THE FLESH! Who is it that was God manifested in the flesh? Why, Jesus, of course! This is the great mystery of God-like-ness! Was Jesus like God? "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father." Why was Jesus like God? Because He was God! **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (Jn. 1:1)** Who is the God that was? You couldn't answer it any better than that if you tried! And scripture could be piled upon scripture to show that God manifested in the flesh of Jesus is the Lord which was! "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." Great is the mystery of God-like-ness... Jesus was God manifested in the flesh! Hallelujah!

The Lord which was is also the Lord which is! The present tense of God's manifestation in Christ is expressed by the apostle Paul when he said, **"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. 2:20)** Jesus Himself prophesied of this manifestation of God in His people, saying, **"If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with (in) him." (Jn. 14:23)** "God is in you." "God dwelleth in you." When we think of God manifested in the flesh we think of the man walking by the shores of blue Galilee, walking among humanity, in His humanity, demonstrating what humanity was intended to be. But God has raised our vision beyond He who was and is causing us to see Him who is! "Now ye are the body of Christ." Christ is no longer walking in that body that tread the sands of Galilee! He is walking in another body today, in your body, in my body, in all those sons whom He is bringing to His glory! In the realm of Him who is we find a glory beyond the was which enables us to press into and participate in the is. While many still look for the coming of the Lord was in the clouds, we have now experienced the One who IS COMING TO BE GLORIFIED IN HIS SAINTS!

Would God that Christians could be awakened to the glory of Him who is! The same John who in spirit beheld the glory of the many-membered Son of man on Patmos, penned these significant words to the children of God: **"Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also." (I Jn. 2:22-23)** Now what does John mean when he speaks of denying the Father and the Son? Let us make no mistake about this! A little further on John enlarges on this statement so that we need not be left in the dark. **"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: EVERY SPIRIT THAT CONFESSETH THAT JESUS CHRIST IS COME IN THE FLESH IS OF GOD: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and now already is in the world." (I Jn. 4:1-3)**

Now let us get these statements clear in our minds! We have heard many wild speculations about who the antichrist will be, but John declares the antichrist to be one who denies that Jesus is the Christ, which is denying the Father and the Son. But how does he do this? BY NOT CONFESSING JESUS CHRIST HAVING COME IN THE FLESH! But what does this mean? It states that we know the Spirit of God by His confessing Jesus Christ having come in the flesh. Does this mean that Roman Catholicism is the Spirit of God? It confesses that Jesus Christ was a man, born of a virgin. It confesses that He came in the flesh as a babe in Bethlehem. They even parade Him before the world hanging upon a cross, crucified. Millions of others around the world, representing every kind of religion and false cult existing admit the same historical facts. Do all of these represent the Spirit of God?

These verses have a deeper meaning! They are not speaking of the fact of Jesus Christ having lived on earth as a man. Almost anyone will admit that! But the profound truth which all of popular religion has missed, is the fact of the Christ actually coming into this flesh, my flesh, your flesh, and becoming an eternal and inseparable part of us! Millions confess Him who was, but very few in this dark age confess Him who is! "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ IS (NOW) COME in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist...ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them (the antichrists): because GREATER IS HE THAT I-S IN YOU (your flesh), THAN HE THAT I-S IN THE WORLD." (I Jn. 4:3-4) Every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ IS come in your flesh and in my flesh, beloved, — is antichrist! Why? Because Greater is He (Jesus Christ) that IS IN YOUR FLESH than he (the spirit of antichrist) that IS IN THE ADAMIC FLESH OF THE WORLD! Our very own natural, human consciousness would deny that the Almighty God of the universe dwells, and lives, and in all things triumphs in us! So don't worry about poor old Mussolini or Henry Kissinger being the antichrist — truly he is enthroned in our own carnal minds!

He that is in you will never leave you nor forsake you! This is the Christ from whose love no power nor creature in heaven or earth can separate us! Paul preached not himself, but Christ Jesus the Lord. After stating this himself, he follows on to say, "But this treasure (Christ) we have in earthen vessels." (II Cor. 4:7) Christ is now being formed in our earthen vessels! Just as God was formed in Jesus within the womb of Mary, so is Christ being formed in the womb of our mortal flesh! Only the complete, mature formation of Christ within us will bring us to manifestation as sons of God. Sonship is the actual quickening of the Christ life who has become the new man within. Great is the mystery of God-like-ness! Christ in us is both ageless and deathless, the actual Son of the God of heaven. He is being formed in all His nature, wisdom, glory and power in this human frame, even as He was formed in the firstborn Son, Jesus, to perform His mighty works.

By personal application, if my spirit does not confess that Christ is come in my flesh, I am antichrist. The confession of my spirit is a much stronger confession than might be made by my mouth. With the mouth confession is made unto salvation, but with the spirit confession is made unto sonship. The confession of one's spirit bespeaks an expression arising from an inner state of being, not merely a belief of the mind. If my spirit is confessing that Christ is come in my flesh, it is confessing it by a living manifestation! As I live out Christ in the nitty-gritty of every day experience, in every situation and circumstance, doing all the will of my heavenly Father upon this earth, I am confessing with my spirit that Christ is come in my flesh! Ah, I might say with my mouth that Christ is come in my flesh that I am a son of God, ready to walk on water and glow in the dark, but my spirit speak just the opposite, as the fountain of my life sends forth polluted waters. Multitudes have a mouth confession of the presence of Christ within whose "spirit confesseth not that Christ is come" in their flesh!

Oh, that men might believe it! Truly, Christ in us is our only hope of glory! HE IS the glory! But antichrist will hear of no such hope of glory. His hope does not rest wholly in the Christ within, but in his own ability and works, his own faithfulness or endurance. He is cluttered about with laws, regulations, creeds, ordinances, observances, rituals, ceremonies, programs, traditions, and religious exercises of this order and that, all of which are designed to assure his right standing with God. He is thus denying the Father and the Son, for the living Christ alone is not his life! Anything that adds something to the Christ life within, to fill some place or function in our lives that is not filled by THE LIFE OF CHRIST ALONE, — is antichrist! The word "antichrist" is made up of the Greek preposition anti and the word for Christ. Anti bears the meaning of that which is

"opposed to" by "supplanting" or being "instead of." During the Middle Ages, a man who was considered a hostile, self-substituted, usurping Pope — one occupying the Pope's place and receiving his honors and exercising his functions — was called an "antipope." This term is commonly used in history in this connection. Such a "Pope" was not merely a person who was against the Pope. Martin Luther was against the Pope, but he was not an antipope because he never went to Rome and usurped the Pope's seat, making himself the Pope! An antipope was a person who was against the Pope by attempting to take the Pope's place. This happened on occasion in previous centuries. In like manner, the antichrist is that spirit, mind, nature, personality, consciousness, activity, enterprise, work, function, method, program or any other thing that comes TO TAKE THE PLACE OF CHRIST in our lives — and by so doing opposes Christ!

Therefore we find that most of the candidates for antichrist promoted by the preachers haven't even come close to being antichrists! Antichrist signifies one who sets himself up in the place of Christ, by appropriating some of the prerogatives and attributes of Christ. That is, antichrist appears as Christ and by so doing is actually against Christ — usurping the place that rightly belongs to Christ alone! Anything that is placed instead of Christ, is literally antichrist. The very moment the love of God, the truth of God, the glory of God, and the power of God wanes from the spirits of the Lord's people, flying out the windows of their souls, a whole host of attitudes, ideas, beliefs, doctrines, rules, regulations, rituals, ceremonies, sacraments, ordinances, forms, methods, organization, and traditions stalk boldly through the door to take the place of reality and life in the Spirit. Any little form of substitution that supplants the ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF THE INDWELLING CHRIST LIFE — is ANTICHRIST!

Those who have truly received the call to sonship have now learned, and learned well, that there is no need for these or myriad other religious trappings in the walk of sonship, for CHRIST WITHIN abundantly supplies everything they can possibly ever need! In order for Christ to be "all in all" He must first become ALL! God was in Christ, and God in Christ is in us! From the moment that the Father declared Christ's sonship the spirit of sonship moved in and through Him and His whole life became the revelation of His Father. The nature, mind, will and power of His Father manifested through Him, and it was the same power of the Father in Him that raised Him from the dead! And now a vast family of His "many brethren" have received that same spirit of sonship, even the same spirit that raised Christ from the dead dwells within us and shall also quicken our mortal bodies by that spirit that dwells in us!

Beloved, if He that was, is now He that is within you, what, under all God's heavens, could be added to you from without? Let us bow in holy reverence to worship and adore, and to live and walk in the blessed reality of such an high and holy calling! Stop seeking anything at all from or through the myriad substitutes pawned by the countless modern day antichrists of the church systems of man. These external religious observances will not suffice for those destined for the throne! CHRIST HIMSELF IS SUFFICIENT! In the name of Jesus Christ, divorce yourself completely and forever from all the substitutes, the realm of the instead of. You will find absolutely nothing in any of it that will satisfy the deepest cravings of your heart after God. CHRIST WITHIN IS ALL YOU NEED! This is the Lord who was Jesus of Nazareth, but who now is the many sons of God in the earth! God is bringing many sons to glory and we are being conformed to the image of God's firstborn Son. The eternal God never changes, but this Lord who was, and is, and is to come does change from glory to glory!

The reality of Christ in us is not a beautiful analogy nor a clever facsimile — it is truly HIM! Bennie Skinner once gave the following illustration. "When they crank up that mint in Washington D.C. with the special engraving machine, and start printing twenty dollar bills on that special paper with the special ink, they then cut them into singles, bundle them together, and put a band around them. You wouldn't take a bundle of these, hold them up, and say, 'Why, that looks like twenty dollar bills!' No, you wouldn't say that because you can see, you know, that they are twenty dollar bills!" In like manner, no one will need to say of the sons of God, "These sons look like Jesus Christ," for all shall surely see and know that the Lord who was IS THE LORD WHICH IS! What, then, does it mean when it says, "...and the Lord which is to come?" The expression "which is to come" is from the Greek *erchomai*, meaning "the coming one." Now, how is the Lord which was, and the Lord which is, also the coming One? What does it mean? It means that in our consciousness, in our experience, He is yet coming to be all that He is! That's what the processing is all about! **And to you who are troubled rest with us,**

when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven...when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that Day." (II Thes. 1:7,10) In the New Testament it was a great revelation that Christ was a many-membered body and that Christ was in them in mighty spirit power. This great truth became a glorious reality as each member of the Christ body found his or her place within that corporate expression of the Lord. But they also spoke of the coming Day of Christ and the coming and revelation of the Lord in a surpassing glory. They anticipated a full-orbed manifestation of this Lord in the glory of manifested sonship. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." (Rom. 8:18-19)

Jesus Christ is coming again, and He is coming to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all those holy sons of God who by His grace have come into His image through the ages. This is the fullness of the Christ! Not for the world nor all that is in it would I for one moment miss the glory which is yet to come! To reign with Christ and with Him usher all creation into the glory of God, which has been the vision of the prophets, the dream of the sages, the cry of the sons, the unrelenting purpose of God, and the longing and expectation of all creation is a prize of far vaster worth than all the power and glory and wealth of all the nations of earth combined. Though God's Christ is one, it will take the ages to come to reveal His manifold beauties and graces. He is the one Christ, yet His body is made up of many redeemed souls. He is the true Vine, yet there are many branches. He is the uniquely begotten Son of God, yet He is leading many sons to His own glory. He is the only Saviour, yet He is bringing a whole company of saviours up on mount Zion.

I bring you good news! YOU ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST — not the "mystical body" as the theologians of Babylon are wont to define it, but you are THE BODY of Christ, making you the Lord which is to come! Christ is in you of a truth, precious one, to manifest the fullness of Himself. Christ is your life. Christ is being formed in you, and you are being conformed to His image. In looking at a piece of petrified wood we can see this. One time it was wood, NOW IT IS ROCK. For something has happened to it! Certain minerals entered into every cell of that piece of wood and wrought a complete change in it. This process continued until that piece of wood had become rock. Same shape, same size, and it has exactly the same cell structure. But what a great change has taken place! THIS IS WHAT GOD IS DOING IN US! Something is happening to us! We do not understand all about it, but we know that there is a change going on in our innermost beings. It is God permeating us with Himself! God is impregnating us with Himself! God is taking over, filling even our very cells with all He is. This change is taking place in our inner selves, in our spirits, in our minds, and ultimately in our bodies. This process shall continue until we arrive at the condition of being saturated with God. God shall so fill us, so overwhelm us, so change us that we take on the very characteristics of God!

I think the highest privilege that scripture puts before us is surely that Christ will be glorified in us — that He will be admired in us. Think of it, my brethren, so completely has the image of the earthly passed away — so completely is the image of the heavenly gained that CHRIST is seen, CHRIST is admired in us! It is not the believer that is admired, glorified though he be. It is Christ who is admired in him! All that the saints are radiates HIS glory. It is in HIS beauty they are arrayed — in HIS glory they shine. The image they bear is HIS — HIS blood has bought them, HIS spirit has transformed them, HIS hand has formed them. They shine as the sun in that heavenly glory, but only as HIS light, and for HIS praise. This is not the hour for any self-exaltation, nor for the promotion of "my ministry," nor for the building of "my kingdom," for it is HE who is coming to be GLORIFIED IN US! Many think that the call to sonship is for their glorification — but it is not so. Little wonder that He is purging, pruning, breaking, sifting, melting, bringing us to such absolute nothingness, so that the only one left to be revealed is THE CHRIST. It is Christ glorified in us who is HE WHICH IS TO COME!

God will not allow us to refuse to see the Christ in each other and then look upon Him in some other form. Look not for the Christ who was, and do not cling to the Christ who is, yet know of a surety that Christ in us is HIM all the way! We will have to recognize Him in our brethren. God will not satisfy our carnal nature by allowing us to see Jesus descending from heaven in clouds of glory, alone in that glory. We shall be glorified together, the scripture says. Why would I look for Jesus in clouds of glory while I pass by His body on earth and refuse to see Him in them! It is this message that is coming to us today! If I want to see Christ I look at you, because that is where He is forming Himself, manifesting Himself, and glorifying Himself! The body of Christ is not

something apart from Christ, not just something that Christ has formed as a separate entity. The body of Christ IS CHRIST in the earth! Until I see, recognize, love and honor Christ in you, my brother, my sister, I would not see, recognize, love or honor one I would see riding upon a cloud! When this precious knowledge becomes sweet to our soul, we begin to look at one another and BEHOLD HIM! I now see Him who is and I shall look, and look, and look until in His temple which we are I see Him who is to come!

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 11 THE PRINCE OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART ELEVEN

THE FIRSTBORN FROM THE DEAD THE PRINCE OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH

"From Jesus Christ who is the faithful witness..." (Rev. 1:5). "These things saith He that is holy, He that is true...these things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness..." (Rev. 3:7, 14).

This word "true" is a very wonderful word! In the Greek it does not mean true merely as opposed to that which is false. The root means "that which is not concealed" or "that which is not withheld," that is, the whole truth as opposed to a partial truth, as distinguished from all shadows of, and approximations to, the truth. It expresses the perfect realization of an idea as contrasted with its partial realization. It indicates fullness as against that which is fragmentary or in-part. For example, we recall that Jesus said, "Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven." (Jn. 6:32) "I am the true vine." (Jn. 15:1) "The true light now shineth." (I Jn. 2:8) "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." (Heb. 9:24)

The manna that fell in the wilderness was not false bread from heaven. God sent down angel bread from heaven for Israel! But that bread did not satisfy. It was only good for a day. If it was left over to the next day it became contaminated, bred worms, and stank. It was wonderful bread from the hand of God, but not the fullness of what God had in mind! Christ is the fullness! He is bread like no other bread! When a man eats of this bread he will never hunger again. He does not need to come back and eat again. He that eats this bread from heaven, which is Christ as life, receives a dimension of life that is heavenly and eternal! Here indeed is reality! This is the true — whole, complete, full, all-inclusive, illimitable, boundless — bread of incorruptible life! The light of the Old Testament law and the words of the prophets were not a false word, they were just not the full revelation of reality that came in Jesus Christ. No one could deny that Israel had light! They were the only people that had light as a nation. The rest of the nations were as when Egypt was so dark that one could feel it, but in the homes of the Israelites there was light! That was wonderful light indeed, but now the true light is come! The light of the world is Christ! Moses and the prophets brought the light of God within the law and the scriptures, but what was but glowing word has now broken forth in the brightness of God in the midst of His people! As the pillar of fire gave a natural light at night, and that was wonderful, now incorruptible life and heavenly light are manifested as living personality in the person of Jesus Christ and those holy sons who come into His glory! The law and the prophets were a fragment, but Christ is the fullness! The law was truth. "Thy law is the truth...and all Thy commandments are truth." (Ps. 119:142,151) So while the law with all its outward observances of types and shadows is indeed truth, Christ is the whole truth and nothing but the truth! "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (Jn. 1:17) The law was a glimmer of light in the darkness, but the true (full) light now shineth!

Since this word "true" indeed expresses perfect realization as against the idea of partial realization as illustrated in these examples, we can now understand that Jesus Christ, the firstborn Son of God, is the FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS! The revelation of Jesus Christ is the revelation of the FULLNESS OF TRUTH AND REALITY. That's what the book of Revelation is all about! It is not merely the last book of the Bible, or a book about the end of the world. It is the revelation of Jesus Christ — the unveiling of the full intent, the ultimate purpose, and the very fullness of God in His called and chosen elect body of Christ! It is the revelation of the Third Day, of the Most Holy Place, of the Feast of Tabernacles, and the Manifestation of the Sons of God!

God has been using His people everywhere to whatever degree He has prepared the vessel for that revelation of the Christ. There has come a beautiful unfolding of His purpose, the outflow of His life, and the manifestation of Himself throughout the church age, right up to the present time. But Jesus sent a revelation to the church to declare that there shall yet come the ultimate, the total, and complete revelation of Jesus Christ — not a narrow, limited thing, not to get a number of people saved and filled with the Spirit, and healed and blessed and used — but the kingdom of God coming with power and with glory, as an expression and manifestation of God in His total capacity with no limitations, with all the power, with all the glory, all the might, all the majesty, all the authority, so that nations will be swept into the kingdom of God, all humanity transformed, creation delivered, and the last enemy, even death, destroyed from off the face of the earth for evermore. That is what you see in Christ's promises to the overcomers, in the manchild ruling upon the throne, in the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, in a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, in the judgments of God complete in all men, and there shall be no more death. What bright and glorious prospects loom before the vision of all who press on into the FULL REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST! How do we know that the sons of God will be manifested in the glory of Christ? How do we know that all men will be delivered and made alive in Christ? How do we know that all sin and death will be swallowed up in the whole human race as creation is delivered from the bondage of corruption? How do we know? Because Christ Jesus Himself is THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS!

In this order of fullness our Lord Jesus Christ is the firstborn, the first manifested son of God, and He is therefore the faithful and true witness. He is Himself the firstfruit, the sample, the demonstration, the prototype, and the pattern of God's fullness in His sons and ultimately in all men! The message revealed in the book of Revelation, and the message I proclaim to you today, is just this: Jesus is coming again! He will never come again in the body of His humiliation, never again walk to rest upon the well, or sleep in the storm tossed boat, never to again be smitten in the face and spit upon and crucified. Can we not all thank God that that part is finished? "In like manner as ye have seen Him go away," so will be the manner of His coming. It was an hour of His kingdom glory and the holy rapture of His translation. And so will He return. So He has returned. So He does return. His return on the day of Pentecost was in a mighty rushing sound, in tongues of flame, in prophetic ecstasy, in gifts of apostles and prophets and miracles. He came to fill His body, the church, with this power. But that was not the end! It was merely a means to the end!

Can we even begin to comprehend the greater glory of His coming in many sons brought to glory? All this will be reproduced on a larger, fuller scale. It will be the FULL HARVEST of His life! He will come with the keys of death and the grave in His hands for His elect sons. He will come in power as the Judge of the living and the dead. He will come as King of kings and Lord of lords in sovereign grace to carry out the great work of restoring all things. "Behold, I make all things new!" Some presume that they have already entered in to this full revelation of Jesus Christ, they are now walking in the Third Day, dwelling on mount Zion, living in the Feast of Tabernacles, and already reign as kings in the kingdom. Their lives and their ministries give the lie to their claims. I have not witnessed a power and a glory greater than Pentecost in any place, nor in any person, nor through any ministry anywhere on this planet. Have you? But it is coming! You can count on it! Having now accomplished His purpose of forming His elect body through the church age, the Lord is now also ready to use the finished product from this age, sons in His own image and likeness, to be the deliverers of creation. To this we are called, beloved, and for this our hearts cry out with groanings that cannot be uttered! Will it really happen? Ah, yes, my friend, JESUS CHRIST IS THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS!

THE FIRSTBORN FROM THE DEAD

"And from Jesus Christ, who is...the firstbegotten of the dead." (Rev. 1:5)

For three and a half years the disciples walked with Jesus. They saw Him feed the multitudes, calm the violent sea with a word, heal the sick and oppressed, and raise the dead even from the tomb of foul corruption. Three of them had been with Jesus on the holy mount and had seen the transcendent glory of His transfiguration. They fell down afraid, dumbfounded by the glory that was manifest, as they beheld the face of Christ shining with a brightness exceeding the noon day sun, and heard the voice of God out of the glory saying, "This is my beloved Son!" But at last the day came when the hideous monster approached, and death moved in and

reaches out its bony hands and takes this Jesus, the Nazarene, and lifts him up from the earth and impales Him upon a cross. He then takes his diabolical dart and plunges it into His heart. Jesus, with a loud cry, gives up the ghost and dies! Blackness and death cover the land and as His lifeless body is laid reverently in the tomb the hopes of all who trusted in God in Christ had been dashed to a thousand pieces.

The hours dragged slowly by. The sun set in the west and darkness covered the earth. At last the eastern sky was reddened and grew bright with a morning hope. People arose and went about their business. Again the light faded and disappeared. Once more darkness threatened. All of this was unseen and unfelt in the coldness and perpetual darkness of the tomb. There no light came nor went. There the air did not move nor was it disturbed by breathing. The most delicate instrument would have picked up no sound of a beating heart. There was but stillness and coldness and death in the tomb where Jesus lay. Those eyes that had wept over Jerusalem and had looked with compassion on so many, now had passed into the land of eternal darkness; those hands that had gone about doing good, which had touched the leper and opened the blind eyes, now were cold and clammy and still. Death reigned supreme in that tomb.

But on that morning of the first day of the week, when there was but the slightest shimmering of dawn on the horizon, unseen by human eyes, there descended the omnipotent and supernatural hand of God, right through that stone, and touched the body of the beloved Son. Life poured into that body and it was quickened by the immeasurable and illimitable power of God. In the silent darkness of that tomb a mighty metamorphosis took place — the body that rose was no longer a natural body — it was a spiritual body! It was a body pulsating with incorruptible power and immortal vitality! It shimmered with a splendiferous glow and vibrated at a frequency thousands of times higher than the body that was laid there three days before. Suddenly out of the blackness of the tomb, the first human body in the history of the world that could not die, nor be affected by any earthly power, stood and quietly passed through the rock walls like sunshine through a window pane, disappearing into the morning mist. Christ came out, not to the roar of hundreds of thousands, not to great parades or waiting hands, but He came out alone, having conquered death itself within Himself. There was only One who was good enough, wise enough, strong enough — Jesus the Christ, the first begotten, the firstborn from the dead! It is His voice that speaks in the vision of Patmos, it is His voice that beckons us onward to the glory of sonship!

But hark! this voice that speaks is not of this world. It does not sound from somewhere among the deep death-shadows in which here we grope and find no way out. It is the resurrection voice! He that speaks stands at the other side of death and the grave as the risen One! That means that He was dead and is alive again and lives forevermore! He is alive with a new life, a victorious life. He was in death, and went through death, and He now lives as never one lived before. And what is more, as He passed through death, He left the way open! In the Spirit we behold Him there, on the other side of death; and looking at His glory from our present travail, we know by that very token that there is a way out! As a man groping in the black and fearful darkness of a deep cave beholds in the distance the glimmer of glorious sunlight and takes courage to continue his way in the one direction of that light spot, assured that there lies his deliverance, so the sons of God groping in the darkness of the shadow of this mortal realm, beholding in the Spirit the glory of the risen firstborn Son, know that there is a way out of death into the glorious liberty of the sons of God! For, mark you well, He is not merely risen: He is the firstborn from the dead! And the firstborn is He that "openeth the womb" and prepares the way for all His brethren. Thus Christ was in the womb of death, was born from death, opening the womb of death for all those whom the Father hath given Him. And it is He, standing in that spot of glorious light, whom you see from your present darkness, who calls to you, "Because I live, ye shall live also!" "To him that overcometh will I give the crown of life." It is true, wonderfully and gloriously true — "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed!"

This beautiful message was sent to the churches from the resurrected, living Christ because He was lost from their minds, because He was vague in their consciousness, because time had eroded their fresh experience, because persecutions and troubles had weakened their hopes, because confusing teachers had disturbed their faith, and they had lost the real essence of His indwelling power of life. So He reminded them, truly reminded us, that He is the first one born from the dead. He is alive from the dead! Not just in spirit, but in spirit, soul and body! Precious friend of mine, are you lacking Him? Are you missing Him? Are you weak and troubled and doubting within your heart? Are you frustrated by pressures from without? Then hear the word of the Lord —

this message is from Jesus who is speaking to you alive from the dead! This is a living word, it's an incorruptible life, touch it and you will be strengthened by it, quickened by it, empowered by it, transformed by it, for it is the life of the resurrected Son of God within you! The book of Revelation is a word of life from the dead, it doesn't come from any mortal man, it's not about darkness, death, destruction, and hopelessness, but it's the value of a treasure from heaven. I have this life in me, you have this life in you, and this life within is the revelation of Jesus Christ, the appearing of Jesus Christ. This word will prevail!

Multitudes of Christians do not believe that Jesus is the "firstborn from the dead." They believe that Enoch was the first man to overcome death! They believe that Enoch was raised out of this death realm to a celestial, immortal existence in spirit, soul and body. Furthermore, they are convinced that both Enoch and Elijah preceded Jesus in His triumph over death, being caught up to heaven, changed and glorified, escaping physical death! That is the story told by the preachers. But I do not believe it! The problem is that the believers in the church systems have become literally filled with traditions and stuffy old theories formed in the minds of men who imagine they are students of the word of God. I am a great lover of the scriptures, but I am always afraid of any man who superficially interprets them out of a carnal mind. That man is spiritually illiterate and has closed his eyes to the shining light of the revelation of the Holy Spirit as it illumines His word. He may be a scholar and have a great intellect filled with dead head knowledge, but is unable to compare spiritual things with spiritual and thereby discern the wisdom that is from above.

Many people claim that Enoch and Elijah never died, yet in Hebrews chapter eleven Enoch is listed among the heroes of faith, and then verse thirteen plainly says, "These ALL DIED in faith, not having received the promises..." Enoch is named and Elijah is referred to in chapter eleven, and yet verse thirty-nine states, "And these ALL having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." In **John 2:13** we read an emphatic statement by Jesus which cannot be contradicted. We would have to say that either Jesus is wrong, or our understanding of a couple other passages is wrong, and Jesus is right! Jesus states, "**And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.**" Did Jesus forget about Enoch and Elijah when He made that statement? I think not!

It is not my intent to go into detail about this subject in this writing, but let us look briefly at Enoch's experience as recorded in the scriptures. Let us examine some of the clues that will aid our understanding. Genesis 5:23 states, "ALL the days of Enoch were 365 years." When this expression is used of other patriarchs, including Methuselah, it is followed by, "...and he died." However, Enoch is unique because instead of "and he died," the record states, "And Enoch walked with God, and he was not; for God took him." What does it mean when it says that God "took him"? According to Hebrews 11:5 it means translation and this word occurs three times in one verse! Translation, however, in the Greek means "to change sides," "transfer," or "transport." When we think of translation we think of going up. But that is not the meaning of the Greek word! "Transferred" would be a better translation. Let us look at another place where "translated" appears in the King James Bible. "**Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.**" (**Col. 1:13**) Now, while it is true there is an upward motion presented in many passages, such as, "If ye then be risen with Christ," and "He hath raised us up together," and many others, these are different words and different analogies. The words used in those passages are not the same word rendered "translated." The word rendered translated simply means to transfer or transport, to move from one place, realm, or state to another — in any direction! Have we not "changed sides" to follow Jesus? Have we not been "transported" from one kingdom to another? Have we not been "transferred" from a human, earthly, natural consciousness, realm, and state of being to a divine and spiritual consciousness, realm, and state of being? Has our allegiance not been "transferred" from our own selfish rights to the will of our Father? This is a very real spiritual experience! And though we have truly been "translated" into a new kingdom, and have "risen" and been "raised up" and "caught up" together with Christ in the heavenlies, have we gone anywhere physically? Did we disappear off the earth? Did our bodies become changed, metamorphosed, spiritualized and immortalized? NO! If we have been "translated" into the kingdom of God's dear Son, and yet haven't gone one inch off of planet earth, nor yet been changed into a body like unto HIS glorious body, by what authority do we contend that Enoch and Elijah left planet earth and have, for the past several thousand years, been living in some far-off heaven somewhere in immortal bodies that escaped death! Nowhere does the scripture say that Elijah never died. It only says he

was "taken," and he was seen being caught into a whirlwind. I have seen many things caught up in whirlwinds, my friend, including buildings and trees, and they were surely transferred some place, some of them never seen again. But they did not go to heaven! Ah, beloved, we do such superficial thinking!

I do not for one moment doubt that Enoch had a great and glorious spiritual experience that raised him up into a new dimension of spiritual life, for that is the outcome in any age of walking with God! He "was not" any more the same old Enoch, nor was He "found" any more in the old realm of sin and death consciousness and existence. But the scripture plainly states that HE DIED! Oh, how we need to let go of all the old religious traditions and believe what God has said! Our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, who came out of the tomb in a glorious body of divine life and power has told us from that state of resurrection life and immortality that HE HIMSELF IS THE FIRST BEGOTTEN, THE FIRST BORN FROM THE DEAD! The question follows — if Enoch and Elijah were able to attain this apart from the resurrection of Jesus Christ, then why would any of us have needed Jesus to open the way for us? Jesus would not have been the first man to overcome death — Enoch would have been first! This strikes at the very root of the redemption accomplished through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Our hope of full and complete redemption, including the redemption of our bodies, lies not with Enoch and Elijah, great as those men were, for only Jesus has the experience, and therefore the power, to change our vile bodies that they may be fashioned like unto His body of glory! Blessed be the firstborn Son!

THE PRINCE OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH

"And from Jesus Christ, who is...the Prince of the kings of the earth." (Rev. 1:5)

Let us look at the kingdom of God as it is described and emphasized in the New Testament. It should be natural, first of all, for us to take a look at the King of this kingdom! Unfortunately, the average church member does not think of Jesus as being a King on this earth. They see Him in heaven as a Saviour, a great High Priest, a Healer, Blessor, Baptizer, and then — the "soon coming" King! In thinking so loosely, we rob Jesus of one of the main phases of His ministry, that of being King on this earth — the King of the kingdom of God! Mind you, He is not GOING to be King; He is King now, for He has already ascended the throne of the majesty on high and been given ALL POWER AND ALL AUTHORITY IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH. This is why He can say to all His younger brothers, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne." (Rev. 3:21)

Jesus Christ has been chosen by heaven to the high office of Universal King! The Father of glory has appointed and anointed Jesus Christ to be King over this earth and all things! "A crown was given Him" (Rev. 6:2). "We see Jesus...crowned." (Heb. 2:9) "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns." (Rev. 19:11-12) God says to the earth, "Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my Spirit upon Him, and He shall show judgment to the nations." (Isa. 42:1) Addressing His chosen, even His beloved Son, the Almighty says, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." (Heb. 1:8) Heaven has declared, "Of the increase of His government and peace and there shall be no end." (Isa. 9:7) The voice of omnipotence proclaims, "I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of me, and I shall give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron...be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth." (Ps. 1:6-10)

The choice of heaven, praise God! is ultimately to be the choice of the whole earth! He whom the Almighty Father has selected to be King over this earth, is enthroned and crowned in the realm of the Spirit, and every knee in the whole earth, yea, in the entire universe is going to bow in ratification of heaven's choice. This glorious One, who is the well-beloved of heaven, in whom the Great Godhood is well pleased, about whose feet the swelling feelings of the innumerable celestial throngs roll in great billows of delight, is the Person we are to crown in this earth as its supreme Sovereign. Blessed be His glorious name forever, and let the whole earth be filled with His glory! Amen and Amen.

Consider for a moment, what the heavenly messenger said to Mary, the virgin of Nazareth. "Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name Jesus. And He shall be great...and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end." (Lk. 1:31-33) Jesus was born to rule! He was born to reign over the house of Jacob and over all the nations of the earth! Remember what He said to Pontius Pilate! "Pilate therefore said unto Him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end I was born, and for this cause came I into the world." (Jn. 18:37).

Christ is the supreme Ruler of the universe! Christ has always ruled. He always will. The Father has given "all things into His hand." (Jn. 3:35) "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool." (Isa. 66:1) So God's "heaven" is His throne from which He reigns over the earth! The earth is physical and natural; God, on the other hand, is Spirit. God rules out of the heaven of His Spirit by His Spirit, as the prophet declared, "Not by (human) might, nor by (outward, natural) power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts (armies)." (Zech. 4:6) The reality of omnipotent power within God's Spirit IS GOD'S THRONE! It means just this — God rules out of Spirit. His power is spiritual power, His authority is spiritual authority. The natural realm must always be acted upon by the higher spiritual realm. First of all, every son of God has come to understand that God dwells in our spirit and rules our lives out of His throne within our spirit! He is the Lord of hosts, that is, the Lord of armies, and His military hosts are composed of those blessed ones who have been joined to the Lord as one spirit, raised up and made to sit together with Christ in the heavenly places, who also live and walk in the Spirit and reign with Him out of the heavens of God's Spirit!

The heavens are the realms of Spirit from which the Lord now rules with absolute authority and dominion. How do we know this to be true? Because of the words of Jesus when He taught us to pray, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Jesus also said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." The Lord Jesus Christ rules and Christ speaks from heaven, even the heaven of God's Spirit. If you will but listen, you can hear the Lord speaking from heaven, even the heaven of His Spirit, which is in your spirit! There is a secret to hearing His voice. It will not be heard above the excited babble of the multitude. He will not boom and thunder to drown out other voices that clamor to be heard. He waits till all other voices are hushed and you have put away from your heart and mind all your own striving, and the uproar of the throng that shouts for your attention has completely died away. You must become insensible to the demands of all other voices and hear only the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking out of the most holy place of your spirit. "Be still and know that I am God." When your soul is agitated to a turmoil and your flesh demands with insatiable desire that its claims be met, and the outer world evokes utter confusion and despair with its myriad exasperating problems, it is time for silence, repenting, and listening to the voice of Christ.

Christ is always speaking, and Christ is always reigning — over all! In the February, 1990 issue of THE LIVING WORD, shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Paul Mueller wrote the following words which carry this truth home powerfully to the heart. "The heavens declare the glory of God because God speaks from that realm and sends forth His word which is heard through all the earth, and to the ends of the world. Within the last few months, God spoke words of freedom, liberty and deliverance from His heavenly sanctuary. Those words of liberty and freedom were sent into the hearts of millions of East Europeans, causing them to send up a shout and demand for freedom that is bringing down the whole communistic system. And what did God do to bring an end to the oppressive governments of Soviet domination? He simply sent a word out of His heavenly sanctuary, and the work was done. The Lord accomplished this unbelievable task without the help of man and with the simplicity of the power of His Spirit.

"When God speaks from His heavenly sanctuary, that message goes out to find lodging in the hearts of those to whom the message was directed. Thus, when the Psalmist described this heavenly, spiritual activity, he said, 'Day unto day pours forth speech, and night unto night declares knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard; yet their voice goes forth through all the earth and their words to the ends of the world' (Ps. 19:2-4, Smith-Goodspeed). The Lord's message of liberty and freedom shall accomplish the will of God, according to His omnipotent purpose. There is no speech, nor words, nor voice of man, yet His message is received to the ends of the world. The Lord thus bypasses all human instruments to fulfill His word.

Just as His word cannot fail, so the heavens cannot fail to send forth that word with all the life and energy of the realm of the Spirit.

"God's word, sent forth from His heavenly sanctuary, cannot fail to accomplish His purpose. If He wants to eliminate the whole communistic society, He will do so by simply sending a word of liberty into the hearts of the multitudes, just as He has done. Mighty armies of hundreds and thousands could not have accomplished what the Lord has done in a few months, though they might have fought for many years in constant struggle and intense warfare. The blood of multiplied thousands of men has been spilled over the world in two bitter world wars for far less than this. The very fact that the communistic empire is falling should cause every child of God to renew their faith and trust in God, and to believe for the fulfillment of the remainder of all His holy word of truth.

"These are truly exciting days! This is a day like no other in the history of the world. God has taken to Himself His great power and is reigning in all the universe. This is the day of the Lord! Just as the Lord spoke a word of liberty and freedom from His heavenly sanctuary, and sent that word to the oppressed peoples of Eastern Europe, so He will speak a word from His heavenly sanctuary that will impart new life to His elect, thus raising us up in resurrection life to be transformed thereby. All He needs to do is speak a word, and it will be done! This truth is being demonstrated now before our very eyes as He dismantles the communist system. And when He speaks that word of Life to His elect that word will not fail to accomplish the divine purpose, so that all of us shall be changed.

"I hereby charge all who read these lines to remember what our omnipotent Lord has already done in Eastern Europe! Remember that He has sent a word out of His heavenly temple that has reverberated throughout the world, and has brought down the Soviet empire! The fact that the Lord has begun to dismantle man's kingdoms should encourage us to believe for His complete dominion over all things everywhere in the fullness of time, including His dominion over death. 'The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him. HE SHALL CALL TO THE HEAVENS FROM ABOVE, AND TO THE EARTH, that He may judge His people. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. AND THE HEAVENS SHALL DECLARE HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS: for God is judge Himself. Selah.' (Ps. 50:1-6)

"We will learn a great truth when we learn, with full understanding, that the Lord accomplishes His purposes by speaking a word from His heavenly temple. He spoke from heaven, 'and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.' The Lord shall shine out of Zion. How shall He shine out of Zion? By the effulgent glory of the manifestation of His Spirit! When the Lord chooses to judge His people, He sends forth the spirit of judgment by calling 'to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people.' When He has concluded His purpose in the judgment of His saints, 'the heavens shall declare His righteousness: for God is judge Himself.' Thus, we are righteous, not because of our good works, but because the Lord spoke forth His righteousness into our hearts to make us righteous. Just a word from His heavenly sanctuary is all it takes to make us righteous, or to accomplish anything else" — end quote.

When heaven was opened to the blessed apostle banished to the wilds of Patmos, and the white horse Rider appeared in the bright skies above, the glory and eternal triumph of God's Christ was magnificently expressed in these meaningful words: "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. And He was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies, which were in heaven, followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron...and He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." (Rev. 19:11-16)

Can we not see, my beloved, that this remarkable vision, blazing and shining with its scintillating glory of power and truth, points directly to our Lord Jesus Christ who is King of kings and Lord of lords, ruling the universe and guiding the spheres. The reference to the Rider on the white horse is clearly not to the entire Christ body, but to the Head of that body. The body of which He is the Head is characterized by the "armies which are in heaven" that "followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean." But the One on the lead horse is the Head, the KING OF KINGS AND THE LORD OF LORDS! He is King of kings because He is King of all those who rule with Him as kings! This same book of Revelation, as I have previously pointed out, distinctly and markedly identifies our Lord Jesus Christ as the King of kings. "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten from the dead, and THE PRINCE OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH." (Rev. 1:5) The word "prince" in this verse is translated from the Greek archon which means "a first in rank or power; prince; ruler." So Jesus is the FIRST IN RANK of the kings of the earth! He is the PRINCE of the kings of the earth! He is the RULER of the kings of the earth! Yes! He is the KING of the kings of the earth! I would solemnly admonish all who read these lines, DON'T TRY TO PULL RANK ON JESUS! Ah, "HE is the Head of the body...who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things HE MIGHT HAVE THE PREEMINENCE." (Col. 1:18)

Jesus is Lord of lords because all others who rule with Him as lords have completely and lovingly submitted themselves to His supreme Lordship. No one can rule with Christ in the kingdom of God who has not, first of all, subjected himself to the Lordship of Jesus Christ — for the whole objective of the kingdom of God is to ultimately bring to pass this wonderful end: "Wherefore God hath also highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of JESUS every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that JESUS CHRIST IS LORD, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. 2:9-11)

Jesus is the great King of kings and Lord of lords! He is not the soon coming king as the citizens of religious Babylon are trained to say, denying by the very words that Christ has any kingdom on earth at this present time. Such ignorant statements always leave me cold! What could be further from the truth, which teaches us that Christ now sits with His Father in His throne in the heavens of God's Spirit and that all power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth! We are already citizens of that kingdom and have already been translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Already it has taken place, already Christ has a kingdom and is its King! From the barrenness of Patmos John wrote that he was our brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ (Rev. 1:9).

Christ is the great King right now, ruling all things for the well-being of His subjects and bringing absolute perfection and completion to His plans which He ordained before the foundation of the world. He is the King of the ages and invincible! Through the ages He has revealed His Kingship on different levels and through various instruments, and He shall yet arise in power and glory in a new and marvelous expression of His Kingship through the MANIFESTED SONS OF GOD, revealing Himself as the great conquering King, bringing deliverance to every man and all creation, reconciling all things unto Himself, on earth and throughout all the unbounded heavens. Every son of God is finding his place in this Day of the Lord and the hour of manifestation is nigh at hand!

The kingdom of God is the only hope of the world! He has reigned, is reigning, and shall reign! May God give us all a vision of Christ the King and Lord of all! He is high and lifted up, far above all other powers! His train, the skirts of His royal robe, the very majesty and power of His Kingship, fills this temple which we are! His train, His royal robe, covers, protects, enables and empowers us with His omnipotent, heavenly authority. His royal robe, the train of which fills the temple which we are, invests us with His own nobility and dominion. He rules from His throne in the realm of Spirit. God grant that we shall see Christ in His ascended glory, seated on His throne and ruling in all the earth, and we with Him! When we see Him, we shall indeed cease from all our petty human dreams, ambitions, desires, hopes, works and aims. And we shall stop regarding men, political parties and philosophies, presidents, prime ministers, legislators, economists, or military leaders as the hope of the world. The truth is, we are the hope of the world, for we are hidden in Christ, who is the King and Lord of all! We are becoming one with Him and are being made kings and priests unto God who shall reign upon the earth (Rev. 5:10). A vision of this Christ and His glorious, all encompassing kingdom, and our calling in Him, will

deliver us from looking to man. Then we will put all our hope and trust in Him who reigns in life forevermore! It is a marvelous thing to be a member of the family of God! There is no greater joy or vocation than belonging to the God family, knowing God as our Father, and that we, the sons of God, have such a wonderful elder brother. But just because He is one of the family, and we are one in Him, doesn't mean that we should esteem Him as an equal with us. Let us never forget that He is the Lord, even our Lord, and that our Father is God! Jesus is our brother, yet in all things HE has the preeminence! We honor Him and adore Him, for we are kings, but HE is the King of the kings! We are lords, but HE is the Lord of the lords! He is the PRINCE OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH!

George Wylie wrote a precious word about the reverence of the sons for the Son, the esteem of the kings for the King, and the devotion of the lords to the Lord. "When the last king of England died, the family was gathered around his bedside waiting. As soon as the king had breathed his last breath, and it was evident he was gone, the first thing the Queen did was to turn to her eldest son, bow before him, and say, 'Your Majesty.' He was her son, but he was now more than that; he was her king! And as her king she gave him the reverence and respect due to his position. She didn't say, 'My son, Edward, you are now king.' No, she addressed him with respect in reverence to his position, bowed in submission to him, and said, 'Your Majesty.' What she was really meaning was, 'My King.' The rest of the family did the same; they bowed to their brother, as Joseph's brothers bowed to him in Egypt, and also said, 'Your Majesty.' I suppose up until this time they treated him as a brother; they likely played with him, argued with him, and perhaps sometimes fought with him. No longer! From now on he would not be treated as just a brother, but as a king — their king! We have a wonderful Father and He is God and Creator of the universe, the upholder of all things; we have a wonderful brother, and He is the Head of all principalities and powers, the King of kings and Lord of lords. He has all power in heaven and in earth. His name is above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the ages to come. Before His majesty every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. All realms and all worlds and all dominions and all nations and all men shall worship and adore Him and pledge their eternal allegiance to Him. He is Lord of all! Behold His majesty! He holds the highest position in the universe; so let us reverence Him and His name in humility and undying devotion and exaltation!" — end quote.

Not only is Jesus the Prince or Ruler or Chief of those kings who reign with Him upon the Father's throne in the heavens of God's Spirit, He is also the Prince and Ruler and Chief of all those kings, presidents, prime ministers, and dictators who rule over the nations of earth on the lower plane of human government. When John describes Jesus as the ruler of the kings of the earth he uses a concept that had been often emphasized in the Old Testament. There the rulership had been applied to Yahweh. Abraham had called the Lord the "Judge of all the earth." Jeremiah had referred to Him as the "King of the nations," and the Psalmist declared, "God reigns over the nations; God sits on His holy throne." God's rulership in the kingdoms of men had been one of the chief claims of the prophet Daniel. "The most High liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation. The most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the basest of men...and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Dan. 4:17,34,35). Isaiah warned Israel that the Lord was using Assyria as the "rod" of His anger. During the period of the Babylonian empire both Jeremiah and Ezekiel taught that God was ruling among the nations of earth. But now it is said that JESUS IS THE RULER OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH! Often in the book of Revelation we see titles applied to Jesus that in the Old Testament were applied to Yahweh. That is because Jesus is YAH-SHUA, Yahweh-Salvation! He is Yahweh come in the flesh to save us! That is why Yahshua (Jesus) is THE NAME that is above every other name (including Yahweh) in heaven and in earth! Yahshua (Jesus) is God's latest name, His own new name given among all men and there is no other name whereby we must be saved! Yahweh is an Old Testament name of God, given to Israel under the Old Covenant that forever passed away with the law and the prophets, with the sacrifices, the priesthood, and the temple. Jesus now has the highest name in the universe! Behold His majesty!

The lower kings and rulers of human governments do not, for the most part, know that Jesus is the King of all kings and the Lord of all lords, that it is He alone who exalts whomsoever He will and abases whom He will, and that they perform His will on that level — but it is true nonetheless! They do not realize that He is the

mighty Lord over them even as Pharaoh did not know that it was Yahweh who raised Him up that His glory might be shown in him! The puny kings of earth do not understand that Christ is the Ruler of the kings of the earth because He rules and reigns from a higher and more glorious throne in the higher than all heavens. Our great King of kings is the true King and Lord of all and is seated upon His heavenly throne of all power and authority! It would help us greatly if we would see that no ruler on earth is where he is by his own choice, ability or power. We are no longer bothered by men like Adolph Hitler, Saddam Hussein or Osama bin Laden, for they would never have been where they were except by divine appointment! We no longer get upset and want to smash the television screen when we hear reports of what our earthly rulers, kings, presidents, prime ministers and other government leaders are doing, for we have seen the King of glory! He is seated on His throne of all power and authority, and is reigning over the affairs of men and nations! All of earth's rulers are where they are by God's purpose, some for judgment, others for blessing, and many other purposes, but when He is through with them He brings them down by sending forth a word which sets in motion the circumstances of their demise. His reign is just, invincible, triumphant and righteous!

Because Christ reigns out of the high realm of Spirit, we must look at things unseen and behold our mighty King. All the sons of God are called to reign with Him! But we are not called to reign on that lower level of human government, and institutions. Those are but the "errand boys" of God's great kingdom! They are of inferior quality, lacking in wisdom, knowledge, and understanding of the mind of Christ and the ways of the Lord. They are poor performers. We are not being prepared to live in the White House or Buckingham Palace. Never entertain the carnal notion, beloved, that either the Lord Jesus or His many brethren, the sons of God, will ever sit in an office behind a desk, with a hot-line telephone at hand! Only as we behold Him in the Spirit can we see our reigning King and Lord of all! Paul saw Him in the Spirit, and then described what he saw. "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen." (I Tim. 1:17) Christ the King is eternal, immortal, and invisible! Therefore, look not for Him seated somewhere on an earthly throne now or throughout all ages. The kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom. So also is the King of that kingdom a spiritual King! He is seen in the Spirit seated upon the throne of His Father in heaven! On another occasion Paul described our King as "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen." (I Tim. 6:15)

"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." (Rev. 5:9-10)

When we see in the Spirit our all-glorious King of kings, who reigns from the heavenly throne of His Father, we will then see how we are called and prepared to reign with Him by the power of His Spirit. We will then see and know that the Ruler of the kings of the earth reigns by spiritual power and we will also see and know that our King moves upon the face of the earth, as the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the deep in that long ago beginning, to bring forth victory over every enemy. He is moving first in us, the firstfruits of His kingdom. As we are changed into His likeness, filled with His fullness, endowed with His mind, conquering every enemy within and without, overcoming all carnality, sin, limitation and death, and ascending up within ourselves to the heavenly places in Christ Jesus where He sits upon His throne of glory and power, we then see all things as they really are in the Spirit. We then see that within us and through us the kingdom of God is coming to earth in a greater way to begin to change all things! To see anything less than this in this great Day of the Lord is not to see our King at all. He is the Prince of the kings of the earth, and we are called to be the kings of the earth!

The true kings of the earth are the manifested sons of God! The true kings of the earth reign with Christ at the right hand of the Father in the realm of the Spirit! Only as we are experientially seated (enthroned) with Christ in the higher than all heavens of His life, power, and glory are we able to begin to reign with Him over the earth. This is a glorious spiritual ministry! Christ is a King-Priest after the order of Melchizedek. He dwells in the light to which no earthly man can approach. Only those who are truly spiritual can see Him as He is, to become what He is. They are the elect who are chosen of the Father to approach unto the Light that He is, and they shall manifest Him as Light to the waiting, groaning, and travailing creation. This is the order of God's kingdom:

Only as we are first changed and transformed from carnal to spiritual, from earthly to heavenly, from human to divine, shall creation be changed!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, Part 11, The Prince of the Kings of the Earth [J. Preston Eby] ~ BIBLE STUDY

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 12

LOOSED FROM OUR SINS

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART TWELVE

LOOSED FROM OUR SINS

"Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood." (Rev. 1:5)

I know nothing deeper in God than love, nor believe there is anything deeper than love, nay, there can be nothing deeper than love! The being of God is love, and love demands an object — the beloved. That is the whole meaning of creation! And it is the greatest proof that God has always, eternally been a Creator — this present creation is not the first, nor will it be the last. If God never brought forth or created anything until six thousand years ago or twenty billion years ago, then He could not have been love before that event, for there was no object of love, therefore no expression of love. God would have been throughout eternity — before creation — loveless. Our existence is not accidental — it had to be! God must love, for God is love; therefore God must bring forth and create. "For God so loved the world." The reality of love is a property inherent in the essence of the lover. The Divine Lover, God, cannot love in a limited way because in His nature and being He is limitless, so He loves to the furthest limits of possibility. That is the meaning of the cross! That is the meaning of God's plan of the ages for the reconciliation of all things! Creation and redemption are therefore intrinsic to God's very life, they are the outer landscape of His own being, God making Himself visible to Himself and simultaneously making Himself visible to us. Creation is in some sense God's very self, as Eve was Adam's self. And in this relationship with His creation God's love is revealed through blessing and redemption in the interchange of giving and receiving!

The message which beams from the cross of Christ like the blazing rays of the noon-day sun is one of SACRIFICIAL LOVE — REDEEMING LOVE. The truth of love in Jesus Christ was that He loved without retaliation for evil, a love that suffered long, even to the agonies of the cross, and then was kind enough to pray, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And I declare to you that regardless of what other sins those wicked men may come into judgment for, they will never stand in the judgment condemned for killing the Son of God, for HE AND HIS FATHER FORGAVE THEM! This truth of the love of God in Jesus Christ must also be true in us, the younger sons of God. Jesus did not love people because He loved Himself, as it was under the law. It was the Father's unconditional and all-surpassing love flowing through Him, surging as a mighty river out to humanity, overflowing redemptively, so that He could say, "Let your love for others not be based on love for yourself, but on what is true in Me: If the Father could love Judas through me, and love Peter through Me, and the people that crucified Me, then let the Father's love so find expression through you!"

Through many years we have sung a beautiful chorus that goes like this: "His love has no limit, His grace has no measure, His power has no boundaries known unto man; for out of His infinite riches in Jesus, He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again." This is a lovely chorus and I love to sing it and I say it is true. In Jesus Christ, there is no limit to His love, no measure to His grace, and no boundaries to His power, for He is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, and His infinite mercy endures throughout all generations and ages. If I say there is one sin, one condition, one creature, one place, one age or group of ages unto which His love and His grace and His power shall not reach and triumph, then I lie and know not the truth. Jesus loved His friends, He loved His enemies, the man who betrayed Him, the man who denied Him, the mob that cried, "Crucify Him!" and the men who nailed Him to the cross. If His love does not triumph over every one of them, then the cross was a farce! There just is no limit to His love! You can never find a place where you can say, "So far He will love, but no farther." Is that love true in us? Or do we say, "Well, I will only stand so much, I will only forgive so long, I will only trust so far, and that is the end of it." God is teaching and training every son that His love should find no limit in us, His grace no measure in us, and His power no boundary in us. This is the first mark of sonship! Oh, that all men might learn God's one and only everlasting Gospel, the Gospel of love — and then preach it! And be it! Love alone can draw A-L-L MEN to Calvary's crimson fountain. Only a Calvary love can transform a

world gone mad, and revive a sleeping church obsessed with her deliriums into a thing of beauty and praise and usefulness. And anyone who is lifting up to a lost and dying world anything or anyone other than Jesus and His wonderful love is simply living a wasted life. The love of God must be lifted up IN US! The sons of God are the Sons of Love, for GOD IS LOVE!

Although God "so loved the world," still there is a special sense in which Christ "loved us" and gave Himself for us — those He is making kings and priests unto God that we might reign over the earth. The book of Revelation is written to kings and priests! Some time ago, in Bill and Elaine Cook's paper, Monty Williamson shared the following beautiful testimony which speaks so powerfully of Christ's love for His called and chosen elect. "A while ago I had an experience with the Lord Jesus Christ that I would like to share. As I was waiting on the Lord in prayer, I was part of a scene that I will try to describe. I was with the Lord's army traveling across the sky, headed for earth. We were all riding on beautiful white horses flying toward the Lord's enemies to do battle. As I took in the scene, I realized I was in the front line of the Lord's army. I took in the view and felt honored that I was allowed to be at the front where I could see the vistas of the earth beneath and know that I would be one of the first to join in this great battle.

"As my eyes moved to the left, I realized that I was riding beside Jesus. He smiled at me and I felt so loved and understood. I was overwhelmed that I was at His right hand as He rode into battle. I felt so loved and honored. I was shocked that I was beside Him, and questioned in my mind why I was allowed to ride there. In return, He just loved me and let me know that it was right that I was beside Him. I felt humbled and greatly loved. I savored the moment and it was one of the greatest feelings I have ever had — to be riding on a white horse with Jesus heading into the battle! After a bit I began to wonder about the others who were riding with us and I felt a little sad that I was at the front with Jesus and that others were not. I was thinking that maybe I should rotate my place with others so that my brothers and sisters could share the joy of riding beside Jesus. I felt Him whisper that it was "Okay" and that I should look around.

"As I looked back, I saw the most incredible picture. I saw the rest of the army — as I looked at each one, I noted that they were all looking to the person on their left. On their left was Jesus, riding beside them! As I looked closer, I realized that from each person's perspective, each one was riding beside Jesus and saw themselves at the front of the army, riding on His right side. The same picture that I had at the first, where I saw myself at the front of the army and at His right hand, was the same vision that everyone else had. We all thought that we were riding at the front of the army beside Jesus! For everyone, Jesus was beside them having intimate fellowship with each one at the same time. My love and awe for Jesus soared! It is just like Him to be able to make each one of us feel the most loved at the same time. He is the Head and we are the body. Does any part of the body feel neglected by the head? No! It is the same with Jesus, our Head. He is able to make each of us feel intimately loved all at the same time. It is something very hard for the finite mind to wrap around, but it is possible with God. His love for us knows no bounds!" — end quote.

LOOSED FROM OUR SINS

John dwelt in spirit before the door of the opened heaven as he walked about the barren slopes of Patmos. Time after time he saw in visions the glory of God, and of the Lamb, and of the kings and priests upon His throne, and of all the redeemed of the ages. The celestial scene filled John's heart with joy, praise, and wonder, and stirred by what he saw and heard in the heavenlies, he cried out, "Unto Him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests — to Him be glory and dominion for the ages of the ages, Amen!"

We need to know what "washing" means. It would be well for us to point out that some Greek manuscripts read "loves" (present tense) in place of "loved" (past) and "loosed" rather than "washed." In Greek the only difference loosed and washed is the letter "o." The idea would be, therefore, "Unto Him who loves us (continuously), and who has loosed us from our sins in His own blood." Since Christ has "loosed" or released us from our sins, the idea here would be that the blood of the Lord Jesus has freed us from the claim and power that sin once had over us.

There was a type of this action in the Old Testament at the time when Israel celebrated the annual Day of Atonement, in which the people were cleansed from all the sins that had accumulated during the previous year. The atonement was done through a priestly sacrifice. In Leviticus 16:5 it is declared that the "two kids of the goats" constitute a single offering for sin. "And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering..." The reason for this is that both goats speak symbolically of the work of Christ in taking away our sins, and the sins of the whole world.

What a tremendously meaningful ceremony the Day of Atonement was! The people of Israel had to plan weeks in advance for this day. Here is what took place on the Day of Atonement. Two young goats were brought before the gate of the tabernacle and presented to the high priest. These two goats were carefully chosen and were to be of equal character and quality in weight, height, and purity. A lot was cast upon the two goats. One lot was for the Lord, and the other lot was for the scapegoat. The goat selected for the Lord was to be offered as a sacrifice. A scarlet cloth was wrapped around its neck to distinguish it for sacrificing. The other goat was designated as a scapegoat and kept outside the holy precincts of the tabernacle. The first goat was taken in through the gate to the brazen altar in the Outer Court where it was slain, and its blood was collected in a bowl. The high priest then took the blood of "the Lord's goat" in through the Holy Place and on in through the veil to the Holy of holies, where he presented it before the presence of Yahweh with incense. He sprinkled the blood upon the mercy seat once, and in front of the mercy seat seven times. Outside, every person in the camp lay prostrate throughout the entire sacrificial procedure. No one saw any of it as it happened. Yet the ritual meant that atonement was being made for their sins! Their transgressions for the whole year were being dealt with — atoned for — forgiven, remitted, covered.

In contrast, the next part of the ceremony was meant as a very visible, illustrated sermon for every Israelite to see. Indeed, at this point, everyone was to stand and rejoice! Coming out of the Most Holy Place the high priest lingered in the Holy Place long enough to change out of his special clothes designed for that occasion and put on his regular priestly garments. Then he emerged and made his way to the gate of the Outer Court where he laid his hands on the scapegoat. Now, the Hebrew word for scapegoat means "the goat that went away," or "removal." And the priest's act of laying hands on the scapegoat symbolized the transference of all the people's sins to the head of the animal. Aaron confessed over the scapegoat all the sins of the children of Israel, saying, "Oh Yahweh, your people, the house of Israel, have committed iniquity, transgressed, and sinned before You. Oh, Yahweh, forgive, I pray, the iniquities and transgressions and sins which your people, the house of Israel, have committed and transgressed and sinned before You; as it is written in the law of your servant Moses, 'For on this day shall atonement be made for you to cleanse you: from all your sins you shall be clean before Yahweh.

All the sins of all the people of Israel were transferred to the head of the scapegoat and then the goat was put into the hands of a "fit man" to be sent away into the wilderness, unto a land not inhabited. There the goat was let go and left. The "fit man" mentioned in Leviticus 16 was a strong, physically fit man chosen for the important task of leading the scapegoat far away into the desolation of the wilderness and leaving it there. The fit man put a leash on the scapegoat and led him out of the camp. And what a sight that was to the people! All of Israel stood watching, as at a parade, cheering, clapping, rejoicing as the scapegoat was led away. It was an object lesson that every citizen of Israel — including children — could understand: "Not only are our sins forgiven to be remembered no more — but they are taken away from us! The fit man couldn't take the goat to just any place in the desert — he must make an arduous journey to a most remote, inescapable place, so far away that there would be no possibility of the goat wandering back into their midst. It must be a complete, permanent, irrevocable removal!

The Lord Jesus Christ is the key character with both of these goats, for both animals together constitute one sin offering (Lev. 16:5). In the sacrifice of the feast of Passover the people could choose between a lamb or a goat. In the feast of Atonement, however, there was no choice, only the goat could be used. Goats were used in the flock as leaders and protectors. "The Lord's goat" represents Jesus who went before us into the Most Holy Place to open up the way through the rent veil. There are many things to learn from types and anti-types, for by them truth is taught with more force than any spoken word. You will notice then that no sins are confessed over the head of the first goat, the "Lord's goat." For you see, this is Jesus the perfect sin-offering, pure, spotless, unblemished, undefiled, holy, harmless, separate from sinners, who by His blood, His own

precious and divine life, has, as our forerunner, entered into the holiest of all, opening up the way for every son of God to follow.

The writer to the Hebrews proclaimed this blessed event in these words: "For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that He had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith." (Heb. 10:14-22)

And what does it mean that we may enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus? To Moses God said that He gave the blood upon the altar to be an atonement for the soul, because THE LIFE OF THE FLESH IS IN THE BLOOD (Lev. 17:11). That is, the blood in the body is the life of the body. Ah — the power of any blood is in the worth of the life! In the blood of Jesus THE POWER OF THE DIVINE LIFE DWELT and worked — hence its intrinsic value. He was the Son of God by conception, and the Son of man by birth. He was a specially prepared body to contain a specially prepared blood that was to be the life of all humanity! This blood was precious from the fact that it was a unique blood which could do something for all humanity that no other blood could ever do. It was the Word of God that became flesh (Jn. 1:14), who was made a man. It was the life of God that dwelt in Him! That life gave His blood, every drop of it, an infinite value. The blood of a man is of more worth than that of a sheep. The blood of a king or a great general is counted of more value than hundreds of common soldiers. The blood of the Son of God! It is in vain the mind seeks for some expression of its value! All we can say is, it is His own blood, the blood of the Word made flesh! The life is in the blood. As the value of this life, so the value of the blood. In Christ there was the life of God; infinite as God is the worth and the power of that blood!

When Adam transgressed, the life of God which had been breathed into his nostrils, fled from his soul, and by that separation all that was left was a residue, that mortal something which flowed in the veins of his body. This blood contains nothing of the life of God, and in its composition is similar to the blood of the animal kingdom, for when the glorious power of divine life was separated from Adam's soul, he entered into the kingdom of death. Before this Adam's spirit and soul had existed in blessed union. The record states that Adam was made a living soul. From the Greek the statement reads, "The first man was made a zoe psuche (living soul)." Zoe, throughout the entire Greek New Testament, is always used in reference to the life of God — divine life. Psuche, on the other hand, is used of the natural life of animals and men. Since both words are used of Adam's life in the beginning, it is clear that he possessed a physical life imbued, infused, injected, impregnated, and permeated with the glorious incorruptible life of God! That is what made him not simply zoe, and not merely psuche, but zoe psuche!

This life, zoe, is the life Jesus promised to give to man when He said, "I give unto them eternal life (zoe), and they shall never perish." This, beloved, is the life that fled from Adam's soul when he transgressed, leaving his outer man ashamed, fearful, and dead. The life is in the blood, but our blood being devoid of zoe life, incorruptible and divine life, is in reality dead blood and capable of sustaining only physical life, and that only poorly until man returns to the dust from whence he came. It is not without significance that, when the bodies of men are embalmed, the first act is to remove the corruptible blood that the dead body may be better preserved. The fact that a chemical in the veins can preserve a dead body is the proof that the quickening power of incorruptible zoe restored to union with the blood of redeemed men will result in life and immortality! Instead of incorruptible and, therefore, deathless blood, Adam's blood corrupted through sin and became subject to death. To redeem this dead sinner, life must again be imparted! The only remedy for death is life! This life is in the blood, so blood must be furnished which is sinless and incorruptible. Now none of Adam's race could do this, "for in Adam all die." There was only one, yes, only one, who could furnish that blood, the virgin-born Son of God, the man from heaven, the last Adam, with a human body, but sinless, supernatural blood, inseminated by the Holy Ghost!

Jesus came to bring life to the world! Here is where His blood differed from the ordinary blood or life of men. His blood was precious in that it was able to do something for mankind which man's own blood or life could not do. The natural blood or life of mankind was only for a few years at most, but the blood of Christ was the life of the ages. So there must somehow be a discontinuance of the blood of a few years that the blood or the life of the ages might be injected into mankind.

Let us notice one thing further. The red liquid that ran through the veins and arteries of the body of Jesus is not the blood whose power redeems mankind and all things unto God. There is no biblical basis for attributing any unusual properties to Christ's body fluids. The term "blood of Christ" is far more significant than any magical or mystical power falsely attributed to His physical blood by those who are ignorant of the truth. And here I must speak a word against one of the popular myths that has been widely circulated among God's people. Various teachers have maintained that human blood is in some mysterious way "congealed light." Now that term carries with it a certain kind of mystical aura, and a rather scientific sound. But the truth is that it is neither scientifically founded, scripturally sound, nor spiritually veracious. Blood is composed of the very same chemical and mineral substances of which the earth is made. If blood is "congealed light," then your refrigerator, automobile, house, and a bunch of bananas and a cup of coffee are just as truly congealed light! Blood is mostly water, but in the blood many substances are dissolved and in this fluid float specks of matter that do not dissolve. From the lungs it takes oxygen breathed in, and from the digestive organs it takes food substances and carries these, as well as disease-fighting cells, to all parts of the body. The liquid part of the blood greatly resembles sea water. This liquid part of the blood without all the solid particles, but including the various chemicals in the blood, is called plasma.

The thing of importance about the precious blood of Jesus is not its physical structure, but the glorious fact that blood bespeaks LIFE. What Jesus poured out was His life, His holy, pure, undefiled, divine, heavenly, incorruptible life, the zoe, the quickening spirit, the life of GOD! He lived and walked out that glorious life in human form and then poured it out as an offering to God. And God took the offering and poured it out, in return, upon mankind! "He...spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither His flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, HE HATH SHED FORTH THIS, WHICH YE NOW SEE AND HEAR." (Acts 2:31-33)

Ah — the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God, but in a new dimension — the divine and incorruptible life of God as it had been perfected and lived out in the life of the Son of God — was now shed forth as the Spirit of the Son to be received by all men to transform and lift them up high into the holiness, wisdom, and power of God. The precious blood of Jesus! There is an old Roman Catholic dogma, which says that Christ carried His blood with Him to heaven in a bowl. Without even knowing its source, evangelical Christianity clings to that ludicrous idea from the Dark Ages by perpetuating a form of mysticism around the physical blood of our Lord. The bowl of blood is indeed a type from the outward, physical ceremony of the Day of Atonement. But in its spiritual fulfillment there is no bowl in the universe that could have contained what Jesus carried into the heavens! When Christ entered heaven (see Hebrews, chapters 8-10), He carried not physical blood, which of necessity would be corruptible blood, but His DIVINE-HUMAN LIFE. He did not transport a bowl of blood or a bucket of blood; He entered in His resurrection body, with the full power of that divine life He had poured out on behalf of Adam's doomed race. If He had not poured it out upon the cross, He would have forever remained the only perfect man — the only manifest Son of God. But, blessed be His wonderful name! He shed His precious blood, He released His human-divine life, He poured forth His quickening Spirit that all may drink thereof and live!

Beloved sons and daughters of God! The blood of Jesus! The blood of the Lord's goat! Oh, think what it means. God gave it for your redemption from Adam's race and your transformation into the image and glory of God. God accepted it in the true tabernacle, in heaven itself, in the heaven of God's Spirit, when the firstborn of the new creation entered there and presented it on your behalf. God points you to it and asks you to believe in its omnipotent energy, in its everlasting sufficiency. Ah, this celestial man was injected into a whole world full of men descended from the earth-man to impart something we had lacked from the day Adam was driven from Eden's bright portals. That something was life, living blood, for He said He came to give life to the world. He

could impart a life to the world that would change it completely! When our spirit is quickened by His Spirit, and then brought into marriage union with soul and body there is raised up within us LIFE AND IMMORTALITY!

What it means is just this. Jesus, through death and resurrection into the incorruptible realm of God, has entered into the Most Holy Place of heavenly life. And now, HE HAS GIVEN US HIS LIFE! His life is His blood, and by the quickening of that divine life in our spirit we become the new creation. You cannot bring old Adam into the Holiest — for the body (natural consciousness) of the Lord's goat was left at the tabernacle gate! ONLY THE BLOOD (DIVINE LIFE) ENTERED INTO THE HOLIEST. Notice! While the King James Version reads, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus," the Greek text actually reads, "Having therefore, brethren, confidence into the entrance of the Holiest in the blood of Jesus." The Greek word is en — IN. Entering in the blood of Jesus. What a word! If it is the blood that is carried into the Holiest, how else could I get into the Holiest, unless I would be IN THE BLOOD? Do you see it? He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. In the union of our spirit with His Spirit we are "in" the blood or life of Christ! It is in this union of life that we are given the boldness, the ability to enter in to the Most Holy Place! In the power of that life we have now entered in! In the blood, the divine life of Jesus in our spirit, we now enter into the Holiest of all!

We cannot reform old Adam. We cannot redeem our old humanity with its desires and lusts. We must leave our human consciousness behind at the gate of the tabernacle, for that human consciousness is represented by the dead body of the Lord's goat. That dead body does not go into the Holiest! We must leave our old human consciousness, our old Adamic mind and identity, out at the altar of sacrifice (the cross) and enter into the presence, glory, and power of God in our new life in the spirit! Only the new creation can enter in! We have tried to make Adam "behave" so we could be pleasing to God. We have put our flesh under laws and rules and regulations and tried to make it be good. It hasn't worked! It cannot be done! Leave the old carcass behind and enter in your spirit into the presence of God in the Most Holy Place. There is no sin at all in your regenerated spirit! And that is who you now really are! As a new creation you haven't done anything wrong! Your regenerated spirit has not sinned! In your true identity you are not guilty! There is therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus!

Someone says, "But my flesh still wants to sin. My flesh still flies off the handle, cusses, thinks evil thoughts, makes bad choices, criticizes, is fearful, deceitful, selfish, hurtful, and lusts after evil things." Sure it does — for "that which is born of the flesh is flesh." That's how flesh is! Flesh can't be any different! You can't make flesh holy! It's born of the wrong seed! But there is a further truth. "That which is born of the spirit is spirit." Oh, yes! That which is born of the spirit is your regenerated spirit and it is like Christ. You don't have to try to make it like Christ. It is! And that's the real you! That's the new man that you are! That's the spiritual man, the heavenly man, the divine man — Christ. And that is the man who may enter into the Holiest any time, at any place, day or night. When the flesh has misbehaved and would heap guilt and condemnation upon your head, leave that old carcass at the tabernacle gate and enter on in to the presence of God in the Most Holy Place! Enter in the blood, in the life of Jesus in your spirit! Oh, the wonder of it!

Now surely someone will accuse me of preaching "greasy grace" and charge me with saying that you can just let your old flesh do everything it wants to do and still be a son of God in the Holiest of all. But you see, my beloved, we have only considered the first goat — the Lord's goat. God's dealing with sin doesn't end there. It is true, however, that in the Lord's goat we can enter right on in to the Holiest while the scapegoat is still standing there at the tabernacle gate. What made the feast of Atonement so wonderful was the inclusion of the second goat. Thank God for the second goat! God has shown us by types and shadows how it is that Christ removes all sin from the experience of His people. Sin will no longer be a problem in my life. The feast of Atonement is not only a day of entering in, it is also a day of release, being freed from all temptation of sin in our lives.

When the scapegoat was led away into the wilderness by a fit man and left there, never to return to Israel, through that action, the people were to understand that their sins had been sent away. That was but a makeshift arrangement and was given only to crudely illustrate what God was doing. In this ritual action there was no provision made for any change in the people who committed the sins. The sins were simply symbolically rolled off from one year to the next. But it was a type of the work of God! **In John 1:29** we read,

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." The words "take away" mean to lift or to take away. It means to completely remove, banish, exile, cast out, disown, depose and dismiss — our sins! Again we read, "And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins." (1 Jn. 3:5)

Can we not see by this that Jesus is not the second goat — He is the fit man! The scapegoat is your human consciousness, your carnal flesh. Jesus has been chosen, selected, ordained and manifested to TAKE AWAY our sins! Can you see it? HE does it! I warn you — don't try to do it yourself. Not just any Israelite could lead that scapegoat away where he would never return. Oh, no! Only the fit man could do it! If you try to do it all your efforts will only end in defeat. You are not strong enough, smart enough, or good enough. That's why a fit man has been chosen for the task! You will never last long enough to get that sin-laden goat of your flesh far enough away in the wilderness so that he doesn't some day wander back into your life again. Only the fit man can accomplish it! He has been manifested to bear, to lift, to carry, to lead away, to take away our sins. He has been manifested in order that He might come into relationship with our human life, and passing underneath the load of human sins, to lift them, and take them away!

Either this is the most glorious gospel that a man has ever heard; or it is the greatest delusion to which man has ever listened. If it be true that Christ Jesus has been manifested to somehow, in some mystery that the carnal mind can never fathom, in order to take hold of my sins, my sins, my sins, my impure thoughts, my words of bitterness, my stubborn selfishness, my unholy deeds, and life, and lead, and bear them away — that is the best news I have ever heard! I long for that more than all! Consider the testimony of the angel Gabriel to the virgin of Nazareth: "And thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins." When the songs which the shepherds heard that holy night breaking the silence upon the Judean hills were heard, what said they? "There is born unto you this day a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

Whether through the second goat we have been saved from our sins or not, in the first goat, the Lord's goat, in and by his blood, WE HAVE BOLDNESS TO ENTER INTO THE HOLIEST OF ALL. You do not have to be delivered from your sins in order to enter boldly into the presence of God and enjoy the fellowship of His life. At the stage of our initial regeneration performance is not the secret to God's presence! If performance were the secret to God's presence, we would of all men be most miserable, for which of us can say that we have not sinned and have had no consciousness of sins since we were converted? No one of us would be prepared to say, "I have never deliberately done the thing I knew I ought not to do!" That is consciousness of sins! But that does not exclude us from the love, presence, and glory of God! After all, God is our Father! Be honest with me. Unless you are a harsh, vindictive, tyrannical brute, does your child's failure, misbehavior, disobedience, or rebellion exclude him or her from your love, from your fellowship, from your care, from your concern, from your counsel, from your table, from your provision, from your blessing, from your home, or from your presence? NO! Then why should our lack or failure separate us from coming boldly to the throne of grace? Let us come boldly that we may obtain grace to help in time of need!

Now that we are a new creation in our inner man, why do we (I speak for many) not have more victory over sin in our outer lives? It is because we have not yet appropriated the second provision of the day of Atonement for dealing with our sins! What did Jesus come into the world to do? He came to save His people from their sins — not merely from the guilt, consciousness, and punishment of sin, but from the sins themselves, the petty as well as the heinous, the respectable as well as the loathsome. His great work is to send away sin — to expel it from our hearts, to banish it from the earth, yea, to cast it into the abyss of non-existence behind the back of God. This is Christ's "holy war." He came carrying it into our world and has brought it right into the roots of our lives and the throne room of our hearts!

On the Day of Atonement, in the body of the scapegoat, sin is finally and completely dealt with! In the spiritual application of the fit man and the scapegoat, God deals with the "goat nature" once and for all. Some time ago, in commenting on the Day of Atonement ritual, Elaine Cook shared an experience: "Having at one time kept both sheep and goats, we understand their natures. When we took a load of sheep to town, we heard not a sound from them, but when we carried goats, the air would be resounding with the sound of horns butting and the sides of the truck would rock from the conflict within. The goat nature is quite opposite to the lamb nature. What does all this mean to us? In simple terms, it means that God is going to deal with our sinful, rebellious nature once-for-all! The goat was not killed, it was completely removed!" This, beloved, is an integral part of

the feast of Tabernacles, even the Day of Atonement that precedes the fullness of that great feast! The day of Atonement prepared the worshipper for the feast of Tabernacles, even as the seventh chapter of Romans precedes the glorious eighth chapter and prepares us for the glory of manifested sonship described in that rich eighth chapter.

It is my conviction that this ritual foretold of the warfare between the flesh and the spirit — between the natural man and the spiritual man within us. During these last years of walking and progressing with God in the Spirit, we have been brought to the place in Christ which corresponds to the day of Atonement and hopefully we have yielded all the iniquities of the man of flesh, for it is here at the place of atonement that sin is dealt with. The desires and motions of the outer flesh man must be SENT AWAY, even as the scapegoat was sent away from the camp of Israel, bearing all the sins of the people. But you see, the sinful goat-nature can only be sent away by the hand of the fit man, Christ, who is ordained to take him away! What does that mean? It means that only the presence and power of Christ in our lives is able to overcome sin in the flesh! Truly He is within us accomplishing this! This is not a work that is wrought from without on our behalf — it is the work of Christ in us! That is why we have to experience the life of the first goat before we can appropriate the departure of the second goat!

Some people think that if they have sin in their lives Christ won't dwell in them, that His presence will flee, God will turn from them and the heavens become as brass against them. People have the crude and unscriptural notion that somehow God is too holy to look upon sin. That is a lie of Babylon! How can sin ever be conquered in my life if Christ is not raised up in me? And if Christ won't dwell in me, fellowship with me, and bless me because of my sin, how can He ever be raised up within me to the point where the spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes me free from the law of sin and death? That is the whole point of chapters seven and eight of Romans!

Paul describes the distress that is characteristic of many believer's lives. "For I do not understand my own actions — I am baffled, bewildered. I do not practice or accomplish what I wish, but I do the very thing that I loathe. Now if I do habitually what is contrary to my desire that means that I acknowledge and agree that the law is good and morally excellent and that I take sides with it. However, it is no longer I that do the deed, but sin which is at home in me and has possession of me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot perform it. I have the intention and urge to do what is right, but no power to carry it out; for I fail to practice the good deeds I desire to do, but the evil deeds I do not desire to do are what I am doing. Now if I do what I do not desire to do, it is no longer I doing it — it is not myself that acts — but the sin, which dwells within me. So I find it to be a law of my being that when I want to do what is right and good, evil is ever present with me and I am subject to its insistent demands. For I endorse and delight in the Law of God in my inmost self — with my new nature. But I discern in my bodily members — in the sensitive appetites and wills of the flesh — a different law at war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner to the law of sin that dwells in my bodily organs — in the sensitive appetites and wills of the flesh." (Rom. 7:15-23) (Amplified)

Our experience in this physical realm is certainly no different than the apostle Paul's! "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh (outer man), dwelleth no good thing." The thing he didn't want to do he did, and the thing he wanted to do he couldn't. What an experience for an apostle! Paul enlarges on his struggle with "sin in my members." Sin in my members is simply a euphemism for "the desires of the flesh" or "the carnal mind." And don't tell me you don't have them! Many of the Lord's people are in denial, claiming that since their old man is dead, the fear, anger, covetousness, lust, deceitfulness, and other carnal and ungodly emotions they feel are just an illusion, a habit, a hang over, a mistaken identity from their former old man who is now really dead, gone, and non-existent. Let me tell you the truth! Your old man is dead, but you do still have sin in your members — the desires of your flesh. The man who says he has no fleshly desires because his old man is dead is either caught up in wishful thinking, self-deceived, or lying. Therefore, the old man and the flesh are obviously not the same, for if they were, your flesh would be dead! How could you still have the option of either "sowing to the flesh" or "sowing to the spirit" if your flesh no longer exists? Look up all the scriptures on the flesh and you will see that all God's saints in physical, mortal bodies still have it! "The flesh wars against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh," Paul wrote. Has that ever been your experience? If the flesh were dead, the war would be over! Perhaps for you it is, and I rejoice for you if it is, but I seem to still get involved in a skirmish now and then!

This is a large subject that would take a book to exhaust, but I can assure you that if the "old man" is who most people think he is, and truly dead, we should all be perfect, sinless, pure, undefiled, and overcomers in every sense of the word. We should not need to mortify, or put off, or put away, or cleanse ourselves from, or overcome anything because all those things would be non-existent! Dead men don't lie, dead men don't deceive, dead men don't cheat, dead men don't fly off the handle, dead men don't gossip, dead men don't fight, dead men don't covet, dead men don't criticize, dead men don't lust, dead men don't make mistakes, dead men don't get depressed, or struggle with anything. If uncle Charlie has died and is lying in his coffin, I can walk up to him, tell him what a splendid fellow he is, flatter him, and heap praise upon praise on him, and he will never smile, appear pleased, or puff up with pride. He's dead! On the other hand, I can stand there and swear at him, abuse him, slap his face, yell about what a scoundrel he is and he will not swear back, strike me, or jump out of the coffin and knock me down. There will be absolutely no response — for he is dead! Dead men don't do anything!

Dead men don't keep on doing evil things and then excuse it by saying that they just didn't know they were dead; it was just such a habit that they have to remind themselves that they are dead so they can learn to act like dead men! What drive!! Yet, I have heard great preachers proclaiming such foolishness, in an effort to rationalize why Christians have fleshly, ungodly emotions and desires, and do bad things, when their old man is dead! It should be clear to any spiritual mind that either the old man isn't dead or we have mis-identified the old man! I think it is the latter. God isn't playing games with us! Do saints still struggle with the carnal mind and the works of the flesh? Do saints still sin? **"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."** (I Jn. 1:8-9)

Ah, precious friend of mine, "sin in our members" and the "old man" are not the same! Every scripture throughout the whole Bible bears witness to this fact. Let me give it to you in the simplest of terms. There are many, many scriptures, but two will suffice to point the way. **"For I delight in the law of God after the inward man."** (Rom. 7:22) Notice what the inward man does. He delights in the law of God — righteousness! But even though the inward man, the new man, delights in righteousness, the awful power of sin lies in our members. Now let us look at the old man. **"Strip yourselves of your former nature (the old man) — put off and discard your old unrenewed self — which characterized your previous manner of life and becomes corrupt through lusts and desires that spring from delusion."** (Eph. 4:22, Amplified) These two passages tell us this: The new man is a nature that delights in righteousness; the old man is a nature that desires or delights in that which is corrupt. The old man, therefore, is our old unregenerated spiritual state in which we desired and delighted in the flesh! Please notice that it is the nature that desires and delights in sin — it is not the "body of sin" (the flesh) itself! It is so important that we see and clearly understand the distinction Paul draws in his writings between "sin in our members" which is "the flesh" — and the "old man." These are not interchangeable terms! Sin is the power and principle of evil rooted in our members, in our flesh, in our body! The old man, on the other hand, is our old unregenerated spiritual state in which we delighted in the sin in our members! And the new man is our quickened, regenerated spiritual existence by which we now delight in righteousness. **"For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my (inward man) mind."** (Rom. 7:22-23) How much plainer can it be!

Any thinking person should understand that once our spirit is quickened by God's Spirit our old unregenerated spiritual state NO LONGER EXISTS! The scriptures have only one thing to say about your old man... HE IS DEAD! Therefore, you are not having any problem at all with your old man, for dead men don't do anything! The proof of this is that you no longer delight in sin! Oh, yes, sin is still in your members, and you can sin, have sinned, and may sin again. But when you do sin — are you happy about it? Spiritually, does it make you feel good? Does your spirit say, "Amen!" Or is your spirit grieved? Do you now regret your weakness, your failure? Right there is the answer! The nature that delighted in sin is dead, it is gone! Your new man now delights in righteousness! You now want to do what is right, you now desire to please God, you now hunger for righteousness! That is the difference between the old man and the new man. And that is why you have still struggled with the flesh and with sin. If the flesh and sin were the old man, there would be no more conflict. Dead men don't sin! The fact that there is now conflict in your life between sin and the new life of Christ within you is the proof that your old man is dead and that Christ in you is alive. Before you were regenerated there was no conflict! The old man took pleasure in unrighteousness!

Let us look at this truth of being "loosed from our sins" from another angle, from the perspective of the sin-offering; not the sin offering of the two goats on the day of Atonement, but the ordinary sin-offering that any man could offer when he sinned. Come with me now to the camp of Israel. There is a man here by the name Eliezar. Eliezar has sinned. He has done a terrible wrong. He didn't mean to do it, but he did. He was overcome by his own passion and in a moment of weakness succumbed to the lust of his flesh. In sorrow Eliezar goes out into his flocks and chooses the very best of his bullocks. He brings the animal to the tabernacle gate as a sacrifice — a sin-offering. The priest takes the bullock and slays it for Eliezar, offering it according to the requirement of the law. Eliezar lays his hands upon the head of the bullock as it is slain, indicating that his sin is imputed to the bullock and the bullock is paying the penalty of his sin. As soon as the sacrifice is finished, Eliezar is free! His sin is atoned for! His sin is forgiven! His sin is removed! He is loosed from his sin and all the guilt and penalty of it! He can never be condemned, judged, or punished for the wrong he did. It is erased. The sin-offering is complete, all-sufficient, and irrevocable. With this burden off of him, Eliezar is now free to work out his problems, to seek God, to press forward, to give himself to learning how to overcome, to be worthy of the sacrifice made on his behalf!

Does sin condemn us to separation from Christ, to a doomed, lost, and hopeless state? Does sin separate us from the love of God, from the fellowship of God, from the presence of God, or from the blessing of God? NO! For we are justified by faith in Jesus our sin-offering, who once and for all offered Himself up for us. We are not justified by our performance — we are justified by the sin-offering that has been made for us! Shall we continue in sin, then, that grace may abound? God forbid! Performance doesn't save us — but it does qualify us for a place and position in the kingdom of God! **"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor those who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Cor. 6:9-10)**

Inheriting the kingdom is not the same as being justified by faith! To inherit the kingdom means to rule and reign with Christ! It denotes responsibility and position, authority and power, dominion and rulership! It means to sit upon the throne! Contrary to the childish teaching of the church systems, responsibility and rulership in the kingdom is not given to every believer in Jesus. The throne is not promised to "him that believeth" nor to "him that is justified." The throne is promised "to him that overcometh!" **"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in His throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches!" (Rev. 3:21-22).**

Before this process of overcoming begins we are, by faith in Jesus our sin-offering, completely released from all our sins and from all the guilt, condemnation, and judgment of those sins freely by His grace! Because this was not taught to us in our churches when we first came to the Lord, many of the Lord's precious little children have been wandering around spiritually maimed, not knowing who they are, thinking that God still remembers their sins, and that He is angry with them, holding their weakness and failure against them, shutting the heavens up against them every time they fall. Men will not let you forget when you stumble, when you cannot break your sinful habits. Preachers, especially, will not let you forget! This is the good news — your sins are gone! The ones you committed before you were saved are all gone. The ones you have committed since you were saved are all gone. And the ones you have committed today are all gone! The one sin-offering has forever taken care of all your sins! That is the assurance you have by faith in Jesus! Don't follow the example of ignorant men who won't let you forget, and don't let the adversary pull that number on you, for Satan is the accuser of the brethren, and he accuses through men and he accuses you through you. You say, "But I sinned!" Yes, you did. You say, "But I failed God!" Yes, you did. You say, "But this is the one-hundredth time I have flunked the same test!" Yes, it is. To which your heavenly Father responds, "Your sin is forgiven, remitted, released, sent away. It's not in my ledger. I don't know what you're talking about." That is the gospel — the good news — my friend! Any so-called gospel that makes the sin-offering Jesus has provided less than that is not the gospel at all!

Every child of God must know that God's love and acceptance of them in the Beloved is unconditional. Until we know that, we have underestimated His love! How many times can the prodigal return home? Only as many times as the Father's love will accommodate! On one occasion Jesus was talking alone with His disciples

about prayer. Peter asks a question. It is never difficult to think of Peter asking a question or making a few remarks. He asks, "Master, how many times must I forgive a man? Seven times? Apparently Peter thinks he is growing in grace. He can actually think now in terms of forgiving a man seven times in succession! But the Lord in effect says, "Peter, you haven't caught the idea. You don't get it! Forgiveness is not a matter of mathematics; not a matter of keeping tab on somebody; it is not that you have forgiven someone six times, so you will go for one more. You must forgive not seven times but seventy times seven — in one day!" And Peter's eyes bulge open with an incredulous stare — "four hundred and ninety times — one man — in one day — Wow!" Methinks that Jesus is thinking that Peter will lose count, or get tired of counting, and finally get it, concluding that forgiveness is not optional, it has no qualification or boundary — it is absolutely, at all times, for all people, and in all circumstances unlimited and unconditional!

Nobody taught or manifested the all-encompassing and totally unconditional love of our heavenly Father more than Jesus. The sin question is settled! Under the law, when the sin-offering was slain, all was forgiven. Mattered not how the offerer felt, how mature he was, how perfect he was, how spiritual he was — his faith in the sacrifice wiped the slate clean. Jesus has now made the one sacrifice forever, and by our faith in the Father's love for us we are accepted of Him regardless of our failures. The secret is just this: HE IS MERCIFUL TO OUR TRANSGRESSIONS UNTIL WE ARE ABLE TO OVERCOME THEM! Only His life within us can ever overcome them! If He withdraws His life because we fail — even if we fail four hundred and ninety times in one day — then we are hopeless! But He doesn't! He freely forgives every time and floods us with His love and His life in the expectation that eventually His life will become strong enough in us to conquer all. That is His way! And it is the only way it can be if we are to be completely saved and perfected. What a plan! What a Saviour!

Then what are we supposed to do? We are supposed to quit trying to deal with sin, and fall in love with Jesus! The more deeply we fall in love with Jesus, the more time spent in His presence, the more we fellowship with Him and eat at His table, the easier and more natural it becomes to subject ourselves to Christ and let the Spirit lead us. The more we will desire to please Him! As we commune with the Lord and listen to His voice, this teaching is life; this teaching gives us spiritual food; it gives us spiritual drink; it raises up within us spiritual substance so we can grow up into the nature of the new man. Victory over sin and the flesh is not our own doing! We cannot produce it! But Christ raised up in our lives will lead us to it! Jesus overcame all things, lived out the nature of God, and manifested the power and glory of God. But He did not do it Himself! He said, "**I can do nothing of myself.**" (Jn. 5:19,30) His complete victory came through his fellowship with, and His subjection to, the Father. "**The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works.**" (Jn. 14:10) And that is also where our power and victory are! Christ in us must do the work. And we cannot make Him do it; we can only let Him do it. And He will do it as we live in His presence! Come, come, my friend, into the Holiest in the blood of Jesus, in the power of His life within your spirit, come right on in and enjoy His abundance! Sin will then, in due time, take care of itself. As soon as you have entered in, the stage is set for the second stage of your experience in Christ — the scapegoat of your flesh can then be sent away!

Paul, at one time in his experience, felt what we all feel in our struggle with the flesh. In desperation he cried out, "**O unhappy and pitiable and wretched man that I am! Who will release and deliver me from the shackles of this body of death?**" (Rom. 7:24). And then came the revelation of the glorious solution! "**O thank God — HE WILL! through Jesus Christ, the Anointed One, our Lord!**" (Rom. 7:25). And right on the heels of this the explanation of how Jesus Christ, the fit man, sends the sin and flesh man away: "**For the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus has freed me from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law could not do, its power being weakened by the flesh. Sending His own Son in the guise of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, God condemned sin in the flesh — subdued, overcame, deprived it of its power. So that the righteous and just requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who live and move not in the ways of the flesh but in the ways of the Spirit — our lives governed not by the standards and according to the dictates of the flesh, but controlled by the Holy Spirit. For if you live according to the dictates of the flesh you will surely die. But if through the power of the Spirit you are habitually putting to death — making extinct, deadening — the deeds prompted by the body, you shall really and genuinely live...**" (Rom. 8:2-4,13) (Amplified).

Oh, yes! The fit man is within us, and as we walk in His presence, soaking up His life, yielding to His Spirit, communing with His mind, submitting to His leading, the goat nature is sent away into a desolate land, an

uninhabited wilderness, never to return! Only the mighty, living presence of Christ raised up within us as life can send the flesh man away! The flesh with all his works is sent into a state of desolation — trapped, dried up, starved, neutralized by the ascendancy of the Spirit in our lives! This is what is happening in the life of every son of God! The Day of Atonement is being fulfilled within us spiritually, preparing our hearts for the exceeding glory of the feast of Tabernacles! The fullness of God is at hand! The greater than Pentecost lies directly before us! The sons of God in this very hour are experiencing the finishing touches of God's great redemption in preparation for the outflowing of His glory unto creation!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 13 THOU HAST MADE US KINGS AND PRIESTS

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART THIRTEEN

COMING WITH CLOUDS

"Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father..." (Rev. 1:5-6). "Thou...hast redeemed us unto God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." (Rev. 5:9-10)

This passage is one of rare beauty. It is like a precious diamond, the effulgence of whose radiance dazzles the mind. It is a drop of pure distilled essence, whose fragrance fills the rooms of the heart of every man and woman who has received the call to sonship. It is a joy forevermore and a challenge to all who comprehend its message. It must be engraved deeply upon the heart of every son of God. It exalts and glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. "THOU hast MADE US!" THOU! There is so much depth to that text that I am afraid that we often do not perceive it. It is like a beautiful star-studded sky on a bright clear night and one cannot even begin to grasp the vast depth that lies above us. So it is with these marvelous words: "Thou hast MADE US TO BE KINGS AND PRIESTS!" The book of Revelation is addressed to those whom Christ is making to be kings and priests unto God! All the experiences of this wonderful book are prepared unto that end – to make us kings and priests unto God!

The unveiling of the sons of God is not the revelation of some people that can do something. No, it is the unveiling of some people that have become something. God is not concerned about taking us some place – to some far-off heaven somewhere. He is concerned with making something out of us. That is what redemption is all about! It is not a question of where we are going, it is a matter of what we are becoming. Two men may go to Miami Beach. One is a beggar, the other a business tycoon. They are both in the same place, but they are not both the same thing! There will be a lot of spiritual beggars in heaven! God is working not to take us, but to make us. "To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." (Jn. 1:12) "Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests." "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." (Rev. 21:7) If Jesus is who He is, then certainly He can do all things, but the doing is incidental, merely a by-product of the being. Our vision in this new Day of the Lord is not in doing or going. We are following on to know the Lord! Our hearts are set on Him! We are not becoming occupied with ourselves, we are occupied with His purpose in us, with what He has said He would make us for His sake. "This people have I formed for myself." "Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests."

When the light of God comes and shines into our heart, we become a light. When we feed on the bread of heaven, we become living bread. When we drink of the water of the Spirit, out of our innermost being flows rivers of living water. When He is made unto us righteousness, we become the righteousness of God. When He has fully saved us, we become the salvation of the Lord. When He reigns upon the throne of our hearts, we become kings and lords with Him. God will have a body through the earth in these days, a people walking in God, walking as God, terrible as an army with banners, whose only purpose is that the Father may be glorified! God is raising up a people formed for Himself, through whom He can reveal and manifest Himself in all His wonderful fullness. Come, let us now open our hearts wide to Him! Come, and as we gaze upon this glorious ministry and its life-flow to all the peoples of the earth, let us yield ourselves unto God that He may work HIS WONDROUS WORK in our lives, bringing us into such union with Jesus, our great King-Priest after the order of Melchizedek, the High Priest of our profession, that we become in nature and power His Royal Priesthood in the earth!

Because all the earth is His, God is raising up a Kingly Priesthood to reign in mighty spirit power and authority over the earth, not to be little human dictators, or an external government of laws and systems headquartered in Jerusalem, or Washington, or London, but with an outflow of life and light and love, touching God with one hand, and humanity with the other, by their priestly ministry bringing the two together, that God may indwell men by His Spirit and live and rule in them in power and glory. The kingly nature in us is not to dominate over men's lives, but to deal and break the power of selfhood and rebellion and sin and the devil that men may be reconciled to God. This is a King-Priest ministry, after the order of Melchizedek! Kings have power and authority. Priests reconcile in mercy and love. But once the reconciliation has taken place, and Christ is enthroned, we deliver men up to God, even the Father, that GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL. That is the principle of the kingdom of God! We rule only to subdue men to God – then GOD RULES IN THEM! He rules first through us, that He may rule finally in them. The manifestation of the sons of God for which all creation is in travail is nothing more nor less than the full manifestation of God's fully developed and empowered government of KING-PRIESTS AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK. Throughout the age now ending the Holy Spirit has been forming, preparing, and equipping that body. In the new age now upon us that body shall be given power and authority over all nations and all things! In the ages yet to come the kingdom shall be expanded from realm to realm, from the lowest of the low to the highest of the high, for of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end!

A thousand, yea, tens of thousands, a mighty army is being touched by the fire from off the altar of God! A great Kingdom of Priests is being set ablaze with the life and love and power of God that will cause the nations of the world to turn to the living God in these crisis days. Too long have men occupied themselves in religious efforts to embalm the spirit of yesterday's revival, wrapping it in the grave clothes of ecclesiastical systems and securing it in sepulchers that speak only of the past. If you want to bless humanity, if your desire is to see the world transformed and the captives set free, if the cry of your heart is to see sin and sorrow and death driven from men's lives until there is a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, then forget, once and for all, all the old-order church system methods of the past, for none of them have converted the world, delivered creation, or brought in the kingdom of God! None of them are sufficient for this new Day! Until we see that God is doing an entirely new thing in the earth in this Day, we haven't learned the ABC's of sonship.

Even now a move of God of world-wide dimensions is in the making! It is being formed in a people, in a sonship company that is becoming the embodiment and personification of all He is. This will not be a revival of evangelistic crusades, television programs, musical concerts, bus ministries, or the building of church buildings, but the overflow of divine passion and power from people who have been so consecrated to God that their hearts and their hands have been filled with HIMSELF. These will not minister in organized meetings, there will be no pulpit, no choir, no song service, no prepared sermons, no organization or promotion of any kind. These will minister spontaneously in every place at all times – in the fields, on the streets, in the homes, in the business establishments, in the restaurants, in the hospitals, in the churches, in the schools, on the airplanes, buses, and trains – wherever they are to minister, by command of the Spirit they will appear in power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost! They will minister to the meek and lowly and needy, to the great and mighty, to the common people and to kings, presidents and prime ministers, to all men everywhere without respect of persons. None will be able to gainsay their wisdom or their revelation or their power!

Already bright clouds are gathering on the horizon, clouds of a multitude of witnesses to the deep and vital work God is doing in the lives of His apprehended ones in preparation for the long-awaited manifestation of the sons of God! The celestial rivers are running full, and great glory is about to break forth upon the earth. This is the time to gird up your loins, like Elijah of old, and run before the chariots. In due time the clouds shall burst and empty themselves upon the earth. Let your heart be lifted high, for God is on the move, and this can be YOUR HOUR OF MANIFESTATION! Only that will erupt and overflow from God's people which has first been inworked by Father's hand. This sonship ministry will not flow from gifts of the Spirit, but from the very life and nature of Christ formed in His body. The ministry of kings and priests is not a gift – we are being made kings and priests – it is a becoming! Do not belittle or depreciate this day when it may seem so little is happening in your midst, my beloved. The accent of the Spirit is not on the external works and gifts and manifestations in this hour – we have already had all that! His concern is with the inner development of the Christ, the formation

of all He is as life and nature within, our becoming the essence and substance of His very Being! Right now the greatest service we can give to others is to die out to all our own ego-self, to all the antiquated religious methods of the past that the living of His Life becomes its own declaration of all that He is and can do, to His glory and praise. Amen!

COMING WITH CLOUDS

"Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him." (Rev. 1:7)

The book of Revelation contains deep and rich teaching for the elect saints concerning the coming of Christ; symbolic, mysterious, wonderful, but always to be approached reverently, humbly, with head bowed low and shoes removed from off our feet, as people standing on holy ground. The coming of the Lord as revealed in the book of Revelation is complex and progressive, extending through a variety of diverse scenes, stages, events, and manifestations, until He has come in such measure of fullness that we know Him finally in that dimension where HE IS the glorious fulfillment of all that our heart has yearned for, and desired so earnestly. All the lacks swallowed up into completeness, all the voids filled with His fullness, and we know the bliss of HIMSELF as our all-in-all!

Almost two thousand years ago John on the isle of Patmos saw unfolding before Him the enthralling drama of the coming of His Lord. As the awesome sight began to unfold he cried out in astonished wonder and surprised joy, "Behold! He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him." This phrase, He cometh, is from the Greek *erchomai*. It is the third person singular, present indicative. Any reader who knows the conjunction of verbs knows what that means. First, it means HE COMES as a present tense reality. The verb is present indicative. He comes. He is in the act of coming. Behold! He is now coming! In other words, He has been coming, He is still in the act of coming, and He continues to come. This is extremely important. More than once the coming of the Lord is spoken of in this tense throughout the book of Revelation. It's not merely a future thing, not something that shall happen somewhere down the course of history, but it is something that is. Oh, that God with flames of His holy fire would burn this truth indelibly upon the hearts of all who read these lines!

The church world is either looking back to an historical Christ, or forward to a futuristic coming of Christ. They miss this word *erchomai* altogether, their spiritual understanding never being quickened to this grand truth that HE COMES — He is coming, He continues to come, He will continue to come, until He has come in the fullness of every dimension in which He can come. It is something that is happening right now! It is happening in your life right now! It means that He comes from one place to another. He comes out of the realm of spirit to be manifested in flesh, out of the realm of the invisible to be expressed and revealed in a visible, tangible way to the physical creation. *Erchomai* means to come, to make one's appearance before the public. It means that He comes and appears before the view of the people round about. And this coming has already happened, it is happening now, and shall continue to happen! This is the revelation that so captivated the apostle John that he could only exclaim with amazement, "Behold! He comes!" And we have been just as amazed as the Spirit has borne witness for a number of years now among the Lord's people that soon Christ shall come in a manifestation of Himself on a plane, and in a measure, never before seen or experienced by men upon this planet. He shall come to be glorified in His saints, manifested in His sons to set creation free. The bondage of corruption, the power of sin and death, shall first be broken from off God's people, then from all humanity. Yes, He has come in measure, and He shall yet come in fullness!

There are two more words: "With Clouds." "Behold! He cometh with clouds." "With" is from the Greek preposition *meta*. It means with, but it also means together with, in the midst of, among, between, in common with, with the help of, and by means of. Here are the ways He comes: Behold! He comes with clouds, denoting an association. Behold! He comes together with clouds, denoting a communion. Behold! He comes in the midst of clouds, denoting an indwelling. Behold! He comes among clouds, denoting a fellowship. Behold! He comes between clouds, denoting a union. Behold! He comes in common with clouds, denoting a participation. Behold! He comes with the help of clouds, denoting an interdependence. Behold! He comes by means of clouds, denoting an instrumentality.

From the dawn of history the way in which God has displayed His glory has been in the form of a cloud. This glory cloud of God has taken different shapes and different sizes on various occasions. When it was time for the children of Israel to begin their exodus out of Egypt, the glory of God took the form of a pillar of fire enshrouded within a cloud. "And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them in the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light, to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people." (Ex. 13:21-22)

What did the glory of God signify every time it appeared? The glory cloud of God signified the unique presence of God! It always told the people of Israel, when it appeared, that Yahweh was uniquely present in this place, at this time, for a special purpose. When the glory of God as a cloud led the children of Israel out of Egypt, it signified to the people that God was with them in a very real and sovereign way. "And the Lord went before them in a pillar of a cloud." God was in the cloud! The almighty God Himself dwelt in that cloud by day and in the fiery pillar by night. That strange pillar of cloud and fire was the visible manifestation of His glory and presence. While Israel walked in the light of His fiery presence, no calamity could harm them, no enemy could attack them, no evil could befall them, nor plague come nigh their dwelling. God was with them in sovereign power in all their marches! "And the Lord said unto Moses, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe for ever." (Ex. 19:9) And again, "And the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the veil before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat." (Lev. 16:2)

When the cloud came down out of heaven and rested on top of Mount Sinai, it signified that God in a unique sense had come out of the realm of spirit to meet with the children of Israel in His manifestation on the earth plane. When they saw the cloud enter into the most holy place in the tabernacle and later in the temple, it signified again that God in a special sense was taking up residence within that worship structure within the nation of Israel. The light that shone in the holiest of all behind the temple curtain of blue and purple and scarlet and fine twined linen, laced with threads of gold and figures of cherubim, was not the beams of the sevenfold candlestick of the holy place, nor even the radiance of the sun in the outer court. It was the glory light of God's own divine majesty! Through time the Israelites called that glory cloud of God the shekinah. The word shekinah means "to dwell." And since the glory cloud always signified that God was present at the place where the cloud appeared, to dwell in a special sense, they called it the shekinah or dwelling glory of God!

The disciples of Jesus had become accustomed to seeing Jesus the man, Jesus the healer, Jesus the teacher, Jesus the miracle worker. They had heard Him tell of the majesty and glory of His Father in heaven, but had never grasped the significance of the glory, majesty, and power of the Christ who walked the road with them. On that momentous occasion when the Lord Jesus took Peter, James, and John up into the mount and was transfigured before them, suddenly there appeared a bright cloud – a cloud with a light in it! And out of that bright cloud the voice of the Father spake concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. "This is my beloved Son – hear Him!" It is more than coincidence that, as Peter spoke, a cloud overshadowed them and a Voice came out of the cloud. One of the significant facts in connection with the glory cloud of God's presence is that God always spoke from the cloud. This began first on mount Sinai. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee...and the Lord came down upon mount Sinai...and the Lord called Moses..." (Ex. 19:9,20). At a later time God spoke from the same cloud after that it had descended upon the tabernacle. "And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses." (Ex. 33:9)

What was that bright cloud with the light in it from which the voice of God spoke on the mount of Jesus' transfiguration? It was none other than the pillar of cloud housing the glory fire, the shekinah glory of God that had led the children of Israel in their exodus out of Egypt and guided them for forty years! As Jesus prayed on the mount, He was transfigured before His chosen disciples. At that moment of transfiguration the glory cloud enveloped Him and God spoke from the midst of the radiance of glory. In the wilderness this glory, this cloud, and the voice out of the cloud are all brought together: "And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. And the glory of the Lord abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day He called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. And the sight of the glory of the Lord was

like devouring fire." (Ex. 24:15-17) On the mount of transfiguration the Son is enveloped in the cloud and we are commanded to hear Him. The writer to the Hebrews then identified this voice and this glory in these remarkable words: "God...hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son...who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person..." (Heb. 1:1-3). Jesus is the brightness of God's glory! He is indeed, the presence in the cloud and the very cloud and fire of the presence!

Let every reader of these lines be assured beyond any possible shadow of doubt that it was this same shekinah, this very same glory cloud which the eleven disciples beheld in spell-bound astonishment on the crest of the mount of Olives that blessed day when the Lord ascended into mid-air and suddenly a bright cloud, like a chariot of God, bore Him speedily away, concealing Him from mortal gaze. "When He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight," the record states. An accident? An illusion? A marvelous coincidence? Not on your life! This is the equivalent of saying that the cloud which hovered over Israel in the wilderness; the cloud which rested upon the glorious tabernacle of old; the cloud which dwelt between the gleaming cherubim in the most holy place; the cloud which filled Solomon's temple until the ministers could not minister by reason of the blazing glory; the cloud which overshadowed the virgin girl Mary when she came to be with child; the cloud which enveloped the Son of God and revealed His glory on the mount of transfiguration; that cloud is the very same cloud that received the Lord Jesus into its midst and out of the sight of mortal eyes! The cloud that received Jesus out of the sight of those startled disciples certainly was no ordinary rain cloud which happened to be blown across a torturous sky. It was the blazing shekinah cloud which had always veiled the divine majesty of God from time immemorial!

Here is where I wish to point out a most significant fact of scripture which has entirely been overlooked by most Bible students and nearly all preachers and teachers. All the way through the scriptures, from the crossing of the Red Sea by the children of Israel, to the ascension of Christ from the Mount of Olives, God consistently manifested Himself in ONE GLORY CLOUD. There was always only ONE SINGLE CLOUD! One cloud before the camp of Israel. One cloud over Mount Sinai. One cloud resting upon the tabernacle in the wilderness. One cloud shining in the most holy place. One cloud filling Solomon's temple. One cloud overshadowing the virgin of Galilee, implanting the seed of the Christ. One cloud shimmering over the summit of the mount of transfiguration. One cloud in which Christ ascended from the mount of Olives. Christ ascended in one single cloud of God's glory – the very same cloud in which He had manifested His presence throughout the long ages of time!

It is when we come to the return of the Lord that we notice a distinct difference! For suddenly the one single cloud disappears and we are introduced to a great plurality of clouds! Let us see! Christ departed this earth in one cloud. He comes again in many clouds! "Behold, He cometh with clouds: and every eye shall see Him." (Rev. 1:7) Daniel in vision beheld Him thus: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like a Son of man came with the clouds of heaven...and there was given unto Him dominion." (Dan. 7:13-14) Jesus Himself said, "And they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." (Matt. 24:30) And again, "Hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." (Mat. 26:64) Finally, the apostle Paul relates this dramatic experience: "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds...and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (I Thes. 4:17) In the CLOUDS! More than one cloud. Many clouds. A great company of clouds!

Why are there many clouds attending Christ's coming, and what are these clouds? Let us not for one moment forget that we are dealing with the cloud of God's glory, presence, and power – the shekinah! When the firstborn Son of God was in the world John said of Him, "We beheld His glory." (Jn. 1:14) When did they behold His glory? You may reply that they beheld His glory when He went about doing good, healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, raising the dead, performing miracles and teaching and speaking as never man spake. Ah, yes, I am sure that in all those things they beheld a glory, but the apostle Peter reveals to us what is really meant by their beholding the glory of the Son. "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory (the glory cloud), saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount." (II Pet. 1:16-18)

How very significant that at the end of Jesus' earthly ministry He said, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also shall be one in us...and the glory which Thou gavest me I have given them...I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one...that they be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which Thou hast given me." (Jn. 17:20-24) And this is the crux of the whole matter! From the dawn of creation's light until Jesus stepped upon this planet, God manifested to His creation in a singular way His own glory. He, the one eternal God, exhibited His presence in the form of one glory cloud! But as Jesus approached the cross, and the glorious events to unfold thereafter, He disclosed the grand truth that God purposed from eternity to SHARE HIS GLORY WITH A VAST FAMILY OF SONS...that glorious body which is the fullness of Him that filleth all in all!

Let us see, then, what great encouragement God has given us concerning His glory. "And ye know how we exhorted you...that ye should walk worthy of God, who hath called you to His kingdom and glory." (I Thes. 2:11-12) Peter asserts: "...also am...a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed." (I Pet. 5:1) "Whereunto He hath called you...to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." (II Thes. 2:14) "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." (Rom. 8:18) The writer to the Hebrews adds this significant testimony: "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." (Heb. 2:10) As the spirit of revelation and understanding floods our minds, we are left without question as to the meaning of all this. There is to be a mighty and universal revelation of the glory of God, that very same glory which was revealed in the cloud of old, but now an intensified many-splendored glory in the many clouds of God's sons!

Another evidence that the "clouds" with which Christ comes are in fact the sons of God in their glory is couched in the terminology of the scriptures on this subject. In most places the passages in question speak of Christ coming "with clouds." There is only one other group of plurality of objects of which it is stated that Christ comes "with" them, and that is – the SAINTS! "To the end He may establish your hearts...at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ WITH ALL HIS SAINTS." (I Thes. 3:13) Jude says, "And Enoch also...prophesied...saying, Behold, the Lord cometh WITH TEN THOUSANDS OF SAINTS." (Jude 14) The Amplified is helpful, when it reads, "Behold, the Lord comes WITH MYRIADS OF HOLY ONES – ten thousands of His saints." But the Interlinear reading from the Diaglott translation gives the clearest of all renderings from the Greek text, so we note, "Lo, comes Lord IN HOLY MYRIADS OF HIMSELF." Myriads of Himself! And all of them partakers of His divine nature, conformed to His image, imbued with His mind, filled with His life, radiating His glory! Myriads of Himself, of His own kind, born of His seed, reproducing His life, a many brethren company of sons – all His sons. Though there are multiplied testimonies to this truth, we will add but one more: "And the Lord my God shall come, and ALL THE SAINTS WITH THEE." (Zech. 14:5) The beloved John sees this same scene in wonder-filled vision and cries out, "Behold, He cometh WITH CLOUDS; and every eye shall see Him!"

When Jesus ascended two thousand years ago, He ascended glorified in that singular glory cloud in which He had dwelt from eternity. He was the one God manifested in all fullness in one Man, the Son. But, blessed be God! As He comes again, "He shall come to be GLORIFIED IN HIS SAINTS, and to be admired IN THEM that believe." (II Thes. 1:10) Centuries ago the apostle Paul wrote these words to the saints at Rome, "And if we are children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also GLORIFIED TOGETHER." (Rom. 8:17) Christ coming "with clouds" certainly shows that each of these sons, to whom is given that same glory that Jesus had from eternity, shall stand ultimately in his own realm of the glory of the Lord. The glory is shared, so the cloud which represents that glory is shared. Each elect son becomes a manifestation of the glory – of the cloud – of the shekinah! In the light of truth so sublime let us search our hearts and sanctify ourselves in the knowledge that we are the body of Christ. The cloud of old rested upon the tabernacle and filled the temple with the glory of the Lord! We are now His tabernacle and His temple! We are now His ark, His most holy place, and His holy mount! The glory is now given to us, rests upon us, increasingly fills us, and shall radiate out from this holy habitation of God forevermore! In Old Testament times God dwelt in one single cloud. But now He says, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them...and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord." (II Cor. 6:16-18)

As the clouds pour out the rain upon our land, so the heavens pour down water upon the earth. When a cloud becomes so heavy with droplets that it can no longer hold them, it spills over, and we have rain. "O Lord my God, Thou art very great...who layeth the beams of His chambers in the waters: who maketh the cloud His chariot: He watereth the hills from His chambers." (Ps. 104:3,13) The clouds are the chambers of God containing the water of life! A cloud is full of water and water speaks to us of life. Water typifies both the Spirit of God and the Word of God. (Eph. 5:26; Jn. 7:37-39) A cloud speaks to us of a vessel which contains water, or contains life. God by His Spirit gives living water to refresh and impart life to His creation! It is the nature of a cloud to empty itself. "If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth." (Eccl. 11:3) When the cloud gets filled up, it rains! That is the nature of the clouds – rain pours out! Now, all that God is is being formed in His sons, we are becoming a receptacle, a vehicle for all the fullness of God, filled up with the life-giving properties of our Father! HE IS FILLING THE CLOUDS!

The nature of each son will be to pour out that life just as God poured it into Jesus and Jesus is pouring it into us. If the sons, as the clouds of heaven, be full of God, they will pour Him out upon all who dwell in the earth-realm! A true ministry has life to give, and is willing to empty himself in order to give life to a dry and thirsty people. Pour out his life for others – that is what Jesus did! We shall empty out that same life on a groaning creation and quicken all who are held in the bondage of corruption! The apostles Peter and Jude both tell us that false ministries are "clouds without water...carried about of winds." A true ministry, then, is a cloud with water. A true ministry has life to give! A true ministry is willing to empty himself out in order to bring that life to a dry and parched land! Jesus was a bright cloud laden with water, for "the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and give His life..." Prepare to rain, O ye clouds!

The one glory has become the multiple glory! The one cloud of His presence has become many clouds of His presence! The Lord is coming to be glorified in a many-membered body, in the clouds of His presence! These are the clouds of His glory into which the triumphant saints of God are being "caught up." Our "catching up" is being brought to that high spiritual sphere where we become one with that whole great "cloud of witnesses," the spirits of just men made perfect! They without us cannot be made perfect, but they with us are the very perfection of God expressed out of the high realm of the heavens of God's Spirit. What a glorious union of forces when those of our generation on earth, and all those overcoming saints of all former ages who have gone on before us, are joined together, becoming an indestructible force in the full, total and complete manifestation of God's majesty, power, and glory at the manifestation of the sons of God! Gird up your loins, beloved, for I hear the sound of abundance of rain!

The Resident within the shimmering cloud of glory is just the Lord Himself! The Lord is the source of the dazzling light, for it is HE who causes the celestial host to shine forth, thus forming the "cloud" and manifesting His glory thereby. Be not discouraged, my beloved, for our Lord shall complete all of His work and purpose in us, lifting us up into higher realms of His Spirit, and completing that union with the whole body of the firstborn. The life of God is taking form! The clouds are coming together! The clouds are gathering rain! The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together! Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him!

This treasure we have in earthen vessels. (II Cor. 4:7) Ah, there is a glory even now as we glorify God in these mortal bodies. Christ had and disclosed such a glory in that dim and distant past when He walked the shores of blue Galilee. But, blessed be His name, in His resurrection He came forth in new garments, clad in a sin-free and death-free body of incorruption and immortality! Now His wonderful life is swallowing up the sin and death in us, bringing to His chosen ones also a change of raiment, and in His due time we shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, for this corruptible is putting on incorruption and this mortal is putting on immortality. Only as we daily put on the Lord Jesus Christ are we changed! "Putting on" is not a passive thing. We are putting on the Lord Jesus Christ; we are putting on incorruption and immortality; and because we are putting on the life, mind, and nature of His resurrection, we are being changed! When we are fully changed by the power of His resurrection we shall be bright clouds out of whom God shall shine and out of whom the voice of God shall speak. We shall be pillars of clouds by day, and pillars of fire by night, to lead and guide all humanity from the bondage of Egypt to the blessing and abundance of the Promised Land!

Though His glory has generally been hidden throughout the ages, at certain times and on special occasions that hidden glory has flashed forth into prominence before the eyes of the few who by the predestined counsel of God were permitted to experience unspeakable things unlawful for a man to utter. We are coming ever nearer when God shall unveil His power and glory before the face of all nations and peoples in a manner far beyond any measure experienced by men of any age! The whole world shall soon see the glory of the Lord in an unprecedented way! From earth's teeming millions of all ages there is a people arising in the image of Christ. Those who watch the spiritual heavens shall soon see clouds as they have never seen before! We have seen the clouds of earth's atmosphere, inky black clouds, and clouds of snowy whiteness; clouds brightly tinted, and many silver lined; clouds made brilliantly gorgeous by the afterglow of the setting sun. But we never yet have seen clouds made magnificently glorious by the blazing splendor of the Son of God! We have seen clouds charged by flashes of lightning. Not yet have we seen clouds charged with the power of omnipotence and flashing with the incorruptible radiance of Christ's life and immortality! Afar off we have seen the morning clouds as they have enwrapped the distant mountain peaks and splendidly capped the hilltops. We have yet to see the clouds which enfold the blazing form of the Mighty One! We have seen clouds driven as chariots to carry rain to the dry and thirsty fields. But CLOUDS ARE FORMING IN THE HEAVENS OF GOD'S SPIRIT THAT WILL BE SEEN, THAT WILL BE THE CHARIOT OF HEAVEN'S KING OF GLORY AS HE COMES TO REFRESH AND QUICKEN AND RESTORE ALL THINGS!

What a sight for eyes to behold! How it enraptures the faithful ones who "love His appearing" and have hoped to the end "for the grace that is to be brought unto them" at "the revelation of Jesus Christ." Of a sudden the blazing light of day will take on a new brightness, above all the glory of the sun, and grow still more light, more bright, and more dazzling, until the eyes of men behold the advancing glory of God's Christ! And with the glory clouds of myriads of like ones unto Himself the all-conquering Christ will appear in all the fullness of Himself in the earth! These brilliant bands will fill the glory-flashing skies from end to end and flood the world with life, light, and love! How magnificent will be the advancing pageantry of the skies! How sublime beyond all mortal comprehension will be the revelation of Jesus Christ!

No wonder John followed his exclamation concerning the Lord coming with clouds with this significant explanation: "...and every eye shall see Him." This beautiful text has often been misused and abused in an attempt to prove the erroneous theory that Jesus will return as a flesh and blood man and be suspended in the sky until every individual throughout the whole earth has had an opportunity to see Him. But this crude interpretation of the prophecy is quite out of harmony with the Bible's use of language and the symbolic scheme of the book of Revelation. Let us note, for example, how scripture uses the function of the eye to symbolize discernment. After Job's long experience of calamity and trial, and the revelation of God's heart to him, he cried out in communion with God, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but NOW MINE EYE SEETH THEE!" (Job 42:5). All will concede, I believe, that Job did not see God literally, but he saw Him, nonetheless. Jesus said to His disciples, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see." I doubt that any would contend that Jesus was reminding the disciples to reflect upon how fortunate they were not to be physically blind!

To "see" means to know. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall know God." A pure heart is one to which all that is not of God is strange and jarring. A heart that has no desires but for the glory of God, whose affections all center in Him, whose delight is in His perfect will, such an one will truly see and know the Lord! It is better to know God than even to see Him by the eyes of sense. There were many who saw Jesus who did not know Him. They saw the Christ, but they knew not that He was the Christ. They saw His miracles, but they did not know Him. They even rejected Him and hated Him, some of them. You could see Jesus Himself in bodily form today, but unless your heart be quickened, cleansed, and transformed, you could not know Him to be the Christ. It is only purity of heart that gives purity of sight!

I don't believe every eye is going to see Him because they are watching TBN, CBN, CNN, or reading USA Today. Every eye is going to see Him because there is coming such great grace and mighty power at the revelation of Jesus Christ in His body that it shall produce a supernatural quickening in the lives of all who behold the appearing of the Lord. Their spiritual eyes shall be opened and they will understand and know what

they have never known before! They will not see as they have seen before, but their minds and hearts will be changed and transfigured in the light of His glory. What a hope!

A beautiful illustration is found in the gospel of Luke. The aged prophet, Simeon, who had received the promise from God that he should not see death until he had seen the Lord's Christ, came by the Spirit into the temple, when Joseph and Mary brought in the child Jesus. "Then took he Him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: FOR MINE EYES HAVE S-E-E-N THY SALVATION." What kind of eyesight is this? A little babe in the arms of his mother, and yet Simeon's eyes were opened to see – not just the form of the babe, but THY SALVATION! This certainly was not an uncommon sight, mothers were constantly coming into the temple with their children, to do for them after the custom of the law. And no doubt there was a vast multitude of other people in the temple on that day; they, too, saw the babe in the arms of his mother, but they did not see THY SALVATION, for having eyes, they saw not – "and the world knew Him not."

When the scripture said, "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together," God is saying the same to the world today. The unveiling of the sons of God is the revelation of the glory of the Lord! When the glory of the Lord is revealed, which is the salvation of God, it is the fulfillment of the word of the Lord to His elect through Isaiah, "I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that THOU MAYEST B-E M-Y S-A-L-V-A-T-I-O-N UNTO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH." When the kingdom of God fills the earth, the earth will be filled with righteousness. WE ARE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD! When the glory of the Lord is revealed, the earth will be flooded with light. WE ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD! The reason the world will know the sons of God to be the salvation of God is because God pours out His Spirit upon all flesh. All humanity, with that quickening of the Spirit, will have their eyes enlightened to see in the body of Christ the salvation of God, to see in the sons of God the glory of God and the righteousness of God. The world will see God's elect as the righteousness of God because we are becoming righteous sons! The world will see God's elect as the light of the world because we are becoming a glorious shining people! The world will see God's elect as the salvation of God because we are becoming a fully-saved people!

"Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him!"

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, Part 13, Thou Hast Made Us Kings and Priests [J. Preston Eby] ~ BIBLE STUDY

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 14

THE ALPHA AND OMEGA

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART FOURTEEN

THE ALPHA AND OMEGA

Long centuries ago Moses stood in the burning sands of the Sinai desert where with bowed head, bare feet, and a trembling heart he beheld the God of the burning bush. The impetuosity and self-confidence of his youth had waned from his spirit and he was content with his flock of sheep and solitary thoughts in the wilderness silence. This, however, was not to last, for God was speaking to the aged man of a stupendous work he was yet to perform beyond the confines of his chosen world. He must return to his enslaved brethren in Egypt and marshal them into the greatest exodus of any people on earth. Moses had no desire for this mission, and we can scarcely blame him, but when finally he consented to obey the call of the Voice out of the bush, he hesitantly asked, "Who shall I say has sent me?" And Yahweh replied, in the words of the King James Bible, "I am that I am. Tell your brethren that I am hath sent you."

It seemed a strange name, yet the magnificent truth contained in those words wrought their emancipation from the slavery of Egypt, formed them into a nation, and led them into the security of their own land. Nearly all Hebrew scholars agree that these words could be rendered, "I will be that I will be" or "I will become what I will become." In the Old Testament the principal revelation of God's name is the word "Yahweh" or "I AM." The word is really three separate phrases joined together in the same manner as in our modern custom of combining the initials of a firm or the syllables from the names of different men to form a company or patent name for a product. The three phrases in the word Yahweh are the three tenses of the verb to be: I was, I am, I shall be. A part of each of these words is combined in Hebrew to form the name Yahweh. It is God's memorial name to all generations. It shows God's intimate relationship with all that is past, His independent, unchangeable existence in the now, and His eternal connection with all that is in the future. What an adequate name for God!

Since divine resources are infinite, God is pleased to become to His people what is best for them and what is needed at the time. This name is at once a revelation and a promise! God was saying to Moses, "What ever my people need me to be for them, I will be!" "I will become what I will become." In fulfillment of this promise-name Yahweh became for the children of Israel a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. He became water out of flinty rock and bread from heaven. God became Miracle Worker, Deliverer, Provider, Sustainer, Healer, Counselor, Law Giver, Military Leader, and many other things on their journey from the servitude of Egypt to the glory of the Promised Land.

The further truth is, however, that "I will become what I will become" is an in-part, out-dated, Old Testament revelation! It is, in fact, but a prophecy. You will understand a great truth when you see that the prophecy is now fully fulfilled. Its fulfillment is in Jesus Christ! Almost two millenniums ago Jesus Christ stepped upon the stage of history, the firstborn Son of God, God (Yahweh) manifested in the flesh! "No man has ever seen God at any time; the only unique Son, the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him – He has revealed Him, brought Him out where He can be seen; He has interpreted Him, and has made Him known." (Jn. 1:18, Amplified) When God came in Jesus Christ He did not say, "I will become what I will become." For you see, beloved, Jesus is the fulfillment of the prophecy – He is, within Himself, all that God has promised to become! In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. (Col. 2:9) These words suggest that Jesus is alone sufficient, for the fullness is in Him; always sufficient, for the fullness abides in Him; all-sufficient, because He is all the fullness; absolutely sufficient, because the fullness resides in Him bodily. In Him are summed up all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3). He is the sum and substance of wisdom, the center and circumference of knowledge. All power in heaven and in earth is given unto Him (Mat. 28:18). He is the source and the sovereignty of power! He is the righteousness of God revealed from heaven. (1 Cor. 1:30) All the nature, love, and glory of God are expressed in the Son! All judgment is committed into the hands of

God's Christ! (Jn. 5:22). He is the salvation of Yahweh in human flesh! Our Lord and our Christ is the verity of Yahweh's truth; the surety of Yahweh's promise; the majesty of Yahweh's power; the authority of Yahweh's throne; the compassion of Yahweh's heart; the repository of Yahweh's fullness; and the legacy of Yahweh's will. Could any imagery ever exhaust our Lord's boundless worth?

In Christ God has become ALL THAT HE WOULD BECOME! When God came in Jesus Christ He did not speak as He spoke to Moses. He did not say, "I will become..." Oh, how my heart leaps within me today as I hear the lovely Christ of God proclaiming, "I AM!" "I am the way, the truth, and the life." "I am the resurrection and the life." "I am the door, I am the bread that has come down from heaven, I am the good shepherd." "I AM!" "I AM!" "I AM!"

What would you think of a preacher who, every Sunday, stood up and preached about himself? Nearly all of those in the church systems would soon get another preacher! Yet Jesus did this persistently and consistently! The apostle Paul has said, "We preach not ourselves," and so it is. Yet, wonder of wonders, Jesus preached Himself! He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me shall never die." "All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers but...I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." "For without me, ye can do nothing." "I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me...bringeth forth much fruit." "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." "Before Abraham was, I am." On and on it goes. Throughout all His ministry Jesus Christ preached Himself. He would indeed be an egomaniac were He not truly the firstborn Son of the living God!

When Jesus says, "I AM," He reveals within Himself the very nature and power of God. God IS. God is constant. That's why He is eternal, because nothing that changes can be eternal. Everything that is eternal is unchangeable, unvarying, unaffected, without fluctuation. The constancy of God's nature – that is eternity! When you know God as He is, you have touched eternity! You have transcended time, space, and matter into a realm where you can see time from beginning to end. There you see all things as they really are, and you transcend into the realm where as He is, so are you in this world. The I AM of Christ is the "Day of the Lord." It is the unveiling of Himself in all that He is! Unchangeably, unvaryingly, constantly, eternally, incorruptibly, immortally – I AM! That is the nature of God! That is what Jesus came into this world to demonstrate and reveal! And, He is bringing us into union with Himself in the I AM. That is manifest sonship!

Let me put it this way. God dwells in the ever-present NOW! Now is common to every time and place. There is no time, no place – there never has been and there never will be – that did not exist in NOW. To live in God's now, is thus to be everywhere and in all times at the same time. On earth we have seconds, minutes, hours, day and night. We may work all day and sleep at night. For us the day is past, and the night is present. At the same time the Chinese are working in the day while we sleep at night. For them the night is past, and the day is present. But an astronaut high above the earth, circling the planet every ninety minutes, sees both at the same time and for him both day and night are now, the present. God, my friend, is high enough that for Him everything that ever has been, or ever will be, is NOW! In the eternal nature of God there is no past, no present, there is only the eternal now. Therefore now is common to every time and every place. To live in now, is to be everywhere and in every time I AM THAT I AM.

Let me give you an illustration. Albert Einstein believed that, according to his theory of relativity, it would be possible to do time travel, to travel forward or backward in time. Now hear me well. If I were to step into a time machine and you say, "Where do you want to go? Do you want to go forward in time, or do you want to go backward in time?" perhaps my first request would be to go backward in time. I would like to go back to the time of David and Solomon. I would also like to go back to Egypt at the time when the pyramids were built, and I would love to go back to the days when Jesus was here; but the era of David and Solomon has always held a special fascination for me. So if I have the opportunity to travel in a time machine that possibly will be the first place I will go! Now, let's suppose the date is February 13, 2003. We climb into our time machine and travel back to the years of David and Solomon. We're not going to make it a quick weekend trip, take a hasty look, jump back into our time machine and return. Oh, no! We're going to stay a while. So we spend twenty years caught up in the events of that period in Israel. We find a residence there, learn the language and culture, make friends, and become involved with what is happening. We walk it out, experience and relish every minute of it for two long decades! Finally, we get back into our time machine and journey back to the twenty-first

century. Guess what the date is when we arrive home. We get back on February 13, 2003! That's right, we get back exactly when we left! Now – if you do not understand time and eternity that will blow your mind!

What did Einstein discover? He discovered that there is no past, and there is no future, there is only now. That is not a metaphysical or new age concept; that is a scientific fact. Everything that ever happened, and everything that ever will happen, is now. What a mystery! But it is the mystery of life. It is the mystery of immortality. It's the mystery of the spirit. It's the mystery of God. It's the mystery of eternity. It's the mystery of manifest sonship. It's the mystery of that realm, that dimension of life and reality, which transcends time and mortal consciousness. And it is out of that realm of reality that Jesus spoke when He declared, "I AM." Oh, the wonder of it! John was in the spirit on the Lord's Day and do you know what he saw? He saw the beginning and the end! He saw all the processing in between, from the day of darkness until the whole earth is full of the glory of the Lord. He saw the glorious One who spoke and said, "I AM Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end." The beginning and the end, time and all its works, are contained in the I AM of God's Christ! From our earthly perspective there is a beginning and an end. But Jesus says, "I AM that beginning and that end!"

For Jesus Christ there is no past or future. He lives in a continual present. Therefore He sees the whole history of mankind in one sighting. It all "is" to Him! He knows what will happen a million years from now and shows it to you, as something that happened a thousand years ago. That is why there are prophecies in the scriptures; not because God guesses or because He is a divinator; and it is not simply because He knows all things. Rather, it is because all things are for Him! For Him the future is as the present, or as the past is for us. Everything IS in God's eternal day, in God's timeless state of being. That is why His name is, I AM. Sometimes it appears that God makes grammatical mistakes. Jesus says, "Before Abraham was, I AM." "Lord, you were. You should say, Before Abraham was, I was." "No, I AM!" He also mixes the future. He said, "Lo, I AM with you till the end of the ages." "Lord, I will be with you, that's future." "No, you don't understand; I AM with you!"

Jesus never directly said He was God, but twenty-one times in the Greek text of John's gospel He spoke the words, "I am." We all use the words "I am" in normal speech all the time. If I say, "I am thirsty," or, "I am an American," I am not implying that I am God! But we must understand Jesus' unique use of these words. On one occasion He said to the Jews, "If you do not believe that I AM, you will die in your sins." (Jn. 8:24) It was later in the same discussion that He declared, "Before Abraham was, I AM!" How did the Jews regard His statement? "They took up stones to cast at Him." (Jn. 8:58) To them He was claiming to be God! For you see, "I am" was the name YAHWEH – they understood precisely the inference! Therefore, in their view, He was breaking the third commandment, and the penalty for this under the law was death by stoning!

No name known to human tongue can describe the firstborn Son of God like this name. No sentence ever uttered by eloquent orator, no phrase ever penned by sage or scribe, no song ever sung by angelic choir can describe in such all-inclusive excellence the almighty magnitude of what He really is. "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way," complained Thomas. "I am the way," Jesus replied, "I am the truth, I am the life." "I am the door. I am the light of the world. I am the good shepherd. I am the bread of life." "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day," sobbed Mary sadly of her dead brother. "I am the resurrection," Jesus answered, "and I am the life." "I am Alpha. I am Omega. I am the first. I am the last. I am the beginning. I am the ending. I am thy redeemer. I am thy strength. I am He that liveth. I am He that is alive forevermore. I am He that shutteth and no man openeth and openeth and no man shutteth. I am the root and the offspring of David. I am the bright and morning star." There is no end to what He is, for He is everything! He is the Christ. He is the Lord. He is the Creator and Redeemer of the entire universe. And all He is He always is – He changes not! He is the I AM!

I have mentioned some things in which the Lord said, "I AM." There are many, many more! What is there throughout all the galactic spheres that He isn't! He is "the Lord our righteousness." He has "become our salvation." He is made unto us "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption." All that the Father has is His. He and the Father are one. If we have seen Him we have seen the Father. All that the Father gave Him, He became. He didn't come saying, "I have," but "I AM." He didn't say, "I have brought you life; I have brought you truth; I have brought you salvation; I have brought you righteousness; I have come to show you the way." No! "I AM!" The Lord Jesus became the personification of all that the Father showed Him. We are to be like Him! Those called to sonship are being conformed to His likeness, filled with His Spirit. Those who are

becoming His many brethren are putting on His mind, growing up into His nature, wisdom, power and authority. All that is true of Jesus is now becoming true of us! He first said, "I AM the light of the world." Later He said to His own, "YE ARE the light of the world." He first said, "I AM the bread that is come down from heaven." Later Paul, by the revelation of Jesus Christ, wrote: "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread." (I Cor. 10:16-17)

He was first made unto us righteousness; but now "WE ARE the righteousness of God in Him." Sons are coming to the place where they no longer say, "I have received, I have been given, I possess, I have," but, "I AM!" We once prophesied, "Thus saith the Lord..." but now we must say, as Jesus said, "I say unto you..." We are no longer something apart from Him, for we are bone of His bones, flesh of His flesh, life of His life, mind of His mind, spirit of His spirit, nature of His nature, word of His word, united with Him, made one in Him. Oh, the wonder of it! It is one thing to go out and tell the world that "the light of the world is Jesus." It is a greater thing to say, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." (Isa. 60:1) Then it is that "the nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." (Isa. 60:3)

THE ALPHA AND OMEGA

In the revelation of Jesus Christ to John on Patmos our Lord proclaims the superlative, transcendental, all-encompassing truth in five marvelous words: "I AM Alpha and Omega!" (Rev. 1:8). Most believers, whatever their language, are aware that Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the alphabet used by the Greeks. Alpha is the name given to the letter A, and Omega is the name for the long O, the last letter of the Greek alphabet. For Christ to affirm that He is "A and O" is as though He were to say, "I am A to Z." The English language has twenty-six letters. All the books ever written, all the libraries of the western world, have contained only these twenty-six letters. These are used to program space research, label medicines, and give messages to the delivery man. Every newspaper or magazine ever printed has used just twenty-six letters. Arranged, juggled, and placed in millions of different configurations, only twenty-six letters are used for the communication of all information.

Jesus, as Alpha and Omega, likens Himself to the whole alphabet. "I am the A, I am B, I am C, I am D and so on all the way to Z – do you get it? Not only is He the letters, He is all that the letters can convey! As one has written, "Is there any need in the whole realm of our experiences, our topics and our themes that the alphabet cannot be adapted to meet? Has the alphabet ever failed poet or lover? Has the traveler found it lacking, or has any philosopher, author, statesman, scholar, scientist or theologian proved it inadequate for literary needs? Potentially the alphabet, with its twenty-six letters, contains all that is necessary for the expression of the utmost wisdom and knowledge. If we wish to describe our feelings, disclose our hopes and dreams, or expound upon any subject of interest, we possess, in the alphabet, the means to do so. Through the medium of words, thought is expressed, so that, in the letters of the alphabet, we possess the key that unlocks every gateway of learning, every door of knowledge, and every treasury of wisdom." The declaration of Jesus that He is Himself Alpha and Omega conveys the thought of infinite resource and inexhaustible wealth. The letters A to Z constitute a claim by which is set forth the absolute completeness of His character, wisdom and power. Is this not what Jesus is saying: "I AM THE TOTAL REALITY OF ALL THINGS! I am every letter, I am unique, I am substance, I am shape, I am image, I am form, I am essence, I am all height and depth and length and breadth of Being, not just words and letters, but the reality of life and power and value of all things, the WORD OF LIFE!" "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was 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." (Jn. 1:1,14)

Alpha and Omega is a revelation! It is all that can be said of the Lord Jesus proclaimed in a way that can be seen and understood. It stands for the revelation of Jesus Christ! By this word He is revealed! Christ is the alphabet – the Word, all that can be said of God. We've seen that in the figure of a Man who walked the shores of Galilee. But we have only touched the shell of that Man, the outer image, not the inner intelligence. The inner intelligence of the Lord Jesus represents His omniscient mind, His omnipotent power, and His divine nature. In speaking of the inner intelligence of the Lord Jesus, we are speaking of the greatest reality of Being in the universe! The truth we are entertaining at this point will prove that all our eternal hopes of sonship and the

kingdom depend upon one thing and one thing alone: that the mind of Christ, the power of Christ, and the nature of Christ dwell in us fully. This is the Alpha and the Omega – all that can be said of God written and inscribed in our inner life. Here then is the truth of truths: God is the Word – the Word is God. Language not only describes what has happened and what is seen – it creates. "And God said, Let there be...and there was." God as the Word creates within us the substance of Himself! The Alpha and Omega speaks into our being the reality of God! When we speak of Christ as Alpha and Omega, we speak of Christ as the Word. When we speak of Christ as the Word, we speak of that dimension of Christ by which God reproduces Himself within us. If God by the Christ within you, my beloved, is speaking a word within you, it is a creative word! Believe that word, walk in that word, live by that word and you will be changed! You will be filled with all the fullness of God! God will take form in you! He will write Himself in living reality upon the tables of your mind and heart! Christ in us, the Alpha and Omega, is our only hope of sonship!

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord...the first and the last." (Rev. 1:8,11) I have heard it said that when Jesus called Himself "the first and the last" He was claiming to be both the "first Adam" who stood in the Garden of Eden and ate the forbidden fruit, and the "last Adam" who came to take away the sin of the world. How could this be, my friends? If Jesus had been the first Adam by whose disobedience sin entered into the world, through whom death passed upon all men, then would He not have needed a Saviour? He would need another Son to save Him from His sin and death! Now if this sinner, Jesus Christ, came to earth again as the last Adam by whose obedience the many are made righteous and given eternal life – how did Adam the sinner become Adam the righteous without a Saviour? If He saved Himself without a Saviour then obviously there was no need for Him to come as our Saviour – for if one sinner can be made righteous apart from a Saviour, surely any man, or even all men, could make themselves righteous apart from the action of another. If Jesus had been the first Adam of the Garden, He could not have been an acceptable sacrifice, pure, spotless, and without blemish. We know, however, that He was the acceptable sacrifice slain from the foundation of the world and **"...ye were not redeemed by such corruptible things as silver and gold...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (I Pet. 1:18-19)**

It is always a fatal mistake for any man, regardless of who he is, to add to the word of God. That mistake will lead him into error and many strange and unscriptural absurdities. When men say what the scriptures do not say they are strumming on harps that have no strings. They make a lot of interesting noise, but there is no harmony with the rest of God's revelation. You see, dear ones, Jesus did indeed say, "I am the first and the last." But He clearly did not say, "I am the first Adam and the last Adam." When you add the word "Adam" to Christ's statement you have qualified it and changed its meaning altogether! You could add any word to His statement and make it mean anything you please! Jesus proclaims that He is the first and the last – period. This momentous statement reaches far beyond Adam – first or last! It reaches from eternity to eternity and encompasses all things. The statement corresponds to the other terms that accompany it – the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending. How gloriously do the New Testament writers describe what it means for Christ to be the first!

It would be of utmost profit for any of us to diligently study the oft repeated scriptural term "in Christ" or "in Him." With this thought in mind I would draw your attention to some scripture passages which appear to teach us that our Lord Jesus Christ is the Creator of all things. He is, of course! But that is not the truth set forth in these particular verses. The first passage we will consider is found in Colossians 1:15-17. I will quote this first from the King James Bible for this is one of the passages that seems to say that all things were created by Jesus Christ. "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature; for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist."

From this scripture we would be led to believe that the creation was made by the Son; but the word translated "by" here in the first instance is in the Greek en, and means "in," not "by," and this is the way most of the other translations have translated it. "For in Him were all things created." If you have other translations, check them, and you will see that this is correct. The Greek preposition en clearly defines location or position. In the second instance in this passage where the word "by" is used – "all things were created by Him and for Him" – the word

translated "by" here is the Greek word *dia* meaning "through," "on account of," or "by the agency of." You will find nearly all translations have translated it this way. Weymouth's rendering of this is lovely, "For in Him were created the universe of things in heaven and in earth, things seen and things unseen, thrones, dominions, principedoms, powers, all were created and exist through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in and through Him the universe is one harmonious whole." Isn't that beautiful?

You see, there is a whole world of difference between something being created by Him, or created in Him, and my prayer is that the Holy Spirit will make this real to you. I think, as we proceed with this thought, we will clearly see what the Spirit has said. It is unfortunate that the translators were so inconsistent in some of the translations. In this statement, "For by Him were all things created that are in heaven," the word *by*, and the word *in*, are both translated from the same Greek word *en*, yet in the first instance it was translated "by," and in the second instance "in," as it should be. This is misleading to the reader!

I am not a carpenter by any stretch of the imagination, but when we were on the mission field in Mexico back in the 1960's, I built most of the furniture we had in our house, crude though it was. From rough lumber I constructed kitchen cabinets, tables, chairs, beds, and a variety of other items. Even I was amazed at how serviceable and attractive some of these articles turned out to be! They were made by me, but when I left the place where they were, they were all sold and left behind, and I was separated from them, never to see them again; for, you see, they were not part of me. Though they were made by me, they had no part with me. But if somehow they had been made in me, rather than merely by me, then wherever I went they would be with me, for they would be a part of me, of my very being. If the creation had been merely made by the Son, then it could be a thing apart from Him, and not a part of Him. When we see that God the Father created the universe IN THE CHRIST, and the whole of created things was in the beginning an integral part of His Being, then that is an altogether different picture!

Words are totally inadequate to articulate a truth so sublime, so I must leave this ultimately to the blessed spirit of Truth to unfold within your spirit. You see, when God planned the present universe, He planned it in and around His Christ. The Christ is the center and the circumference of all! He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. The whole vast creation was made in Him and for Him. Before the sun ever kissed this earth creation began in Him and it will end in Him, for He is the beginning and the end. The Christ is the beginning of the creation of God! **"These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, THE BEGINNING OF THE CREATION OF GOD." (Rev. 3:14)** Do you see how this theme is stated again and again in different terms throughout the book of Revelation? Christ is the beginning of creation and He is also the end, all things must begin in Him and end in Him, for this is the Father's purpose for His Son!

Our God and Father has been pleased to leave us in no doubt or uncertainty as to how or where all things began, but in clear, unequivocal language stated the source and goal of all things for our assurance and joy. All originated in Him, created from the substance of His own divine energy and Being, and held together in a harmonious wholeness in His eternal Word, or the Christ. But, for His own wise purposes, all did not remain that way! We have already explained the Greek preposition *en* which means "in" and denotes a position of rest, an established location. According to the scriptures ALL was created IN the Christ! The scriptures are clear, however, that all did not remain "in" Him. We are assured that there was initiated another stage of activity whereby all things were brought "out" of Him. Nothing can be clearer than the fact that "in" and "out" are opposites! You cannot be both in and out of any place or thing at the same time! Coming "out" from a place or position involves a process, an action. There is another Greek preposition, *ek*, meaning "out of." It indicates action. If you come out of your house – that is an action! The word of God declares that not only were all things created in God and Christ, but there was a process by which all things came out of God. Let us read it: **"We are aware that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God except One. For even if it so be that there are those being called gods, whether in heaven or on earth, even as there are many gods and many lords, nevertheless to us there is but one God, the Father, O-U-T OF (ek) WHOM ALL IS, and we for Him." (I Cor. 8:4-7)** Again, **"O, the depth of the riches and of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How inscrutable are His judgments, and untraceable His ways! For who knew the mind of the Lord? Or who became His adviser? or who gives to Him first, and will be repaid by Him? Seeing that ALL is O-U-T OF (ek) Him and through Him and for Him: to Him be glory for the ages! Amen!" (Rom. 11:33-36).** Now let us read these last verses from the Emphatic Diaglott: "For who knew the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor? Or

who first gave to Him, and it shall be given to him again? Because OUT OF HIM, and through Him, and for Him are ALL THINGS. To Him be the glory for the ages. Amen."

This is without doubt one of the least understood statements in the word of God! And yet, a true comprehension of the real purpose of God throughout the ages cannot be had apart from it. Considering the creation of the heavens and the earth – the universe and all that is therein, visible and invisible – fresh from the hands of the Creator in all its primeval and pristine glory; God being all-wise and omnipotent; the question presses itself upon us: From whence came sin and evil? From whence came darkness and death? Why did God permit these to enter the creation which had been made in Him? How did it happen? Why the disruption of the primeval state?

The answer to these monumental questions is to be discovered in the great fact of the creation being brought "out of" God! When God lowered the creation from the realm of pure spirit existence in Christ in the heavenly sphere, to this gross material realm of matter and form, there occurred a mighty disruption, breaking up, or fragmentation. The creation was "made subject to vanity" and the whole downward process of disintegration and dissolution was begun. Just as our ascent back into the image and fullness of God is ever "from glory to glory," "from faith to faith," and "from experience to experience," so the process downward into fragmentation and dissolution continued through various stages and vast ages of time until the lowest depths of frustration were reached.

The first downward step came when creation was lowered from the realm of pure spirit existence in Christ to this physical and material realm. Not only did man begin in the spirit, later to be lowered into this material realm, but all things began in spirit and were subsequently lowered into this physical world. The magnificent wonders portrayed in Genesis reveal this truth with divine certainty. We read there of "every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground...and the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath (spirit) of life; and man became a living soul." (**Gen. 2:5,7**) Behold how great an understanding divine inspiration has placed upon all who have ears to hear! These words teach us infallibly that there were plants and herbs before they were in the earth or ever grew in soil, and there was a spirit man who was blown into the clay model of the man Adam by the very breath of God. The union of this spirit man with the clay model produced Adam the living soul! That was the first step downward, even in the glories of Eden! And then the Tempter came, man's experiment with sin followed, and death seized man with its unrelenting power. Step by step, stage by stage, the whole creation came out of Christ!

How obvious today the vast difference between those who are either "in" or "out" of Christ! "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation." "Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ." "In whom we have obtained an inheritance." Of our state before we were in Christ, it is stated, "At that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." (**Eph. 2:12**) Outside of Christ is naught but ignorance, sin, sorrow, darkness, and death! In or out – what a great gulf separates these two! The very process of creation's coming out of God produced a disruption and fragmentation of the whole. "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is ONE LORD." That statement doesn't mean that Yahweh is the only God, true as that is. It signifies that He IS ONE – that is, UNITED, UNIFIED, UNDIVIDED, UNFRAGMENTED. All within Himself is harmonized, synchronized and joined in perfect unity. That is God's nature! Therefore, in Him, creation was one harmonious whole without a discordant note anywhere! It was preeminently a spiritual creation, vibrating as a symphony of unutterable beauty, a triumphant masterpiece of dynamic harmonious accord. In the glory of that celestial beginning we were all sons of God; there was no trace of sin, no evil, no carnal mind, no adversary, no death, and no darkness or discord at all. Everything everywhere existed in Christ and every spirit stood forth in its full majesty, pulsating the dynamic anthem of exulting creative glory. What a song!

And that is how it is in the new creation! For you see, beloved, the new creation is but the old creation reconciled, re-deemed, re-generated, re-stored to its original place, condition, and state IN CHRIST! The new spiritual creation is all that is "in Christ Jesus" in the fullness of what that means. We are unified again in Him. The new creation has already begun! Step by step, just as we came out of God, we are now coming into God. When the scripture says, "If any man be in Christ he is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold, all

things are become new," this is speaking of that little firstfruits company that is the first to enter into the new. These become fully a new creation in Christ. In the life of the one who has truly entered into Christ, and been unified again in Him, all the old has passed away and everything has become new! Now I know this scripture is applied to all believers of whatever stage of spiritual experience, but if we consider this reverently and carefully, we can easily see that this not the experience of the average believer. When we first believe on the Lord a new beginning takes place. A change has started. Some of the old has passed away, and some new things have taken their place; but how many believers can honestly say that all old things have passed away, and everything has been made new? Our restoration is a progressive work! It begins when we first turn to the Lord, and continues until we are completely in Christ.

The proto-type of this wonderful reality of restoration into Christ is our Lord Jesus Christ. That's what the book of Revelation is all about – it is the revelation of Jesus Christ! When Jesus says, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last," – what a revelation that is! Jesus often spoke of His Father being in Him. He said, "It is not I that do the works, it is my Father that is in me." The Father dwelt in the Son and worked through His Son to accomplish His will. But this isn't all! He also explained to His disciples this great truth, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" It wasn't just that the Father was in Him, but He was also in the Father. The glory of creation when it was created in God is thus revealed in our Lord Jesus the Christ! When Jesus was praying to the Father for those God had given Him, that they might be one, that they might come into this glorious unity, He prayed thus: **"That they all may be one, as Thou Father art in me, and I in Thee, that they may be one in us."** (Jn. 17:21) Only this mutual dwelling can bring the oneness, the unity, the wholeness that God desires!

The only way all old things can completely and forever pass away is through our entrance back into God! John 3:16 is called by many "the golden text" of the Bible. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." There is a marvelous significance in those words that surpasses any sermon I ever heard in my years in the church systems. "That whosoever believeth in Him..." The word "in" here is translated from the Greek word eis, which means "into," denoting action and progression. If we use the word "into" it reads like this, "That whosoever believeth into Him should not perish, but have the life of the ages." Eis carries with it a sense of growth, and of going on into something. It suggests a progressive salvation, as other scriptures tell us. "Now is our (full) salvation nearer than when we believed." We didn't come out of God in one grand leap, and we are not returning into God in one grand leap. We were not delivered from all sin and death by "believing on" the Lord Jesus Christ one night in a revival meeting. Oh, no! But we are being progressively delivered, changed, and transformed as we constantly believe into Him!

It is this same Greek word eis that is used in many, many wonderful passages where the true meaning has been concealed by faulty translation. I will quote just one passage for you and capitalize the places where the word eis has been used, and will use the word "into" in place of whatever word the King James Bible uses. I think you will see the beauty of this, and perceive its special, deeper meaning. **"Till we all come INTO the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, INTO a perfect man, INTO the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ...speaking the truth in love may grow up INTO Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ...from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body INTO the edifying of itself in love."** (Eph. 4:9-15) In these verses we are told of the body of Christ and how the body grows and is built up by the ministry of every part. We are exhorted to minister in love, so that the body can grow INTO CHRIST. We are to grow up INTO the full stature of God's Christ!

Paul Mueller has written a precious exhortation, "As we have grown and progressed in the kingdom of God, our understanding of Christ and of the Father also has increased, for we now see ourselves as being a part of Him. We are the body of Christ, and He is the Head of this body. Christ has said, **"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."** Christ is the Spirit of God; He is the beginning of all things. He is the Word that was spoken by the Father that brought all things into existence. And He also is the end of all things! All things shall ultimately be gathered into Christ, to be unified with the Father that **"God may be all in all"** (I Cor. 15:28). By the wisdom of the mind of Christ we now see that we are a part of Him who is the "Alpha," or the beginning of all things, for we were originally in Him in spirit. So also are we a part of Him who

is revealed and seen now as the "Omega," or as the end of all things. We came out of God in our beginning! And now we are returning into God, but with a redeemed mind (soul) and body. We also are becoming a part of the glory of Christ!"

Our Lord called Himself the Alpha and the Omega in Greek, the Aleph and the Tau in Hebrew, or the A and the Z in English, or its equivalent in any other language, without in the least altering the figure of its significance. Alphabetical languages usually have the letters arranged in a fixed order. The first is often used as a symbol of the beginning and the last for the ending. That is, our Lord claims to be what letters and language were meant to be, namely the expression of truth. HE IS T-H-E W-O-R-D – the expression of the totality of God's nature, wisdom, power, purpose and substance from first to last. God is a spirit – an invisible, incorporeal, intangible, unapproachable Spirit. But that hidden and unsearchable One may be uttered, expressed, manifested. And that utterance, that expression, that manifestation of invisible Godhead is the Christ, the Logos, the Word – God projected from the plane of the invisible, intangible and unknowable into the realm of the visible, tangible, and knowable. In that long ago beginning all things were created in the Christ, and apart from Him, outside of Him was not anything made that was made. In Christ Jesus we see clearly our very own origin in God! In Christ Jesus we see perfectly the original state of all things! Oh, my Christ and my God! In Thee I see how I, and all men, and all things once were! My God and my Christ! In Thee I see how I, and all men, and all things shall again be! My Lord, that is the Word that Thou art to me! In God's revelation of Himself and His plan of the ages He has used many characters, but the first one was Christ and the last one will be Christ again. All commences and concludes in Him!

Christ is the Alpha and the Omega. Only the glorious mind of Christ can reveal to our hearts what that means! Through a glass darkly I can see that He was the first, "before all things." Can I also believe that HE IS THE LAST? If He is the beginning, can my feeble mind dare to comprehend what it signifies when He says that He is also the END? Surely Ephesians, chapter one, makes this as clear as it can be at this juncture in our understanding. Paul says that "God... chose us in Christ before the world began." He goes on from that beginning out of eternity to reach forth to that which will be at the conclusion of all ages of time, declaring that God is "making known to us the mystery of His will – of His plan, of His purpose. And it is this: In accordance with His good pleasure which He hath previously purposed and set forth in Him, He planned for the maturity of the times and the climax of the ages to unify all things and head them up and CONSUMMATE THEM I-N C-H-R-I-S-T...in Him also we had been foreordained in accordance with His purpose." (Eph. 1:4,9-11) All that began in Christ – and that was all things, everything! – shall end in Christ, that He may be the first and the last, the beginning and the end. If you can conceive of God taking Eve and putting her back into Adam, as it was in the beginning, then you may also understand what is this glorious purpose that transcends Adam and Eve – when God takes the whole vast creation and MAKES IT ONE IN CHRIST AGAIN! All of mankind's yearnings and searching after God to fully know Him shall find their complete and eternal satisfaction there where all things are brought back into Christ.

The First and the Last bring before us both the time element and the substance of creation. "For out of Him everything comes; through Him everything exists; and in Him everything ends! Glory to Him forever!" (Rom. 11:36, (Goodspeed). "For out of Him and through Him and to Him are all things. For all things originate with Him and come from Him; all things live through Him, and all things center in and tend to consummate and to end in Him. To Him be glory forever!" (Amplified Bible). Truly HE is the beginning and the end of all things! The beginning, precious friend of mine, was not a date on the calendar. The beginning was and is a glorious Person – our Lord Jesus Christ! Christ Himself is the beginning! If you consider with reverent honesty these words of significance and truth, you will understand as never before the spiritual words which open our Bible: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." IN THE BEGINNING! "I am the beginning." Thus, the spiritual translation of the first verse of scripture should read, "IN THE CHRIST God created the heavens and the earth." Jesus Christ is "the beginning of the creation of God. (Rev. 3:14) All things were created in this beginning! The beginning is neither time nor place. The beginning is Christ Himself! In Him all things were created and set in order in the beauty and unity and perfection and harmony of the Spirit of God!

What has now been provided in Christ is a re-turn, a re-storation, a re-newing, a re-demption, a re-conciliation, a re-surrection, a re-stitution. The prefix "re" means BACK, AGAIN, ANEW – and all the words with this prefix

indicate something that LEFT ITS PLACE AND HAS NOW MADE ITS CIRCUIT AND COME BACK TO THE POINT OF ITS BEGINNING. Oh, mighty Christ!

**"All God's sons are coming home,
All God's sons are coming home;
Home to the Father, home to the throne,
All God's sons are coming home!
All creation is coming home,
All creation is coming home;
Home to the Father, home to the Son,
All creation is coming home!"**

**Coming home, coming home,
Never more to roam;
Open wide Thy arms of love,
Lord, I'm coming home!"**

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 15 THE BEGINNING AND THE END

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART FIFTEEN

THE "END TIMES" THE BEGINNING AND THE END THE SOURCE OF LIFE

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come." (Rev. 1:8)

Not only is Christ the beginning, He is the end of all things! Mankind is yet groping about in the dense darkness of the carnal mind, knowing not that HE is standing right there in the shadows, were their eyes opened to see. Yet He hath appointed a day – O glorious day! – when His light shall shine forth and the plan shall be completed as the apostle saith, "For God has allowed us to know the secret of His plan, and it is this: He purposed long ago in His sovereign will that all human history should be consummated in Christ, that everything that exists in heaven or earth should find its perfection and fulfillment in Him. IN CHRIST we have been given an inheritance, since we were destined for this, by the One who works out all His purposes according to the design of His own will." (Eph. 1:9-11) (Phillips)

Everything in history is moving inexorably toward a day when Jesus will have conquered everything and everyone. Like a mountain of dirt before a gigantic bulldozer steadily moving forward, all that can be conquered is being collected into the loving arms of Jesus, whose right it is to rule. When Christ ascended on high after His resurrection, He led many captives out of the prison house and also set forth His great purpose: "Now He that ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens THAT HE MIGHT FILL A-L-L T-H-I-N-G-S." (Eph. 4:9-10) The message is clear – redemption includes the complete transformation of the entire universe (all heavens) and all that is within it so that God in Christ shall FILL ALL THINGS. There shall not be left one corner of this vast universe, nor one creature in it, where He shall not be Lord and King. Everything everywhere shall be restored to the beautiful harmony and order of the love of God. Indeed, He shall fill all things that God may be all in all!

All that God has ever done or ever will do, all that He has said or ever will say, will ultimately redound to His glory, that He may be "All in all" – and why not? "In the beginning GOD..." Everything else is because of God – God's love, God's wisdom, God's purpose, God's power, God's righteousness. And for all things to find their purpose, their reality and their end in Him is the final goal of salvation's history. It is an extraordinary thing, yet sublimely true, that the Lord Jesus gives us to understand that what He is doing on earth today and throughout the ages to come is only a beginning. What He has given us is a root, and not yet a tree; a foundation, and not yet an edifice. The Kingdom Seed must grow, the branches spread out, the blossoms appear, and the fruit be formed. The little stone cut out without hands must grow and grow until it becomes a great mountain that fills all the earth. In the end the kingdom of God will have filled all realms everywhere, from the Milky Way to the outermost galaxies, from the caves of Afghanistan to the government halls of Beijing and the worshipping throngs of Mecca, and God will be All in all! Those who on earth are now being perfected in Christ are the firstfruits of this marvelous revelation of God All in all!

In these days many people are seeking to know what the end will be. At this time of frustration and confusion, men want to know what God will bring to pass in the end. Many years ago heaven shed its light in my spirit and I saw clearly that if we could know something of God's beginning of things, we could then understand something of the end. A clearer conception of the beginning would give us a clearer knowledge of the ending. In connection with this, I would like to quote from a book called The Gospel of Thomas. While it has not been accepted as being inspired, along with many other apocryphal writings, there is still truth to be gleaned if we

can separate the meat from the bones. The Gospel of Thomas consists of a series of sayings attributed to Jesus. On one occasion Jesus is reported to have said, "I will give you what eye has not seen, what ear has not heard, what hand has not touched, and what has not arisen in the heart of man." The disciples said to Jesus, "Tell us what our end will be." Jesus said, "Have you then discovered the beginning, so that you inquire about the end? FOR WHERE THE BEGINNING IS, THERE SHALL BE THE END. Blessed is he who shall stand at the beginning and he shall know the end and he shall not taste death." Here is blessed confirmation of what we have known from the scriptures and by the spirit of revelation from God! Jesus says that if we know the beginning and stand at the beginning, we shall know the end, and we shall not taste death! What a word!

Is it not true that in the beginning there was no sin, no sorrow, no pain, no tears, no limitation, and no death? Behold Jesus Christ! HE is the beginning and HE is the end! HE abolishes death! HE brings life and immortality to light through the gospel! It is in Him that we have life, and have it more abundantly! All that is happening now came out of the Beginning and will come into the Ending. If Jesus Christ is the End, then this does away with all this teaching in the church systems about everlasting hell and eternal damnation, for HE IS THE END. Death is not the end, judgment is not the end, hell is not the end, fire and brimstone are not the end, damnation is not the end, for CHRIST IS THE END! Though men be processed by judgment "unto the ages of the ages," that judgment is not their end, merely a means to the end, there is an end at the conclusion of the ages — and that end IS CHRIST!

"God sitteth upon the circle of the earth," said the prophet Isaiah. While the word for "circle" in the Hebrew text denotes the sphericity of the earth, it may also denote the cycles of nature. These cycles are the continual goings and comings of the seasons, days, months and years, ordained by God in the beginning. Everything in nature moves in cycles: winter and summer, seedtime and harvest; generation after generation all show the might and wisdom of God. Even electricity must have a circuit. There are positives and negatives in all of nature, and everything flows through them. The earth spins upon its axis while it revolves around the sun; the sun moves in its own circuit in the heavens as also each galaxy moves in a broad circular sweep through distances that defy the imagination. SO IT IS WITH GOD'S WORK. In the spiritual realm there are the positives and negatives of life and death, good and evil, spirit and flesh, blessing and curse, temptation and triumph, strength and weakness, light and darkness, God and Satan. It is in the interplay between these that we are brought to perfection! It is therefore reasonable to conclude that man, the highest of God's creation, came out of God, was then lowered into the world of vanity, darkness, and death, but will return to God, thus completing the cycle, not in part, but in full. Our Lord Jesus Christ is Himself the supreme illustration and example of this wonderful truth, for He came out of God, descended into the lower parts of the earth, that is, into the very depths of human nature and experience in the fall and the curse, overcame in it, and then arose and returned back into God.

This great principle has been called "The Law of Circularity." Some would have us believe that this is a "New Age" concept, but I do not hesitate to tell you that that notion is far from the truth. If it is a New Age concept then they borrowed it from somewhere, for this great Law originated with GOD! It is found written by inspiration of the Holy Spirit all through the scriptures and is inscribed as well upon every law of nature within the cosmos. "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things – for all things originate with Him and come from Him; all things live through Him, and all things center in and tend to consummate and to end in Him. To Him be glory forever! Amen." (Rom. 11:36) (Amplified)

The Law of Circularity requires that just as all things began in Christ, all shall end in Christ. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last, saith the Lord." (Rev. 22:13) Only the glorious mind of Christ can reveal to our hearts what that means! Through a glass darkly I can see that He is the first – "before all things." Can I also believe that He is the last? If He is the beginning, can my feeble mind dare to comprehend what it signifies when He says that He is also the end? All that existed in Christ before the ages began, shall return into Him again that He may be the First and the Last. All that came out of Him, lowered into the realm of the negative, completes its circuit, returning once more to its former estate – IN CHRIST! This is not New Age philosophy, my friend, this is sound, fundamental biblical truth. The first Adam had power to take ALL with him into sin and death, without their knowledge or consent; therefore, the last Adam, the Lord from heaven, gathers up the same number in His great redemptive work and ALL MEN who came out of God shall return, that the circle may be unbroken. There is an old song that asks the question, "Will the circle be

unbroken, bye and bye, Lord, bye and bye." We now have God's answer to that question: "YES!" The circle will be unbroken, the circle will not be broken! God's great Law of Circularity will bring all men back into God!

THE "END-TIMES"

The Greek word for "end" is telos meaning "the limit where previous activities cease; the goal; final result of a state or process; aim; purpose; conclusion; consummation; that which is brought to the full, being finished; the uttermost or terminal experience beyond which nothing remains to be said or done." May I just add – WOW! I am sure that many of you, like me, once thought that "the end" was an event, a date on the calendar, a period of time. I used to preach about the "end times" and referred to our writings as "studies in end-time revelation." But a wonderful thing happened along the way – I found "the end-time!" I also discovered the beginning of time! "In the beginning GOD..." Time is relative only to creation and John in his Gospel explained, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." (Jn. 1:1-3) Jesus Christ is Himself the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, and when we have found Him we have found not only the beginning of the matter but also the end of the matter. The "end-time" is not some dark, distressful period at the end of a particular age; the end-time is ALL THINGS GATHERED TOGETHER INTO CHRIST. "That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together into one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him." (Eph. 1:10) That really says it all! The end-time comes for each of us when we truly and fully find Christ as our all in all. If you can see it, my beloved brethren, the sons of God are THE ADMINISTRATORS OF "THE END" FOR ALL MANKIND! The end is not a time period, the end is not a world war, the end is not a "rapture" of the saints to some far-off heaven somewhere, the end is a glorious person, even Christ. HE is the beginning and the end for all things, for all men, and for all ages. Hallelujah!

**"Then cometh the end" – the end of what?
The end that God so long hath sought!
The end He always had in view,
The end that man so little knew.
The end of sin's triumphant sway,
The end of death – the grave's decay.
The end of judgment and of ire,
The second death, the lake of fire.**

**The end when God will ever be
With us for all eternity:
The end for which His love doth call,
The end when HE is All in all!**

THE BEGINNING AND THE END

Thank God for the light of Christ that is shining into this world of darkness! He is removing the darkness first in His elect and causing us to look to the realm of the Spirit where all things begin and end. The Alpha and the Omega has sent forth the rays of His glorious light so that we can see all things as they really are! All things do not begin or end in time. Time is not the Alpha and the Omega – Christ is the Alpha and the Omega! All things begin and end in Christ. Christ transcends time! Only in Christ are we able to see both the beginning and the end of everything!

A synonym for "beginning and end" is "author and finisher." "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb. 12:2) A brother shared his experience at the museum in Florence, Italy which beautifully illustrates the truth of Christ as our beginning and end – the Author and Finisher of God's great work in our lives. He writes, "As you enter the museum in Florence, at the very end of a long corridor stands this enormous, brilliant statue, David, lighted especially to enhance the work of the master craftsman. Unfortunately when most people go to see this fabulous piece of work they do not notice the other statues

which line the hallway leading to this masterpiece. For, along the hallway is, in my opinion, some of his best work – some of his most futuristic work. Aligning this hallway is his abstract art. Some art historians say he was probably one of the world's first abstract artists. Others call it his unfinished work.

"After studying some of those pieces and seeing them for myself, I was amazed at the beauty of one statue in particular. When Michael Angelo wanted to sculpt he would go to the marble quarry. He would walk throughout the quarry until he could find a special piece of marble with a statue that he could "see" trapped inside. It was his job to release this statue! He would simply chip away the marble from the outside that concealed the image within! And so he released the statue of Moses, he released his Pieta, he released David. But there was one piece that he saw that he was unable to release. And so it stands off to the side. Few people see it. But if you ever go to the museum in Florence to see the statue of David, stop and look at the unfinished art. There you will see a man who is still imprisoned in the hunk of marble. He is straining to escape from his imprisonment in the marble. You can see his neck stretching. The muscles in his neck and the muscles across his chest and his shoulders bulge as he is apparently trying to crawl out of this piece of marble. But his creator is dead. So he is permanently, historically, forever imprisoned in his cube of marble! He was there hundreds of years ago. He is still there today. And he will be there when you go to see him, or when your great grandchildren go" — end quote.

There are people today who are in the process of being released from their statue! They are not an image encased in marble, but they are a regenerated spirit imprisoned in a body – in a fleshly Adamic mind and nature. They are wanting to bring forth their inner man that he may step out of his bondage to the outer, out of his subordination to the desires, ways, and passions of the flesh man. The outer earthly identity must be put off, chipped away, so that the inner spiritual identity may be revealed. But many people today feel stuck. They're imprisoned in their piece of marble! But listen, O child of God, for the good news I have is this: Your Creator is not dead! He is alive today and He is not finished with you yet! God loves you and He has a plan for your life! He has walked up and down through the quarry of this world, and He found you, a special piece of marble with a unique expression of the image of Christ locked within! He selected you, He bought you, He called you, He chose you, He ordained you to be a son of God in this age. The Master Craftsman has begun His wonderful work in you. He has a purpose for you, dear one, and it is a purpose of completion!

The story is told of a stunt pilot who, thinking he would have a bit of fun, endeavored to persuade a rather wary friend to take a ride with him. The friend declined the generous offer. Thereupon the aviator assured him that he would not perform any hazardous feats while in the clouds. Finally the reluctant friend decided to take the risk. Once in the air, however, the aviator performed all kinds of stunts, much to the horror of his passenger. Having subjected him to this ordeal, he then landed and they alighted. The pilot hastily stepped out so that he might enjoy every bit of his companion's reaction. Freeing himself from his little cabin, the passenger looked at his tormentor and said, "Thanks for the two rides." "Two rides?" asked the pilot curiously. "What do you mean? We had only one ride." "No, thank you," said the friend, "that was my first ride and my last ride!" The past and the future and often treated in the same way. They are considered separate and distinct as a first and a last, or as a beginning and an ending. But once we see that Christ the Lord IS the first and the last, the beginning and the ending, it becomes clear that neither is separate or distinct from the other, for both are united in one reality in Him! The Lord who began His work in you will finish it because He that is in you is both Beginning and End, both Author and Finisher of your faith. It is not a matter of time at all, it is a matter of Christ!

Let's imagine for a moment that there is a great parade scheduled to pass through your city. So you go downtown early in the morning and set up your little chair there on the sidewalk in front of the hardware store. At that spot you seem to have the perfect vantage point from which to view the parade as it passes by. The hour arrives and you begin to hear the beating of the drums, the sound of the band, the tramping of feet and the noise of the wheels. You know that the parade is on its way. Soon the floats begin to pass before your vision. But there is a problem – there are people all around. Thousands of people are pressing together, standing on the sidewalk or sitting on the curb. There you are in your little seat watching the parade, but because of the crowd all you can see is the one float that is right there in front of you. One by one you watch the floats go by. There are some floats that are in your past – they have already passed by and have rounded the corner. You can't see them anymore, so they are in your past. There are other floats that are in your future. They are still far down the street. You can't see them, but they are on their way and you will view each one

from your limited perspective. You are like a horse with blinders. All you see is that little portion right there in front of you!

Now let's suppose that you make your way up to the top of a three-story building. You perch yourself there on the edge of the roof in order to have a better view of the parade. In that instant past and future pass away because now you see the whole parade at once. You see the float that is down there in front of the chair where you were seated. But you also see the one behind it, and the one behind that one, and the next one, all the way to the end of the parade. You see the float in front of it, the one in front of that one, and the next one, all the way to the beginning of the parade. You see both the beginning and the end! You see the end from the beginning! You see everything in between! It is a matter of perspective. It's your viewpoint. It has to do with your elevation. If you can get high enough you can see it all at once and the whole parade exists in the now. It's all now! And that's how it is in Christ! The eternal now IS CHRIST! He IS the Beginning and the End! Only in Him are we able to see both the origin and the consummation of all things as one unified whole.

As we ascend in Christ the Spirit of God changes our perspective of all things. He alters and adjusts our viewpoint. God is bringing us up into a dimension in Himself to see as He sees. God can see all things at once! He exists in the eternal now. A million years are to Him as but a day. There is no past in God. There is no future in God. The garden of Eden is not past, nor is the millennium future. The dawn of creation is not thousands or billions of years ago, nor is the consummation of all the ages of time future. God is high enough to see the whole purpose from beginning to end, that beginning and end are in Him, and it all exists in the eternal now! Oh, the mystery of it!

In the limitation of our natural minds we view things with our blinders on. We are perched on our little seat on the sidewalk in front of the hardware store with thousands of human bodies around us – with all the confines of the systems of this world, with all the restrictions of this gross material realm, with all the impediments of the carnal mind – and all we can see is that little portion of history that is right in front of us at this moment in time. Everything else is either past or future! That's why men are distressed. That's why believers are troubled. That's why even we are sometimes confused. That's why we cry out to God and say, "Oh God, Why? Why did this happen? Why did that happen?" We feel helpless and hopeless in the midst of circumstances, situations, problems, and troubles that come our way. But did you know that all of our "Why" comes from the little chair in front of the hardware store! Many years ago the Spirit of God spoke to me and said, "Sons do not ask, Why?"

Tragedy and trauma come into our lives and we don't understand. We look out at the world, society, and the nations, and see what is happening in our schools, in our communities, in our government, and even in our own families sometimes. We see ungodliness and wickedness, sin and sorrow, terrorism and war, disease and death, misfortune and heartbreak, and we feel helpless because we are sitting on our little chair on the sidewalk in front of the hardware store. All we can see is how it looks from where we are! We miss seeing where it all came from and we cannot see where it is all headed. We fail to discern the great purpose in it all because of our limited vision! We can't see the origin, nor do we see the consummation. We just see what is in front of us. And we call that now! THAT'S NOT NOW! That is now, but it is not all of now. In Christ the origin is now. The destiny is now. The whole plan is now because God is NOW! When we get high enough in the Spirit to see from God's perspective we see the whole thing. Christ Jesus is the source and the consummation of all things! Dwelling in Him we know that all our steps are ordered of the Lord and our "future" is secure, the "outcome" is certain, for HE is our Alpha and Omega, our beginning and our end! When we truly see that all our happenings are ordained of God, all is according to divine purpose, all is secure in Him, and the outcome is by divine appointment, what rest it affords! What peace this holy knowledge brings! What confidence the truth evokes!

I have had agnostics and skeptics ask me, "If God is real, if God is in control, if God is all powerful, if the God you worship is as good as you claim He is, why do we have all the millions of starving people, little children with bloated stomachs, drug addicts strung out committing suicide, prisons full of criminals, teenagers shooting up our schools, and famines, tornadoes, war and destruction? If God is love, why do we have all that?" And you know, it is difficult to answer that, because you are trying to explain something to people who are sitting on their little chair on the sidewalk in front of the hardware store. They are looking only at appearances. Their perspective is limited and their vision defective. All they can see is what appears in front of them without any

knowledge of either the origin or destiny of all things. In the blindness of their minds it is impossible for them to comprehend the grand design, the great purpose. And you can't answer their "Why" unless somehow they can get high enough to SEE THE WHOLE PICTURE! Until they can see for themselves both the origin and the consummation, they cannot perceive the real meaning behind everything happening in between. So how are you going to describe the perspective of the man up on the top of the three-story building to the man sitting in his little chair on the sidewalk in front of the hardware store? You can explain it to him but he just can't see it! This great truth has to come by revelation!

Suppose you were to meet a mystic today, a spiritually sensitive one, who could see your past, your present, and your future. He could see what you will do tomorrow, where you will be twenty years from today, and see your end – the whole thing! It is like a man high up in an airplane over an island of the sea. He is looking down on a river. He sees where the river begins in the mountains, he sees the continuation, and he sees the end of the river where it empties into the sea. He sees all this at the same time! God, therefore, sees us in a way that we cannot see, and because He sees from a height from which we do not see, we should trust Him without questioning or fear. Those called to sonship in this Day are learning to trust! We are learning to trust so that whatever God tells us to do, we do it! If He says, "Jump over the precipice," we jump, because our heavenly Father is seeing us in a way that we do not yet see, and knowing us in a way we do not yet know. HE is seeing what our end will be! Each of us has an end. Have we ever thought of it? We have an end, and God is seeing our end right now. Does that cause you to fear? Not if you are a son! For we know our end – our end is CHRIST! "I am the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord!"

There is divine meaning in every happening that comes into our lives. There are no accidents in God! Everything that comes to us is for our learning, for our growth and development in God! How God teaches us is His business! If we try to put our hand to it, we'll only make a mess of it. If it is left up to us to direct our steps, we will guard, preserve, fight for, and save everything that needs to go to the cross because we are sitting on our little chair on the sidewalk in front of the hardware store. May the Voice that spoke to John on Patmos resound in our ears this day. "Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne." (Rev. 4:1-2) Ah, there is where we want to see from! When we "come up hither," high enough "in the spirit," we see the "throne" of God's sovereignty and are enlightened with the holy understanding that all is well because our Father is reigning over all!

THE SOURCE OF LIFE

Before we leave this subject of the Beginning and the End, I would like to point out one other outstanding thought that is inherent in this beautiful title. When Jesus says, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending," He is proclaiming the great truth that He is both the source and the consummation of all things. This is a truth that every son of God is learning to know and experience within ourselves, for Christ in us is our hope of glory. Christ is now becoming the beginning and the ending of our lives!

Here I would share some inspired and challenging words from a brother we labored with some years ago. He began with the beautiful text from the gospel of John, chapter six. "Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat, which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for Him hath God the Father sealed. I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; he that believeth on me shall never thirst...it is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." In order to understand the great mystery that Jesus is seeking to reveal to us in these verses, we need to understand the word "quickeneth" that is used in the King James translation. It is an old English word that the King James translators used to describe the original wording in the Greek scripture which meant "to give life" or "that giveth life" or "that is the source of life." So what Jesus is really saying here is, "It is the spirit that giveth life" or "it is the spirit that is the source of your life." The next thing we need to understand in order to comprehend this great mystery is that when Jesus said, "It is the spirit that giveth life" or "is the source of your life" He was not talking about the Holy Spirit of God alone, but He was talking about your own spirit, for, "He that is joined to the

Lord is one spirit." (I Cor. 6:17) Your own quickened, regenerated, born-again spirit – which is the Son of God dwelling in you – is the source of your life!

The next thing we need to understand, to comprehend this mystery, is the meaning of the word "profit" Jesus used here when He said, "The flesh profiteth nothing." Now the profit on any investment is always the increase. It is that which was not, which is created out of the investment's creative powers of that which one starts with. If I invest a thousand dollars, and it brings back two thousand dollars, then the second thousand dollars is the increase, the profit, that is literally brought forth out of the creative powers that were in the first thousand dollars to increase itself, to double itself, when properly invested. Therefore, this word "profit" is a creative word! It implies the power to create, to increase one's self, or to reproduce one's self. Therefore, when Jesus said, "The flesh profiteth nothing," what He was trying to get over to us is that there is no creative power in the flesh – in anything that is physical and material in this earth. It cannot increase itself, it cannot reproduce itself; in fact, it cannot even sustain the life that it has, for if our spirit were to depart from our flesh body, it would immediately begin to deteriorate and go back to the dust from whence it came. When Jesus said, "The flesh profiteth nothing," He was revealing to us that every visible, carnal, natural, material, physical thing in this world, including our own flesh body, is not creative. It has no power to increase itself; it doesn't even have power to sustain its own life! All it can ever be is the visible manifestation or expression of the Life of Spirit, and of the creative power that is in Spirit.

On the other hand, when Jesus said, "It is the spirit that quickeneth" or "it is the spirit that giveth life" or "is the source of your life," what He was seeking to reveal to us is that the spirit is creative, that our regenerated spirit has creative power! Therefore, the great mystery and the great truth that Jesus was seeking to reveal to those who can receive and understand it is that it is our own spirit that is the source of our life, that we carry the source of our life around in our own beings; and therefore, our own spirit being the source of our life we are not dependent on anything outside of our own being for life! For you see, when you are a source, you are the beginning. A spring from which a river comes out of the earth and flows into the earth is the beginning of that river. It is the source from which the water of that river comes. And therefore that is what Jesus was trying to get over to us – that since we have been born of the seed of God, and since Christ, who is the beginning and the end, is that regenerated, recreated, born-again spirit that is within us, it is your spirit that giveth life, or that is the source of your life, and being a source within itself, is therefore not dependent on anything outside of itself for its life!

When you are a source, you are the beginning; therefore you are not dependent on anything before you or anything after you, or anything outside of you, for your life. The truth that Jesus teaches us is that we carry the source of our life within our own spirit and we are not dependent on any fleshly thing outside of our own spirit for our life. It is because Jesus came to the revelation of this truth and the reality of it within Himself that He could step out into the world and say, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end." Knowing that He carried the source, the beginning of His life within His own spirit, He could say, "I am the beginning." Knowing that the creative power was in His spirit to bring forth His final destiny, and that that destiny was under the control of the creative powers that were within His own spirit, He could say, "I am the end."

When Jesus said, "The flesh profiteth nothing – it is the spirit that quickeneth, that is the source of your life," He was revealing to us the great truth that the source of our life is not in the flesh, not in the visible, not in the carnal, physical, material things, nor in anything that is of this natural world; but all those things are but outward manifestations of the creative powers that are in the life of Spirit, and that the source of our life is in our own spirit. Now the problem with all of God's precious people, you see, is that they have not known this great truth. They have thought that they are dependent for their lives on the carnal, material, physical things of the flesh of this world – natural money, natural housing, natural food, natural body, natural abilities, and the laws of nature. All of us have thought that those things were the source from which our life came! In fact, we have so been deceived that those visible, physical, carnal, natural things were the source of our life that we were so completely dependent upon them that if we were cut off from them – if we lost our job, lost our money, lost our housing, lost our food – we thought that we would die! For you see, this is the great lie that the carnal mind deceived man with through the fall. When man lost the consciousness of his spiritual nature, and degenerated down into the consciousness of the outer, carnal, physical nature, man became convinced that he was dependent upon the visible and the physical and the natural for his life – natural money, natural job, natural

business, natural food, natural medicine, natural clothing, natural housing, natural possessions, natural transportation, natural body – natural, natural, natural! We have been so convinced that that is the source of our life until we have been scared out of our wits that if we were cut off from that source of life, we would die!

Jesus, when He was out in the wilderness with His people, and needed bread, by-passed the natural resources, by-passed the wheat field, by-passed the flour mill, by-passed the grocery store and sat down on the ground, and through the operation of that spiritual law of faith, drew right out from within His own spirit enough bread to feed five thousand people! For you see, beloved, there is a source of life, and all that pertains to life, including bread that sustains life, which is not dependent on the natural resources of this world. It is the original source of life – SPIRIT! The Bible makes it very clear that all life, and every manifestation of life that is in this universe, originally came right out of Spirit. Thus the apostle Paul says that "through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God; so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." (Heb. 11:3) Therefore, the Bible says that everything in this world which is visible and physical – in the beginning, originally, was not made of something visible or tangible already existing – which does appear – but was made of the resources that came originally right out of Spirit, by the spoken word of faith. Faith drew it right out of Spirit and manifested it! Therefore, you see, Jesus, as He sat on the ground that day, and fed five thousand with five little loaves of bread and two small fish, had become a manifest Son of God who was not subject to the laws of nature, neither underneath them; and therefore not dependent on the natural resources for bread, but could by-pass them. He was a spiritual Son of God who was sovereign over all physical laws, and therefore could go right back to the original source of bread and draw it right out of His own spirit.

Do you notice how easily Jesus did this? The scripture says that Jesus instructed His disciples, "Make the men sit down." You see, when you get bread from this source, you don't have to get it standing up, with a plow or a sickle in your hand, laboring and sweating, as men have for six thousand years, since they've been under the curse; but you can sit quietly down and bring forth all things from a position of rest. The men sat down, and Jesus sat quietly down with them. The record states that Jesus simply took the loaves of bread, and when He had given thanks, He distributed to the disciples – as much as they would. You see, there was no shortage here. Everyone got to eat as much as he wanted, as much as he would! And Jesus did it so smoothly and so easily – He just sat down, gave thanks, and began to hand it out. He didn't have to go through all the soulful hype men go through today in an effort to work up a little faith! He didn't have to go through a thirty-minute praise service, dance around in the Spirit for a while, speak in tongues, prophecy, and then scream, "In the name of Jesus, let there be bread!" There was no fanfare, no showmanship, no theatrics, no emotional appeal at all. This great truth that we're seeking to share with you, that it is the spirit, the Spirit of Christ in your own spirit that is the source of Life – this truth had become so real to Jesus that, moving in the spiritual law of faith, He could draw it, effortlessly, right out of His own spirit!

Out of the experiential knowledge of this great truth Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life." He knew that through coming into the world and shedding His blood to cleanse us from our sins, and make us clean vessels, so the Holy Spirit could regenerate us, recreate us, birth us again, restore us to the consciousness of our true identity, grow us up into the spirit to that place of manifested sonship in which He stood, then through Him in us we would be able go back to the original source of Life, and of Bread, and of Reality. HE is the bread of Life to us; not the natural world system, neither the material resources of this natural world system. It is the spirit that createth Life; the flesh profiteth nothing! Jesus on another occasion stated it this way, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." He set before us two ways of life. We can live our life in the flesh, or we can live our life in the spirit. We can walk after the flesh, or we can walk after the spirit. We can draw our existence out of the natural realm which passes away, or we can draw our existence out of the spiritual realm which liveth and abideth forever. We can live our life according to natural law, or we can prepare our mind and heart to live life according to Spiritual Law.

I do not mean to say that as sons of God we should not work, earn money, drive a car, build a house, or eat food. Jesus and His disciples had a purse with money in it, they bought food and clothes, rode donkeys, ate ordinary food, and slept in houses. Jesus knew the Father within as His source, therefore He walked in no anxiety or concern about natural things. If Father supplied them in natural ways He received it with thanksgiving, and if there was no natural supply He made wine out of water, got money from the fishes mouth, and multiplied loaves and fishes. It wasn't a question of how it came to Him, but a matter of the law of faith by

which all things were possible! For thirty years Jesus worked, it is believed, in Joseph's carpentry shop. I have no doubt whatever that for a number of years He was dependent upon His skill as a carpenter to feed His mother and His brothers. But as He grew in wisdom and in stature as the Son of His Father, the day came when He fully learned and appropriated the higher Law of the Spirit of Life! Then the carpentry shop ceased to be His source – the Father within became His source! As long as the Father within led Him to work in the shop He worked in that way, and that was the spirit's supply. and when the Father called Him to leave it He walked away in confidence for His source of supply went with Him! Now He was truly the manifest Son of God. How wonderful this is! When the spirit within becomes our source it ceases to be a matter of how things are done – it is a matter that all wisdom, knowledge, understanding, and action spring from the Life within instead of from the natural world!

To us today, as to men of old, Jesus says, "Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but labour for the meat that endureth unto everlasting life." You see, beloved, the problem with us is that we have spent all our life laboring for the meat that perishes; working on the job and doing some business and labor for the natural meat, wearing ourselves out, growing old and weary, our hair turning gray, sweating and toiling always for the meat that perishes. And often we have not spent a balance of time and effort laboring for the spiritual meat that will endure when all the natural meat has perished. Yes, the bread that Jesus fed the five thousand was natural bread, although He drew it out of the realm of the Spirit! But by learning and knowing and moving in that realm of the true source of Life He was able to go on and by the same law of faith overcome all natural things and, finally, conquer even the last enemy – death – and stride victoriously out of the tomb! Therefore it is time for all who have received the call to sonship to labor more and more for that Spiritual Meat that shall endure unto everlasting Life, when all the natural meat has passed away!

I have observed in the ministry of Jesus that there was never a problem He faced that He could not solve, never a need that He could not meet, no victory He could not win, no realm of revelation, experience, or relationship to God that He could not possess. To this sonship ministry we are called, my beloved, and we are learning to walk by the faith of the Son of God! Press on, dear ones, set your face as a flint, turn neither to the right nor to the left. Continue to look unto Jesus who is the Author and the Finisher of your faith! He is our Beginning and He is our End! This is indeed the true END-TIME REVELATION!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 16 COMPANIONS IN THE KINGDOM

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART SIXTEEN

JOHN COMPANIONS IN THE KINGDOM

"I am Alpha and Omega...who is, and who was, and who is to come, THE ALMIGHTY," speaks the divine voice at the opening of the book of Revelation. A little later we read, "When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last..." (Rev. 1:17) At the closing of the book the same voice declares, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last...I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify these things unto you in the churches." (Rev. 22:13,16) Centuries earlier the Lord spoke through the prophet Isaiah, saying, "Thus saith Yahweh, the King of Israel, and his redeemer Yahweh of hosts; I am the first; and I am the last; and beside me there is no God" (Isa. 44:6). Again in Isaiah 48:11-12, "For mine own sake I will do it...and I will not give my glory unto another. Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last." These and a number of other scriptures show that Yahweh is the first and the last, the only God, the God of Israel, the Almighty. In the book of Revelation Jesus Christ is the first and the last, the Almighty. Let the saints of God arise to the wonderful truth that JESUS CHRIST IS THE YAHWEH OF THE OLD TESTAMENT!

People have great difficulty understanding an abstraction, a force, or a spirit. It must be personalized, it must take form, and that is why God has come in the person of Jesus Christ so that we might see Him and see what God is like. That is why in the book of Colossians the apostle Paul says of Christ, "He is the exact likeness of the unseen God — the visible representation of the invisible...for it was in Him that all things were created, in heaven and on earth, things seen and things unseen, whether thrones, dominions, rulers or authorities; all things were created and exist through Him and in and for Him." (Col. 1:15-16) Therefore, the embodiment referred to as Jesus in the physical world, in the atomic world, is the invisible Yahweh who exists in a Spirit or Light World. He is Almighty Creator of everything in heaven and in earth! "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Other scriptures tell us that it was Yahweh who is the great Creator! Glorious, indeed, and wonderful beyond human description is the great truth that the book of Revelation is the unveiling of God-Yahweh-Yahshua — the invisible Almighty God who came to earth as our Lord Jesus Christ!

The great Yahweh appeared to Israel in a cloud and a pillar of fire. He lived in that pillar of fire and led Israel daily. At the dedication of Solomon's temple He announced His coming as a great cloud that appeared to all the assembly of Israel, so bright and glorious was the cloud of His presence that the ministers could not minister because of the blinding, overwhelming glory. Then one day the same Yahweh was manifested in a virgin born body that was prepared for Him. The God that tabernacled above the tents of Israel, who tabernacled in the temple on mount Moriah, now took on Himself a tent of flesh and tabernacled as a man amongst men. But He was the SAME GOD! The Bible teaches that GOD WAS IN CHRIST. The body, the outward human form, was Jesus, the Son of God. In Him dwelt and dwells all the fullness of the Godhead, bodily (Col. 2:9). Nothing can be plainer than that! Mystery, yes. But actual truth — it can't be plainer!

No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him — He has revealed Him, brought Him out where He may be seen; He has interpreted Him, and He has made Him known so that he who has seen the Christ has seen the Father. (Jn. 1:18; 14:9) The One who walked by the sea of Galilee and through the dusty roads of Palestine was none other than the living God, Yahweh in human form, the Creator who humbled Himself and came into this world. This One who died, who rose again, who ascended up far above all heavens that He might fill all things, who sits upon the throne of the Majesty on high and who has entered into our lives by the power of His Spirit — this Lord Jesus Christ is Himself THE ALMIGHTY! "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending...the Almighty." (Rev. 1:8)

I have no desire to dispute doctrines about the Godhead. I am sure each of us has our understanding of God, how God is one and how God is three, and all the rest of it. I am not writing to debate those issues, rather to point out a truth, which the Spirit has made very real to my heart. There are many kinds of terminology that we still use that are not the Spirit's terminology. They are not what the Spirit has witnessed concerning God, but terms that men have coined to express their conception of the Godhead! Many of these terms have come right out of the darkness of religious carnal minds and the Lord's people have embraced them and parrot them as though they were divine revelation! Christians talk about God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. Did you know there is not a scripture in the Bible that talks about God the Son? There is not a scripture in the Bible that speaks of God the Holy Ghost! Yet the title "God the Father" appears many, many times throughout the New Testament. "To us," Paul said, "there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him." (I Cor. 8:6)

Jesus is always referred to as the Son of God — not God the Son. Now you say, "Wait a minute, brother Eby, are you telling me Jesus isn't God?" Not at all! I am saying that He is not called God the Son. Likewise, the Holy Spirit is most often referred to as the Spirit of God — not God the Holy Spirit. God Himself said, "I will send my Spirit; I will pour out my Spirit." He nowhere said, "God the Holy Spirit will come to you." Do you see what I mean? We use terminology that has been formulated by the theologians of the church systems, but which are not found in the word of God! Jesus said that the Father had sent Him, and that the Father is God. So to us there is one God who is the Father! The question follows — Was Jesus God? Absolutely! But did you know that the God in Jesus was the Father? What did He say? "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, HE doeth the works." (Jn. 14:10) Can you imagine GOD saying, "I can of mine own self do nothing?" Yet Jesus confessed that He, of Himself, could do nothing! Only the Father in Him could speak and do the works! So what I am saying is, THE GOD THAT WAS IN JESUS WAS THE FATHER! "Great is the mystery of godliness: GOD was manifest in the flesh." (I Tim. 3:16) Not God the Son manifest in flesh. GOD was manifest in the flesh!

The great Indian apostle and mystic, Sadhu Sundar Singh, was caught up in the Spirit. I know not whether he was in the body or out of the body, but he was caught up in the Spirit and saw, in Spirit, the throne of God. Just as John saw, when on Patmos he was caught up in Spirit, Sadhu Sundar Singh saw the throne of the heavens of God's Spirit and "there was ONE who sat upon the throne." He did not see three thrones! He did not see God the Father sitting on one throne, God the Son sitting on another throne, and God the Holy Ghost upon a third throne. Nor did he see one throne with three Gods seated upon it! He saw one throne and on the throne he saw One sitting, and the One he saw was Jesus. He saw Jesus sitting on the throne! But emanating, radiating out of Jesus in a never-ending and all-encompassing effulgence of glory, majesty, wisdom, power, dominion, love, mercy and goodness was the Father! Shining out of Jesus was the scintillating glory of the Father so that Jesus could say, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet thou hast not known me? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" (Jn. 14:9)

My heart's desire and prayer to God is that all who read these pages may now see themselves in Christ. May God enable you by His Spirit to see yourself IN CHRIST! God's elect, God's chosen ones, Christ's many brethren are the body of Christ. God has one glorious Christ who is composed of many members. Jesus Christ our wonderful Lord is the Head of this Christ body and we are members in particular. To all who have received the call to sonship Jesus says, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne." (Rev. 3:21) And yet John sees only one throne and One seated upon the throne! The mighty, eternal, all-embracing truth of it is that when all God's sons are seated in Christ, who is in the Father, upon that awesome throne of the heavens there is still only One that can be seen upon the throne! Truly we are able to say, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me." And the Lord Christ witnesses, "It is not I, but my Father that dwelleth in me." Oh, the mystery of it! Oh, the wonder of it! If you today can by the Spirit see that one throne where the King of glory is seated in all the fullness of the nature, power, glory, wisdom, love and majesty of God, and see yourself seated in Him, then you know what UNION IS! Then you know what SONSHIP IS! If you are able to comprehend these simple truths, you know more about the Godhead than all the theologians of Babylon!

May the beautiful words of the prophet fall with divine understanding upon our spiritual ear. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given...His name shall be called...the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father." (Isa. 9:6) It does not say mighty man, but Mighty God. A little child is called the Mighty God! The child mentioned here refers to the child born in the stable in Bethlehem, who is not only named Jesus, but also the Mighty God, and furthermore the Everlasting Father. As a child born to us, He is called the Mighty God; as a Son given to us, He is called the Everlasting Father. This is very strange, is it not? When the child is called the Mighty God, is He the child or God? And, when the Son is called the Everlasting Father, is He the Son or the Father? If you try to figure it out you cannot do it! You must accept the truth that since the child is called the Mighty God, it means the child IS the Mighty God! And since the Son is called the Father, the Son IS the Father! If the child is not the Mighty God, how could the child be called the Mighty God? And if the Son is not the Father, how could the Son be called the Father? Then, how many Gods do we have? We have only one God because the child Jesus is the Mighty God, and the Son is the Everlasting Father.

When Jesus came, He came to take the place of Adam — to fulfill the eternal purpose of God for man to be the expression of God to the whole universe! Is that not why God created all things in the heavens and the earth, then as the crowning glory of His creation He brought forth in the earth man in the image and likeness of God. It was by, through, and in man that creation would see, touch, and know the invisible God. Man was destined to be the manifestation and revelation of the invisible Creator to the visible creation! When Christ came as the last Adam, to fulfill that great purpose which had been aborted in the first Adam, His emphasis or principle was: "I will be a man and I will fulfill the divine plan. I will be a man living wholly unto God." His first consideration was not evangelistic — that is, toward man. His first consideration was toward God! "I will live unto God. I will live by the Father. I will draw upon His life. I will be simply a vessel filled with God! I will express Him, manifest Him, reveal Him. I will do nothing on my own; I will not initiate anything. I will not show how much I can do, how much I know, how much power I have. I will not display my own attributes. I simply will be humanity, a human vessel, but God the Father will be in me, living out His life, speaking His words, acting out His purpose, and working through me His glory, power, and will." That, my beloved, is sonship! And that is how the child became the Mighty God, and that is how the Son became the Everlasting Father! Sweet mystery of God!

When Jesus came into the world He said two things. First, "A body hast Thou prepared me." (Heb. 10:5) He was saying, "I have a means of expressing God among humanity." A body is for expression. If I never moved my hands, or my mouth, or my eyes, you never would know what I was thinking. But having a body gives me these unique physical capacities, and I am able to express outwardly what I am inwardly. Well, Jesus Christ said, "I will not express what I am; I will express what HE IS!" As I have pointed out earlier, Jesus also said, "I do nothing of myself." Oh, my! That is just contrary to what we have thought. We have thought that Jesus was the second Person of the Godhead, and He could do anything! Yet He plainly said, "I do nothing of myself." "As I hear, I judge." "What I see the Father do, that I do." In effect He said, "My judgments are just, because I judge no man; my Father judges and my Father never makes a mistake. He knows what's going on! I just listen for His judgment and as I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, for it is not mine, but His." This is the man Jesus speaking! If Jesus were the second Person of the Godhead, as the theologians tell us, He could never say, "Of myself I can do nothing." Imagine God saying, "Of myself I can't do anything!" One impotent God waiting for another more powerful God to act! Oh, no! The man Christ Jesus is saying, "As a man, I can do nothing. But the Father, the Mighty God who dwells in me, who is my life, my reality, He can do all things!" And that, my beloved, is sonship!

Again Jesus said, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but THE FATHER THAT DWELLETH IN ME, HE doeth the works." (Jn. 14:10) You could ask the Lord Jesus, "Where are you going?" He would answer, "I'll go where my Father goes. My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. I don't stop and consider when I take a journey. When the cloud of my Father's presence within me begins to move, I move with the cloud. Now I'm going to Galilee, then to Judea, and then across the river. I never anticipate anything. I just walk as my Father walks. He guides me this way, and that way. I just walk as my Father walks, for it is not I, but my Father who lives in me." This is the way He was living His life, moment by moment. He had no desire to speak, unless the Father had something to say. He did not heal, unless the Father in Him was healing. He had no desire to do anything — just the Father's will. He had no desire to perpetuate anything. When the Father changed directions, He changed directions. When the Father was finished with something, He was finished with it. When the Father passed something by, He

passed it by. When it looked as if the people wanted to set Him up as king, He said, "My hour is not yet come. I can't anticipate anything. I can't jump ahead of schedule." And that, precious friend of mine, is how the child became the Mighty God, and the Son became the Everlasting Father! That is sonship!

Now here is the second thing Jesus said when He came into the world. "I delight to do Thy will, O God!" Jesus never stopped to consider whether He was going to be understood or misunderstood. He never stopped to consider if He was going to suffer. He never stopped to think about whether He was going to die. He knew that as long as He walked in the will of His Father, nobody could take His life from Him, because it was the Father's life. Whatever His Father willed moment-by-moment that was all He could will. "I come to do Thy will, O God."

The record states of Jesus, "And when even was come, they brought unto Him many possessed of devils: and He cast out the spirits with a word." (Mat. 8:16) That word was not Christ's word at all! I do not believe that Jesus ever cast out a devil. I do not believe that Jesus ever healed anybody. I believe what Christ Himself said, "The words that I say unto you I speak not from myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, HE doeth the works." Who did the works? The Father! Did Jesus do them? No! Oh yes, the record does say that He did mighty works, but Jesus made it plain that it wasn't really Him at all, it was the Father, the Mighty God, who dwelt in Him. Jesus never said that He did any works! Men recorded that He did, but Jesus said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." (Jn. 5:17) In other words, it was the Father that worked in and through Him. All glory to the Father! The words which flowed from the Christ's lips were not the words of Christ at all. They were the words of the Father. For you see, Jesus was possessed. He was possessed by a Spirit. He was possessed by God!

Jesus never said to a sufferer, "Brother, be of good cheer!" All Christ's words were the words of the Father! He always said, "Son, be of good cheer!" Was that not the Father speaking? When He said to the woman who touched the hem of His garment and was healed of the issue of blood, "Thy faith hath made thee whole," did He call her "sister"? Was it our Brother or our Father who was speaking? Hear what He says! "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole!" These were the words of the child who was the Mighty God, and these were the words of the Son who was the Everlasting Father!

My spirit is stirred with the knowledge that the Father was in the Son, deity was in humanity. There was no revelation of sonship until Jesus came and revealed the Father in human flesh. Since the child has become the Mighty God, and the Son has become the Everlasting Father, we are to honor the Son even as we honor the Father! The beloved John saw a throne set in the heavens of God's Spirit, and One sat upon the throne. He that sat was to look upon as a jasper and a sardine stone, and there was a rainbow round about the throne, with a glory like unto an emerald. And yet — in the midst of the throne He saw a Lamb as it had been slain! The One who sat upon the throne was also a Lamb! And the little Lamb was furthermore the Lion of the tribe of Judah! And in the midst of the throne were four living creatures. Four is the number of universality. It speaks of that which is world-wide, all-encompassing in relation to earth. Again and again the Revelation speaks of the "four winds" of the earth, the "four corners" of the earth, and the "four angels" with their action earthward. The four "living creatures" in the midst of the throne represent the worldwide or universal expression and revelation of THE LIFE OF THE GOD OF THE THRONE! They are the figure of all the overcomers, of all the holy sons of God who sit with Christ upon His throne! Just as the twenty-four elders round about the throne represent the ministry of priesthood, so the four living creatures in the midst of the throne represent the power of kingship. Kings and priests! These are all pictures of THE THRONE. Understand what is in the throne and you will understand the greatness of the One who sits upon the throne! There is One who sits upon the throne, yet that One is also a Lamb, He is as well a Lion, He is furthermore Four Living Creatures, and in addition He is Twenty-four Elders. All of this is included in the revelation of the throne! "And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb...and they sung a new song saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." (Rev. 5:8-10) Oh, yes! There is only One upon the throne, but that One is a MANY-MEMBERED ONE, THE RULING FAMILY OF GOD, THE FATHER AND HIS SON WITH HIS MANY BRETHREN BROUGHT TO GLORY!

I am still speaking of Jesus Christ who is "the Almighty." Paul says in **II Corinthians 3:17**, "Now the Lord is that Spirit." The Lord is what Spirit? The "Lord" spoken of here, of course, is the Lord Jesus; and "the Spirit," of course, is the Holy Spirit. Then again Paul tells us, "And so it is written, the last Adam was made A QUICKENING SPIRIT" (**I Cor. 15:45**). Today's Christians, steeped in the false doctrines of the church systems, blinded by the traditions of men, have a traditional way of saying that "Christ is in the Holy Spirit." But the word of God does not say that! There is not one verse in the whole Bible which says that Christ is in the Spirit! "Christ is in the Spirit" is, therefore, a traditional saying, whereas "The Lord IS the Spirit" is the scriptural expression. This is made very plain in chapter eight of Romans, as well as many other passages. "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." (**Rom. 8:9**) The Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ are one Spirit! And there is an even greater mystery than this! "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." (**I Cor. 6:17**) Oh, the wonder of it!

The last Adam was made a quickening or Life-giving Spirit, Paul explains. The last Adam, of course, is the Word made flesh, the man Christ Jesus. The Life-giving Spirit, of course, is the Holy Spirit. There can never be another Life-giving Spirit beside the Holy Spirit! The Word was made flesh and became the last Adam, and then through death, resurrection, ascension and glorification, became THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT! "Now the Lord is the Spirit." John wrote, "This spake Jesus of the Spirit, which they that believed on Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given; because JESUS WAS NOT YET GLORIFIED." (**Jn. 7:39**) Two things were essential before Jesus could return as the Spirit. He must go away. He must be glorified. "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come. I will not leave you comfortless: I WILL COME UNTO YOU." On our behalf, as man and the Head of man, Jesus was resurrected, and then ascended, being admitted into the full glory of the Divine, and His human nature received up into union and participation with the eternal Spirit, becoming of the same substance and essence of the eternal Spirit. He was glorified, He was truly spiritualized! And the Holy Spirit could now come down as the Spirit of the GOD-MAN — most really the Spirit of God, and yet as truly the Spirit of Jesus the man. He could come down as the Spirit of the GLORIFIED JESUS, to be in each one of us who receives Him. And to as many as receive Him, to them gives He the power to become the sons of God! God be praised! Jesus has been glorified! The child has become the Mighty God! The Son has become the Everlasting Father! The Lord has become the Spirit! There is now the Spirit of the glorified Jesus and we have received Him! Christ in us is our hope of glory, and our reality of sonship to God!

When Christ the Spirit comes into us, He comes to fulfill this high and holy calling. He comes within as the all-sufficient Spirit to make us all that we must be as God-men. In our modern era man has learned much about nutrition. Nutrition is the science and study of the foods that build the human body and make it strong and healthy. The body gets the nourishment it needs from the raw materials contained in foods. Starch, sugar, fat, protein, minerals, vitamins and water are all raw materials. From these raw materials the body builds flesh, bones and muscles, and makes blood and other body fluids. There are some foods that build body tissue, others that make strong bones and teeth. Many of these materials are minerals. One of the important materials that helps the body grow and function is vitamins. There are several different kinds of vitamins and each has its particular use. All of these minerals and vitamins are important! For instance, calcium promotes proper formation of teeth and bones. Iron helps build red blood cells. Vitamin A aids good eyesight. B vitamins are good for the nerves. Niacin builds healthy skin.

In order to supplement your diet and get all the vitamins and minerals your body needs you can go to the store and purchase them in tablet form. There you will find bottles containing calcium, bottles containing iron, others of niacin, vitamin A, B vitamins, vitamin C, D, E, etc. You could soon fill your entire cabinet with bottles of all kinds of vitamins, minerals, enzymes, and other food supplements. But the supplement companies have simplified all this for us by creating the "multi-vitamin-mineral" tablet! One of these tablets will contain sufficient amounts of every known vitamin and mineral needed by the human body. You don't have to swallow fifty different pills — you just take the one! This one is the all-inclusive dose! And friends, have we ever realized that Christ the Spirit is the best and most all-inclusive "dose" in all the world? HE is the one complete dose, which is enough to meet all our spiritual need! HE is the raw material of the new creation man! HE is the stuff sons of God are made of! The Spirit of Christ is all that God is! Christ in us is our hope of glory! And we are the hope of creation!

Our human body needs all the vitamins and minerals in order to develop and function. The body of Christ, the new creation man, the sons of God need the all-inclusive dose of the quickening Spirit of Jesus, the last Adam, in order to grow up unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ and be perfect God-men. God is preparing to manifest His sons to deliver creation from the bondage of corruption. We shall see the glory, wisdom, and power of God's Christ manifested in all fullness in a many-membered body right here upon this earth! How can we attain to this? By taking liberally of the all-inclusive dose of the Life of God in Christ!

Adam had the opportunity to become the full revelation of the image and glory of God to the whole universe. This was offered to him in the tree of life! The tree of life was nothing else than the life of God in Christ. This life was in man's very spirit. The tree of life was the all-sufficient "dose" which would have built eternal spirit life in Adam, making him in turn the very source of that life. But Adam refused his "dose" of incorruptible life, choosing rather to live from the devitalized, insufficient junk-food of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in his soul. Consequently, Adam quickly sank into degeneration, weakness and death. In the natural, a person who does not get enough vitamins may have poor eyesight, rough skin, sore gums, or a host of other ailments. People who are too thin or feel tired much of the time usually need more nutrients. There are ugly diseases, such as pellagra, scurvy, and beriberi that occur when the body does not get enough vitamins. We have all seen the debilitating diseases of osteoporosis, arthritis, heart trouble, cancer, and others that often come from a lack of proper nutrients. Have you not seen the pictures of the pitiful children in third-world countries suffering from acute mal-nutrition? The eyes are large and protruding, cheeks sunken, stomach bloated, arms and legs thin and bony, and other awful conditions. Lorain and I saw this scene thousands of times when we were on the mission fields. It is a heart-rending sight! And friend, this is the spiritual portrait of old Adam! It is also the spiritual portrait of millions of professed believers in Christ in all the churches of the world! This is the picture of the horrible spiritual image into which men sink when they refuse, or cannot acquire, their "dose" of the all-sufficient life of God in Christ! This is the sad result of the deficient diet of the tree of religion's empty forms, lifeless ceremonies, man-made doctrines, carnal programs, vain traditions and commandments of men — the tree of the knowledge of good and evil!

All of mankind today, enslaved by sin, sickness, sorrow and death, are manifestations of Adam's wretched condition. Mankind today, after six thousand years of degeneracy and impoverishment, bears absolutely no resemblance to man as God destined him to be from the beginning! And religion hasn't helped one bit. Religion has brought mankind their "Care Package" of religious junk-food, religion has given men a little strength and cosmetically dressed up the outside and made men appear a little better, but the internal disease is still raging out of control. Death has passed upon all men. But, blessed be God! God is forming a people into the image of His Son to bring to all mankind the all-sufficient dose of the incorruptible life of God! He has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given unto us the ministry of reconciliation! "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, WE SHALL BE SAVED BY HIS LIFE." (Rom. 5:10) It is wondrously true! We have been reconciled by Christ's death, and we are being saved by His life! Yes, we shall be saved COMPLETELY, spirit, soul and body, by His life! Through the death of His Son God has opened Eden's gates, and brought us back into the garden of God! In the garden, in the tree of life, God has again made available to us the all-sufficient dose! Within the Spirit of Christ there is an all-sufficient supply! Everything we need to be God-men is contained in the Lord the Spirit! We are now becoming what we have never been. We are now becoming all that man was intended to be. We are now becoming the sons of God! We are now able to live in His sight! There is no need to cry, beg, or fear. We have only to draw near with a confident heart, and full expectation of faith, to take Him, eat of Him, appropriate Him. We are being saved, changed, transformed BY HIS LIFE!

Is it not therefore wonderful that Christ should be called the True Light, the Truth, the Life, the Resurrection and the Life, the Holy One, the Just One, the First and the Last, a Just God and the only Saviour, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Lord the Spirit, God our Saviour, the Creator and Maker of all things, God over all, blessed forevermore, who only hath immortality; our Lord and our God, whom we are commanded to worship, and whom all the angels of God are commanded to worship, for unto the Son He saith, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever" — is it not wonderful, I say, that this Jesus Christ declares Himself to be "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come — THE ALMIGHTY!"

JOHN

"I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." (Rev. 1:9)

John has the supreme distinction, and the everlasting honor, of being our Lord's most intimate friend on earth. And what an exalted light that casts on the character of John, on the qualities of his spirit, and on the disposition of his heart! When we would know all about a man, the first question we may ask is, "Who are his friends?" "Who is his most intimate friend," we seek to know, for any man is known by the company he keeps and by the friends he chooses. And when we ask this question about our Lord, the answer comes back, "John — he was the disciple whom Jesus loved!" He was one of the twelve, the one who leaned on his Master's bosom at the last supper. And he was the disciple, above even her own sons and daughters, to whom Jesus from the cross committed the care of His grief-stricken mother.

The Lord Jesus, at the opening of His ministry, had a whole multitude of disciples who followed Him about. But both the needs of His heart and the nature of His work led the Christ to make a selection, and to choose an inner circle of more intimate friends out of that large and loose multitude. And after much prayer, and listening carefully to the voice of the Father within Him, Jesus at last chose just twelve men to have them always with Him. They were more than His staff, they were His friends, His very brethren. But as time went on, both the drawing of His heart, and the discernment of the Father's purpose in each of the chosen ones, led their Master to make yet another selection of still more special associates, inside the circle of the twelve. And thus we may notice as we read through the Gospels from chapter to chapter, we read less and less of the nine, and more and more of that chosen three — "Peter, James, and John." And then, even of the select three, John more and more stands out as the loved disciple — the special, distinct, prominent, and by far the most intimate friend of his Master!

The root of all friendship is always found in likeness — in likeness of nature, likeness of character, likeness of mind, likeness of interests, likeness of tastes, likeness of purpose. What a validation that is, then, of John's heart, character, and purpose — to be told that, out of all the men that our Lord met with and chose as His associates while on earth, John was the man He best loved and made His closest and most intimate friend! What a close and precious relationship they had! This is clearly and powerfully revealed in John's Gospel, for far above the other three Gospels, John wrote not about the day by day happenings in the outward ministry of Jesus, but of the deep things of the Father made known to man by the Son of His love. The depth, the spirituality, the heavenliness, the supreme divineness of John's Gospel makes it a perfect miracle of revelation, truth, and inspiration. How close must have been the likeness, how deep the love, and how perfect the friendship between Jesus and John! Little wonder, then, that when the time came for the full and complete REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST, that it was to John that the heavenly vision came! And John is himself in the book of Revelation a type — representing that chosen elect, the footstep followers of the Lamb, who follow their Lord all the way from mount Calvary to mount Zion; the little remnant who turn from all the delusions of the church systems and the carnality of their own ways and wills, to lean upon His breast, to know the beat of His heart, to sup with Him in the secret place, partaking of His mind, filled with His love, one with His purpose. These have a higher heritage and are heirs to a higher calling. These have privileges, and duties to perform. These blessed ones are about their Father's business. These are arising and beginning to shine, going forth and leading the way for all who will follow. These are the sons of love. These have ascended into the heavens of God's Spirit, they have beheld the throne set in heaven, they have stepped into the day of the Lord, and to them is given the kingdom of Heaven!

COMPANIONS IN THE KINGDOM

"I John, who also am your brother...and companion in the kingdom of Jesus Christ." (Rev. 1:9)

Some people think that the kingdom of God has been held in abeyance, it has been held up in heaven somewhere, until Jesus comes back and establishes it in the earth. Why, my beloved friend, you are just about two thousand years behind time! Don't you know Jesus already came and established His kingdom in the earth? "Now after that John was put into prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the good news of the kingdom of God, and saying, the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the

good news!" (Mk. 1:14-15) "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man is pressing into it." (Lk. 16:16) You say, "Well, we're waiting for Jesus to come back and make the kingdom take over." Well, my beloved, He has come back in you in His fullness to make it take over! "That you may be accounted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven...when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day." (II Thes. 1:5-10) That's how it's going to take over! There will be no other take over of the kingdom of God except it comes in and through you who are hearing the word of the kingdom, who by faith and obedience are entering into the kingdom of God. The kingdom has been planted in the earth and God is now preparing and equipping a company of king-priests to expand it, extend it, and increase it, until every enemy is defeated and all things are subdued unto Jesus Christ the King!

One glorious day the firstborn Son of the living God walked among men and announced, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand." The new reign of God had come to the birth! The call went forth throughout all the earth in the power of the Spirit for men to become willing subjects of the kingdom of God. First twelve, then seventy, then vast multitudes responded to the call. On the day of Pentecost alone about three thousand precious souls, quickened by the Holy Spirit with eyes to see and ears to hear, answered the call and were gathered into the reign of God. No longer did devout men wait for the kingdom, but they were in it, and they ate new heavenly food and drank new heavenly wine with Christ in the kingdom of heaven! Let God be praised! For His rule in ransomed hearts had begun. Everywhere men and women were translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's Son. Even in lonely exile on the isle of Patmos, John the disciple could exult that he was a brother and a companion to the saints "in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ."

The kingdom of God is established in that domain where God's saving power has defeated all opposition, broke down every wall, transformed all that is contrary to God's nature, mind, and will, and has brought men into willing submission to His authority. Where the nature of God and the mind of Christ have mightily conquered, the state of things is called the Kingdom of God. Where hearts are changed, where sin and error and darkness have been defeated, where truth and righteousness advance, where the will and ways of God are raised up as reality and life in a people, where the mind of Christ rules out of union with God — there the kingdom of God has come and is advancing! In the kingdom it is no longer God ruling over you by His sovereignty from without, but the life, mind, heart, nature, power, wisdom, knowledge and will of God entering into you, becomes your very own reality.

The kingdom of God that John was in, and the kingdom of God that I am proclaiming today is composed of that company of elect sons of God who have aligned themselves with God; who lean upon His breast, who listen to His voice, who put on His mind, who obey His commands, who walk in His nature, who do His will and carry out His divine purpose in the heavens and on the earth. They are loyal subjects of His kingdom, for they ever do His bidding. Their King is the Lord God Almighty and He is their Father. They obey without question; for it is their nature to do only and always those things that please the Father! They are true citizens of the kingdom of God! They are first under His rule and authority, but they are ambassadors of that divine and heavenly kingdom. They are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ! They are destined to share all His glory and sit with Him upon His throne! They are the members of the government of God and the kingdom of heaven is expressed through them and the power and the glory of the kingdom is being committed into their hands for the age and the ages to come.

Thank God for John who, in the dark distress of inhospitable Patmos, could testify, "I am your brother and companion in the kingdom of Jesus Christ." He was on Patmos, but he was in the kingdom! While the irons wore deep grooves in his arms and legs, through the long nights and the cold ground, while the rats scrounged for food, scurrying around and over the sleepers, John was living in the righteousness, peace, and joy of the kingdom! It was not on Patmos, but in the kingdom, that God spoke to John, and started showing John things, and He opened up to him like you would do when putting one of your video tapes in the VCR and playing it through the television. As the gulls wheeled and screamed, John was lifted up in spirit so he could see the outworking and consummation of God's great plan of the ages. All the vain things of this age passed away and the real was in the panorama before him.

Before him passed the vision of the church. He saw the condition for centuries to come. It was a mix of tragedy and triumph. He saw the four living creatures of God's divine life and dominion revealed in the holy sons of God in the midst of the throne, and he saw the twenty-four elders of the Royal Priesthood round about the throne, emanating from the throne in grace, mercy and restoration for all creation. He saw the Lamb upon the throne open the book of God's great dealings and purposes. He saw the seals of revelation opened, he heard the trumpets of initiation sounding their herald, and the vials of consummation bringing an end to all that opposes the kingdom. He saw the horses of conquest desolating that earth which we are, and he saw those slain who laid down their lives that they might take up the life of Christ. He saw the stars of human wisdom fall from the heavens of men's minds like the wind shaking figs from a fig tree. Every mountain of man's kingdom, every stronghold of fleshly dominion was shaken so violently that none remained in its original place. The sun and moon that lighten the outer court were darkened, the trees and grass growing out of the earth of the carnal nature, and bearing the fruit of the works of the flesh, were completely burned up, and Mystery Babylon the Great fell.

John staggered as he witnessed the sealing of the hundred and forty-four thousand sons of God, with the Father's name in their foreheads, standing in the authority of God's kingdom upon the heavenly mount Zion. With amazement John gazed upon the great multitude that no man could number, the vast company of earth's redeemed, clothed in the white robes of Christ's righteousness, with palms of victory in their hands, singing praise to God and to the Lamb. He saw a new heaven of spiritual dominion and a new earth of righteous expression. He saw the city, not the city of Rome with her pomp and power, but the glorious city of God which originates in the heavens of God's Spirit. He saw the manchild upon the throne, and the great dragon of deception, accusation and death cast into the abyss. He saw the refining inferno of the lake of divine fire which burns for the ages of the ages until all things are purified and God is All-in-all. Then he saw "every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever!"

John is our companion in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ! There is on Patmos a grotto enshrined today as the place where John received the Revelation, but it was not there that he saw the glory of the unveiled many-membered Christ of God, for John was in the Spirit on the Lord's day when he saw all these things. You can climb Patmos' rocky slopes, you can stand there in the grotto and receive nothing. I have stood there upon that lonely mountain myself, and I testify that I received no enlightenment there. God is not on Patmos! It is in the holy mountain of God, upon the spiritual mount Zion, in the heights of the kingdom realm of God's Spirit, that God is seen, touched, and known. Those sons who are walking with God in the Spirit today are eye-witnesses of His majesty, and have heard the Voice from heaven as they stand with the Lamb upon the holy mount. We are companions with John — with Jesus — in the kingdom of God!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 17 COMPANIONS IN TRIBULATION

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART SEVENTEEN

THE TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE

"I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation...was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." (Rev. 1:9)

One of the most frequently expressed concerns among Christians is, "When is the tribulation going to begin?" The real question that people seldom ask is, "When is the tribulation going to end?" The popular teaching of the church systems is that there will be a seven-year "Great Tribulation Period" upon the whole world at the end of the church age. According to the "end-time" teachings of a number of evangelical denominations and groups, this doom is coming to the world very soon. We are, these alarmists inform us, currently in the last of the last days, and the end is upon us. Therefore, perilous times will come, the antichrist will arise upon the world scene to impose upon men the dreaded mark of the beast, and the Great Tribulation will break in savage fury upon the nations.

There are many who believe Jesus will come just prior to this time of great tribulation and rapture the church away to heaven. Some say He will come in the middle of it, and others after it is over. There have been many theological debates by so-called authorities on the subject. The more I study all these aspects, the more I wonder how they ever invented such doctrines at all — all of them! At the very least, the scriptures they use are completely taken out of their context. What the Bible teaches, and what most of us have been taught, are definitely two different things!

Peter, in speaking of the coming of the Lord, said, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty." (II Pet. 1:16) The apostles of our Lord did not teach or follow after cunningly devised fables. Yet, when it comes to the events that mark the transition from the church age into the new and more glorious age of the rule of the sons of God, vast multitudes are following cunningly devised fables! Believers have spent so much time listening to these cunningly devised fables proclaimed by the ministers of the carnal church systems that they have completely ignored the words of God that show there really is no such thing as a seven-year tribulation period! There is no scripture in the whole Bible that connects seven years with the mention of tribulation. It is a miscalculation, misinterpretation, and misrepresentation of the program of God! No doubt these misconceptions have been made by sincere men and women who love God, but I do not hesitate to say that the whole scheme of "end time events" proclaimed on television, radio, and from the pulpit is a cunningly devised fable.

Elaine Cook said it so well in one of their papers. "'Who's afraid of the big bad wolf, the big bad wolf?' I hear the children chant at their play. It seems many Christians are afraid of one particular wolf called 'the great tribulation.' This fear that has been planted in their hearts prevents them from seeing God's plan and purpose for them. When I speak to some people about the kingdom, they raise up the barrier of this great tribulation that must come first. I'd like to shoot down this wolf before their eyes and render it dead and powerless to keep people from walking in all that Jesus purchased for them. It's hard for believers to see that the kingdom has come because they believe the 'great tribulation' has to come first. Of course, they don't want to be here for that, so they want to make their exit out of here! Expecting Matthew 24 to be fulfilled in the future prevents them from seeing that the kingdom came in Acts 2. Jesus said, 'I won't drink wine with you again until I drink it anew with you in the kingdom.' On the day of Pentecost, they tasted wine that had never been drunk before, and they toasted the king and the coming of the kingdom! The kingdom is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost! So — receiving the Holy Ghost gives us the kingdom potential to walk in the kingdom! The kingdom of God came in power!

"The big bad wolf teaching would have Christians believe that they must go through seven years of tribulation before they can walk in the kingdom. They ask you, 'Are you pre-trib, mid-trib, or post-trib?' If they knew the scriptures, they would be none of these! They could throw the whole 'trib' out! Jesus said, **'In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world'**" (Jn. 16:33) — end quote.

A number of people in this "sonship" or "kingdom" message have brought this fable of the "end-time great tribulation" right over from their old-order doctrines of the church systems into this present move of the Spirit and word of the kingdom. Many years ago we were in fellowship with brethren who believed that within a few years the antichrist beast government would rise up in the earth and take over the government of the United States and, indeed, of the whole world. They took this old-order Babylonish doctrine, mixed it with the present truth of sonship and the kingdom, and came up with a "hybrid" revelation that it was time for the woman (end-time body of Christ) to flee to the wilderness from the face of the beast. They would escape the fury of the beast and his mark, and the horrors of the great tribulation, by literally fleeing to remote wilderness areas of the world and hiding out there until the manchild would be birthed, take the throne, and wrest power from the beast.

These brethren began to raise up "farms" in remote areas of the world, where they could become self-sufficient, living off the land. A mass exodus of saints began from all over the United States and Canada. I have stood on those end-time farms where people were preparing for the great tribulation, and witnessed those precious brethren plowing the mules, pumping water, chasing cows, slopping hogs, rising before dawn, stumbling in at the close of day bone tired, physically exhausted, and spiritually drained, then required to attend nightly meetings, sing and clap, move in the Spirit, minister the Word — and all became so dry and lifeless, going through the motions by rote, for the "cares of this life" had choked the anointing and outflow of HIS LIFE. The terrible truth is that they were far less pressured and more relaxed, more in the word, and in prayer, and in the Spirit back in the city on their jobs before they "fled" from "Babylon"! They had the cart before the horse, anyway, for according to chapter twelve of the Revelation the woman doesn't flee to the wilderness to birth the manchild — the manchild is born, caught up to the throne, and then the woman is carried away into the wilderness! And here we are, more than thirty years later, and the beast government still hasn't taken over the world, nor has the anticipated Great Tribulation begun! The "great tribulation," which is supposed to run its course for three and one half or seven years, at the end of the church age, is nothing more than the idle imaginings of men who have no knowledge of what they affirm. It is nothing but an invention of ignorance.

THE TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE

To grasp and comprehend this powerful truth, we must be able to rightly divide the word of truth. **"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."** (II Tim. 2:15) The word for "divide" is orthotomero meaning "to cut straight or to dissect correctly." Would God that all His saints would be enabled by the Holy Spirit to correctly dissect, or cut apart and lay open, the word of truth! In the depths of my spirit I am sure that all who read these lines, with prayerful contemplation, will be able to correctly divide truth from error in the scripture passages I shall now quote. I list below EVERY PASSAGE in the New Testament in which the word "tribulation" appears. I am using the King James Version because it is the primary one the preachers use to teach the seven-year great tribulation that is coming upon the world after the church has been raptured to heaven.

What you should look for is the context — the connection, subject, theme, setting and application of the word. See how many times tribulation applies to the Jews, how many times it applies to the ungodly or the world, and how many times it applies to the saints of God. Consider carefully in how many cases tribulation is associated with terms such as "end time," "last days," "seven years," "judgment," "wrath," "vengeance," "antichrist," "beast," "rapture," etc. When you have prayerfully examined all these scripture passages in relation to these questions God will speak and give you wisdom and understanding of His ways and His plan. When God speaks to your heart He will not merely help you to decide between the various opinions, teachings, and doctrines of men. When He speaks it is revolutionary and the opinions of men are discarded, for they are always contrary to His will. When the holy light of truth breaks forth in our minds and is established in our

hearts, every stone of the old erroneous edifice of carnal man-made religious teachings will be thrown down and God will build within us a temple of truth and reality after the mind of Christ. The mind of Christ is the thought, intent, and purpose of God. The mind of Christ is the mind of eternal, immutable, omniscient wisdom. It is the mind of Christ, which will govern the world in wisdom through the manifest sons of God! This is the mind that will bring order out of the fearful chaos that now exists! It is the mind of wisdom that will fill the whole earth with the knowledge of the Lord as the seas are filled with water! The mind of Christ is a priceless gem, rich and rare above all the treasures of earth!

Now here are the scripture passages on tribulation.

"But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended." **(Mat. 13:20-21)**

"When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth let him understand:) then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains...for then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be...immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." **(Mat. 24:15,16,21,29)** This speaks of the tribulation that has come upon the Jews beginning in A.D. 70 with the destruction of the temple by the Roman general Titus, bringing the termination of the Jewish nation and the final and complete end of the Old Covenant of Law with its priesthood and sacrificial order. The writings of the Jewish historian, Josephus, outline the history of the incredibly horrible events of that time. History records how the Christians escaped from Judea, just as Jesus foretold. This reference is repeated in Mark 13:24.

"These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." **(Jn. 16:33)**

"Paul...departed to...Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." **(Acts 14:21-22)**

"Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile." **(Rom. 2:9-10)** This passage appears, to the inattentive reader, to promise tribulation upon every evil man. The contrast, however, is not between saints and sinners, but between two classes of people who are serving God! And it is not talking about every evil man, but every soul of man that doeth evil. There is a difference! On the surface one might think that Paul was vindictive or cruel by suggesting tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that does evil, but when we understand that pressure is for a purpose, then we can see the end that the soul may be saved and the evil dealt with in our lives. Oh, yes, there is purpose in pressure! Notice that the judgment of the Lord is to come upon "every soul of man that doeth evil." The Greek word for "soul" here is psuche, and refers to the mind, will, emotion and desire of man. This is a reference to the powers of the five senses in man, including the mind, which is the seat of consciousness. Thus, the carnal nature and the carnal mind are that part of man that experiences the Lord's indignation, wrath, tribulation and anguish, until all evil is eliminated. That is why we must through much tribulation enter the kingdom! God does not require His elect to pass through tribulation out of some sadistic desire to see us suffer — but He does indeed scourge every son whom He receives! The scourging is out of His love for us, and for our good, that we may be purified thereby. The elect are those who, because of the indwelling spirit of sonship, seek for God's highest and best. They are the spiritual ones whose vision is fixed upon "glory, honour, and immortality, eternal life." Their desire is for the glory of that incorruptible and immortal life of Christ! Others are looking no further than the temporary healing of this physical body, but we are looking beyond healing to a complete salvation in spirit, soul, and body, conformed to the image of the resurrected and glorified Christ!

"And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience..." **(Rom. 5:3)**

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us!" **(Rom. 8:35,37)**

"Blessed be God...who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." **(II Cor. 1:3-4)**

"Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation." **(II Cor. 7:4)**

"Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory." **(Eph. 3:13)**

"For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation..." **(I Thes. 3:4)**

"So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure...seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you." **(II Thes. 1:4,6)**

"I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation." **(Rev. 1:9)**

"I know thy works, and tribulation...fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." **(Rev. 2:9-10)**

"Notwithstanding I have few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols...behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds." **(Rev. 2:20,22)**

"And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." **(Rev. 7:14)**

Now — that is every passage in the whole New Testament in which the word "tribulation" appears! Twice it speaks of the great tribulation that came upon the Jews when God abolished the Old Testament order of Law and Sacrifices by destroying the Jewish nation, temple, and priesthood. Once tribulation is pronounced upon those who persecute the saints. Once Jesus promises great tribulation to those believers in the churches who commit spiritual fornication. AND IN EVERY OTHER PASSAGE THE HOLY SPIRIT SPEAKS OF THE TRIBULATION WE ENDURE AS GOD'S ELECT! It is especially significant to note that not one single mention of either tribulation or great tribulation applies to the world or to the nations! Every mention of tribulation in the book of Revelation concerns the tribulation suffered by the Lord's people! Where is the seven-year Great Tribulation Period the preachers so confidently and audaciously proclaim, as though it must be written all over the pages of God's Word! With all humility of mind and with complete understanding of my own human ignorance and limitations, I want to affirm that I cannot find in the scriptures the Great Tribulation theory or any of the other so-called "end-time events" so loudly heralded from the pulpits and over radio and television. They just aren't in the Bible!

Please disabuse your mind of the erroneous notion that the great tribulation is something that comes upon the world, or upon the wicked, or upon the kingdom of the beast. Tribulation is a word that the Holy Spirit uses in the book of Revelation only in relation to saints! This truth cannot be stated more eloquently than it was by John W. Follette when he wrote, "Tribulation is a word that God uses in relation to saints. The etymology of the word means threshing. The farmer does not thresh weeds; he threshes the golden wheat that the grain may be separated from the chaff and the sticks. He is after grain, not trying to pound out some straw. Therefore God says, Tribulation worketh patience; that is, the golden grain of patience, long-suffering and kindness, comes by way of threshing or tribulation. Think of the splendid spiritual grain of character and noble living produced only

through the tribulation process. The spiritual tone and quality of the mighty men of God came only through trouble and suffering.

"In the world about us, in the fields of fine music, art and literature, the artist never reaches the climax of his labors and gives to the world the best in creative beauty and strength until he has known the poignant touch of personal sorrow or grief or trouble. Oftentimes it is like a divine alchemy turning the ordinary and prosaic life into a glorious display of divine power, fortitude and beauty. It is the use of trouble that releases the deeper springs of our lives and sets aflow the streams of mercy and understanding which a perishing world needs" — end quote.

George Hawtin once wrote, "What man, sweltering in the consuming heat of the fiery furnace of his affliction, can understand that naught but his shackles are being removed, but not one hair of his head is being singed? What man, receiving stripes, can know that the devastating stripes themselves are becoming the marks of the Lord Jesus?"

Why do men choose to believe the cunningly devised fable that "the tribulation" is the final and full outpouring of the anger, wrath, and judgment of God upon the world, rather than the purposeful dealing of God with His people who are to be purified, perfected, and conformed to the image of Christ? Some teachers paint a terrible picture of this tribulation which is supposed to come upon the world with phrases like: avalanche of judgment, ghastly pestilence, devastating judgments, mankind's darkest hour, incredible horrors — a judgment so terrible that God isn't going to let His church go through it. Where do men get such notions as these? Certainly not from the scriptures on tribulation! Why have men so naively overlooked the plain statements of scripture that trial, testing, chastening, pruning, purging, refining, and tribulation are specifically ordained for those called and apprehended to sonship? Can you not see how Christians do not love the truth, but hide from it? They don't want to pass through the tribulation that worketh patience and the nature of Christ! They prefer to believe, contrary all the testimony of God that an angry, offended, vengeful God is going to finally give this wicked old world just what it deserves! And while the world is experiencing the horrors of the damned, all God's "special little saints" will be caught up on clouds of glory, indifferently and unconcernedly dancing with glee at the marriage supper of the Lamb!

The believer who has received the call to sonship and has been introduced to the spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, rejoices in hope of the glory of God and glories in tribulation. (Rom. 5:3) That this is a supernatural experience is evident from the meaning of the words that describe the suffering which purchases for us patience, perfection, eternal life, glory, the kingdom of God and the throne of the Lord! "Tribulation" has been brought into the English language from the Latin. The verb is tribulare, which means, "to press, to oppress, to afflict." The Latins had a tribulum, a threshing sledge which separated grain from chaff. It consisted of a wooden platform studded underneath with sharp flints or iron teeth. As this instrument passed over the pile of grain the wheat was separated from the straw. We can well understand how a man undergoing afflictions would compare his sufferings with those which would be inflicted if such an instrument passed over him. Now, how can a son of God rejoice in such grinding pressure?

The Greek word brings us the same terrible thought, couched under slightly different imagery. The word is thlipsis, and originally conveyed the idea of "pressing together, pressure." The Greeks themselves did not use this word in connection with human suffering — only in the New Testament did the Holy Spirit chose this term to describe the experience of God's sons! The disciples of Christ were the first to think of themselves as being in the vat like grapes or olives, and being pressed to the point where the nature of Christ within them flowed out like wine or oil! How can we press righteousness, peace and joy from pain and sorrow as one presses wine from grapes or oil from olives?

When John the Baptist was introducing the Lord to the people, he said that Christ would baptize them with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Then he continued, "Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and will gather the wheat into His garner; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire." Phillips translates it this way, "He will come all ready to separate the wheat from the chaff, and to clear the rubbish from His threshing floor. The wheat He will gather into His barn and the chaff He will burn with a fire that cannot be put out."

The purpose of threshing is to separate the wheat from the straw and the chaff. This speaks plainly to us of the two aspects of our lives: the inner and the outer man, the spirit and the flesh, the spiritual and the natural, the carnal mind and the mind of Christ. The stalk grows up for weeks and then the head appears before the kernel of wheat begins to form in the head. One will see fields of beautiful green wheat waving in the wind, but there is not yet any grain! It is all there, the stalk and the head, but there is no wheat in the head. That comes later. The stalk and the chaff are necessary for the formation of the wheat. Gradually the kernel of wheat begins to form, and all the life that was in the stalk and in the head settles in the kernel. As the grain comes to maturity the rest of the plant dies, dries up, and is no longer needed. The wheat is the Christ that is formed within, the rest of the plant is our natural life which was used as a vehicle or womb for the Christ life. Paul was like a farmer nurturing the Christ life in the saints, and his cry was like that of the farmer waiting for the harvest, "My little children, for whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you!" (Gal. 4:19) You see, the farmer is not after stalks or heads — the farmer is after grain! He eagerly anticipates the formation and maturation of the wheat in the head!

As the Christ within us, the life of sonship, comes to maturity there must come a separation of the wheat from the chaff and the straw. There must come a separation of the inner son from the outer man, of the spirit from the flesh, of the divine from the human. The old is no longer useful, it is only in the way, and must be destroyed. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God! When the wheat in the head matures all the life settles in the grain. That is where the fullness is! That is where Christ is formed, where His life is preserved, to be revealed! The rest of the plant has to die. There is no life in it! The straw and the chaff are dry and lifeless. They serve no further purpose. The only life there is is in the kernels that have formed in the head! The only life there is in us is in the Christ who has been formed in us! The rest of us is dead. "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Phil. 3:3). There is no life in the natural man or in the carnal mind. So there has to be a separation of the old from the new, and the old must be consumed with fire. Most Christians interpret the fire to be hell fire. They think the Lord will separate the wheat (the Christians) from the chaff (the unbelievers) and cast the unsaved into hell fire. That's not what its talking about at all! "He shall thoroughly purge His floor..." "His floor" is the territory of His kingdom, it is the people gathered into His kingdom. God is not in the business of burning up sinners! God is in the business of burning out of us that which makes us sinners! It is the Lord's called and chosen and predestinated elect who appear on His threshing floor to be threshed and purged until nothing is left but Christ!

The threshing process, separating the wheat from the straw and the chaff, is one of beating, tearing, and rubbing. In ancient times the wheat was trampled by the feet of the oxen. Oxen were driven back and forth over the wheat until the separation was complete. Another method was to beat it with a flail. This was a stick and the wheat was pounded with it until the kernels were knocked from the heads. The modern combines have a rub bar process where the wheat is subjected to pressure and rubbed between two surfaces. Whatever the method used, the process of separation is not an easy one! It is not a pleasant experience! The separating of our fleshly ways from our walk in the Spirit is not a pleasurable experience either! The separation of our carnal religious traditions from the expression of our new spirit man is not a simple process. The separation of our human will from the will of God is not easy. It may sound easy, but believe me when I say it is not easy! The Lord has to beat us, just as a stubborn child sometimes has to be beaten with the rod of correction. The Lord has to tramp us, pound us, tear us, put us under pressure and rub until our flesh man is separated from our spirit man and there is none of the old self nature left to pollute the kingdom of God, to desecrate His temple, or to threaten the righteousness of His throne within us.

The separating is accompanied with much suffering. The firstborn Son of God was made perfect through the things He suffered! There is no other method by which we will be perfected also. George Wylie certainly understood these processings of the Lord when he wrote, "Perfection is not attained on any pathway of roses. It is a rugged, torturous way strewn with sufferings, pain, sorrow and grief, oftentimes beyond what we think we can bear. Sometimes the process is so severe as to cause His elect to cry unto Him day and night. Many days and nights I have cried unto Him, saying, 'How long, O Lord, how long?' When subjected to some fiery trials in the past I have often said to the Lord, 'Lord, it is enough, I can't take any more; please remove it, take this load from me.' This was a prayer He never answered and I am glad now that He never did! When I prayed like this, instead of lightening the trial He heaped more on me. Instead of turning down the heat He turned it up, making

it hotter. I don't pray that way any longer! My cry now is, 'Lord, keep the fire burning until the purifying process is complete, until there is nothing left of this old corruptible man and you have a vessel that is sanctified and meet for your use.' Those whom He has called and chosen for this high calling are being put through the refining fires now; they are being persecuted, tramped upon, slandered, buffeted, subjected to suffering, pain, and sorrow and they cry unto God day and night. They are not crying for deliverance from the trials, but for grace and strength to bear it until the process is finished." — end quote.

Oil and wine are biblical symbols of joy, revelation, and life. Oil and wine represent the inner essence of the fruit from which they come. Olives and grapes are the fruits which produce oil and wine but they are not oil and wine themselves. In Palestine we find olives and grapes that have never fulfilled their true destiny! The olive shrinks and is wrinkled. A hungry man will eat such olives, and the poor people put them into their food; but the richness has evaporated. Grapes that remain on the vine harden, and after a time they are pulpy and dry. They will keep for months, dry all the time, and will still be nourishing, but the wine is gone, and the raisins excite a thirst for the juice that is not there. Such olives and grapes are better than nothing, but they are not substitutes for oil and wine! The fact is, the only way to preserve the inner essence of the olives and the grapes is to extract it from them in the form of oil and wine!

Are you satisfied with olives and grapes? Be sure they will dry up in your storehouse and will never flow out to quicken, nourish and bless humanity! Oil and wine bring lasting joy and strength and life, not olives and grapes. And surely you can see that it is not possible to have oil and wine unless olives are pressed and grapes are crushed! Even the finest fruit will not yield its essence without this process. Indeed, the finer the fruit the firmer the skin, and the heavier the pressure must be put upon it to burst its surface that the juices may flow. If the Christ life in us is to be released to humanity, we must be crushed!

To have oil and wine you must have olives and grapes. The natural man cannot bring forth the life of Christ or the ministry of sonship, because he has no fruit from which they can be produced. Religion is the product of the natural man, but religion has no life! Only the new creation man of the spirit has within him the life of God. If you are walking after the fleshly mind you can bring forth no quickening life because you have nothing but thorns and thistles. Crush them and you get thorn juice and thistle milk which never made the heart of any man rejoice! The natural man can observe rituals and ceremonies, obey rules and regulations, and do many good religious works, but he can never be conformed to the image of Christ and he can never reveal out of himself the life of God that sets creation free. This comes only from God's oil and wine; and these, in turn, are pressed only from God's olives and grapes!

Most Christians are content with the knowledge that they have olives and grapes in the garden of their life. They take a certain pride in the fact that the Lord has visited them and has dug the earth and pruned the trees and vines; He has also sent seasons of refreshing and watered them with care and even gathered fruit. They consider themselves a fruitful bough in a fertile garden. And the fruit of their lives certainly does become a blessing to many! But those who are called to sonship have been made aware that God is after something more than that. He is after grain that has been threshed, and olives that have been pressed, and grapes that have been crushed! He is after the inner kernel, the oil, and the wine where the essence and power of the inner life is brought forth. The presence of fruit alone does not satisfy the heart of the Father. Nor can it be preserved to meet the need of creation. God has caused a people in these days to become dissatisfied with the mere production of olives and grapes. If you are satisfied with grain in the head, or with olives and grapes in the vineyard of your life, you will never flow out to creation in grace, love, and power!

The olives must be pressed and the grapes must be crushed! "We must through much tribulation (pressure) enter into the kingdom of God." For this the Lord has many different processes. In all vintage countries proprietors of great vineyards have their own secrets for making wines. Connoisseurs tell the difference between the products of one vineyard and another by their tastes. Soil, sun, method of preparation, all enter into the final product. So the Lord works in each of us to bring forth a particular brand, expression, or dimension of His life that we may impart. To each He gives a new name which no man knows saving he that receives it! (Rev. 2:17). To that end the Lord is now working in the lives of all His elect sons, first growing olives and grapes in the vineyard of our life, and then pressing them out so that there may be oil and wine to bless creation. We cannot know the quality of the work of God in us except when the pressure comes! What flows

out of our lives when we are pressured? Ah, have there not been those times when there was nothing but thorns and thistles, and anger, bitterness, complaining, unbelief, and ungodliness flowed out when we were crushed. But what a mighty work the Lord has been doing in us! Yet — we can never know the true quality of the Christ life formed within us until the pressures come and the essence is literally squeezed out of us! In the measure that we welcome infirmities and tribulations, we shall glory in them and realize afresh the power of Christ to transmute the suffering into glory and distill the nature of Christ from tribulation.

Yes, my beloved, the Lord is growing His olives and His grapes in the gardens of our lives, and He will press out His oil and His wine! He will give us such an expression of the outflowing of the nature, love, wisdom, glory and power of Christ that nothing else in the world will charm us like the knowledge that we are the sons of HIS LIFE. It is evident that this kind of living is miraculous, for it is not in the capacity of the natural man to give forth oil and wine. It is natural to whine and sigh and cry in adversity! The worldling often lives such a life of failure, and, alas, many Christians settle down to the same low level. But our Father has called and ordained us for better things and higher realms! We are learning to glory in tribulations, for we have been called to the kingdom for such a time as this!

God is constructing a temple, built of living stones, out of which to manifest His glory in the age and the ages to come. Tribulation has been prepared as a chisel and hammer to be used in the constructing of this building. The living stones that even now are being placed in this temple have been chosen in the furnace of affliction and in the crucible of suffering. It has been necessary that an oven be heated in which to purify the gold for God's temple, a furnace in which all the dross is separated from the gold, and all the hay, wood, and stubble is burned up from our lives. When we realize that behind every happening of our lives is the mighty hand of God working to bring forth gold from these earthen vessels, we can rejoice, as David, in our afflictions and trials and exclaim with him, **"It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes." (Ps. 119:7)** When we begin to see the good that comes from the pressures in our lives, we are able to appreciate all the more the greatness of our God and the depth of the wisdom of His great mind!

The carnal mind says, "I see no value or purpose in all this trouble and tribulation." The carnal mind is shrewd as a lawyer looking for a loophole! The carnal mind doesn't like it or want it! But the mind of Christ knows that the servant is not above his Lord. The disciple is not above his Master who learned obedience through the things He suffered. God is preparing a people who cannot be moved, upset, or frustrated by anything! The cry of His heart is for a people who can share His throne and shepherd the nations with a rod of iron. (Rev. 2:26-27) These have to be people of character who are unshakable. We cannot afford the luxury of our personal feelings. WE HAVE NO "RIGHTS." If we do, we'll lose them in the fire of our great tribulation! Our testings will last as long as it takes to change our mind, attitude, and actions. Can we walk around in the furnace without complaining? Can we sing and dance in the fire? Can we shout praises in jail at midnight? Ah, beloved, there is purpose in affliction. There is purpose in trial. There is purpose in suffering. There is purpose in tribulation!

Well has George Hawtin written: "I would to God that all God's elect might see that everything everywhere is working tirelessly and endlessly to produce sonship in those who are the called according to His purpose. Everywhere! Everything! Temptations, tears, heartaches, unfaithful friends and brethren, loss of property, loss of business, perils, hateful neighbors, fiery furnaces, dens of lions, rugged crosses, and isles of exile! All things! All things! All things, too numerous to mention, are working for the good of God's elect, and are adding, though unseen now, an exceeding and eternal weight of glory to us."

We who have endured our share of the persecutions of Christ shall be abundantly blessed of the Lord to receive our inheritance in the kingdom of God. "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him." As we look beyond the present, with its trials and tribulations, we will see the glory of the fullness of the kingdom of God that is yet before us. The darkness of this present world, with its evil, ignorance, beastliness, and violence, is rapidly fleeting. The new morning, with the fullness of the light and glory of God and His kingdom spread upon the face of all nations, is ready to dawn upon the whole earth. It is time for a new and unprecedented move of God! All the moves of former days have grown old as a garment and are now weak, anemic, feeble, exhausted, impotent, languishing and ready to pass away. The next move of God in the earth will be the manifestation of the sons of God and the hour for this manifestation draws nigh.

One morning a couple of cowpunchers went out on the range to bring in a wild steer from the mountains. They took along with them one of those shaggy little gray donkeys — a burro. Now a big three-year old steer that's been running loose in the timber is a tough customer to handle. Nevertheless, these cowboys had a technique for handling this steer. They got a rope on the steer and then they tied him neck and neck, right up close, to the burro and let them go. At first, the burro had a bad time. The steer threw him all over the place. He banged him against trees, rocks, and into bushes. Time after time they both went down. But there was one great difference between the burro and the steer. The burro had an idea. He wanted to go home! And no matter how often the steer threw him, every time the burro got to his feet he took a step nearer the corral. This went on and on. After a week, the burro showed up at the corral. He had with him the tamest and sorriest-looking steer you ever saw! The thought of this little burro, being overpowered and abused can encourage us when we find ourselves struggling with difficult problems or people in our lives. We often feel tied, "right up close." If we could only have some slack! But our Father had a purpose in tying us to our problems. He knows that the faith of the son of God in us will enable us to hang in there! No matter how often we are thrown, our tenacious spiritual nature will enable us to get to our feet and take a step nearer to God's victory! We may be abused and hurt. But just think of the tremendous outcome — that we might eventually stand before the throne of our Father — an overcomer indeed! You see, my beloved, God's techniques make sense after all!

If you will look closely at the scriptures you will see that it has never been God's purpose to save His people from tribulation, but to bring them through tribulation and out of tribulation victoriously on the other side. Consider the case of Daniel. He was a man of God who lived among a people who hated God and hated His people. Daniel was also a man who prevailed with God in prayer! Yet God arranged for him to be thrown into a den of lions. While this was going on, Daniel was no doubt praying earnestly for deliverance. But what did God do? He didn't stop the enemies of Daniel! He allowed them to throw Daniel into the den with the starving lions! However, God delivered Daniel by being with him in the lion's den! God stopped the mouths of the lions, and as a result the God of heaven was magnified throughout all the kingdom of Babylon!

We cannot dictate to God the way that He will deliver us, or to what extent He is going to allow us to be thrust into the fires of tribulation. God is sovereign! He ordains for every son to be tried just as the firstborn Son was tested by the devil in the wilderness. No matter how difficult the situation, God is ingenious and has a thousand ways to glorify His name through our tribulation that we have never even thought of!

Another example of this is that of the three Hebrew children who, during the time of the Babylonian captivity, were thrown into the fiery furnace for refusing to bow down to the idol statue of the Babylonian king. Could God have prevented them from being cast into the furnace? Of course He could! But instead He allowed them to be bound and thrown into the flames. These young men did not dictate to God how He should deliver them, or even whether He should deliver them. They knew that the greater evil from which they needed to be delivered was that of disobeying and dishonoring the Lord! They were more concerned about being delivered from this sin than being delivered from the fiery furnace! They were willing to die rather than reproach the name of the Lord within themselves. But there was one in the midst! Ah, today my beloved, there is one in the midst of us who walks with us in all our troubles! He is there, always there, for He is the one in the midst of each of us. It is the Christ! He is the Lord of the fires! He is the Creator of the lions! All is in His omnipotent hands, and He dwells within every son of God. Oh, the wonder of it! We do know and testify that every happening in our lives is freighted with divine purpose. Many of God's elect today are passing through pressing and trying times, yet we praise God for all the processings and dealings by which we are made overcomers. Truly the Father is bringing us into new dimensions of faith, wisdom, love, and the image of God! We know that we stand on the threshold of a divine breakthrough into higher realms of life and glory! We must press through tribulation. We must learn God's purposes and His ways. God's intent is not to take us out of pressure, but to lead us by His Spirit and bring us through pressure. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me..." What a wise and strong and glorious people we shall be when the work is completed!

"He turned the sea into dry land: they went through the flood on foot...for Thou, O God, hast proved us: Thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. Thou broughtest us into the net; Thou laidst affliction upon our loins. Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place." (Isa. 66:6,1-12)

Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee; in whose heart are the ways of them. Who passing through the valley of Baca (weeping) maketh it a well; the rain also filleth the pools. They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God." (Ps. 84:5-7)

"Our fathers understood not Thy wonders in Egypt...He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it was dried up: so He led them through the depths, as through the wilderness. And He saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy." (Ps. 106:7-12)

"To Him that smote Egypt in their firstborn: for His mercy endureth for ever: with a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm...to Him which divided the Red Sea into parts...and made Israel to pass through the midst of it...but overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea...to Him which led His people through the wilderness..." (Ps. 136:10-18)

"And I will bring the third part through the fire, and I will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: and they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God." (Zech. 13:9)

"But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and He that formed thee, O Israel. Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passeth through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: and when thou walketh through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour..." (Isa. 43:1-3)

"They returned again...confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." (Acts 14:21-22)

God is forming His Son and building His kingdom in our lives! If you desire Him to construct His nature in your life, then you, O child of God, must learn this one simple and sublime truth: In every situation and circumstance, in every difficulty and problem, in every test and trial, in all trouble and tribulation — God will bring you THROUGH!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 18

COMPANIONS IN TRIBULATION [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART EIGHTEEN

JOHN'S TRIBULATION ON PATMOS COMING OUT OF GREAT TRIBULATION

"I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation...was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." (Rev. 1:9)

Most people have the idea that tribulation means wrath, judgment, torment and vengeance. The Greek word is thlipsis, meaning "pressure." It is derived from the word thilbo that means "to crowd, to be pressed upon in a narrow place." Ray Prinzing wrote, "Pressures are used to PRESS US INTO THE KINGDOM! Trying to pray ourselves out of these distresses only defeats their very purpose. But when, in the midst of our pressures, we pray that God would bring us deeper into Himself, then these very straits have served their purpose — for they have channeled us into Him."

Another brother has written, "For many years scientists have been aware that the gem of gems, the diamond, was fashioned in deposits of carbon by extreme pressure of the earth's inward forces. This was demonstrated some years ago when General Electric announced the development of a 'successful synthesis of diamonds' which took pressure of more than 1,500,000 pounds per square inch at temperatures of 5,000 degrees Fahrenheit for hours at a time. The principle of pressure is found in every aspect of natural life, for it holds the secret power. Coal, produced by pressure upon an accumulation of dead leaves and vegetation, operates huge factories and supplies energy to millions of homes. Raging torrents wear crevasses and form beautiful waterfalls. Stored reservoirs of water generate mighty dynamos.

"Life itself depends on pressure! A butterfly can only gain strength to fly when it is allowed to push itself through the walls of its cocoon. Even the minutest seed must burst to bring forth new life. Pressure applied at the right spot can stop the flow of blood from an arterial cut and save a life. Strength is developed through pressure. You would not receive any water from the faucet or sufficient gas to warm your home or cook a meal if it were not for pressure. Underground pressure can cause a mighty artesian stream of life-giving water to gush forth! The thought of pressure applies also in the spiritual realm. If extreme pressures are needed to form a diamond, can we wonder that God allows the heat to be turned on when He desires to develop jewel-like qualities in us?" — Don Bruce, Springs in the Desert.

There are gems of varying quality, depending upon the amount of pressure applied and the length of time subjected to that pressure. What intense pressure and heat are required to make a diamond! In the kingdom of God there are spiritual gems, the Lord's "jewels," of varying worth in the kingdom depending upon the measure of the processing. Some brethren today don't believe in processing — just the finished work. Jesus did indeed offer up Himself once for all for our redemption, but one has to be extremely naïve to believe that that finishes the work in us! Thank God, though we are forced to say with Paul, "We are pressed out of measure," we need not despair as we keep our eyes upon Jesus, the Captain of our salvation. He is our forerunner who went into the wilderness to be tempted, tried, tested, pressed by the devil — and He returned from His wilderness experience IN THE FULLNESS OF THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT OF HIS SONSHIP! He has left us the example that we should follow Him, suffer with Him, and then reign with Him!

JOHN'S TRIBULATION ON PATMOS

When on Patmos John said that he was our companion in tribulation. Let us look for a moment at the historical background of John's tribulation. According to the church father, Irenaeus, who had fellowship with those who had personally known the apostles, the book of Revelation was written during the great persecution which had

taken place "not long ago, but almost in our generation, toward the end of Domitian's reign," between the years A.D. 93 and 96. This is the view, which was overwhelmingly held by the early church, and I believe it is the correct one. This is the almost unanimous testimony of all the great church leaders, from the second century onward.

The Preterist theory, which attempts to assign the date of the book of Revelation to the persecution under Nero, who died in the summer of the year A.D. 68, breaks down on every point. Nero's persecution was restricted to Rome, and there is nothing to show that it ever extended to Asia Minor. Furthermore, the persecution under Nero was not on the grounds of religious belief. He wished to avert from himself suspicion of the crime of having burned the city of Rome, and therefore attempted to implicate the new sect called "Christians." He certainly would not have reached into far-away Asia Minor to imprison Christians there for burning Rome! This was A.D. 64, and there is no proof that his fiendish cruelties to the infant church continued to his death four years later. On the contrary, the martyrdoms under Domitian between the years A.D. 93 and 96 were due to a refusal on the part of Christians to worship the emperor as divine. The ground of persecution, therefore, indicates the reign of Domitian, and not that of Nero. In addition, there is no evidence that Nero banished Christians — he put them to death! But banishment is distinctively known as a form of punishment inflicted by Domitian and his persecutions did indeed reach into Asia Minor.

The epistle of Paul to the Ephesians (one of the seven churches of Asia), written in A.D. 61 or 62, abounds with tributes to the love then existing among the Ephesian saints. It is an epistle of high spiritual vision, with no hint of departure from the love and life of the Spirit. Timothy was still ministering in the Ephesian church in A.D. 68. Yet, when the Ephesian church is addressed by the Lord in the book of Revelation, He says, **"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."** (Rev. 2:4) This rebuke by the Lord obviously belongs to a time later than Paul's epistle and Timothy's ministry! The condition of all the seven churches in Asia, as described in the book of Revelation, implies that they had been in existence for some considerable time. They had a history behind them that had developed with time into distinctive and entrenched characteristics. Errors had become deeply rooted and widespread. Also, they were experiencing martyrdom on a scale that would not have been happening in the days of Nero.

Patmos is a lonely, barren, rocky, volcanic, sun-scorched island in the Aegean Sea, some seventy miles southwest of Ephesus, the city in which John had been living and ministering for some years. The island is about ten miles long and six miles wide, with hills rising to about a thousand feet. On account of its dreary character, the emperor Domitian used it as a place of banishment for prisoners. The distinguished archaeologist, Sir William Ramsay, tells us that John's banishment was characterized by inadequate food, shelter, and clothing — he slept on the bare ground. He also suffered the stinging lash and perpetual physical restraints placed upon him by a military overseer.

To this day only a handful of people eke out an existence on Patmos, where there is a dingy grotto with a cave where tradition says John lived and wrote the book of Revelation. Today most of the people who live on the island of Patmos are fisherfolk. The island is also a secluded paradise for tourists. But when John was banished there for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ, it was no paradise! There were no restaurants and no plush beach resorts. There were no air-conditioned hotels with carpeted conference rooms where Spirit-filled business men could give their testimonies of how God had blessed them and made them millionaires. It was a place of long, lonely nights and cold ground, where rats scrounged for food and nibbled at the toes of the sleepers. There it was that John was exiled and the heavens opened unto him!

John was in the isle of Patmos "for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." That is how the King James Bible reads, but that is not quite correct. The Greek word is *dia* which means through, not for. The true meaning is that John was "in the isle that is called Patmos, through the word of God." In other words, God sent him there! The Roman emperor Domitian didn't send him there. The devil didn't send him there. GOD sent him there! John was on Patmos through the word of God! Does that not speak to us that we, also, are where we are today by divine appointment? All our steps are ordered by the Lord! The infinite wisdom of God's mind cannot be ascertained by these carnal little heads of ours. We must banish our childish theology and bring our minds into harmony with the mind of Christ. We must peer through the mighty telescope of God's wisdom as it looks through the vast universe of good and evil until heavenly light bursts with blazing brilliance upon our

inquiring spirits and we see with crystal-clear vision that God is in all things, and is responsible for all things, the simple and mundane as well as the great and the heavenly, the so-called evil things as well as the good. Oh yes, beloved, if you are in the upper room with its rushing mighty wind, its flaming tongues of fire, and its irresistible Holy Ghost power, God arranged for you to be there! And if you are breaking stones under the blistering heat of your far-away Patmos, God has put you there! It was God who chose your parents and the date and place of your birth. God selected the area where you would be raised, your associates, your friends, and your enemies. God arranged everything that has come into your life, the good and the evil. All the happenings of our lives are ordained by our Father to further our growth and development in Him. He knows exactly what is needed to make us what He purposes, and it is He who issues the orders that determine our destiny.

I have heard again and again that the name Patmos means "the place of my killing." That may be so, but after extensive research I have not found any etymological (the study of the origin and history of words) evidence for it. The only hint I have found concerning a meaning for Patmos is from Cruden — he says Patmos comes from a root, which means "to be crushed or squeezed." That certainly corresponds with the word tribulation — PRESSURE! John on Patmos said, "I am your brother, and companion in tribulation." It should be evident to all that John was not, in type, killed on Patmos, but he most certainly was crushed, squeezed, and pressured! And such has been the history of God's called and chosen elect!

For the elect of God, called to sonship and the kingdom of God, the pressures are increasing, not diminishing. Travail is upon us, as upon a woman with child. To the woman in pain, ready to be delivered, the doctor commands, "Press! Press! Press!" And to you who read these these lines I exhort, "Press on, dear ones, for a son is about to be birthed!" Through great travail and pressure the manchild shall come forth and we shall enter into the kingdom of God as kings and priests to reign with Christ. Then all the earth, all men, and all nations shall behold the glory of the Lord on a level it has never been seen before! The many-membered son, the complete Christ, the many sons brought to glory shall bring forth mighty deliverance in the earth! Only those who are brothers and partakers with the exile of Patmos in the tribulation and patience of Jesus shall win the kingdom of heaven. To him that overcomes, and to none but him, will the King give to sit down with Him in His throne. The watchword is — PRESS!

The idea that the "Great Tribulation" is going to be poured out upon the world is a stupidity that contradicts every scripture passage on tribulation in the whole New Testament! Perhaps we have been casual in reading the very words of the Lord Jesus to His own, **"In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."** (Jn. 16:33) Mark the connection of thought! He clearly did not say, "On this earth the world is going to get the tribulation. I will surely rain out upon the unbelieving, misguided, sinful and rebellious masses of earth the fierceness of my wrath and the fury of my judgment. But be of good cheer, precious little ones, for you will not be partakers of this tribulation — I will come and evacuate you to heaven before that great and terrible day of the Lord comes." No such optimistic tantalization as this! The testimony of the Lord standeth sure, "In the world YE shall have tribulation." YE!

Tribulation simply means "pressure," and great tribulation mean "great pressure." Everybody, on some level, experiences pressure in this world. Pressure, in modern medical terms, is called external stress factors. Physicians now recognize the great importance of internal stress, caused by reaction to external stress factors, in causing and aggravating a host of diseases. In this world all of us are subjected to a host of stresses — just as Jesus said! Examination of the blood of a person experiencing internal stress will reveal the presence of abnormal toxic chemical compounds that are formed as a result of his emotions of frustration, resentment, anger, hate, anxiety, worry and fear — which result in a number of diseases. The cares of this world have turned many peoples lives into a pressure cooker. Not to speak of war, persecution, or martyrdom — just the strain of everyday living in our modern society is steadily growing worse because of financial problems, higher taxes, inflation, recession, joblessness, terrorism, the disturbing world situation, responsibilities, sickness, hospital bills, rebellion in the home, drugs, street gangs and a host of other conditions.

The distractions and pressures of "this life" are too numerous to mention, we are all faced with them every day, but when they so overwhelm us, so mar our lives with anxiety, stress, fatigue and distraction that we find ourselves so distressed and depressed that we are not able to gather ourselves together and walk in the joy,

peace, and victory of the kingdom of God — then we have not discovered that HE THAT IS WITHIN US IS MIGHTY AND HAS OVERCOME THE WORLD! When we live in the consciousness of the outer man we are burdened with cares, pressured, tense, irritable, discouraged, hopeless, enticed by the flesh, in no spiritual frame of mind. But when we truly find the reality of the Christ within, learning to wait in the presence of the Lord, thinking with a spiritual mind, and begin to live out of the inner man, I testify to you that the Spirit of His Life flows out of our innermost being and then, with no special ado, even without seeking or asking, just exposing ourselves to the transforming power of His life, and the transcendent excellence of His mind, the spirit of our sonship graciously sweeps through our being, quickening the mind, cleansing the emotions, washing away the tension and frustration, breaking in the sweetness of His presence the relentless demands of the flesh, rolling back the brassy heavens, bringing glorious victory!

Ah, "In the world ye shall have pressure! But — be of good cheer — take courage, be confident, certain, undaunted, enheartened, inspired, invigorated — for I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD!" The mighty Christ is raising up within the life of every son of God in this new kingdom day of the Lord the victory that overcomes the world with all its pressures! HE overcame the world in the body of Jesus of Nazareth, and now He is doing the same within us! Praise His name!

There is a poem by Louise S. Pridgeon that expresses this so beautifully:

**Pressed out of measure and pressed to all length,
Pressed so intensely it seems, beyond strength;
Pressed in the body and pressed in the soul,
Pressed in the mind till the dark surges roll.**

**Pressed by foes, and a pressure from friends,
Pressure on pressure, till life nearly ends.
Pressed into knowing no helper but God;
Pressed into loving the staff and the rod.**

**Pressed into liberty where nothing clings;
Pressed into faith for impossible things.
Pressed into living a life in the Lord,
Pressed into living a Christ-life outpoured!**

All across the land today we hear the radio and television preachers convincing vast multitudes of naïve and gullible babes in Christ that the saints of God should have the best of everything. They should have instant healing, the most lucrative businesses, the finest homes, the most prestigious positions, the most expensive cars, the finest clothes, and freedom from want or pressure of any kind. Why, they will even bless our billfolds for ten dollars and assure us that, if we will give them one hundred dollars, we will get one thousand in return! Then, wonder of wonders, when these highly favored saints have lived their lives in ease and luxury, they will fly away to heaven at last with nothing to do and all eternity to do it in. And if the great and terrible tribulation should come while they are still on earth, they will be immediately evacuated by way of rapture to spend seven years sitting on a cloud with Jesus eating pork chops, or some other such foolishness. Let all who teach these fairy tales hear the voice of eternal truth ringing clear above all other voices, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world!" I hear Christ warn His beloved saints in these awesome words, "Yea, and A-L-L that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." To all who would reign with Him upon His throne He says, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." To those who seek the glory, power, and honor of the kingdom of God He declares, "Ye must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." And Paul adds his voice of admonition, "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience..."

One well-known television preacher was bombarding the air waves with the tearful complaint that he was being "persecuted" by the press. And what was the cause of his persecution? Why bless your heart, the press had discovered that while pleading a financial emergency and making impassioned appeals on his show for millions of dollars to keep his work from collapsing, he was, at the same time, secretly purchasing an elaborate

beach house in California, and Rolls Royce and Mercedes automobiles for his personal use at a cost of almost a half million dollars, not to mention the expensive furs and diamonds accumulated by his wife. Persecution indeed! I am making no mistake when I tell you that this man was not being persecuted for righteousness' sake, nor for the faith of Jesus, nor for the word of God, nor yet for the kingdom of God — rather, he was being persecuted for foolishness' sake, and that is stating it kindly. Over the last forty years there has been a bumper crop of these worldly-minded deceivers, and I tell you the truth when I say that such know nothing at all about the path of sonship and conformation to the image of Christ that comes only by the correcting and transforming ministry of suffering, persecution, tribulation, trial and testing.

The shallow Christians and the hireling ministry of the church systems know absolutely nothing about the divine principle of the refining, purifying fires of suffering, or the oil and wine of revelation and life that flow out only through the tremendous pressing and crushing of tribulation and trouble. As long as men's eyes are blinded to the great and glorious purposes of God for His sons in the ages to come, they will be looking for a spiritual life of ease and a short-cut to glory, remaining blissfully ignorant of the supernal blessings of suffering with Christ. When believers are deluded by the popular but erroneous notion that they have been saved to escape this sin-cursed world and spend eternity shouting and dancing up and down Hallelujah Boulevard to the rapturous music of harps and the fluttering of angel's wings, then indeed there would be little purpose in suffering during this present time at all, for even if saints were no worse off for their suffering, they would be no better either!

When the eternal Father through His matchless grace reveals to the child of God that it is His Master Plan for the ages to come to effect a universal reconciliation, restitution, and restoration through the agency of a royal race of kings and priests who through trial, suffering, and fierce tribulation have experienced within themselves the sorrows and pressures of this dark world, thereby learning infinite compassion and unconditional love for every anguished, tormented, pain-wracked, enslaved soul of man, then all our tribulation is freighted with divine significance! When we clearly see the sublime and incontrovertible truth that it is through much tribulation that we are conformed into the image of Christ the King-Priest, to reign and work with Him in the plenitude of His wisdom, the perfection of His holiness, the fullness of His understanding, the intensity of His compassion, the infiniteness of His love, the beauty of His justice, and the omnipotence of His power, every son having the mind of God, discerning all things, knowing all things and having the perfect nature, character, and ability to carry out the intricate and infinite will of God, then all our tribulation will redound to the glory of God and the eternal blessing of all creation! Among that perfect, omnipotent race of king-priests there will be no carnal minds, no fleshly actions, no emotional responses, no selfish desires, no self-serving, no weakness, no limitation, no mistakes, no dissensions, no disobedience; but with justice, wisdom, understanding, compassion, righteousness, love and power shall they shepherd the nations, and ultimately the vastnesses of the unbounded heavens until all things everywhere are subdued unto Christ, and Christ shall present a perfect kingdom to the Father.

Now since such glories are in store for the sons of God, can any man longer question why our all-wise heavenly Father should take such pains to bring His sons to perfection? None knows better than He exactly what is needed to transform His sons from corrupt and carnal creatures of the dust to beings of divine understanding and heavenly glory. I have often said that I have strong confidence in the ability of my heavenly Father to bring me to perfection and maturity as a son of God. My Father is a great son-raiser! He was a colossal success with His firstborn! Anyone who can raise a Son like Jesus Christ knows exactly what He is doing and can surely handle you and me, my precious brother and sister! **"We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings...wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him the name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." (Heb. 2:9-10; Phil. 2:9-10)**

Beholding the glory of Jesus Christ we can understand why the Father takes such infinite care to bring all His sons to perfection! Would you dare to imagine that any of the presidents, prime ministers, senators or members of the parliaments of this present world system would be found fit candidates to straighten out the

mess this world is in, bringing an end to crime, poverty, ignorance, violence, fear, deceit, greed, war, broken homes and hearts, sickness, pain, and death, restoring all into God again? Ah, the ages to come will be given into the hands of God's choicest sons — saints fully developed, perfected through suffering, matured through trial, proven through testing, beyond the reach of corruption, greed, selfishness, limitation, or any such thing. For twenty long centuries the Father has been meticulously qualifying and forming His government for the ages to come by the work of the Holy Spirit in His elect. The hour for the presentation of this government of His sons is nigh at hand!

This great work of perfection is done by the Holy Spirit leading us through the counsels, corrections, and disciplines of the Father. As the pressures and persecutions of this world system come against those who are moving on in the Spirit of God, the very test and fire is our purifying fire! It purges out the dross, making us smaller and smaller in our own eyes, and meek and humble in the mighty life of God being wrought in us. As we surrender more and more to Christ in us, it makes our natural man perish more and more until he is completely dead so that Christ alone can come forth in us.

There is a natural law in human experience that proclaims the means by which the sons of God shall be made manifest. When we want to temper a piece of steel, we place it in the fire and heat it until it is red hot. When it is almost at the melting point, we plunge it in the cold water. It almost instantly becomes hard for perfect use. So God, when He brings us forth as His sons, places us in the furnace of trials and testings, bringing us to the melting point. When we are tested to the breaking point, then He plunges us into the refreshing cold water of the River of Life. Then we become the manifest sons of God!

Not one son of God can escape the process! You can be a nice sweet Christian and go to heaven when you die without suffering or tribulation. But you cannot be a son apart from chastening and tribulation! You can be saved by grace and blessed with all the free gifts of God without testing and trial. But you cannot reign with Christ apart from being perfected by the things you suffer! And, matters not how much revelation we have, you and I still need to be purified; we need to be heated, beaten and pressed! Sometimes when the word of the Lord comes to us our understanding is unfruitful, it speaks nothing to us, there is simply no light. There is no light until one day God places His hand of dealing upon us and so orders our circumstances that we are brought under a certain kind of pressure. Under this pressure we turn to the Lord and suddenly His word to us gives light! Oh, we must have the dealing hand of God! Under pressure and bruising we turn to the Lord in a deeper, more intense way, and the Spirit moves mightily on our behalf to guide, comfort, encourage, rebuke, teach, correct, counsel, reveal, instruct, develop, strengthen, mature and perfect us. In all this the Spirit operates and we learn the ways of the Father! There comes the expression of His grace and glory and power in our walk. Then not only are we blessed, but the heart of the Father is satisfied, and through us creation will be touched by God!

COMING OUT OF GREAT TRIBULATION

Life on this earth is filled with affliction, reverses, calamities, heartbreak, disappointment, trouble, suffering and tribulation — everything that breaks and processes and molds the character of God into our lives. People often say, and sometimes even those called to sonship say, "I don't know why God allowed all this to happen to me!" Ah, that's an easy thing to solve! He lets it happen because we need it! When it happens we don't think we need it, it seems that God is unjust or has turned against us or forsaken us. We are like little children. My father used to tell me, when he gave me a threshing with his razor strap for some act of disobedience, "Son, this hurts me more than it hurts you. I do this because I love you!" And under my breath I was muttering, "Oh, yeah! I'll bet!" I couldn't believe that! It took me many years to understand the heart of my father, but after growing up into a responsible and mature manhood, having children of my own, at last I understood. That which appears to be unneedful and unjust becomes our crown and our glory when the process is finished and at last we understand! Since we are now His sons, we ought not be surprised at any of the processings which He brings our way, but rather see the hand of our Father in all these things, knowing that in His own mystical and divine way He is working it all for our good and for His glory!

The apostle Peter expressed the truth of it this way: "[Beloved, do not be amazed and bewildered by the fiery ordeal which is taking place to test your quality, as though something strange — unusual and alien to you and](#)

your position — were befalling you." (I Pet. 4:12) (Amplified) "THINK IT NOT STRANGE," the King James Version says — do not be amazed and bewildered, do not be astonished, do not be alarmed or incredulous as though the experience is foreign, unwarranted, unexpected, abnormal, a surprise. It is not an accident — it was PLANNED. It is not a surprise — it was PURPOSED.

People enter into this path of sonship and I hear them saying, "I've never had trouble like I've had since I came into this walk!" Of course you haven't. That's the way it's supposed to be! The higher the position, the more rigorous the training! "I had it better back in the church system," they moan. I wouldn't doubt that one little bit, because God is not at this time interested in either Babylon or the world. His purposes lie with those He has selected, drawing them out and beyond the course of this world's religion, and placing within them a divine call, a sense of destiny which must be fulfilled. You wonder why things are so difficult, why all hell breaks loose, why as soon as one door opens another door closes, you wonder why you have all the troubles, trials, difficulties, problems, and tribulations, while the way of the religious is not so. Brother, you're in the furnace — Jesus is being to you what He promised He would be — a REFINER'S FIRE! You are in the crucible of His purpose.

How long will this continue? I would like to promise you some respite, but I dare not. The Psalmist says, "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, PURIFIED SEVEN TIMES." (Ps. 12:6) Seven is the number of perfection! It reveals the great truth that God's own nature will be produced in the fire. He will heat up the furnace until you have been perfectly cleansed and purified, nothing remaining but HIMSELF. That which the Lord is receiving unto Himself cannot be of an inferior quality to Himself. The gold — ah, it is HIM. The silver — it is of HIM. How marvelous is the grace by which He has birthed us out of His own Spirit, making us "partakers of the divine nature." (II Pet. 1:4) It is like the grades in school, the farther along you go the harder the lessons become!

How long, think you, would it take a workman with a hammer and chisel to crush the ore and extract the gold from the rocks in which it lies so closely embedded? But if they are flung into the great furnace, and fires fanned to torrid heat and the draught roars through the burning mass, eventually a great glowing stream of pure fluid metal, from which all dross and rubbish are parted, flows into the waiting mold. This is a parable of what God will do for us! At first the surface of the melting metal may be dark and lurid — deep orange red, over which a flickering flame shall pass; but, as the process is pursued, the color will become lighter, the dark fumes will pass off, and the metal shall bear the appearance of a highly polished mirror, reflecting the beholder's face. The process may be long and hot; BUT THE RESULT IS SURE!

Those who love the Lord and long to see His purpose fulfilled in their lives, are willing to accept Him as a refiner's fire, as a thresher of wheat, as a presser of olives, as a crusher of grapes, and as a scourging Father! We accepted Him as Saviour, Baptizer, Healer, and Blessor; now we are accepting Him as the Lord of the fires! Our Father has made us willing to embrace the means He uses to perfect us. He perfects us in the crucible of adversities. The tribulations He sends us are not punishments for past failures, but divine tools to conform us to His image. Paul's thorn in the flesh, Job's loss of all his possessions, family, and health, Joseph's betrayal by his brethren, his being sold as a slave, and later his being falsely accused and thrown into prison, were all for a divine purpose.

Taken to the isle of Patmos, John was made to see a "great multitude" of saints which no man could number, from every nation, kindred, people and tongue, standing before the throne of God and before the Lamb. Each was clothed in a white robe and held a palm branch in his hand. The white robe speaks of purity; the palm branch denotes victory. Being made pure by the inwrought righteousness of Christ also brings victory over self! Asked by one of the elders, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, with palms in their hands, and whence have they come?" John answered, "Sir, you know." And the elder said to him, "These are they which have come out of GREAT TRIBULATION; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Each of these white-robed saints had to experience great tribulation.

I may be wrong, but it seems to me that these are the very people who had been followers of Jezebel, the false prophetess, the false ministry of the church systems, who committed spiritual fornication and ate spiritual food that was defiled by idols — by false images and conceptions of God. Were we not all there at one time? To

these the Lord Jesus said, "Behold, I will cast her into a bed (of trouble), and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds." (Rev. 2:22) It is interesting to note that the term "great tribulation" appears only twice in the book of Revelation, and neither time does it apply to the world. In both cases it has to do with the Lord's own people! Jesus said he would cast the spiritual fornicators of the church age into great tribulation, unless they repented. What do you suppose would be the purpose of the great tribulation? Why, bless your heart, would it not be to influence and motivate them to repent! And then John sees a great multitude that has come out of great tribulation. A wonderful transformation has taken place in them through the process of the great tribulation. They have now "washed their robes" and have "made them white in the blood of the Lamb." They were already God's people, and were not now washed from the filth of the flesh they walked in before they were saved, rather, they were washed from the defilement of religion and religious systems! As a result of their going through that great tribulation, God's purpose was accomplished in their lives. Cleansed and purified by the Lamb, they were transformed and brought very near to His throne of love, grace, and power.

Let us understand clearly just who these white-robed saints of God are! They are the redeemed of God who have washed their robes from the defilement of the false doctrines, empty rituals, fleshly methods and carnal programs of the church systems of man. White robes in the book of Revelation denote "the righteous acts of the saints" (Rev. 19:8). It is the righteousness of Christ with which they are clothed, resulting in righteous, truly spiritual acts manifested out of their lives upon this earth. All of them have endured the strippings, purgings, prunings, threshings, refinings, and purifying dealings of God and have been thoroughly chastened and corrected by the Father. They are seen coming out of this great tribulation clothed in the white robes of Christ's righteousness and waving palm branches of victory and praise to God! They are a righteous people, and they are a joyful, praising people! The Lord has led them through the processings of His Spirit, which made them pure and righteous in God's sight while they walk this earth in the midst of worldly sin and religious corruption. These are the ones "coming out" of "the great tribulation" having their robes washed in the blood of the Lamb! Praise God! It is His own harvest! How many are there? "A great multitude that no man could number." It is the "great" tribulation because of the "great" multitude! No man can experience more than his own tribulation. This "great tribulation" has lasted throughout the two thousand years since Christ came and began to form His body in the earth. All through the age He has called out people after people, company after company, from the apostate church systems of their day, and now, praise His name, there is a great multitude that no man can number!

It should be obvious to every spiritual mind that the great multitude that no man can number is not the same company as the 144,000 that can be numbered. Not that 144,000 is a literal number, but it is the number of divine government ascribed to a select called and chosen company who reign with Christ upon His throne. As the spirit of revelation and understanding floods our minds, we are left without question as to the meaning of all this. Notice, now, the position of God's kings and priests. To him that overcometh to be a son of God is granted to sit with Christ in His throne, even as Jesus overcame and is set down with His Father in His throne. (Rev. 3:21; 21:7) The manchild is caught up to God and to His throne and rules all nations with a rod of iron. (Rev. 12:5) The 144,000 stand with the Lamb on mount Zion. (Rev. 14:1)

To correctly unlock this term, "mount Zion," we need to go back and consider the shadow. Israel was the whole nation; Jerusalem, the capital city. And while Jerusalem comprised all the governmental class, yet in Jerusalem there was only one who, with his household, dwelt on mount Zion. He was the king! His was the highest pinnacle of glory attainable. But that Zion was only a shadow of the true and heavenly mount Zion to which we are come. (Heb. 12:22) And of this mount Zion the Spirit testifies, "For the Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it." (Ps. 132:13-14) David was king over natural Israel. Christ is king over spiritual Israel. David dwelt on the natural mount Zion. Therefore Christ dwells on the spiritual Zion! And this spiritual Zion is composed of those who have reached the very highest pinnacle attainable in Jerusalem: those who, like king Saul of old, are head and shoulders above all others: those who have followed their Lord all the way from mount Calvary to mount Zion! By way of a modern example, the city of Washington, D.C. today is the seat of our government, yet the White House is the highest pinnacle one can attain in Washington. The man who dwells there, like David of old, has reached the very highest pinnacle of power and rulership attainable in the natural. In like manner, the spiritual mount Zion is the "little remnant," the manchild, the 144,000, the kings and priests, the ones who have attained

the highest pinnacle of majesty in the spiritual realm and sit with Christ upon His throne! Though there is a great multitude on different levels of the governmental realm in the heavenly city of God, yet only the kings of the kingdom sit upon the throne and reign from the heavenly mount Zion!

You will notice especially that the overcomer sits on Christ's throne. The manchild rules the nations from the throne of God. The 144,000 reign with the Lamb from the heavenly mount Zion. The "great multitude," however, are not "on" the throne — they are "before" the throne of God and of the Lamb! Neither do they "reign," but they "serve" God day and night in His temple, and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They are a blessed company indeed! They are the vast multitudes of the redeemed out of the age who have walked with God in a pure walk in the Spirit. And, while they are a redeemed and sanctified and spiritual people, they are not the sons of God who reign with Christ upon His throne. They have not taken the spiritual steps that cause them to fully grow, mature, and progress all the way in God to become kings and priests. They have not attained to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Yet, they are the Lord's own people, precious in His eyes! He who sits on the throne of the Lord — Christ and His many brethren — dwells among them; they dwell in the wonderful, rewarding, sustaining presence of the King of kings and the Lord of lords!

"Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither shall they thirst any more; neither shall the sun (the illumination of the outer court) light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall FEED THEM, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." (Rev. 7:15-17) Blessings are lavished upon this holy people who have "come out of great tribulation" and have "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

No saint of God can escape the Great Tribulation! You will not be raptured out before it comes, for it is already here! It is not some horrible judgment of vindictive wrath and unrestrained vengeance poured out upon the nations, my friend; it is God's own process of discipline and purification for ALL WHOM HE IS REDEEMING AND TRANSFORMING INTO HIS IMAGE AND LIKENESS!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 19 IN THE SPIRIT ON THE LORD'S DAY

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART NINETEEN

"I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia." (Rev. 1:10-11)

Every word of the book of Revelation is freighted with divine significance. Each individual word, when studied with understanding, is a key to the message of the book. Each word has a spiritual meaning and is an expression of the language of God. No word in this book means what the carnal mind thinks it means, but each word, when illuminated by the spirit of revelation, unlocks something of the mysteries of God in the understanding of the spiritual mind. Then you understand how important each word is!

The book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ has been, by the carnal mind, a book of intimidation, browbeating, threatening, tyranny, terror, and disquietude; a book of ignorance, bewilderment, perplexity, and confusion. And yet, when understood by the spirit, it is by far the most inspirational, instructional, and kingdom impartational book in all the scriptures! I have never been more helped, had more questions answered, and got a world view and a kingdom view of my life, and the outworking of God in creation, than through the opening within my spirit of the truth of the book of Revelation.

For centuries the book of Revelation has held an interest for everybody from prophets to ditch diggers. After one fashion or another, all have believed that the book held within it the spiritual meaning behind events happening in the world. Many and varied have been the predictions and prophetic outlines based upon the things found written in this text. In every case, however, given enough time, the forecasts of the most noted teachers, and would-be prophets, have been proven wrong. This is not because all were false prophets, evil men, or deceivers, but rather it demonstrates just how difficult a task it is to interpret a writing as complex and filled with symbolism as the book of Revelation. It simply cannot be done with the natural mind!

Why are there so many different interpretations of the book of Revelation? There are three primary systems of interpretation in the church systems known as the Preterist, the Historicist, and the Futurist schools of thought. The Preterist view teaches that the whole book was fulfilled in A.D. 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem and the ending of the Old Testament law, priesthood, and sacrificial system. According to this view every mention in the New Testament of the "last days" and "end time" refers to the cataclysmic events that brought the end of the Old Testament era and order, and the establishment of the new spiritual order of the church age. Others subscribe to the Historicist interpretation, viewing the Revelation as a symbolical history of events throughout the church age, from the days of the apostles all the way down to the end of the church age. These see in the symbols of the Revelation events such as the rise of the Papacy, the Holy Roman Empire, the scourge of Islam, the Protestant Reformation, The French Revolution, and many other things. Most evangelical Christians today embrace the newest of the three schemes — Futurism. The Futurist theory teaches that the entire book of Revelation, from chapter four on, is yet future, to be fulfilled during a seven-year period of "Great Tribulation" at the end of the church age. In addition, there are hundreds of differing applications of the symbols and events within each of these three schools of thought!

Why so many views? I think the answer to this question is illustrated in a little story I read. Three people were visiting and viewing the Grand Canyon — an artist, a pastor, and a cowboy. As they stood on the edge of that massive abyss, each one responded with a cry of exclamation. The artist said, "Ah, what a beautiful scene to paint!" The minister cried, "What a wonderful example of the handiwork of God!" The cowboy mused, "What a terrible place to lose a cow!" And then Haddon Robinson tells the story of a Colorado resident who moved to Texas and built a house with a view of hundreds of miles of range land. "The only problem is," he said, "there's nothing to see." At about the same time a Texan moved to Colorado and built a house overlooking the

Rockies. "The only problem is," he said, "I can't see anything. The mountains are in the way." The story is also told of a mole that once pushed its head out of the ground and said to a bird who was swinging and singing on the branch above it: "What are you making such a noise about?" Said the bird: "Oh, the sunshine, the trees, the grasses, the shining stream, and the white clouds on the mountainside. The world is full of beauty!" "Nonsense," said the mole; "I have lived in this world longer than you have, and I have gone deeper into it. I have traversed it and tunneled it, and I know what I am talking about, and I tell you there is nothing in it but fishing worms."

The lesson in each of these stories will cause us to stand assured of this fact: WHAT ONE SEES DEPENDS UPON WHERE HE SEES IT FROM! Everyone has his particular vantage point, perspective, position, or frame of reference. It has become my experience, however, that in order to comprehend, at least in part, the infinite depths and majestic heights of truth revealed in the book of Revelation, we must leave the customary paths trodden by natural learning and intellectual effort, to explore the realms hitherto kept secret, and walk the avenues where man's spirit has seldom soared. If we now insist that all revelation and illumination of truth must be judged by the narrowness of our past tradition, better far it is that we turn our back now on all illumination and light that comes by the Spirit and join those tradition-ridden Pharisees who could never believe that Jesus spoke aught but blasphemy when He declared in the certainty of divine wisdom, "Before Abraham was, I AM." The book of Revelation is a book that defies the wisdom of man! The natural man can never understand the things of God! Whatever viewpoint we take that originates from any pinnacle of human intellect, from any compartment of the imagination, from any kind of speculation of the carnal mind, or from the musty traditions of man's religious creeds, will completely miss the view from the lofty heights of the spirit of truth! Awe-inspiring truth fills the pages of the Revelation and it is certain none could ever understand them but by the Holy Spirit!

The book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ will never be plumbed by the human intellect! Someone has asked, "Was there not a key sent with the book, and has this been lost? Was it thrown into the Aegean Sea?" "No!" answers the Spirit of Truth. The key was sent along with the book, and it has been allowed to lie rusty and unused, while all kinds of false keys and picklocks have been tried, and tried in vain, until men have come to look upon the book as an unintelligible enigma, only meant to puzzle and confuse. But the true key has all along been visible enough! And the attention of men has been loudly called to it! It is Christ who is giving the revelation. The revelation is of Christ and by Christ. Christ is the author as well as the content of the revelation. These things man can never know unless they are revealed! No human wisdom could foreknow these mysteries; no human mind could understand them. "Who do men say that I am?" Jesus asked His disciples. They answered first one and then another. "But whom do you say that I am?" Peter responded with that immortal answer, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!" And Jesus said, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven — in the realm of the Spirit!" In like manner, we have heard what men say the Revelation means. Now it is high time to hear what the Spirit says it means!

John was in the Spirit in the day of the Lord when he received the revelation! The Spirit was his vantage point, his perspective, his position, his frame of reference. So many are looking today in the natural for the events of this book to come to pass, but John was in the Spirit when he saw the vision, and he was in the Spirit when he wrote the book — he wasn't in the natural! He was in a realm beyond the natural, and beholding events in a realm beyond the natural. These things are written in a language that only the spiritual mind can understand! A natural mind produces a natural concept. It should be obvious that only a person who knows French is able to read a book written in French. A Frenchman is the most likely person in the world to understand the most difficult treatise in the French language. In the same way, the book of Revelation was written in the Spirit, out of the mind of the Spirit, in the language of the Spirit, and it requires a spiritual unfoldment to understand it! Only the man who lives and walks in the Spirit can receive from it. You must be a citizen of the land — the heavenlies — where the language of the book is known. You must read and understand it in the language in which it was written — not the Greek language, but the language of the Spirit of God! We must be quickened by the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God for the message to be comprehended. A spiritual book must be spiritually discerned!

No word given to a prophet from the Lord by the Holy Spirit can be truthfully understood or interpreted unless the same spiritual understanding is given to the reader by the Holy Spirit that gave it originally to the prophet. God's elect in this hour is being given the ability to "Hear what the Spirit saith," and it is the same anointing

wherein it was spoken and written. The book of Revelation, like any other part of the scriptures and prophecies, must be "spiritually" understood. Understanding came to the disciples of Jesus when He "opened unto them the scriptures." Before that their natural understanding was unfruitful. They didn't have a clue! They read all the scriptures and never saw Jesus there until He "opened" the scriptures to them. And it wasn't a doctrine, it was spiritual illumination that burst forth within their hearts!

The term "in the Spirit" is much more profound than it appears in the English translation. The Greek expression means "to become" or "became." What John relates here is that he became in Spirit or came to be in Spirit. He received an entrance into a realm that was much deeper and more intense than his world of outer consciousness — beyond the material realm. He came into the realm of heaven, the omnipresent dimension of Spirit. Heaven is the home of all spiritual and celestial beings — not a geographical or astral location, but a dimension of life, mind, consciousness, being, and reality. The purpose of the Revelation is to reveal to us what takes place when one enters into the realm of the Spirit, to live and move and have his being in the Spirit. When we enter into this new realm we experience new things happening to us. These things have repercussions, effects, and manifestations in our outer man!

Many years ago Albert Hughes penned the following words of keen spiritual insight: "The vision will be understood only by the spiritual man. The natural man will meet with many difficulties as he seeks to know the book. No human intellect or natural ability will be sufficient. Only the spiritually discerning will ever discern. The book has a language all its own, a language fully foreign except to those whose conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour. Only those in whose mind is the light of glory will ever understand these sublime symbols, this precious phraseology. Only in the Spirit is such triumph possible! Physically, John was in Patmos; spiritually, he was in the fullness of the Holy Spirit! That which John experienced at Patmos was something beyond his conversion. It was a new consciousness, a complete communion. He was in tune and in touch with the infinite so that it was with the most perfect ease that God revealed His plans!

"John was a translated man, a transformed man. Only the Spirit can do this! When this takes place in any life, we hear and see things not possible at any other time. John was told to write what he heard and saw, a most difficult task indeed! And to get others to believe you when you do write, is even more difficult. For nearly two thousand years, men have been disputing concerning what John wrote. How can men who have never seen and heard, judge the writings or the discourses of those who by the Spirit have both seen and heard? The book is a mystery certainly, but not a mystery which cannot be understood. It is a revealed mystery, revealed to those who have been enlightened. This mystery can never be known by the natural man, with all his natural powers, but it is a mystery which is blessed to those whose minds and hearts have been touched by the Divine Spirit. May that Spirit who makes all revelation understood, come to us (in consciousness) and make plain this Word, this Voice, this Vision, this Personality. May we meet with Him who was dead, but is alive again, until He makes us glad with the joy of His countenance, until our faces are lighted with the light of His eternal glory, until our hearts burn within us with the fullness of His reality, leading us ever onward and upward until we see Him face to face, and become like Him by seeing Him as He is" — end quote.

John was in the Spirit when he received the great Revelation of Jesus Christ! Now that sounds like a mystical term. But everybody has a spirit. We are not human beings trying to be spiritual; we are spiritual beings in a human body! Spiritual realities seem so foreign to many of the Lord's people because of the dominance of the flesh. The carnal mind is so busy "carnalizing" the word of God which is spirit and life that it thinks that spirit and life is "spiritualizing" things that were meant to be natural! We must enter with our spirit into His Spirit to grasp the depths of this book! While the hand of John was used to write the visions and revelations he received, only the Holy Spirit fully understands and can impart what John saw and wrote unto us. In our human frame we can only see the letter, the outward form of the visions John saw, and our natural mind is without understanding.

The folly of trying to interpret spiritual realities with the carnal mind is illustrated by a humorous story that is told about a Popish and Jewish debate. According to the story, in the middle ages, the Pope decided that all the Jews had to leave the city of Rome. Naturally, there was a big uproar from the Jewish community. So the Pope made a deal. He would have a theological debate with any person selected by the Jewish community. If their representative won, the Jews could stay. If the Pope won, the Jews would have to leave Rome forever.

The Jews realized they had no choice. They looked around for a learned champion who could defend their faith, but no one was willing to volunteer. No one felt that they could equal the Pope's vast knowledge and overwhelming eloquence. Finally they picked a man to represent them — an old rabbi named Moishe who had become half-witted and spent his life sweeping the synagogue. Being old and slightly addled, he thought he had less to lose, and he agreed. He asked only for one condition for the debate. Not being an eloquent man like the Pope, and not being proficient in Latin, he asked that neither side be allowed to talk. The Pope agreed.

The day of the great debate came. Moishe and the Pope sat opposite each other for a full minute without making a move. Then the Pope raised his hand and showed three fingers. Moishe looked back at him sadly, shook his head, and raised one finger. The Pope waved his arms in a circle around his head. Moishe pointed to the ground where he sat. The Pope pulled out a wafer and a glass of wine. Moishe pulled out an apple.

The Pope stood up and said, "I give up. This man is too good. The Jews can stay." An hour later, the cardinals eagerly gathered around the Pope to find out what happened. The Pope said, "I've never met a man with such keen spiritual and theological insight. No matter what I said, he had an answer that reminded me of how little I know. First I held up three fingers to assert that God was to be found through the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He responded by holding up one finger to remind me that, even though He has manifested Himself in three ways, there is still only one God, and we both know His name. Then I waved my arms around me to show him that the greatness of God is written in the heavens. He responded by pointing to the ground, reminding me that God was in the midst of us through the presence of the Holy Spirit. I pulled out the sacramental wine and wafer to show him that God's Son absolves us from our sins. He pulled out an apple to remind me that God has been dealing with sin as far back as the Garden of Eden. He had an answer for everything! I cannot ask people with such deeply spiritual leadership to leave Rome. They can stay!"

Meanwhile, the Jewish community had crowded around Moishe, amazed that this old, almost feeble-minded man had done what all their young, eloquent scholars had insisted was impossible! "What happened?" they asked. "Well," said Moishe, "first he said to me that the Jews had three days to get out of town. I told him that not one of us was leaving. Then he told me that this whole city would be cleared of Jews. I let him know that we were staying right here." "And then?" asked a woman. "I don't know," said Moishe. "He took out his lunch and I took out mine, and it was all over."

The natural mind is just as inept at understanding the language of the Spirit, as Moishe and the Pope were at understanding one another's sign language in this story! When the things of God are interpreted by carnal reasoning and human intellect, only foolishness and confusion can result. We have already noticed that John was "in the Spirit" when the Voice spoke to him, and only when we get into the "same Spirit" can we understand the things he saw and recorded. The same Spirit that wrote the book must also interpret it! And when we see it in the Spirit, the truths therein have much more meaning and significance for us at this time. As members of God's Christ, our walk is seen in the book of Revelation, including our full deliverance and victory over the flesh, sin, the devil, sorrow and death. As we are coming to understand in the Spirit and by the Spirit the book ministers to our spirit encouragement, inspiration, understanding, wisdom, power and life! When the Revelation is studied by the natural intellect, it kills. When the Revelation is studied in the Spirit, it brings life. All teaching from God must come by the Spirit! Once we catch but a glimpse of these heavenly and divine truths and supernal glories in the Spirit, we are never again satisfied with the simple-minded mythologies that have been passed to us through so many pulpits and so-called experts over the past hundreds of years. As we walk in the Spirit we peruse the pages of this book with a sense of destiny and the certain knowledge that God is really going somewhere with all that has happened, is happening, and will happen in the future!

The seven trumpets, for example, are a striking spiritualization of the plagues the Lord sent upon Egypt in the book of Exodus. As we look at these plagues we see that they are likened unto the literal plagues upon Egypt, but we know that the book of Revelation is a spiritual book of spiritual truths and spiritual experiences to be perceived and received only by the Spirit. Can we not see by this that the spiritual plagues come upon the spirit of Egypt within each of us to bring the release of our spirit from the dominance of the carnal mind that we may march out of the bondage of the flesh and enter into the full realization of our inheritance in our promised land — Christ! Is that truth not infinitely more blessed and meaningful than literal plagues falling on the nations of earth! Truly these plagues bring THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST!

That is why the Lord Jesus repeats seven times the admonition, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith!" Those are the same significant words Jesus always spoke on earth when He gave a parable with a deep spiritual meaning. Only the spiritual mind could understand it! None of the learned elders, scribes, lawyers, rabbis, Pharisees or Sadducees could "get it"! They missed it every time, just like Moises and the Pope, and went away shaking their heads in confusion. Once we are spiritually familiar with the message of books like Zechariah, Ezekiel, and Isaiah we're not afraid of terms like blood, locusts, fire, and all the graphic illustrations by which God shows us the spiritual dynamics of what He is doing.

In like manner, John by the Spirit gives us graphic depictions of the spiritual dynamics of the process by which the kingdom of God comes to pass in our lives and in the earth. But these are entirely missed by the carnal understanding! You look at the stars at night and they appear as so many little twinkling dots in the heavens. But with a telescope you can zero in on them and captivate the depths of what is out there, and it becomes evident that their glory far exceeds what the naked eye can perceive. In the book of Revelation God is giving us a behind-the-scenes, backstage, spiritual view of the drama of the processes of His dealings in the lives of His people.

The plagues of Egypt were sent upon the kingdom and people that held God's people, Israel, in bondage. The plagues in the book of Revelation are, therefore, related to God's spiritual people — for the message is sent to the church! It is Jesus talking to His body! The plagues in the book of Revelation represent those dealings God sends into our lives to break the bondage of Egypt, the spirit of this world, the controlling of the flesh, the dominance of the soul, the ruling of the carnal mind! God is breaking the power of every kingdom within that rules us, usurping the life of the spirit. Our Father is bringing us out of our Egyptian bondage by a mighty and an outstretched hand! And what mighty shakings, earthquakes, and cataclysms take place in our earth as He does this! He is bringing us "out" in order to bring us "in" to the fullness of our inheritance in Christ!

Charles Weller shared the following story, which he attributed to Des Walter, from Australia. There was a man from a very primitive country that came to the USA. He had no knowledge of the technology that was about him, not even how a car would work. He was given keys to a car to use in his travels across the country. But everyone took it for granted that he was a driver, so no one explained how the car worked, except to say that the car would make his traveling faster and easier. In the morning he proceeded with the keys to the car. He figured out how to get in and put the keys in the ignition. He played with the steering wheel, adjusted the seat, stepped on the pedals, but nothing happened! After considerable waiting, he got out of the car and started pushing it. It was very hard work.

Finally, he came to a hill and jumped in the car as it quickly sped down the hill. He was gaining speed and believed that surely this is what the man meant when he gave him the keys to the car, assuring him that it would make his trip much faster. But the car stopped at the bottom of the hill, and there was a hill to go up which required great effort. He was about to abandon the car when a stranger, who had seen the whole thing, came by to talk with him. The man laughed a little, listening to the plight of the man and with loving eyes said, "Let me show you how it works." He showed the man the engine and what it could do. Then told the man to get in the car and let the engine do the work. The stranger was right and the man was carried away by the power and might of the engine.

You see, beloved, the real "key" to the car was in knowing how it worked! And there is a "key" to the book of Revelation! Like the poor man in the story we have been playing and fiddling with it, trying to figure it out; but there is a wonderful "key" that opens it up and makes it work! That key is not a system of interpretation, not a method of analysis. The key is the illumination of the Holy Spirit! If you try to play football by basketball rules, you will wind up in confusion and chaos. It can't be done! Somebody gave us the wrong rules about a hundred and fifty years ago and told us we are playing basketball when we are playing football. We've been trying to play football by basketball rules! We've been trying to understand the book of Revelation by the rules of the carnal mind, by human understanding, by other prophetic books of the Old Testament, by outward world events, when the game-plan of the book is spiritual and internal! So we force this book to fit into concepts that we have been taught, and we have had to speculate, conjecture, surmise, imagine, assume, and theorize about the incredible events John saw, trying to make them fit into the rules of this natural world, when all the

time it is heavenly things that are being revealed! John never saw a thing until he was caught up IN THE SPIRIT INTO THE HEAVENLIES! The Lord is giving His elect in this hour a shift in our perception, we have been crying out mightily to God to deliver us from every inherited tradition, and He is enabling us to start all over again in the Spirit until we see the glory of God's Christ in every chapter and line of the Revelation!

"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (I Cor. 2:12-14)

We can find a parable of this in modern science. There are whole ranges of color, the scientist tells us, which our physical eyes cannot perceive. True, we can see all the colors of the rainbow, ranging from red at the one end of the spectrum to violet at the other. But now we are assured that this is only a comparatively small fraction of the colors which really exist; that beyond the red rays at one end of the spectrum there are the infra-red, beyond the violet are the ultra-violet, and out beyond these again whole unimaginable reaches of color which we never see at all, because our eyes as at present constituted cannot get hold of them. In short, what we do see is only a tiny segment of the whole! If this is true of our physical eyes, is it not also true of the inner eye of the spirit? In days past, in our babyhood walk in God, we apprehended something of eternal spiritual realities; we have seen, even if through a glass darkly, something of the marvel of the kingdom of God and the beauty of the King! But our past spiritual spectrum — how poor a fraction of the whole! And beyond the best insights we have had in this dark, shadowed existence of time and flesh and limitation and tradition and religious teachings of the old-order church systems of man, what reaches of glory are now being opened for us in that higher world of the kingdom of heaven! All our questions are being answered here, line upon line, precept upon precept, as the Father teaches us by His Spirit the mysteries of His purposes!

Consider now, though one might study and search forever, trying to figure out the enigma of the symbols of this wonderful book of Revelation, he would never arrive at the correct interpretation, for the carnal man sees through carnal eyes, and having eyes he sees not, neither does he understand. There is therefore only one word of advice I can give. Do not try by much study to figure out the marvelous mysteries of God's word, but CONCENTRATE ON CHRIST. HE is the truth, and beside HIM there is no truth! Our knowledge of God and the things of God depend entirely upon where we look. Paul penned these words to the saints in Colosse and they are just as true today as they were two millennia ago: "IN HIM are HID all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3). Christ Himself is the great treasure house where all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are concealed and stored up. IN HIM, and in Him alone, are to be found all the rich blessings and mighty powers and celestial realities which wisdom and knowledge bestow! This book is about the revelation of Jesus Christ — but we will neither discover nor experience that unveiling by applying the human intellect to the written words of this book. We can only see, know, and experience His unveiling within ourselves through intimacy of fellowship and vital union WITH CHRIST! It is only in the Spirit and by the Spirit that we can see Him and know Him. The Revelation is ultimately not a book — it is the experiencing of the very person and life of Jesus Christ within ourselves!

The book of Job is a book of deep spiritual revelation. The natural man can never understand the things of God! This truth is proclaimed in **Job 32:8** wherein we read, "There is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding." Inspiration — that doesn't speak of just a mental state, it speaks of emotion, passion, quickening, illumination, interior thinking. God is in-spiring His sons! People wonder sometimes where we get our ideas from and the depth of understanding of God's word and purpose. We're inspired! I'm not talking about myself, I speak of all the elect of God who see and hear by the Spirit! You could never discover these truths by study, although study is a part of the process. The truth must appear to us in our spirits as something we see, know and understand beyond our senses, beyond the mind, beyond the seeing of the eye or the hearing of the ear. The truth appears out of the rolling discourse of God's voice within us! That is inspiration! It is the in-breathing of God and the understanding and knowledge imparted out of His very spirit within us. The things we write and speak are inspired by heavenly light! They do not originate out of any part or aspect of the earthen vessel, but purely and completely out of the treasure within the vessel.

We have often missed the truth because we relied on our intellect to interpret to us the scriptures, instead of looking to the Teacher sent from God, to do His work, and perform His ministry. Even Spirit-filled Christians depend mostly on commentaries and books by the hundreds, written by men, and often men void of the Holy Spirit, as their source of information and understanding of the scriptures, and the spirit of truth is relegated to a back room in their minds, and rarely consulted about anything the scriptures have to say. God's called out elect, who are walking in the Spirit in this new day of the Lord, have reinstated Him to His proper position and allow Him to fulfill the ministry He came to do. Now don't think I am against books. I am not. I have quite a large library myself! I use books. If I were opposed to writings I would not be sending out this article. Many people have been helped by what is written, but far too many saints think that through Bible study, and by searching the scriptures alone, they can come to an understanding of the things of God, and acquire a knowledge of the truth. But if we are really studying the Bible, in the light of inspiration and revelation, this is what we will find, for this is what the Bible teaches: apart from the revelation of the indwelling Spirit, there is no way that we can search out, nor understand, the things of God and His ways!

Hear what the inspired apostle said: "O the depths of riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God, how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out." (**Rom. 11:33**) How can we ever search out the unsearchable, or find that which is past finding out? Ah, it is the mind of man that is unable to search out and find out the things of God! It is impossible by human means or methods, but not impossible with God, for with Him nothing is impossible. There is a way, His way, and that is by the working of the indwelling Spirit of Truth!

The sons of God today are putting on a new mind, even the mind of Christ! Every son of God is relinquishing, abandoning, signing away, repudiating, disclaiming, and renouncing their own human, carnal mind! The eye is the figure of knowledge and understanding. The apostle Paul penned these meaningful words: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." (**Eph. 1:17-18**) The phrase, "the eyes of your understanding," reveals that spiritual sight or spiritual understanding is an ability or function of the mind. Without mind there can be no understanding! A man's understanding corresponds precisely to the condition, development, or quality of his mind.

Every created life form possesses mind and the understanding of the creature is limited by the quality of its mind. Quality of mind is, basically, an inherited characteristic. For instance, a cat thinks like a cat, knows as a cat, understands as a cat, and acts like a cat because it was born a cat, therefore possessing the brain and mind of a cat. We used to have a cat in our home. I noticed that this cat would come and sit in the living room while I watched the evening television news. While I am very interested in news, the cat had absolutely no interest at all! He couldn't care less! It is not that he didn't see the pictures flashing across the screen. He saw them, all right, but he didn't understand them, so he just curled up on the carpet and went to sleep. Politics, economics, weather, murders, war, terrorism — none of this had any meaning to him whatsoever. It is simply impossible for cats to understand things human! Humans are of a different and higher order than cats. Cats may see men, and observe their movements, yet there is no common ground of knowledge. The cat has no comprehension of what it sees. It discerns only things pertaining to its own realm. It has positively no understanding of the ways of man, or of the meaning of his movements, or the significance of his words, or of the intent of his actions. Cat minds function on the level of cat nature, while human minds function on the level of human nature.

In like manner, God is of a different and higher order of life and nature than are humans. The mind of man functions on the level of human nature, whereas the mind of God functions on the level of divine nature. There is no common ground of knowledge or understanding between the two! Therefore, the natural man is totally incapable of comprehending that which pertains to the realm of God. For natural minds to comprehend things spiritual is equally as impossible as for cats to understand things human. And so, until humans receive of God's Spirit, the Spirit that knows and understands the things that pertain to God, it is impossible for them to have any understanding, either of God, or of His word, or of His will, or of His ways. With what truth did Paul write to the Corinthians: "For who could really understand a man's inmost thoughts except the spirit of man

himself? How much less could anyone understand the thoughts of God except the very Spirit of God? We have now received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit of God Himself, so we can understand something of God's generosity towards us." (I Cor. 2:11-12, Moffatt)

And then after men receive the Spirit of God, the depth of their knowledge and understanding is wholly in proportion to the measure of the indwelling Spirit and the growth and maturity of the mind of the Spirit within them. Jesus was a man, but God was in Him! "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." (Col. 2:9) He grew in stature and in favor with God and man until He received the Spirit of the Father without measure. (Jn. 3:34) In Christ dwells all the fullness of God! And therefore He had and has all the discernment and knowledge and understanding of heaven! But we faltering mortals cannot claim what Christ possessed until we have grown up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, conformed to His image, transformed into His likeness. We, upon being born again, regenerated, our spirit quickened by His Spirit, awoken to our identity as actual sons of God, yet babes: "Babes in Christ." And the understanding of newborn babes, spiritual though they may be, the offspring of God though they are, is limited in the extreme! They cannot have a deep knowledge or comprehension until they have been filled with the mind of God; until they have grown to spiritual maturity, the spiritual mind being fully developed within them!

We will never, in this age, be fully able to comprehend the boundless power of the mind of man. The natural mind, though it understands not the things of the Spirit, is capable of astonishing wonders! All the marvelous inventions of the world have proceeded from the mind of man, yet the natural mind receives not any of the things of God! As heaven is higher than earth, so are God's ways higher than man's, and God's thoughts higher than man's. The man who receives of God's life is renewed in the spirit of his mind; that is, he takes on a new mind originating in the new spirit-life, so that he thinks and acts as an entirely new creation, a new man, a new kind of creature. As he follows on to know the Lord he finds that his darkened mind completely gives way to this new creation mind, which is the MIND OF JESUS CHRIST. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," Paul admonishes. The mind that was in Jesus was the Father's mind! It is like a brain transplant. If surgeons today were able to take out your brain and transplant mine into you, you would become, in spite of a different body, — ME! You see, all my accumulated experience, knowledge, and wisdom, or lack thereof, would be transferred to you! Because He was fully possessed of His Father's mind, Jesus was able to say, "I and the Father are one." "I speak as my Father speaks." "It is not I that doeth the works, but my Father who dwelleth in me." The mind that was in Christ Jesus is freely given to every man who believes into His name that he might be one with Christ and one with the Father.

Let us never forget that in those glorious ages to come it will be the mind of our heavenly Father that will rule the universe. The Father has decreed that He will rule the universe by HIM whom He has chosen; and those sons, the many-membered Son, every one will be possessed with the Father's mind. As the hands and the feet of a healthy body act in harmony with the head, so every member among the sons of God act in harmony with the Head, even Jesus, because ONE MIND DWELLS IN THEM ALL!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 20 IN THE SPIRIT ON THE LORD'S DAY

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART TWENTY

THE LORD'S DAY THE VOICE OF A TRUMPET

"I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches, which are in Asia." (Rev. 1:10-11)

I've heard a lot of different definitions of what the Lord's Day is, and all the explanations I've heard lead me to believe that not very many people have been caught up in the Spirit. I have been caught up in the Spirit, and the things I saw and heard were the same realities I read in the book of Revelation! With the brush of the Holy Spirit and the paint of the word of God I hope to create a picture on the canvas of your understanding. The real world, the eternal world, the world that will never pass away, God's world, the kingdom that flesh and blood cannot inherit, can only be seen, touched, and experienced by the spirit man that you are. It is in the spirit that we connect with this invisible, divine, heavenly, eternal world!

"I John, was in the isle that is called Patmos...I was in the spirit on the Lord's Day." (Rev. 1:9-10) Praise God for that "in the isle," — "in the spirit"! Physically, John was in Patmos; spiritually, he was caught up into the heavens of God's Spirit! The "was" is from a Greek word which means "became" or "came to be." "I John, became in Spirit on the Lord's day." What do you suppose John was in before he was in the Spirit? Someone says, "Well, he must have been in the flesh!" No — I do not believe that John was in the flesh. Paul clearly tells us, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." (Rom. 8:9) The way this reads in the Greek is that as long as the Spirit of God is constantly dwelling, abiding, motivating, and controlling us, we are not in the flesh. I don't believe the beloved John was in the flesh! He was, however, in his soul.

The soul is the mind, will, emotion, and desire of man. John was in his own mind, his own will, his own emotion, and his own desires. There is nothing wrong with that! These were not ungodly or corrupt, but neither were they the Spirit of God or John's own spirit. We need to think spiritual sense about these things! The "flesh" is the realm of sin in my members. It is a lower realm than the soul. I am acting in my soul when I drive my car, chat with my neighbor, play with my grandchildren, or go to a concert. I am in no way acting fleshly — that is, out of a sinful nature. Now, if while driving my car I deliberately run someone down, or, if while chatting with my neighbor I lie to him or insult him, then I am in the flesh! But when I am doing very natural things I am not sinning. I am merely moving in my soul life. There is something wrong with walking after the flesh, for "the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like..." (Gal. 5:19-21)

To become "in the Spirit" is to ascend into a higher realm! It is to consciously rise from your soul into His Spirit, from your own mind into His mind, from your own thoughts into His thoughts, from your own will into His will, from your own emotions and desires into those of the Lord Himself. There is nothing wrong with playing with the grandchildren, going out to eat, attending a concert, feeling weary, or thinking about the work you must do tomorrow. Jesus hungered and thirsted, grew weary, worked in a carpenter shop, rode a donkey, and attended some very lavish banquets! When Jesus needed a piece of wood for a table He was building, He didn't pray, shake, speak in tongues, fall on the floor, and seek a vision for instructions about selecting the right board. That's why He had a soul — for the plane of natural, everyday living. I have met people who thought they had to "hear from God" before they could go to the store!

God gave us a mind fully capable of making such decisions and carrying out our normal physical, business, and social activities. He gave us emotions capable of enjoying love, beauty, music, travel, recreation, and many other things. But that is not the dimension of the spirit! It is possible, yea, desirable, to walk in both realms at the same time! It is by the soul that I drive my car, but I may also drive it in the spirit. Now if you find that difficult to believe, you should see the spirit some people drive their cars in! I have often done my business, social activities, and physical labors while at the same time being overwhelmed by the presence and power of God! I have walked into a store while caught up in a heavenly realm, and was still able to buy a loaf of bread and walk out again. No one knew I was in the Spirit except me! I have received revelations while brushing my teeth, but I didn't require a revelation to brush my teeth. You see the difference!

In the spirit there is a sensitivity to God, the sensation of life and light, the consciousness of His presence, the revelation of His voice and His will, and the reality of a higher state of being. Bennie Skinner told of a man who went into an office and the gentleman there had a plaque on his desk that said, KEEP LOOKING DOWN. The man said, "Sir, don't you have that saying backward — aren't we supposed to KEEP LOOKING UP?" The gentleman replied, "It depends on your perspective, on where you are. If you are living above the things of this world, if you are seated in the heavenlies, then you can keep looking down. But if you are burdened down, overwhelmed by earthly things, and walking in the lowlands of the flesh, then you must keep looking up!"

John came to be "in the Spirit." It is a blessed thing to be in the Spirit! God is making a spiritual man today! When God formed Adam of the dust of the ground, he became a living soul. Adam was sinless when he came from the hand of his Creator, and he lived and walked in the dimension of his soul. It is natural to live in the soul realm! It is not sinful or wicked — just natural. You don't have to do a thing to get into the soul realm. We were all born into this world in that realm! But Adam did have to do something to fall down into the flesh realm — he ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He disobeyed the word of the Lord to him! He partook of the fruit of a lower realm. He sinned! That is just the difference between "flesh" and "soul." You have to sink to a lower level to be in the flesh. In the flesh is a dark realm, a rebellious realm, a sinful realm, a wicked realm of selfhood, corruption, and unrighteousness.

The soul can be beautiful! What can be more beautiful than the innocence of a child, though they know nothing of the spirit? It is the soul that enjoys traveling to far-away places with strange-sounding names, quaint cultures, and exotic vistas. It is the soul that is moved by the strains of beautiful music, that stands transfixed before a colorful sunset or the majesty of mountain peaks. The soul may be lifted up to touch and partake of the high realms of the Spirit of God! In such a moment the sweet singer of Israel exulted, "Bless the Lord, O my soul!" And in the Magnificat the virgin of Galilee cried out, "My soul doth magnify the Lord!" The soul can also sink into the domain of the flesh and revel in base things, for "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." But the soul itself, of itself and by itself, is neither evil nor spiritual. It is just the soul. The soul is incomplete and seeks union. It finds union with either the flesh or the spirit! When it walks after the flesh, it dies. When it walks after the spirit, it lives!

"The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." (I Cor. 15:45) It is in conscious union with Christ that we become "in the Spirit." This was John's "rapture"! In this rapture John became a spirit-man. He became one who heard; one who turned; one who saw; one who became as dead; one who was quickened by the right hand of the One in the midst of the candlesticks. His own consciousness, life, identity and reality were swallowed up in the vision of Another! And the whole subsequent vision of the book of Revelation is in that holy Light!

THE LORD'S DAY

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day..." The whole church world today is waiting for the day of the Lord. And many in this word of the Kingdom are also waiting for the day of the Lord. But John wasn't waiting for the day of the Lord! He "became," or "came to be," as the Greek expresses it, in the day of the Lord! It seems to me that if John "became" in the day of the Lord two thousand years ago, you and I can "come to be" in the day of the Lord right now!

It was on or in the Lord's Day that John was in the Spirit. In the New Testament days the Roman emperor was deified and claimed to be God. The day that a man became the Roman emperor was called "The Emperor's Day." And all the time that the emperors reigned over the Roman empire the people of the empire were required to observe that day as "Emperor's Day" That was the day when the emperor was crowned. On that day the Romans acknowledged that "Caesar is Lord! Caesar is God!" But then the Christians came along and they refused to acknowledge the emperor as Lord, or as God. They said, "Jesus Christ is Lord! Jesus Christ is God! He has risen from the dead, He has ascended up far above all heavens, He has been given the name that is above every name, all power has been given unto Him in heaven and in earth, He has been exalted to sit on His Father's throne, He has been crowned as King of kings, and Lord of lords — King of the universe. Jesus Christ is King! Jesus Christ is Lord! This is the LORD'S DAY!" To know Christ in living reality and walk with Christ in the Spirit was to be in the Lord's Day!

Here is how John came to be in the day of the Lord. He says, "I became, or came to be, in the Spirit." It was "in the Spirit" that he was in the Lord's day! It is not by arriving at a date on the calendar, but by living and walking in the Spirit that we enter into and experience the day of the Lord! Many people are looking into the outer world to see the coming of the day of the Lord. They watch world events, calculate times and seasons which they imagine point to the signs of the approach of the day of the Lord, and study the prophecies of the Bible for an understanding of the ages so that they can recognize the day of the Lord. But it was only in the Spirit that John perceived that he was in the Lord's day. The day of the Lord is a realm above in the Spirit, and when we come to be in the Spirit we find ourselves in the day of the Lord!

Jesus lived in the Spirit. He always lived in the Spirit. He walked in the Spirit. He talked in the Spirit. He ate, drank, slept, worked, and ministered in the Spirit. Thus we plainly observe that all true spirituality is lived out in practicality. We're talking about a very practical daily walk! Ah, my beloved, do not childishly wait for goosebumps to tell you that you are in the Spirit! We can be in the Spirit without any goosebumps, feelings, or emotions of any kind. We can be in the Spirit while in the fire that has been heated seven times hotter. The three Hebrew children found themselves in the Spirit in the fiery furnace! Daniel knew what it was to be in the Spirit in the lion's den! Noah experienced being in the Spirit on an ark in the dark, swirling waters of the deluge! Jesus was in the Spirit hanging upon a cross on Golgotha's hill! John was in the Spirit on the rocky desolation of an isle called Patmos! Do you see it, my brother, my sister? Being in the Spirit has absolutely nothing to do with chills and thrills or electric currents running through our body. Singing, dancing, and shouting are no evidences of being in the Spirit! Loud and emotional preaching does not mean the preacher is in the Spirit. Being in the Spirit is not a feeling, not an emotion. It can be an emotion, but it may not always be a favorable emotion! I thank God for wonderful feelings and blessed experiences of all kinds. I will not turn any of them down! But that is not what it means to be in the Spirit!

If all hell breaks loose and my whole world crashes down around me, I am still in the Spirit as I walk in the stability and victory of the Christ within. John came to be in Spirit in the day of the Lord. He didn't come to be in flesh, moaning and groaning, demanding to know why God allowed this to happen to him. He knew he was a spirit-created man, he knew he was a son of God, he knew that he was destined of God. His exile to Patmos was not punishment for disobedience, it wasn't due to a lack of faith, it wasn't because he had failed God, and it wasn't that God had failed him. Oh, no! John was right in the center of God's will on that horrible island, and there he gave himself to be in Spirit. I'm sure he didn't feel very spiritual! He was hot and sweaty, he had no shave cream, no shower, no soap, no deodorant or toothbrush, no laundromat, and he was lonely and destitute. If he identifies with his flesh, he's a dead man! But he came to be in Spirit. With this scene filling our hearts perhaps we can approach with uplifted heads the heavenly wonders John saw that day on Patmos as he beheld things which carnal men can never understand. In the Spirit he was carried beyond the flesh, beyond the world of Patmos with its heat and flies and insects and scorpions and hopeless despair. In Spirit we see the invisible, hear the inaudible, and understand the incomprehensible! What man knoweth the things of God save the Spirit of God that is in him? In the Spirit we know the things of God, we see as God sees, understand as God understands, think as God thinks, speak as God speaks, act as God acts, and live as God lives. Oh, the wonder of it!

I now exhort all who read these truths to earnestly seek to live and move and have your being IN THE SPIRIT. These are things beyond the scope of the natural mind and beyond the power of the natural man. But there in

the Spirit you are a new creation, no longer of the earth earthy, but one Spirit with the Lord from heaven. There in the Spirit you stand no longer in the dark world of natural men who live and walk after the flesh; you stand no longer in the insipid realm of vain traditions, carnal programs, and wanton harlotry of the apostate church systems; but you stand in the light, wisdom, power, and glory of the DAY OF THE LORD!

The day of the Lord is not a date on the calendar. It doesn't begin one day and end another. It's not a twenty-four hour day, a seven-year day, neither is it a thousand-year day. The day of the Lord IS. "God IS LIGHT, and in Him there is no darkness." That is the day of the Lord! It is the illumination of the light of God. The day of the Lord is a condition that takes place within a people. It is the light, the understanding that begins to dawn in our consciousness that elevates our awareness of God and the dimension of Spirit. It is the understanding of the Almighty! It is the revelation of God's glory, majesty, will and purpose. In Genesis God called the light "day" and Jesus said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (Jn. 8:12) Then He said, "Ye are the light of the world!" (at. 5:14) And the apostle Paul by revelation added, "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children (offspring) of light, and the children (offspring) of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness." (I Thes. 5:4-5)

What is happening is that understanding is coming to us. Understanding is light! Paul prayed for the Ephesian saints that "the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." (Eph. 1:18) God's called and chosen elect in this hour is getting understanding! We're understanding God! We're understanding His Spirit, His ways, His will, His truth, His plan, His purpose, His heart — so the day of the Lord is dawning in us! The Day Star is arising in our hearts and the shadows and darkness are fleeing away in the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Never have we understood as we understand today! How we rejoice in this day, that our eyes can see the things they see, our ears hear the things they hear, and our hearts understand the things they understand! The veil has been torn from our minds and from our hearts, and with clarity we see God's great plan and purpose in the earth, in the elect, and in the universe! We see both sides of the veil — the great cloud of witnesses all around us there in the realm of the spirit, and the visible company of overcomers walking here in this world in flesh bodies. And God is moving in both realms, preparing for the manifestation of all His sons! The true nature of all things is becoming crystal clear! For us, the day of the Lord has dawned! And it has dawned because we have "come to be in Spirit!"

Just as day and night co-exist on earth side by side, so the day of the Lord and the gross darkness that covers the people co-exist side by side. Just as Americans walk in the brightness of the noon-day sun at the same time that Chinamen slumber in mid-night darkness, so there are both children of the day and children of the night in the world today. Some men walk in darkness while other men walk in light! They may dwell in the same house, work at the same job, or sit next to each other in a meeting. Some men abide in darkness while other men abide in light.

The day of the Lord neither begins nor ends. It simply IS. God has never known anything but the day that HE IS! It begins for us at that blessed moment when, quickened by the Spirit of God, it consciously dawns upon us, just as the natural day begins when we arise and greet the dawn. The fact is, it has been day somewhere on earth all the while the veil of darkness hung over us as a shroud. Day has nothing to do with time. It has nothing to do with dates. It has nothing to do with the calendar. It has nothing to do with the ages. It only has to do with your relationship to it! If someone asks when the day of the Lord begins, I cannot answer. If you can fly at the right speed in an airplane you can stay in the day all the time. The sun will never set! Traveling home from Europe Lorain and I were in the day for twenty hours. The day of the Lord IS. Yet almost all Christians in the church systems today are talking about when the day of the Lord is going to come. It will come when they arise from their carnal-minded delusions and begin to walk fast enough in the Spirit to STEP INTO IT! That is how John got there, and that is the only way any man will get there!

I do not believe that the day of the Lord is Saturday, or Sunday, or any other day of the week. Sunday is nowhere called "the Lord's day" in the scriptures — it is always called "the first day of the week." Yet, in nearly every book I have read on the book of Revelation, the author has said that John was "in the Spirit on Sunday!" The Lord's day is not a time period at all! The Lord's day is a state of being. As we become "light beings,"

illuminated by the light of God's glory from within, we truly become the light of the world — the day of the Lord! That is what the "unveiling" of Jesus Christ is all about! It is taking off the veil from the glory of the Christ raised up in the lives of His many brethren. That is in process right now! We are now being changed from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord! Christ is being formed in us! The kingdom of God is being established in that earth which we are! This, my beloved, is the Lord's Day!

Oh, we are seeing with such clarity today! The day of the Lord is a state of being that God's elect is entering into right now! Have you wondered why you are able to see the deep mysteries of the kingdom of God, while those about you are void of understanding? Have you questioned why the wonderful truths of reconciliation, sonship, and the kingdom of God burn brightly within your heart, while they are meaningless to other believers? Have you pondered why the great plan and purpose of God in this hour is so clear and obvious to you, whereas others reject it with hostility? I will tell you why! The day of the Lord has dawned in your land! The Sun of Righteousness has arisen and when you awaken in the Lord's day you can see all things as they really are. You are able to see backward and forward, for the Lord's day is an eternal day, having neither beginning nor ending, and in this day all things are revealed! For some strange reason it is difficult for men to believe that the day of the Lord is nothing more nor less than the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. They would rather have a date on the calendar, a time period with a beginning and end, than to have the glory of God within themselves! As we step into the Spirit in the day of the Lord something happens. Great and marvelous changes occur. There is divine activity that is taking place within us and out from us. Something is happening to us, something wonderful is happening in us, and marvelous things beyond our understanding are happening out of us! As we ascend in the Spirit all creation is being affected! The events in the outer world are not things that are "just happening." Heaven casts its shadow upon the earth, and the great spiritual things that are taking place within the heavenlies of God's sons are producing an effect in the earthlies. My brother and sister, there is a strange and wonderful thing happening today, and John saw it in Spirit while on Patmos. **"And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake."** (Rev. 8:3-5)

This is a scene in the heavenly temple of God, which we are! As the sweet odor of our prayers and praise and worship ascends before God from the golden altar within us — there is produced an effect! The prayers of the saints! The prayers, praise, and worship of God's elect in the heavenly realms of God's Spirit are not a useless exercise, they are part of God's cosmic purpose. Ah, we have missed the importance of our ministry unto God in the Spirit! We have thought prayer was for "getting things" from God, blessings and benefits for us and for our loved ones. That is part of it. But the spiritual priesthood ministry of God's elect in the heavenly temple of God which sheds itself in prayer, praise, and worship, is an important function in the redemptive and reconstructive and restorative purposes of God! There is a relationship between the decrees of God, the prayers of the saints, and the deliverance of creation. As our prayers and praise and worship ascend in the Spirit, the very coals from the altar that released the fragrance of the holy incense of our spiritual ministry is CAST INTO THE EARTH! The spiritual and divine fire of God, which takes a cold, hard substance (incense) and transforms it into a spiritual fragrance that wafts its way to the throne and brings pleasure to the very nostrils of God, is cast into the earth realm and mighty powers are released in the earthlies! There are voices as the word of the Lord is released, and thunderings as the power of God is manifested, and lightnings as the illumination of God flashes within the consciousness of men, and a great earthquake as the carnality of man, and the kingdoms of man, are shaken to their foundations. Oh, yes! The earth realm of our own life, and that of the world about us, is powerfully transformed by the activity of the Spirit that comes out of the heavens of our spiritual ministry in the heavenly temple of God! As God moves us to minister unto Him in the Spirit He is urging us to do what is necessary to enable things to happen in the way they are supposed to happen in the earth realm. As we pray, the fire from the censer of our lives is cast into the earth! That fire produces the day of the Lord! As we learn the holy purpose of our ministry in the high realm of the Spirit in these significant days, there comes that deep inner consciousness that somehow we are participating in a tableau and drama of history! We are bringing the day of the Lord upon the earth!

No man can get into the Spirit in the Lord's day and all things remain the same. In the glory of God the face of Jesus Christ is revealed! He becomes revealed more and more. This is where and how John saw the revelation of Jesus Christ — in the Spirit on the Lord's day! May God grant understanding to all who read these lines to see the great truth that the day of the Lord will increase and increase in intensity and scope until all darkness everywhere is illuminated and all shadows pass away. The day of the Lord shall come upon all men! In the day of the Lord the haughtiness of man is cast down, and the Lord alone is exalted. The day is surely coming when the nations shall walk in the light of this day and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honor into it. The tabernacle of God shall be with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God. This is true of God's elect today! But it shall be true for all men and all nations, and God shall wipe away the tears from all eyes, and in all God's vast universe there shall be no more sorrow, neither pain, nor crying, and there shall be no more death; for all the things of man's day shall pass away and all things shall be made new! And there shall be no night there. These words are true and faithful. (Rev. 21:3-5)

The firstborn sons of God are the day of the Lord, for upon them is risen the glory of the Lord, and they are the light of the world. Christ's presence is beginning to fill the whole earth and the glory of the Lord is risen upon a people. This is not a fancy or a fallacy, this is the sovereign work of God in the lives of those who have been called to this Day. This is the very truth, the very understanding as the Spirit has made it known unto His chosen people, that we might know the counsel of God for this very Day. Though multitudes continue to walk in darkness, the darkness of the world of the carnal mind and of the carnal religious systems of men, you shall walk in the Light! Many stubbornly cling to those things which are passing, to the former orders and moves of God that have ended, the relics of a former season of glory, but those whose hearts have responded to the call to sonship are taking hold of those things that are new. The former heavens are being rolled up like a scroll and set aside. There is a new order, a new heaven and a new earth for you today, saints of God! The sun has risen higher in the heavens and this Day is brighter than it has ever been!

Ascending in the Spirit we have stepped into the day of the Lord! We must go forth and lead the way for all who will follow. The day of the Lord begins with those who are enlightened, cleansed from all error, bondage, and carnality, and clothed upon with the glory of Christ's presence, mind, and nature. The day of the Lord begins with those who have eyes to see the true purposes of God for this hour, and commit themselves to walk therein. There is glory and power and rejoicing and praise ahead for those who walk in the light of this day of the Lord! This is the day of deliverance, not bondage. The bands are broken. Christ is conqueror! He reigns! We are not expecting the antichrist nor the great tribulation, for we have met the Christ, we have heard His heart, we have beheld His glory, and have been made one with His purposes. His hosts are invincible, and we are those hosts. Our coronation draws nigh. We are the city foursquare, the heavenly Jerusalem, and mount Zion where Jesus the King is ruling and reigning. The kingdom of God is within us! His glory overshadows us! His light emanates from us! Those who are born of this word of the kingdom are now standing on kingdom ground.

THE VOICE AS A TRUMPET

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet...and I turned to see the voice that spake with me." (Rev. 1:10,12)

No sooner was John in the Spirit in the Lord's Day, than he heard a voice behind him. It was the sound of the voice that gripped his attention. John responded to the voice and turned, was changed, to see the voice. The voice comes to turn us around, to change us! It will change our thoughts, our perceptions, our understanding, our purpose, our form, our substance, our very state of being. Hearing the voice did not cause him to get in the Spirit, but being in the Spirit John was able to hear the voice! Those around him who were not in the Spirit in the Lord's Day heard nothing.

This great voice, this majestic voice, this voice of power and authority was as the voice of a trumpet. Let us understand what a trumpet is. By the Spirit we understand why John reacted so swiftly to the voice as a trumpet, for the trumpet speaks of a prophetic tone in which the Lord appears in the midst of His people. John hears that prophetic tone in the Spirit! Many of us have heard that prophetic tone! There is a time in prayer, in

meditation, in waiting upon the Lord, in the moving of the Spirit, in the sovereign operations of God in our lives, when we become aware of the prophetic spirit, and in that prophetic spirit the Lord Himself is descending into our experience and speaking, unveiling something of Himself. It is beyond the letter of the word! It is beyond a mere blessing! It is the Lord Himself, and we hear a word in the Spirit that can only be heard in the Spirit, and behold a glory that can only be seen in the Spirit.

John understood something that few today understand — when you hear the trump the Lord is descending out of heaven! (I Thes. 4:16). Let us, then, who are coming to maturity in our understanding, stand together with John on that blessed day, and looking through the eyes of inspiration know once and for all that the Lord descending from heaven in the sound of a trumpet is not a future eschatological event, but a present reality to all the blessed elect of God who come to be "in the Spirit on the Lord's day!"

John turned to see the voice that spake with him! He turned to perceive the voice, to discern the voice, to understand the voice, to gain the knowledge of what the Lord was saying and doing in the voice. When we hear the voice of God it's never where we expect it to be — it requires a turning to see the voice! When we think we know what God is doing, and we have His ways and His will and His word all figured out, He speaks in a new way never heard before and we must turn from the norm of our spiritual experience to hear and see Him. The presence of the Lord is so fresh, so new, so transcendent, that it always demands a turning!

The voice John heard was the voice of the resurrected, ascended, glorified Jesus Christ! Once he heard the voice everything changed and wonders began to unfold. Before he heard the voice John was describing his own situation on Patmos. As soon as he heard the voice the visions of glory began! The voice commanded him to write the things he saw in a book and send it to the seven churches. There is not a man on earth who is qualified to speak God's word until he has heard the voice of the Son of God! And no word uttered by man will ever be effectual in the lives of the hearers until that word is energized to go forth as a Living Word.

There is a tremendous value in words even in the natural realm. All words are either creative or destructive. All that happens every day in the world is accomplished by the power invested in words. All the business and transactions of men and nations are carried on by the power of words. All the political and economic ideologies that have shaped movements and determined the course of history and the destiny of billions of people and races and empires have first issued as words which form their consciousness within the minds and wills of men, who then actively create out of them the external form and substance of them. The whole Communist empire, for instance, with all its institutions, tyranny and powers, was inspired and produced out of the energy of words spoken and penned by a man by the name of Karl Marx. Words printed or written on paper are powerful enough to imprison or put to death a man, or to release him. Words on paper are powerful enough to join a man and a woman in marriage, or to separate them by divorce. Mere words on paper are sufficient to make one exceedingly wealthy or to make one penniless, to start a war or to bring peace, to establish a kingdom or to dissolve an empire. Everything works and moves by and through the power of words! All words spoken form some level of consciousness within man, which in turn forms the world you live in. But none of these words produces life unless it is enriched by the spirit of life from God! Many words gender death.

The mystery of God is not far off in heaven somewhere. GOD IS THE WORD AND THE WORD IS GOD! Furthermore, THE WORD IS THE SPIRIT AND THE SPIRIT IS THE WORD! **"The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (Jn. 6:63)**. Words are the most powerful things in creation! All things, visible and invisible, were created by God's word. **"And God said, Let there be..." (Gen. 1:3)** **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made" (Jn. 1:1,3)**. We are born again by the word of God! **"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." (I Pet. 1:23)** The Living Word is the LIVING CHRIST!

Christ is the perfect speech of God. When the invisible and unknowable God desired to reveal Himself and communicate Himself to mankind, He placed the substance of Himself in His Word, and made that Word flesh, and caused that Word made flesh to dwell among men and speak as God to men. Christ the Word contains the pure essence and power of Life! The words of Christ will form the consciousness and sense of HIS BEING WITHIN, and of His world, so that you may live in it forever. The presence of Christ places us in a position to

hear the voice of God! This is the voice we want to hear, not just any voice, but the voice of the Living Spirit. I have witnessed many men speak and preach the words of scripture with great persuasion and nothing happened. There is no "magic" or "mystical" power in the words of the scriptures! The only power they have is that they testify of CHRIST THE LIVING WORD! They point to HIM WHO IS THE LIFE! When men come to HIM they live! One can preach great sermons and die. But when one hears the dynamic living voice of the Son of God transformation takes place! The same Living Word that by its almighty power brought creation into existence was made flesh and dwelt among us. The Word was not made a book. The Word was not made a teaching or a doctrine. The Word was made flesh, divine substance in human form, the Son of God! That is the Word that John heard! And that is the same Word we hear today in the Spirit! That Word is the voice, the living voice of the Christ within every son of God. The same Word that came into this world and conquered sin and death in the person of Jesus Christ is being raised up in you and me in these days!

Here, Christ's voice, as John heard it, is compared to a trumpet. Later John said, "After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were a trumpet talking with me; which said, come up hither, and I will show you things which must be hereafter." (Rev. 4:1) Notice this trumpet-voice told him to come up higher, so he could see the things God wanted to show him. God's trumpet-message is always to come up higher! It is sent because that is the great need of the saints and of all mankind, to come up into the higher realms of the Spirit, for we cannot see the glorious spiritual truths, nor behold the wondrous heavenly things, from the lowlands of our carnal mind and childish religion. Normally we "hear" a voice, but John said of the trumpet-voice that penetrated his spiritual consciousness, "And I turned to see the voice that spake with me, and being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man." (Rev. 1:12-13) The One who spoke with a "voice" as of a "trumpet" was in the trumpet-voice, and it was in the message of the voice that this glorious One was revealed. I do not hesitate to tell you that this was the revelation of Jesus Christ as He appeared to John IN THE TRUMP OF GOD!

"God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet." (Ps. 47:5) When a rising time is due for God's people, it may be said that God is "gone up," as taken from the lesson that He moved in a pillar of cloud and fire to lead His ancient people, Israel. "With the sound of a trumpet" signifies that His voice is being heard. God's voice and His trumpet are one and the same! It is the sounding forth of His word! Many messengers (His many-membered body) add volume to the sound of that trumpet. Another passage speaks of "His voice as the sound of many waters." (Rev. 1:15) John also tells us that waters means multitudes of people! (Rev. 17:15) So God's trumpet-voice is sounding through many people, "many waters." "And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." (Rev. 19:5-6) John heard coming from the throne (divine authority) a message which he said was a voice of a "multitude," of "many waters," and of "mighty thunderings." It was one trumpet-message with many voices adding volume to it! It was one message, but being trumpeted by many voices, so that it became as the voice of a "great thunder." This shows the beautiful unity between Christ the Head and His many-membered body!

The trumpet bespeaks of a clear word of God from the Spirit-appointed and Spirit-anointed messengers, His ministers. Trumpets are words, clear words, living words! The trumpet of God is His voice, His voice from heaven, His voice in the saints; even the voice of the Holy Spirit through the consecrated messengers of God. The trumpet is the revelation of the Lord speaking through His people in an oracle of the Spirit. The sound of the trumpet is simply the PROCLAMATION OF A MESSAGE!

With a simple knowledge like this we should have no trouble at all in understanding that our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, the Logos of God, is Himself the trumpet, the message, the revelation! In type, Jesus is the trumpet of God, delivering a clear sound, a living word, introducing us to the reality of the perfection and incorruptible life of which He is the beginning. Praise God, it is the Lord Himself who comes in the trumpet-message, and at the sound of His voice we are caught up with Him to share the glory of His sphere of life. The Lord Himself descends out from the highest realms our heavens (spirit) into the lower realms of our earth. We are the creatures God is creating to express His nature, power, and glory unto creation. His purpose for coming out of the realm of spirit into our earth is to catch our whole being up into the realm of spirit, to swallow

up all death into HIS LIFE! And He accomplishes this by coming to us in a trumpet message! It is the word that changes us!

Too numerous to mention have been the things God has taught us as we have walked in the light of His ever-increasing truth. Our minds have often been staggered by the wonderful things we have seen and heard and our ambitions have been raised as we have gazed into the promised land of the Spirit and have seen the innumerable and wonderful glories that lie before us in the fullness of our sonship. We are undoubtedly standing at the threshold of a new dimension in God, a higher realm in the Spirit, and a new level of experience. Like John, we have heard a voice as a trumpet! When we come to a time like this, many will refuse to go on. There is some strange thing inherent in all men that makes them reluctant to leave the security of their fixed abode to press forward into the challenge of the new. They feel that they have journeyed far enough and that the effort to press into the new and more wonderful realm is too great a risk. We tend to become rigid, settled, self-confident and crystallized, fixed in our gaze and in our pose. In order for us not to miss the next phase of the unfolding revelation of Jesus Christ, God has to sound a shrill trumpet into our hearts that we might be alerted. God is saying and doing a NEW THING! It is time to go forward! It is the hour to arise to the battle and possess our land, our full inheritance in God. It is time to leave the first principles of the doctrine of Christ and GO ON TO PERFECTION! It is time to put on the mind of Christ and be transformed by the renewing of our mind! It is time to live and not die! "Come up hither!"

The trumpet-message is alerting our minds to the fact that the sons of God who are being prepared to restore creation are not just ordinary Christians with ordinary experiences. We have tasted the earnest of our inheritance, and it is now time to arise and enter an entirely new realm of experience in God. I speak of the realm which is in truth the realm of the fullness of God, the realm of incorruptible life and glory, the realm of the kingdom with authority and power. Furthermore I am convinced that those who have ears to hear the sound of the trumpet in this hour, and the willingness to "come up hither" as the Spirit commands, will attain to the glory of that new realm while the rest of the church world goes on as usual in the old realm and on the old planes. Jesus is the revelation of this realm of which I speak because He came forth as the Pattern Son and He speaks a clear sounding word. He is the pattern of this heavenly sonship and He is the Alpha and the Omega of it! He is the beginning of the new creation of God, but you and I are following the forerunner, and just as He trumpeted a clear sounding word, you and I are going to trumpet a clear sounding word to the elect in this generation.

Let us take heed to how we hear, and how we speak and what we speak! The order of man is passing. How? BY THE SOUNDING OF THE TRUMPET! By the very word of our mouth, because of HIM who speaks out of us! We might compromise the message and bear a message of appeasement to the old order of the religious systems, but what would that accomplish? If a trumpeter blows an uncertain sound, how will you know to prepare? If the trumpeter has no message, how is he going to speak? "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand." (Joel 2:1) God has commanded us to blow a trumpet in Zion and sound an alarm in His holy mountain! Our job is to sound an alarm in Zion, to awaken His elect, and let them know that THE DAY OF THE LORD IS HERE!

God has a trumpet-message that is sounding forth because it is time for His people to move into new territory. May God grant us wisdom and understanding that we may apprehend the mystery of these things. The trumpet-voice John heard that day on Patmos later becomes the seven trumpets sounding through the Revelation! The seven trumpets are like the seven eyes, seven horns, seven stars, and seven spirits — they are the seven-fold fullness of God's trumpet-message, the declaration, proclamation of the process of His victory wrought out experientially within each of us! Seven angels sound the seven trumpets. Who are they? THEY ARE THE LORD! Know this, and you will possess a great key to the book of Revelation. It is the Revelation of Jesus Christ! So when someone shows up under a symbol, doing something that originates with God, who do you suppose it is? Why, bless your heart, IT IS THE LORD! He said in chapter one, "Behold, I come quickly." And throughout the book He comes, and He comes, and He comes, and He continues to come! He comes as a trumpet-voice. He comes as a Lion. He comes as a Lamb. He comes as seven spirits. He comes as seven angels. He comes as a mighty angel. He comes as the Son of man. He comes as horses galloping out of a seven-sealed book. He comes as a star coming down out of heaven. We could go on and on.

But when an action originates out of God and out of heaven, under whatever symbol is used — IT IS THE LORD! It is the Lord coming to purge us, refine us, thresh us, perfect us, transform us, change us, mature us, and conform us to the image of the Son! As the trumpets sound within the lives of God's people we begin to experience the fullness of all that God is! There has never been an expression of God at this level in the earth at any time except in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, for He is the firstborn among many brethren. But now there is a people that has been sealed unto the day of redemption, and when God begins to loose the seals, sound the trumpets, and pour out the vials, it will bring forth a many-membered expression of God at the same level of God's fullness. This is the revelation of Jesus Christ!

"And the angel which I saw...sware by Him that liveth for ever and ever...that...in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished." (Rev. 10:5-7) The words, "In the days of the voice of the seventh angel," and the words, "begins to sound," speak volumes to me because the complete sounding of that trumpet involves a process in time and shows us that our change which comes with the sounding of the seventh, or last, trumpet is not to find its total consummation in one specific moment. There is the obvious implication of a prolonged sounding extending through various periods and dealings. Yet at the initial sounding, the "mystery" of God's purpose for His elect shall no longer be hidden. Ah — methinks I have heard this trumpet, for the mystery of God has been revealed in the midst of the saints in these days! When the seventh trumpet sounds a wonderful thing takes place — the manchild is birthed, caught up to the throne of God, and rules the nations with a rod of iron!

In the days when the voice of the seventh angel with his trumpet-message begins to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished. The mystery of God is God manifest in the flesh! "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh." (I Tim. 3:16) This is also the mystery of Christ, that God was in Christ, and now God in Christ is in us! Paul elaborates upon this mystery in these words: "How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel." (Eph. 3:2-6) When you follow the word "mystery" through the writings of the apostles it is clear that the mystery is the body of Christ. In Ephesians 5:31-32 it is the mystery of the union of Christ the Head with Christ the body in all the fullness that that means. It is time, my beloved, for the mystery of God to be finished! Finished means completed or consummated. In the days of the voice of the seventh angel THE BODY OF CHRIST SHALL BE FINISHED! Not just quantitatively, but qualitatively. That trumpet signifies that the Lord's elect, the sons of God or the body of Christ, have all been transformed into His image and likeness and grown up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ! Christ the Head and Christ the body shall be joined in the blessed union of fullness. The mystery of God manifest in the flesh will be finished!

The seventh trumpet signifies that the hour has arrived for the sons of God or the body of Christ to come forth in birth, into full and complete manifestation! This corporate Christ, Head and body, this manchild company, shall rule all nations with a rod of iron. Caught up to God and His throne — into His authority! In the days of the voice of the seventh trumpet-message the mystery shall be finished, the body completed, the long and tedious work of preparation of God's sons shall at last be consummated. The trumpet has begun to sound! There is an acceleration of God's revelatory word, an intensified trumpet-message, a clear sound of the revelation of Jesus Christ! Listen, my friend, for the sounding of the trumpet-voice within your spirit!

If you can hear this trumpet sounding above the hue and cry of rapture, antichrist, mark of the beast, great tribulation, denominationalism, sectarianism, mansions over the hilltop, cabins in the corner of gloryland, pie in the sky, religious programs, rituals, ceremonies, endless meetings, coverings, bishops, cunningly devised fables, money raising schemes, false prophets, false healers, lying signs and wonders, carnal health and wealth prosperity doctrines; if you can mount up with wings as eagles and soar high above all this carnal, confused, frustrated clamor of noisy gongs and clanging cymbals, and hear the distinct, plain, unmistakable sound of this last trump, then it can be said to you: Blessed art thou, overcomer, manchild, hundred-fold, firstfruits; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven!

The seventh trumpet is the final redemptive message and when it is finished sounding God will have made a man in His image! What tremendous truths are being blown on this redemptive trumpet! Let not any man rob

you of the greatest sound that man has ever been privileged to hear! A sound with such a high and holy pitch, with tones so deep and profound, that only the Spirit can reveal its message to those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. Do not miss what the Spirit is saying; gird up the loins of your mind with the truth that will fully redeem you, spirit, soul, and body!

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." **(Rev. 1:10-16)**

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 21 ONE LIKE UNTO A SON OF MAN

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART TWENTY-ONE

SEVEN GOLDEN CANDLESTICKS ONE LIKE UNTO A SON OF MAN ONE IN THE MIDST

On an outwardly dismal day on far-away Patmos the blessed apostle John sits in holy contemplation. Suddenly the earth seems to sink away beneath his feet. The horizon recedes. John's spirit seems to be liberated from the shackles of time and space. He is taken out of contact with the physical world about him: he is "in the spirit." He sees, indeed, but not with physical eyes. He hears, but not with physical ears. He is in direct contact with the spiritual realities of the heavenly world! He is alone...with God! He is wide-awake and every avenue of his spirit is open to the direct communication coming from God in the spirit. John is told, "Write the things that thou seest in a book." Now, isn't it interesting that he not only wrote the things he saw, but also the things he heard. So the "seeing" is not seeing with the natural eye, it's seeing in the realm of the spirit! You can "hear" in the realm of the spirit and in hearing you see, that is, you understand **"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me..." (Rev. 1:10,12).**

What kind of turning did John do? Did he physically turn around? John was in the spirit, so his turning was a spiritual turning! His turning was an inward turning! It doesn't mean he physically turned around, it means he turned from beholding things in the earth realm to beholding things as they are in the heavens of God's Spirit. John began to hear by the Spirit and see by the Spirit — his perception and vision raised to a higher dimension. His eyes and ears were opened to all things spiritual and heavenly! He turned in the same way we mean when we say that someone has "turned to the Lord." We don't mean they changed the position of their body or tilted their head in a certain way to gaze into the sky. It is a spiritual turning, an inward change. John was changed in his spirit, lifted into a new awareness, quickened to hear and see the things that come from the Spirit of God! I have turned many times during the years of my walk in God. More than fifty years ago I first heard the Voice that John heard, and I turned from my Pentecostal realm to see the Voice, to embrace a new experience and dimension in God! Since that blessed day, each time we have heard the Voice out of the Lord's on-going revelation of Himself, we have turned to hear as we are supposed to hear, and to see as we are supposed to see.

I am terribly at a loss for words to express the glory of what John heard and saw when caught up into the Spirit. He heard a voice as a trumpet, and said, "I turned to see the voice that spake with me." "Turned" is the same word which is translated converted in Acts 3:19. There is a conversion that takes place in our lives before we can see the voice that speaks with us! There is a turning from all that is not the Lord Himself! We are not just turning or being converted from the ways of the world, or from religious traditions and forms of godliness. In the life of every son of God there is coming a turning even from those legitimate things God has given us — from seeking and glorying in our ministries, our gifts, our callings, our positions, and our blessings. We are being turned to the Lord Himself! It is when we behold Him in the Spirit and by the Spirit that the great work of God is finished in us to transform us into His image and glory! **"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (II Cor. 3:18)**

"And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks one like unto the Son of man." (Rev. 1:12-13. The candlestick realm is the church realm! THAT'S WHERE THE MESSAGE IS! The message is not out there, not from Christ in some far-off heaven somewhere, not from an angel from heaven, not from Christ outside of us. The message is within. The voice of the Son of God is the voice in the churches, within those in the churches who are walking in the Spirit and seeing and hearing by the

Spirit. Weren't nearly all of us in the churches when first we heard the Voice? It's among us! It's in our midst! The kingdom of God is within you! The Spirit of the Son is within you! God dwelleth in you! The Holy Ghost is within you! The word of Christ dwelleth richly in you! The anointing abideth within you! The voice of the Son of God is heard from within!

Have you ever turned to see a voice? John turned to see the Voice! He didn't turn to see the man, or the woman, or the prophet, or the angel — he turned to see the Voice that spoke to him. Until we grasp the eternal importance of the voice of the Son of God we will never turn to see the Voice — not the vessel the Voice speaks through! God has spoken through men and women and angels and jackasses and clouds and bushes that burned and were not consumed. God is bringing us to the place where we do not demand to hear God speak in a certain way or through a particular vessel, but our sole and all-consuming desire is to hear the voice of the Son of God and see Him in His revelation, whatever it be. When God speaks it matters not whether He speaks through a man or a woman, or through a white man, a black man, a Chinaman, or through a jackass. It makes no difference how educated or uneducated, how polished or unpolished, how desirable or undesirable the instrument. There are people who refuse to receive the word of God unless it comes through a particular apostle, prophet, writer, or ministry. If you are not approved by their organization, their board, their apostle, their bishop, or their little religious clique called a "fellowship," they will not receive the word of the Lord from you. You must have the right credentials! Only their ministry is the chosen vessel, and if God wants to speak He will speak through them. He can't speak through anybody else! I have no hesitation whatever in telling you that such an attitude is immature, carnal, sectarian, fleshly and devilish. All who are truly walking in the Spirit as sons of God are keen in their hearing, listening for the voice of the Son of God, for whosoever hears the voice of the Son of God shall live and not die, saith the Lord.

The sons of God also are able to see. "And I turned to see the voice that spake with me." And what a surprise! "And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks." We would expect John to see a person — but when he turned he saw seven golden candlesticks. "And in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks one like unto the Son of man." These are wonderfully significant words! The One John saw was not seated on a golden throne in heaven, He was not standing in a rainbow before a waterfall, He wasn't standing on a mountain top, He wasn't standing in the doorway of a great cathedral. Oh, no! He was standing in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks! Would to God that all His people everywhere really knew where this One is! He is standing in the midst of the churches. He is in the midst of the Lord's people, in the midst of the body of Christ. And He is right there in the midst of you, my precious brother, my sister. "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; He judgeth among the gods." (Ps. 82:1)

The seven golden candlesticks are the seven churches, and a Voice was speaking out of the midst of the seven churches. It is necessary to see the church before you can see Him who is in the church. There are some people who have no use for the church. They say that God has called them out of the church. I understand what they mean, but they are wrong. I have been called out, too. Many years ago I received the distinct and powerful call to "Come out of her...that you be not partaker of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues. (Rev. 18:4) That is the Spirit's unmistakable call to come out of Babylon! Babylon, among other things, is the religious system that calls itself "the church." It is not the church! The church is the body of Christ! Babylon is an imitation, a usurper, an impostor, a harlot man-made system that masquerades as the church. Oh, yes, we have been called out of Babylon, but we are still in the body of Christ! If you have truly been called out of the church, then you are severed from Christ! I esteem the body of Christ. I honor the body of Christ. I have a great love for the body of Christ, which is the church. The Lord Jesus Himself loved the church, and gave Himself for it, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

Come now, my beloved, and let us SEE THE CANDLESTICKS — for when you see the candlesticks you will also see one like unto the son of man in the midst of the candlesticks. Come, and let us behold where He dwells! Would you not think it strange should someone come to your house, get out of their car, put their hands over their eyes, grope their way up the walk to your door, knock at the door, and when you answer the knock they should say, "Oh, I don't want to see your house — I just want to see you!" Wouldn't you think that a little peculiar? Wouldn't you secretly consider that person a little "flaky"? Some of God's people are just like that! They don't want to see what God dwells in. They avoid all contact with the candlesticks. They want to hear the

Voice without seeing the candlesticks! It can't be done, my friend. Here I am, 67 years of age, short, gray, and bald. Sometimes I wish I was 30 years old and tall, dark, and handsome! But I can't do anything about that. I'm sure I could make a few improvements on this house I live in. A face lift, a toupee, and some "Just for Men" hair color might take ten or fifteen years off of my appearance. But it would still be the same old house. And if you want to meet me, or hear me speak, the voice you hear will come out of this tabernacle that you see. This is where the voice resides. This is where the life is. In like manner, there is no way that you hear the voice of the Son of God apart from the tabernacle — the body — He lives in!

We may not like some things about the present state of that body, including our own condition, but it is His body, nonetheless. Someone says, "Oh, I don't want to see the man, I just want to see the Lord!" It is true, we know no man after the flesh, that is, on the natural level, after the carnal consciousness. But let me make it very clear — you have to see the man in order to see the Lord! I can only see Christ in you by seeing you. And I can only hear Christ out of you by hearing you! "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men." Another says, "If I could find a perfect church I would be a part of it." Well, then it would no longer be a perfect church — you would mess it up! God is bringing us to the place in this important hour where we are willing to look at each other in spite of our weaknesses, mistakes, errors, spots, blemishes and wrinkles until He finishes His work in us and gets rid of them out of our lives. Ah, yes, the Lord whom ye seek is coming swiftly to His temple as a refiner's fire and fuller's soap, and He shall purge and purify the priesthood of His house! In the meantime the Lord is still speaking out of His temple and it is impossible to hear the Voice without seeing the candlesticks! We must be able to hear the voice of the Son of God even if there are imperfections in the vessels. In the midst of the church, which is His body, there is One like unto the Son of man. If we look with the pure, anointed eyes of the Spirit — we will see Him!

SEVEN GOLDEN CANDLESTICKS

"And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks." (Rev. 1:12)

It is of special interest to note that the seven candlesticks are not merely candlesticks — they are "golden" candlesticks. The seven-branched candlestick of the tabernacle was constructed according to the word of the Lord given to Moses. It was made of pure gold, of a solid piece weighing a talent. Since gold is symbolic of deity, or the divine nature, this candlestick would absolutely have to be something emanating from God. In fact, it would have to be God Himself represented in the candlestick because it was made of solid, pure gold. It was not made of shittim or acacia wood overlaid with gold, as other parts and furnishings of the tabernacle were, which symbolized human flesh overlaid with divine nature, or anointed with the Holy Spirit of God, for the pure gold represented God Himself who was going to be the "lightbearer" or "candlestick" that would illuminate our tabernacle or body. This piece of furniture must absolutely be something beyond our human nature, beyond our outer, physical, fleshly being or our soulful life. Yet it must be something that would dwell in our tabernacle and give us life, illumination, and power with God!

There is no doubt about it — the golden candlestick represents our regenerated spirit! The church is not made up of outward, carnal, fleshly people — the body of Christ is composed of men and women who have been quickened, raised up, made alive in their spirits by the life of God Himself! "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly." (Prov. 20:27) "For Thou wilt light my candle: the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness." (Ps. 18:28) "In the beginning was the Word...that was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." (Jn. 1:1,9) We know that our mortal bodies have not yet been quickened and glorified, and our souls are still in the process of being quickened and transformed, but in our spirits we have already been quickened, made alive, raised up and made to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus! Now, we also know that there were problems in the seven churches of Asia in the book of Revelation! There was sin, carnality, error, pride, and a number of negative conditions. The Lord admonished and rebuked the churches for these conditions! So — how could "pure gold" and only pure gold serve as the symbol of the seven churches? The answer is quite simple. The candlestick is not the symbol of the outer man of soul and body, which are merely human and mixed, weak and polluted. The candlestick is the symbol of the inner man, the new creation man, the Christ man after the Spirit! That is where Christ dwells within us and lightens our candle! That is where the light of God and the life of God are in us!

May the Lord enable all who read these lines to see clearly by the spirit of wisdom and revelation that our spirit and God's Spirit are truly ONE SPIRIT. "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." (I Cor. 6:17) Often we try to understand the truth of God on a carnal level. We must see as God sees! For instance, the scripture says, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things are passed away, and behold all things are become new!" (I Cor. 5:17) When we look at our lives and find old things that have not passed away, we might conclude that we are not in Christ, and we are not a new creation! Would we not have to be perfect to fulfill this scripture? Another scripture that will kill us, when understood with the natural mind on the outward, human level, is, "He that is born of God does not commit sin." According to this passage it is impossible for a born-again person to sin! So immediately I come under condemnation. I must not be born again! How could I be born again, because I certainly do miss the mark! And not only does it say that he that is born of God does not commit sin, but it adds, "Neither can he!"

We must have a revelation that he which is born of God is our spiritual man. It is the inner man which is "renewed after the image of Him that created him." My body is not yet born of God! My soul is not yet born of God! But deep in the inner recesses of my being my spirit has been born of God! You see, my beloved, it has nothing to do with my outward, human, fleshly life. It is not the Adamic life that has been born of God! It is Christ who has been born again in the womb of my life, and it is Christ who is now my life. If any man be in Christ he is a new creation! That's where the new creation is! My outward human weakness, failure, carnality and defeat have nothing to do with this inner reality. Christ in me is my hope of glory! My spiritual man is who I am. Christ is being raised up in us! Christ is complete. Christ is pure and holy. Christ is sinless. Christ is my regenerated spirit! My regenerated spirit is a new creation. In it, old things are passed away and all things have become new! My regenerated spirit is born of God, it does not sin, neither indeed can it! THAT IS WHO I AM. THAT IS WHO YOU ARE! And that is the "gold" of the GOLDEN CANDLESTICK!

ONE LIKE UNTO A SON OF MAN

"And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man." (Rev. 1:12-13)

The apex of history was the day John saw Christ as He really is! Let us consider with holy reverence how this mighty One who stood among the candlesticks, proclaiming, "I am Alpha and Omega," was something more than the gentle and lowly Jesus of Nazareth. John states with great clearness that he, being turned, saw one LIKE UNTO A SON OF MAN. Now, the King James Bible, as quoted above, says that John saw one "like unto the Son of man," but that is not how the Greek reads. There is no definite article in the Greek, it does not say "the Son of man" but "one like a son of man." The Diaglott reads, "and in the midst of the Lampstands one like to a Son of Man." Young's Literal says, "and in the midst of the seven lamp-stands, one like to a son of man." The Amplified Bible renders, "and in the midst of the lampstands one like a Son of man." The Concordant Literal New Testament translates, "and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like a son of mankind." The Wuest Translations reads, "and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man." We could go on and on, practically all translations consistently translate the Greek text correctly as "a son of man" instead of "the Son of man."

Now I know this fact will dismay a great number of preachers, teachers, and writers who, like me, have taught that since Jesus is "the" Son of man, this one "like unto the Son of man" is His many brethren, conformed to His image. There is truth there, but our truth must be pure, focused, and undistorted! So what is John really seeing, and what is he really saying? Let us take note that what John saw was a vision, a picture, a representation, and what he saw was someone who was "like a son of man" or someone in human form. It was a personage that bore the likeness of a man — head, hair, eyes, mouth, hands, legs, feet — all in the form of a man. Yet, this One he saw was something more than an ordinary man! He saw One in such surpassing majesty that words almost failed him when he tried to describe what he saw. This One was great, grand, illustrious, brilliant, radiant, awesome, imposing, overwhelming, glorious, and sublime! He had the features and appearance of a man, but there was an aura, a stature, a glory and a majesty of His person that transcended that of any natural man!

Who was this remarkable person whom John saw that day on Patmos and describes so vividly? Was not this person the same One who took Peter, James, and John up into a high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them? For at that time His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light, "exceeding white as snow" (Mat. 17:2; Mk. 9:3), much the same as they appeared when John saw Him in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. Yes, this is preeminently none other than our Lord Jesus Christ who has been raised from the dead and glorified with that same glory He had before the world was, and who dwells in the light which no man can approach unto. Saul on the Damascus road and John on the isle of Patmos beheld the glory of the Son of God out of the realm of the Spirit, and it blinded Saul's eyes and caused John to fall at His feet as dead. How do we know this is Jesus Christ? After seeing Him in His glorified body, and falling at His feet as dead, this One identified Himself to John with these words: "Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." (Rev. 1:17-18) After all — this is the revelation of JESUS CHRIST!

ONE IN THE MIDST

It will greatly aid our understanding to see that there is an individual or personal, as well as a corporate sense of this "one in the midst" of the candlesticks. We know that Christ is one, even Jesus Christ; and we know that Christ is also many, even the body of Christ. In like manner there is the one Son of man, even Jesus; and there is also the many-membered Son of man, even the sons of God. Each of these, in a unique way, walks "in the midst" of the candlesticks! It will be a great blessing to your heart to understand how the Lord Jesus, the Son of man clothed in the garment of His priesthood, with eyes of discernment like flames of fire, with burning feet of judgment like unto brass heated red-hot in a furnace, and the two-edged sword of His living word flashing out of His mouth, walks in the midst of each of us and all of us whom He has redeemed!

The seven-branched candlestick of the tabernacle was made of a talent of beaten gold. It was the lightbearer of the holy place! There was no other light, either natural or artificial, in that holy place. The light of the outer court was the natural sun, and the light of the most holy place was the blazing Shekinah — the glory of the God of Israel! But in the holy place the light originated from an indwelling oil, the light came from a silent and fragrant power within the candlestick. In the midst of this precious, beautiful, and perfect light-giver stands a glorious One in the likeness of a man. This One is walking in the midst of the candlesticks! (Rev. 2:1) The throne is not seen. It is Jesus and the churches alone with each other. It is Jesus under the figure of the priesthood of old that was responsible for the state of the candlesticks. Here is the Lord Himself, the high priest of our profession, and those who walk with Him in the Spirit, tending, trimming, replenishing the lamps!

Aaron, he and his company, under the old covenant, were appointed to look after the seven-branched candlestick, and this they were to do throughout their generations. They were to order the lamps, evening and morning, which were to burn continually without the veil of the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation. And these outward things served till the seed Christ came in His new covenant, who abolished all those outward tabernacles and candlesticks and lamps and lights in the outward worship, and the outward priesthood as well. And in the generation of Christ in the new covenant, the members of His body have become the temple of the living God, and the candlesticks and lamps and lights of the holy place of the Lord! In the book of Revelation He calls the seven churches the seven golden candlesticks, which is a perfect number, the completeness of the redeemed of this age. And Christ, the high priest, doth enlighten the candle, which is the spirit man, in the candlestick. And Christ walks in the midst of these candlesticks in His heavenly fine linen, and heavenly golden girdle; and His hair as white as wool and snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass, as if they were burning in a furnace; and out of His mouth goes a sharp two-edged sword; and His countenance is as the sun shining in his strength. Here is Christ, walking in the very spirits of new creation men, whose spirits He has lighted with His holy and divine and eternal fire, who are destined to be transformed not only in spirit, but also in soul and body; here He exercises His offices, for He is a king to rule in their hearts, and a priest to reconcile all things within them to the nature of God, to save the soul and redeem the body, that He may offer His people to God without spot or blemish!

It was not the candlesticks themselves, which had called unto John. It was the One in the midst like unto a son of man. How intimate, how strengthening, how illuminating that expression — "in the MIDST." The voice of God called to Moses "out of the midst" of the burning bush, and later "out of the midst" of the cloud. The fourth

man walked free with the three Hebrew children "in the midst" of the fiery furnace. God dwelt "in the midst" of the camp of Israel. God dwells "in the midst" of Zion, and He that dwelleth "in the midst" of thee, is mighty! It is the place, which Jesus took as the Master of His disciples. It is the place He took after He rose from the dead. It is the place which He occupies as the Spirit sent down from heaven. He is the Lamb "in the midst" of the throne, and of the elders, and of the four living creatures! The tree of life is "in the midst" of the paradise of God!

"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mat. 18:20).

My beloved brethren, I am as much opposed to religion and man-made, organized, carnal minded, fleshly religious systems, as any man alive today. This has been my passion since that blessed day when the voice of Christ bade me "Come out of her." At the same time I recognize the church as the body of Christ! I thank God for the church, the seven golden candlesticks! Many of the Lord's people have confused religious Babylon and the church. So many groups today, even "sonship" and "kingdom" groups want to perpetuate the system of Babylon. All who are truly called to sonship and coming into that sonship have ears to hear what the Spirit saith to the churches! The leading of the Lord in our lives has been two-fold. First, we seek to fellowship with all the Lord's precious people, regardless of what level they are on. They are all HIS, and if we can touch them and bless them in any way, that is our joy. That is how the firstborn Son of God walked!

Second, we cannot, dare not fellowship the Babylon system. The Spirit of the Lord has drawn a clear distinction between the Lord's people and the system so many are involved in. This is clearly revealed in the book of Revelation! There were seven carnal churches, yet the Lord walked in the midst of them! Then there was that great city, Mystery Babylon the Great, out of which He called His people and which He burned and destroyed with fiery judgments! We can and will fellowship any redeemed child of God — but we will not fellowship their carnal systems! As a result much of our fellowship is limited to a "one-on-one" basis, and with small groups of saints, after we get past those who won't fellowship us because they perceive us to be heretics! At the same time we are not opposed to meetings or gatherings of the saints. The Spirit does indeed move upon some to meet, worship, and share together. And, when such gatherings are by the Spirit, and not controlled by either the spirit or system of Babylon, we are happy to partake. And we do!

On the other hand, we do not put a premium on meetings. My walk with God would in no way be hampered if I never attended a meeting! I would not fall into sin or error, or backslide. My spiritual growth is not meeting oriented. I do not have to attend gatherings in order to stay spiritual and follow Christ into sonship. But when gatherings are appointed of the Lord, on a regular or occasional basis, there is a mutual benefit derived from the presence and power of Christ "in the midst." We condemn none who attend meetings, nor do we condemn those who don't. Nor do we praise either group. We have learned from many years of walking in the Spirit with God's people that the Lord deals with every man in His own unique way and according to His purposes for our spiritual growth and development — and His will for us in these areas is subject to change from time to time!

To know the Father's will for our walk today — that is the issue! And then to abide there with no condemnation either to ourselves or to others whom the Lord is leading differently. Often those who sense they have grown beyond the need for gatherings look down their noses at those who still find the need to meet. In like manner, those who are part of active church groups look with disdain upon those whom the Lord has called into a walk of separation, whom they cynically characterize as "Lone Rangers," who have "left the body," and are "spiritual elitists" who are "no good to anyone." Let me go on record — so far as I am concerned both groups are yet carnal and think as men, not discerning the Lord's body! We are called to love one another, to discern by the Spirit the Father's purpose in each one, to esteem each better than ourselves, and to release all our brethren to God for His sovereign dealings in their lives, whatever His plan for them is! Anything less than this is not sonship or kingdom! I refuse to take sides with either group, but seek to edify all the Lord's elect, to present every man perfect in Christ. And I will fellowship with both! Furthermore, I can tell you by personal experience and by the wisdom of the Lord that there are sons of God in both camps who in their growth in the Spirit, in their love, in their righteousness, in their humility, in their maturity in the ways of God, and in their effectiveness in the kingdom of God are not one whit behind any man or woman of the other persuasion! No one way of doing things has a corner on God's purposes in this hour! Get off your hobby-horse, my brother, my sister, and discern by the Spirit what GOD is doing! Oh, yes, I have a witness in my heart that CHRIST IS IN THE MIDST

OF THE CANDLESTICKS! This is what the revelation of Jesus Christ is all about — it is the revelation of God's Christ personally, corporately, and universally!

In chapters two and three of the Revelation we see seven conditions within the seven churches, good and bad, positive and negative, commendable and reproachable. The Lord is in the midst of every one of these conditions! He walks in the midst of the churches, in the midst of their love, strength, patience, righteousness and faithfulness, and also in the midst of their weakness, faults, failures, carnality and rebellion. The Lord is there in the midst of every condition! Aren't you glad the Lord walks in the midst of our condition? Thank God! If He didn't get into the midst of our condition we would be of all men most miserable and altogether hopeless.

The Christ of God walks in our inner being. He is walking to fulfill every promise made to every generation. We are a portion of the church age and we are a portion of the seven golden candlesticks and He who walks among them! We have an identity in these same situations today. None of the seven churches are out of existence — they represent the seven-fold condition of the church throughout the age. Every generation has had these same conditions mentioned there manifest in them! Just search them out. They are there! The identifying marks of each church is still in the earth today, and most of us could quickly identify them! The negative conditions represent conditions of carnality and error, of fragmentation and separation from the life of the Spirit! They are things that must be overcome. The positive conditions are blessings and privileges and attainments that must be apprehended!

Christ is walking up and down in the midst of the candlesticks. These candlesticks are the light of the Lord in the churches! They are the seven-fold spirit of God, the seven lamps that burn before His throne. This light is what is walking up and down in the midst of the candlesticks. To walk up and down means to be present in light form among us! He walks in spirit form, and the seven angels are His lighted word, the anointing of life in the midst of His people. HE IS WALKING! He has the keys of death and of hell! He is loosing the prison houses and setting the captives free!

HE IS WALKING!

**He is walking in bright clothing,
In the garden of my heart;
And the spices of His presence
Cause refreshing scents to start!**

**And His Spirit winds have blown them,
To the ends of all my earth;
Walking, talking, living message,
Of the New Creation Birth.**

Irene Lindsey

Thank God for the One in the midst, yet we must avail ourselves of His wonderful presence and power! A message comes to mind — it is the story of the house of the heart and the various rooms in the heart of one who has come to know the Lord. There was a particular room at the bottom of the stairs, right off to the side. There the Lord said to this believer, "Here I will meet with you each morning." The believer said, "Lord, you would take time to meet with me every morning?" And He replied, "Yes, I will meet you right here in this room." And so, morning after morning, just as the sun was rising, they held their intimate communion, that blessed fellowship. The believer grew in the knowledge of the grace and ways of God and his spirit was enriched and his life blessed. But then, in the press of things through the tyranny of the urgent, there came a morning when he overslept. He had to get to the office and rushing down the stairs he forgot about the meeting. It grew to be a habit. Weeks and months went by and that quiet time was forgotten. Then one day as he reached the bottom of the stairs in his usual hurry to work, he noticed that the door was ajar and the light was on. He stepped inside to see what it was. There was Christ, sitting, waiting for him. He said, "Lord, what are you doing here?" The Lord said, "Have you forgotten that I told you I would meet you here every morning?" He said, "Lord, you mean that you have been here every day waiting for me?"

Beloved, have you heard your Lord's voice calling you to come apart with Him, to leave everything and every one that hindered you, and come into a higher place of revelation and separation unto Himself? Have you kept your Lord waiting while you fulfilled the demands of the world, or while you pampered your flesh, or while you did something that you wanted to do, instead of doing what He wanted you to do? Have you heard Him chide you because you neglected Him, because you were not giving yourself to intimacy of fellowship and communion, because you were not seeking His presence and glory, because you were not ascending into the heights of His Spirit to know Him in His fullness?

When you heard His voice in these and other ways, have you risen up eagerly and quickly and hastened to your Lord? Or have you asked Him to wait for a more convenient season? Did you have some "church work" which you felt was very important because some souls were looking to you for help? Did you tell your Lord to wait until you could leave them, or finish what you were doing? Many times, it is so! Not always in words do we tell Him to wait, we just go on with our "work," fulfilling the responsibilities thrust upon us. We are going to respond and obey, we are going to arise and commune with Him, we are going to seek Him with all of our heart, we are going to follow hard after Him, we are going to pursue the vision and lay hold upon the prize of the high calling, we are going to be sons to Him, but not until a more propitious moment when we have finished what we are doing!

I do not hesitate to tell you, precious friend of mine, that it is alone with the Lord; it is when the clamoring voices of this world and of our own minds have been silenced; it is when the strife and opinions of the flesh have ceased; it is when all our religious works have been abandoned; it is when earth has receded and heaven and eternity have drawn near enough for us to see the unseen, that the voice of the Lord is heard in our spirits and His presence is known and His beauty appears. It is in such separation and communion that we tread the courts of the Lord, that the fragrance of His life envelops us, that we are strengthened and equipped to fulfill the will of the Father in this new day of the Lord! Our Beloved is calling us to that secret meeting place within ourselves, until in union with Christ we arise to express and manifest the glory of His kingdom in the earth!

So little of His presence has been realized by those Christians who fill, Sunday after Sunday, the pews of the harlot church systems, that even many who are baptized in the Spirit have more fear of the power of the adversary than they do have of the knowledge of the majesty and presence of the King of Glory. His presence is not always best known in the realm of soulish worship, with its clapping, dancing, and shouting, which excites a religious fervor that in most cases does not proceed from the Spirit. Praise God for the reality of rejoicing in Him, but many have discovered that they thought God was only in the Cathedral, so He called them out from there. We thought God was in the great revivals with signs and wonders and miracles, so He separated us from this. We thought the presence of God could be conjured up by much singing, clapping, and shouting, so He sent fiery trials, stripping, and separation even from this. We so enjoyed and sought the atmosphere of worship until we discovered that we had become worshippers of worship, rather than worshippers of God! So He brought a dealing even in that realm. Finally, isolated and all alone, then He says, **"Lift up now thine eyes and look from the place where thou art..." (Gen. 13:14)** "I am with you IN THIS PLACE, perhaps obscured by the shadows, but I am here in the midst of you, working within to conform you to my image, and bring you forth in my likeness." Though we share an existence apparently filled with nothing but the mundane happenings of the routine, YET CHRIST IS PRESENT AND ACCOMPLISHING GREAT AND MIGHTY THINGS WITHIN! Stripped of all the religious crutches we have leaned upon we find that the great work of God in sonship is performed in that most holy place within — in our very state of being! God reveals Himself to the humble in the lowliest of disguises, but the proud who never look beneath the surface, fail to find Him even in the greatest of His manifestations.

We see the Head of God's Christ supremely victorious, waiting until the body comes to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, unto a perfect man, so that His enemies become His footstool. The Head is victorious, triumphant, and crowned! But this glorious work He began will be carried forth until His whole body, even the feet, shall rise to the place of authority and power that He has. Now in these appointed days there is coming forth a body of people, raised up by the Holy Spirit of God that is not content to let Satan and the carnal mind rule here on this earth. These are crying out for deliverance from every enemy and all the bondage of corruption within themselves. These cannot be satisfied until they see the kingdom of God coming with power into the earth! They know not how this can be done, for it truly looks impossible! None of the religious or revival

realms of the past have accomplished this. But having heard from heaven they gladly embrace the hope! The Spirit of God is now revealing truths that have been hidden from ages and from generations. Hope is springing up in the hearts of the saints, God's called out ones, and they are seeing that we can follow Jesus into that which is beyond the veil, into the Holiest of all, into the fullness of God. These are looking not to die, but to live; not for eventual victory in heaven, but for victory right here on this earth.

I know that some say that we are not passing through the tabernacle in our experience, moving from the outer court to the holy place, and on in to the most holy place. They tell us that we are already in the most holy place and that all that remains is for us to come out from behind the veil to be revealed and minister to the lower realms. But let me tell you something. No priest could come out of the most holy place until he had passed through all realms of the tabernacle and entered in beyond the veil. All of this represents an experience in our lives! We can't leave the outer court until we have thoroughly experienced the outer court! Nor can we go beyond the holy place until we have completely appropriated the reality of the holy place. So-called "positional truth" won't do here! Now I know God has given us boldness to enter in beyond the veil into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus, but I can assure you that I have yet to meet the brother or sister who has fully experienced and appropriated all that the most holy place is! Do me a favor, my brother, and don't come back out of there until the most holy place is what you are! Should you come out in your present state of limitation you will have little to add to the lower realms, nor will creation be set free. And that is the truth!

Ricky Evans has shared this pointed and challenging word: "We have no desire to argue with any who feel they have already come into fullness. Yet, if what they have is fullness then we are greatly disappointed. We do have a desire to come into the reality of full sonship as displayed by our precious Lord. He showed us what it really means to walk in the Spirit without measure! All others have shown us what it is like to walk in the Spirit by measure and we have seen, in our own lives as well as others, what sad failures we can be in the realm of measure. Oh, but our wonderful Lord would not have us sit down in defeat. Oh no! He showed us in His humanity that we can indeed move from measure to fullness and live a life of victory free from all failure by walking in the measure we have and increasing our capacity for more of the life of God which dwells in us.

"There are many today who have learned all the right terminology of "kingdom" and "deeper" teachings, and have assumed they have arrived at such a place in their walk. They assume themselves to be in Tabernacles, in the Third Day, and behind the veil, because they have read the books and heard the tapes. They have had an emotional stir which has caused them to think they have entered into the depths of a new dimension. But friend, all the knowledge and emotional stirring means absolutely nothing as far as the reality of our growth in God! You may go to a football game, or a baseball game, and you may know all the statistics of the players involved. You may know all the rules of the game. You may get caught up in the emotions of the players, the excitement of the crowd — but that will not make you one of the ball players! If you were to be actually put into a uniform and placed in the game you would quickly find all your emotional excitement and all your knowledge does not mean you can actually play the game." And so it is in the kingdom of God!

Can our finite minds comprehend even in a measure what this shall mean, to walk in that state of being that the resurrected, ascended, glorified, enthroned Head-Christ is now in? That is what the most holy place represents! Even in the days of His flesh the firstborn Son of God had absolute dominion over the elements, the beasts, the birds, over the most powerful devils and the worst diseases. And finally He was victorious over death itself, the last enemy to be destroyed for each of us. Some claim now to have already conquered physical death, while they are still afraid of a mad dog, fasten their seat belts on the highways, and continue to eat three meals a day to keep themselves alive. Precious friend of mine, death is the last enemy to be conquered! But fall it must, before the mighty power of God working through the inChristed, His body. And Jesus said that the works He did, we would do also, and even much GREATER WORKS. (Jn. 14:12) This power is not offered to us for us to gratify our carnal appetites for bread made from stones, nor for sensationalism, nor for financial gain, nor to build a kingdom for ourselves. Jesus was tempted with all these things, and He overcame them. And so will all those who today follow the Lamb to the heights of mount Zion! What a destiny! How marvelous the plan of God! How glorious the path of those who walk the path of sonship to God! There is "One in the midst" and He that is in the midst of thee is mighty! The "One in the midst" is the One who speaks to the churches, the One who by His word and power raises up the overcomers to the realm of His throne!

Although He is spoken of as "one like unto a son of man," yet this glorious One identifies Himself as Jesus, who is, indeed, THE SON OF MAN! Jesus constantly referred to Himself as "the Son of man." This expression occurs over eighty times in the Gospels, and the intriguing thing is that it is always on the lips of Jesus. Stephen used it once (Acts 7:56), and the people once asked whom Jesus meant by it, but these are the only recorded occasions when anyone used it of the Lord other than Jesus Himself. But He used it constantly. It is found in all four Gospels.

Most Christians read right over that, thinking it means Son of God, though it says He is the Son of man. This does not mean that He was a descendant of Adam, the fleshly man, nor even that Mary in some mysterious way contributed to His genetic makeup. Someone says, "But don't the scriptures say that Christ is the seed of Abraham and the son of David? How could He be the seed of Abraham and the son of David if He was not the offspring of these men?" The answer is very simple. The inferences in scripture that Jesus was the seed of Abraham, or the son of David, do not speak of Jesus' flesh or human life! All who are "in Christ" are classified as being the "seed" of Abraham (Gal. 3:29), though their outer human substance was in no way derived from Abraham! To the Jews, who piously traced their lineage back to Abraham, Jesus said, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. Ye are of your father, the devil." He certainly was not appealing to their flesh in denying their relationship to Abraham! He meant that they were not of the nature, the faith, the righteousness, the spirit of Abraham! And when He told them they were of their father, the devil, He did not mean they were physically begotten by the devil personally and physically planting a demonic sperm in the womb of each of their mothers! He wasn't talking about flesh at all! John the Baptist was Elijah, according to Jesus, but I do not see that he was physically or humanly Elijah. He came in the power and spirit of Elijah! We are seeing spiritual realities and relationships here — not natural!

In solemn truth we may search the Bible through and we will not find that the "second man" was in any way derived from the "first man." Jesus was not conceived by the union of divine sperm with Mary's human egg. Mary's life was Adam's life, and if Mary contributed anything at all to Jesus' life He would then have been from the fallen Adam and would have Himself been of the first man Adam. By that one man Adam all were made sinners, and in Adam all die and are dead. Jesus would, therefore, have needed a Saviour instead of being the Saviour! Nothing is more certain than this — Adam cannot redeem Adam! The fallen cannot perfect himself to redeem and restore himself. The very thought is an absurdity! I have heard men say that when Jesus says, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last," He means that He Himself was both the first man Adam who sinned and the last man Adam who redeemed. I do not hesitate to tell you that this is not only an improbability — it is an impossibility!

The supreme evidence for the virgin birth is Jesus Himself. He is a fresh start! He is a new kind of man! The first Adam came into the world by the creative act of God. So did the second man, the last Adam! The only difference is that the first man came from the hand of God whole, as a full grown adult, whereas the second man was formed as an embryo, then planted in the womb of a woman to develop and be born into the world as a baby. "The second man is the Lord from heaven." Jesus said, "The Son of man came down from heaven." In the natural, people do not come down from heaven in a physical body, so we can't imagine Jesus coming down from heaven like that! And of course, He didn't; He came down through Mary. Mary was a surrogate mother! Today there are so-called "moral" or "ethical" questions about the use of surrogate mothers, but really there is no moral issue at all. God Himself used a surrogate mother for His own Son and sanctified it in the eyes of the whole world! This was God acting for man. It was not man acting for God. This was God taking the initiative. This was God stooping down to man, not man reaching up to God. In Jesus Christ, God entered into human life in a new way!

The first man is of the earth, earthy, the record states; the second man is the Lord from heaven! The first man fell by sin, marred his image, lost his dominion, forfeited his inheritance, becoming a poor, miserable, degraded creature, in his consciousness ignorant and godless, the impotent plaything of circumstances, and weak and helpless to the last degree. The second man knew no sin, was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and walked even upon this earth in a realm higher than the heavens. Have you never wondered how the second man became the Saviour of the first man if He Himself was the first man? How could the fallen man become the Saviour without a Saviour? If Jesus was like us in that He needed a Saviour, but was somehow

able to save Himself without a Saviour, and then save others, then mankind really needed no Saviour at all, for they could have, like Jesus, simply saved themselves! Such reasoning is spiritual tomfoolery and theological drivel.

What, then, does Jesus mean when He calls Himself the "Son of man"? He means that He was born from the realm of true manhood, formed in that state of being in which the first man dwelt before he sinned. Jesus stepped right out of that prophetic, spiritual, creative dimension where the word of God proclaims, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." He was the second man to be fashioned in that realm of true manhood which is the image and likeness of God in a physical manifestation. He is the second representation of God; He is the last Adam because the image of God as seen in the first Adam, disappears in Christ! His image and representation of God actually destroys the image as represented by the first Adam! The first Adam becomes superfluous and obsolete. Because the second man, the last Adam replaces him! Being the second man of GOD'S MANHOOD CREATION, He is called "the Son of man" or the offspring of GOD'S MANHOOD IDEA. The first man Adam stepped forth out of the Creative Mind of God's Idea of Manhood, and Jesus was the second man to proceed out of that Creative Manhood Idea of the Father. As the second man He is thus the SON OF MAN, the second of an Order, the second revelation of the image and likeness of God in man, birthed from the Manhood Mind of the Father! This man, being tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin, is THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF GOD RESTORED IN MAN! From that position of sharing our humanity, while not inherently partaking of our sin and death, He became the perfect sin-offering for us all. He also became the new Federal Head of the race of redeemed mankind!

What is an image? An image is something, which is formed, a representation of something, a likeness. A true image would be that which correctly depicts the appearance, form, substance, nature, character, and being of whatever it stands for. A true image of God would have to be a true expression of who and what God is! Today we have many false images of God! These, whether idols, concepts, ideas, actions, or theological creeds are manufactured out of the carnal minds of men according to their own darkened understanding. So we have in carnal-minded men a distorted image of God! Many preachers portray God as vengeful, vindictive, unforgiving, unmerciful, judgmental, demanding, laying heavy yokes upon His followers, taking away our salvation the moment we slip or fall into sin, consigning all who die outside of Christ to unending torture in hell fire, and many other hideous, monstrous images. But, blessed be God! Jesus Christ brought a true and correct image of God, by faithfully walking out the true and divine manhood.

Jesus expressed the concept of true manhood when He said, "I and my Father are one." The Jews took up stones to stone Him, for they perceived that He was calling Himself God. They were unable to discern the image, the divine state of true manhood. The Jewish leaders felt He had no right to take this position, but here is something vitally important to understand. He was not going around telling everybody He was God to exalt Himself in any carnal way. He was teaching man and restoring the knowledge of man's true relationship to God and His purpose. By teaching that God and man are really one, He was showing that the value of every created person was GOD HIMSELF. It didn't matter that the truth of our real nature had been hidden, covered, and buried beneath the load of sin and its consequences. What is happening in this hour is that a great light is dawning in the consciousness of man by regeneration, the quickening of the Holy Spirit, lifting people's eyes beyond what they can see to discover the reality of Christ within, to identify with that holy thing which is called the Son of God, and which is just as truly the SON OF MAN!

It was in MAN, the highest of God's creations, that God placed the "invisible things of Himself" for display. Now we are being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ — the image of God that Christ gave. All the holy sons of God are becoming the image of God in the earth to reveal the heart, wisdom, nature, power, glory, and love of God to every order of the universe, worlds without end. Through these manifested sons all realms shall be blessed to see and touch and experience the image of God! This is the only way the visible can behold the invisible! ALL shall come to know Him! THIS IS THE PURPOSE OF GOD IN MAN!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 22

ONE LIKE UNTO A SON OF MAN [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART TWENTY-TWO

THE PERFECT MAN

“And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the candlesticks one like unto the Son of man.” (Rev. 1:12-13)

The King James Bible, as quoted above, says that John saw one “like unto the Son of man,” but that is not how the Greek reads. There is no definite article in the Greek, it does not say “the Son of man” but “one like a son of man.” Practically every translation available translates the Greek text correctly as “a son of man” instead of “the Son of man.” Let us note that what John saw was a vision, a picture, a representation, and what he saw was someone who was “like a son of man” or someone in human form. It was a personage that bore the likeness of a man. Yet, this One he saw was something more than an ordinary man! He saw One in such surpassing majesty that words almost failed him when He tried to describe what he saw! This One had the features and appearance of a man, but there was an aura, a stature, a glory, and a majesty of His person that transcended that of any natural man!

As the spirit of revelation and understanding floods our minds we see that there is an individual as well as a corporate sense of this “one in the midst” of the candlesticks. We know that Christ is one, even Jesus Christ; yet we know that Christ is also many, even the body of Christ. In like manner there is one Son of man, even Jesus; and there is also the many-membered Son of man, even the sons of God. This One like unto a son of man is preeminently none other than our Lord Jesus Christ who has been raised from the dead and glorified with that glory which He had with the Father before the world was. Yet this One is also all the holy sons of God who are conformed to His image, filled with His fullness, bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, word of His word, life of His life, and spirit of His spirit!

THE PERFECT MAN

Understand this and you will understand a great mystery. Spirit is that aspect of God by which He is able to individualize Himself. As Norman Grubb once pointed out, the word “individual” comes from the Latin *individuus* which means un-divided. Most people seem to think that it means the exact contrary! It suggests separateness to them, as though being separate or divided from every other human being makes them an individual, but they are mistaken. Individual means un-divided, showing that each human person is undivided from humanity in that he is a perfect expression of what humanity is. Thus, in the higher realm of spirit life God has the power of individualizing Himself, that is, the bringing forth of another expression of what He is without, so to speak, breaking Himself into parts. God individualizes Himself as the new man within us, Christ; and so, when we are regenerated we are actually an individualization of God! God can individualize Himself in an infinite number of distinct beings, or units of consciousness and expression, and yet not be in any way separated or divided. God can do this because He is spirit and life. Inorganic matter cannot be individualized! It can only be broken up. Thus, if you were to tear off half a page of this article, and then tear that into small pieces, you would have divided up the page. The remnant of the page would be smaller by the amount of paper torn off; and the whole page would be the sum of all the fragments. This is division — not individualization! Spirit, however, can be individualized; it can be produced into another form without in any way subtracting from, or diminishing, the original. This capacity of God is the process by which He is bringing forth a vast company of sons in His very own image! So your real self, the Christ within, the spiritual man, the new creation, is in all truth an individualization of God! This does not mean, of course, that you are an absurd little personal god. You are an individualization of the one and only God who was first individualized in the person of Jesus Christ. The Christ man within you is not “another Christ” or “another God,” but the

manifestation of the life, mind, will, nature, power, and glory of the one and only true and living God — our Father!

Come with me back to Galilee two thousand years ago. This man Jesus is quite a preacher. He is considered by many to be a prophet. Rumor says that He even does wonderful miracles. But wait a minute! What makes Him so special? “Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers,” men ask. The hometown folks have known Him since He was in diapers. They’ve seen Him play and heard Him cry. They’ve seen Him with sweat-drenched clothes and dirt under His fingernails. Isn’t He just an ordinary guy from an ordinary family? “Isn’t He the son of that carpenter? Isn’t His mother Mary? Come to think of it, didn’t she get pregnant before marriage? Aren’t His brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas?” they ask. “And don’t His sisters still live in town? No doubt about it: this man is as human as anyone; He’s nobody special.” The people are right that Jesus is as human as anyone. But they’re wrong to think He’s nobody special! They look so hard at Jesus on the outside that they fail to see who He is on the inside! They look so hard at Jesus as a man, that they don’t see Him as God! Let’s not repeat that same mistake. But let’s not make the opposite mistake either. Let’s not look so hard at Jesus as God that we don’t see Him as a man!

The following has been widely circulated, I do not know who the author is, but it states some wonderful things about the Son of man. “Almost twenty centuries ago there was a Man born contrary to the laws of life. His death was contrary to the laws of death. He lived in poverty; He possessed neither wealth nor social prestige. In infancy He startled a king; in childhood He puzzled doctors; in manhood He ruled the course of nature, walked upon the billows as pavements, and hushed the sea to sleep. He had no cornfields or fisheries, but He could spread a table for five thousand and have bread and fish to spare. He healed the multitudes without medicine and made no charge for His service. He never wrote a book, yet all the libraries of the country could not hold all the books that have been written about Him. He never wrote a song, yet He has furnished the theme for more songs than all the songwriters combined. He never founded a college, but all the schools together cannot boast of having as many students. He never marshaled an army, nor drafted a soldier, nor fired a gun; and yet no leader ever had more volunteers who have, under His orders, made more rebels stack arms and surrender without a shot fired. He never practiced psychiatry, yet He has healed more broken hearts than all the doctors far and near. When He died few men mourned. But a black crepe was hung over the sun. Though men trembled not for their sins, the earth beneath them shook under the load. All nature honored Him. Corruption could not get hold of His body. The soil that had been reddened with His blood could not claim His dust. Death could not bind Him. The tomb could not hold Him. Behold what manner of man is this!”

One day in an humble home by a dusty street in the village of Nazareth God supernaturally inseminated a young virgin girl by the name of Mary, and Jesus, the only sinless human since Adam, was born into this world. It is hard for us to realize that in that babe was the life-energy that held the universe together. It is difficult for us to realize that as that boy, the firstborn Son of God, grew in stature, the wisdom and the knowledge which was within Him would confound the wisest theologians; that the miracles He was to perform and the things He would declare, as He walked the earth, were to become living words whose vibratory capacity would change the minds of men, transform their lives, and alter the whole course of history and nations. Here is one who is perfect in thought, perfect in word, and perfect in deed. The fact of the matter is, He is the first perfect man who has ever been on this earth! Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Perfect Man. The sons of God who come to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ are perfect men, and also the Perfect Man!

A lecturer was once talking about man’s imperfection. He wanted to enforce his point, so he asked rhetorically for anybody in his audience who had ever seen a perfect man to lift his hand. No hand went up. Encouraged by this fact, he asked the question the second time. “Has anyone here ever seen a perfect man?” Still no hand was raised. After he had asked a third time, way back in the rear a little timid fellow lifted his hand. Surprised, the lecturer asked, “Have you seen a perfect man?” “I haven’t exactly seen him, but I’ve certainly heard a lot about him,” the little fellow replied. “Who in the world is he?” “He’s my wife’s first husband.” No doubt he had heard a great deal about him! But if he had met him, I think he would have found out that he was not perfect. The first perfect man who lived on this earth is our Lord Jesus Christ. And wonder of wonders — Jesus was normal, the only normal person who had ever walked this earth!

My brethren — what a mystery the young child Jesus must have been to Himself! I suppose He was about thirty years of age before He was at all able to satisfy Himself as to who and what He actually was. The child Jesus must have made the discovery early in His life that He was like no other child in all Israel. “All seek their own,” says the scripture, in condemnation of all the children of men. All were walking after their own desires and interests, after their own passions and lusts, after their own thoughts and ambitions. But the child Jesus must have seen and felt within Himself, with a holy wonder, and a divine joy, that, while all around Him, young and old, were doing their own thing, far deeper in His heart than His own things were the things of God, and the things of His neighbor. So early was this the case with Him that, at twelve years of age, He was able to say to His mother, “How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?”

Jesus Christ, the second man, the last Adam, was the first perfectly obedient man. It is written of Him in His youth, **“And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.” (Lk. 2:52)** The expression “increasing” means to CUT A WAY THROUGH AS A PIONEER. Jesus lived making decisions as no other teenager ever had. He hacked a way through the jungle of selfishness and sin, amidst a people who lived under the curse. He made decisions and choices based on light and truth, the first of His kind. Isaiah had prophesied this learning process centuries before: **“The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.” (Isa. 50:4-5)**

The writer to the Hebrews impresses upon us the intense reality of Christ’s humanity — His being made like unto His brethren, His partaking of flesh and blood in like manner as ourselves, His being tempted in all things like as we are. He leads us in spirit down into Christ’s humiliation in the flesh, and speaks of the wondrous mystery of the agony there, as the second man and the last Adam was prepared and perfected for the redeeming, restoring, and glorifying work He came to do. Let us enter upon this holy ground with hearts bowed under a consciousness of our ignorance, but thirsting to know something more of the great mystery of perfect manhood which is manifest sonship, first revealed in the life of Him **“who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared; though He were a son, YET LEARNED HE OBEDIENCE BY THE THINGS WHICH HE SUFFERED; and being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.” (Heb. 5:7-9)**

There is nothing on earth that will increase your faith and add to your confidence in this walk of sonship to God like the knowledge that manifest sonship is nothing more nor less than perfect manhood! When God said in that long ago beginning, “Let us make man in our image and after our likeness, and let them have dominion,” it seems that God made a mistake. When He made him out of dirt — the dust of the ground — and made him with the kind of human body we have, flesh and blood, spirit, soul, and body, with all the appetites, desires, and weaknesses we have, all the frailty, all the ability for twisting, warping, and spoiling things; when He created us like that and then thought that in such a physical, human, natural, dirt-body His image, glory and dominion could be manifested — it seems that God was mistaken! Could that human creature limited like us rule the world and nature, the universe and principalities and powers, and all things?

The first man indeed was turned aside, so God said, “I will invade humanity and come down in the person of my Son, limit myself to a human, physical body just like man has, with all its appetites and passions, with all its possibilities of suffering hunger, weakness, and death, and I will demonstrate the character, the life, the love, and the power of God on the human level.” The sonship of Jesus was God manifesting Himself within the limitation of a human body! Christ could not fly, He had no halo, He could not see further than anybody else, He could not run faster than the other young men in His day, He got as tired as anybody else, He got hungry, fell asleep, they could spit on Him and finally kill Him. Yet in Jesus Christ you have the perfect manhood and that perfect manhood is MANIFEST SONSHIP! It is the perfect manhood expression of God, which is what Jesus called THE SON OF MAN. It is man in the image and likeness of God!

What is the importance of the incarnation? It means that the Spirit of God, the Word of God, God Himself, can live and express Himself in a physical human body. When God invaded humanity in the body of Jesus Christ, took upon Himself human nature and limitation, was made in the likeness, not of glorified flesh, but of sinful

flesh, and for thirty-three and a half years lived, walked, worked, slept, and died in that body, manifesting God on the level of manhood, it meant that God can, by His Spirit, come in and as our spirit live in these human bodies of ours, living in us, loving in us, working in us, fulfilling righteousness in us, overcoming all weakness, limitation, sin, and death, ruling over all things through us, and manifesting the fullness of Himself, even though we are compassed about with infirmities, for He Himself was tempted in all points like as we are. Even though we suffer being tempted, He Himself learned obedience by the things He suffered. Even though we suffer in the weakness of our flesh, His back was beaten, His brow was crowned with thorns, His hands and feet were nailed to a cross, His side was thrust through with a spear, and He shed His blood. Yet, dying on the cross in agony with the spittle running down His face, and the mockers standing about jeering, God was living, loving, forgiving, healing, redeeming, reconciling, restoring, and manifesting in the man Christ Jesus!

Being mocked, God is living in Him. Asleep in the back of a boat, God is living in Him. Hungry and He goes to a tree and finds nothing to eat on it, God is living in Him. Thirsty, crying for water upon the cross, God is living in Him. Dying, God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. Do you see what God did? He revealed that He is at home in human bodies, for man is the image of God! “The tabernacle of God is with man,” — not with angels, not with spirits — with man! “We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” “The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” **“Let the word of Christ dwell in you.” (Col. 3:16)** **“The Father and I will come and make our abode — be at home — with you.” (Jn. 14:23)** Not to be a visitor, not to be a foreign power coming upon us and overwhelming us, making us do things we can’t control. Oh, no! The Spirit will “abide” with you forever, that is, as the Greek meaning indicates, He will dwell, settle down, be at home, to live naturally in you and as you! The Spirit will dwell in you without conflict, to flow through your mind normally and naturally. The word of God shall flow out of your mouth automatically and spontaneously. The works of God shall be manifest through you without fanfare, hype, or theatrics — in an ordinary, natural way. It seems much so-called prophecy cannot come forth unless the speaker starts to shake or change his tone of voice. Don’t you know that God was speaking through Jesus all the time? People try to heal the sick and cast out devils by creating some kind of an “environment” for the power of God to work, and by shouting commands in the name of Jesus, as though authority is in the volume of the voice! Don’t you know that because Jesus had authority He could but whisper, “Come out,” and the spirits obeyed His command? When God comes to dwell in us and we know that Christ is our life, it is not something foreign that has invaded us, it is the image and likeness of Him who dwells within our spirit finding expression through us normally and naturally as the tabernacle of His life, nature, power, mind, will and glory. Hallelujah!

Paul did not say, “For me to be spiritual and get into the 144,000 is Christ.” He said, **“For me to live is Christ!” (Phil. 1:21)** Living for Paul did not mean those supernatural moments when he was seeing visions, hearing voices, falling out under the power, and being caught up into the third heaven. It meant for Paul to walk from one town to another on the dusty roads with Christ walking in him and as him. It was speaking to people the mind, will and word of God, manifesting the love of God, and demonstrating the power of God in a normal expression of life. The image of God was not seen in Christ just on the mount of transfiguration, it was seen in Him sitting at meat with sinners, speaking the wisdom and love of God while eating a steak and drinking wine. Jesus was no more the Son of God when He ascended in a cloud than He was when He stooped and wrote with His finger in the dirt and, turning to the adulteress beside Him, said calmly and compassionately, “Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more!”

Sonship will be most truly and fully fulfilled in us when God can feel at home in us, without any strain, pretense, showmanship, or abnormality. When we are able to be divinely human and humanly divine we will know the power and glory of manifest sonship! The Christ of God can live in us, manifest His life, love, and power in us at the office, in the home, at the store, in the field, at school, on the airplane, in the street, in every relationship of life. Jesus turned water into wine at a wedding reception, healed blind Bartimaeus while walking down the street, multiplied the loaves and fishes during the course of a meal, healed the lame man in the synagogue, saved and delivered the Samaritan woman while sitting at a well, calmed the storm while riding in a boat, raised the daughter of Jarius in private in her bedroom, raised the son of the widow during a funeral procession — He never preached the gospel of the kingdom or did His mighty works during a “spiritual meeting” or by in any way acting “religious.” Christ lived normally, He demonstrated God naturally in every facet of His life, and simply went about “doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him.” That, my beloved, is sonship! That is perfect manhood! That is the Son of man!

It all goes back to the creation of man. Jesus said, “The Father hath given Him (the Son) AUTHORITY. . .because He is the SON OF MAN.” (Jn. 5:26-27) One might think it should have read, “because He is the SON OF GOD,” but it doesn’t say that. The awesome and universal authority of the Son is rooted in the fact that He is the SON OF MAN. Why was it necessary for Jesus to be the “Son of man” to have authority on earth? That man should bear the image of God and have dominion over all things is the first announcement of God’s intention regarding man, and locked up in that wonderful declaration is a universe of meaning that does not reach the eye and that the mind has never understood. We must re-establish and re-define the purpose of our existence. Why are we here? The purpose of God in man has been blurred, distorted, and hideously mangled by the carnal teachings of the church systems!

Oh that men would awaken to the truth that God has provided the answer to humanity’s dilemma! “Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that MAN whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead.” (Acts 17:31) I hope that we all have become aware that that MAN by whom God shall judge the world in righteousness is a corporate man. “But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. . .for the perfecting of the saints. . .till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a PERFECT MAN, unto the measure of the stature of the FULLNESS OF CHRIST.” (Eph. 4:1,12-13) “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that ye shall judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life.” (I Cor. 6:2-3)

God in His great purpose of redemption and restoration is raising up A MAN, the MANY-MEMBERED CHRIST OF GOD. He is preparing an instrument, a channel through which to rule, deliver, and bless. God has a MAN to fix creation’s problems! You see, beloved, when God injected Himself into the history of this world to save, lift, redeem and restore it, He could not do it as God. He had to do it as man. That is why God was manifest in the flesh, because anything that is done in a governmental way on this earth must be done through man. “Let them have dominion...” is God’s own sovereign edict and delegation of governmental authority. Man’s rulership of the earth and the heavens is built into the constitution, which He framed for creation. For God, as God, to do the job would be unconstitutional! Man is God’s constitutional agent. To man has been given the stewardship of the earth and of the heavens! That is why there is now a perfected MAN reigning in the heavens! God remains the owner, but man is the manager and overseer — the judge, ruler, priest, and king! Jesus Christ had to come in the form of man, in the likeness of flesh, being made in all things like unto His brethren, because nothing happens on this earth except through man. The Captain of our salvation, the High Priest of our profession, The Head of the Christ-body, the firstborn Son of God, the King of kings and Lord of lords IS THE MAN CHRIST JESUS, not the God Christ Jesus; He is the SON OF MAN, not God the Son.

Now for Jesus to have anything to do with this dominion He had to become a man, for the dominion was given to man, and in order for Him to receive the kingdom, He had to be a man. As the eternal Word of God He could have nothing to do with this dominion, though it was through Him that all these things were made. But become a man He did, and through His life of obedience to the Father, by His holiness, His purity, His grappling with sin, pain, limitation, and death, and triumphing over it, He qualified to receive the kingdom and to be the ruling head of it, the King of glory. The man in God’s image has a divine and royal destiny to exercise authority and dominion in this world and throughout the unbounded heavens. He is to be lord and head of all! All that happens in the cosmos must take place under the direction of man! God created all things and then man in His image and likeness, as the connecting link between God and His creation that through man in His image and likeness the invisible God might be seen and known and touched by the visible creation. The face of God would be revealed for all creation to behold, in the face of man! The likeness of God would be made known to the entire universe in and by man. The love, grace, wisdom, knowledge, power, and glory of God would be exercised toward every creature and world and order throughout the vastnesses of infinity through the man in the image and likeness of God!

Jesus is the altogether lovely One. When He walked this earth in human form He was altogether unlike anyone who had ever lived since Adam was banished from Eden’s fragrant garden. He was quite different in so many ways — many that perhaps you have never thought about. For example, did you ever notice that

Jesus never withdrew a word or modified a statement in His whole life? Which of us can say the same! He never apologized for anything He said. Which of us can make the same claim? There was no misstatement, no half-truth. What He uttered was truth itself because HE WAS THE INCARNATE TRUTH. Did you ever notice that Jesus never sought advice? Even Moses the lawgiver had his counselors; and Solomon, the wisest of them all, had those from whom he sought counsel and advice. But Jesus had none! In fact, He never went to any school of higher learning. That which He had received of His Father He gave unto us. Occasionally, someone had the impudence to offer Him advice, which was peremptorily refused on every occasion. Yet, does not the Bible say that in the multitude of counselors there is wisdom? Yes, when one is as ignorant as we are, so ignorant that we have no earthly cure for our ignorance, then, indeed, we need counselors! The Holy Spirit has now been sent into the heart of every son of God called to sonship as the “comforter” or “counselor,” even the spirit of truth, who is leading us into all truth! Jesus is the pattern, the prototype of this sonship!

Jesus never confessed a sin. This is absolutely astonishing! It is axiomatic in the spiritual realm that the holiest of men have been those who were most conscious of their sin and guilt. Job was brought to absolute desperation when God appeared to him. Isaiah abhorred himself when he saw the living God, and said, “I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.” (Isa. 6:5) Peter said, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man.” (Lk. 5:8) And Paul said, “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.” (I Tim. 1:15) Jesus confessed no sin for one simple reason: unlike any one of us He had none! He is the perfect

Further, Jesus never bothered to explain any of His frequent ambiguous conduct. When word was brought to Jesus that Lazarus, His good friend, was sick, what did He do? Did He rush to his side to help him? No, He remained right where He was for three days, while Lazarus grew sicker and sicker and died. Then belatedly, He appeared and His appearance evoked from the broken heart of Lazarus’ sister these reproachful and heart-rending words: “Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother would not have died!” No explanation. No apology. Not a word! “Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?” And then those immortal words before the tomb: “Lazarus — come forth!” Jesus just allowed time and the unfolding plan of God to justify all that He did. He had no motive to gain the sympathy, understanding, or adulation of men. Jesus was asleep in the back of a boat in the midst of a storm with waves breaking over the railings, filling the ship. “Master, carest Thou not that we perish?” cried the distressed disciples. No word of explanation, just the command, “Peace! Be still!” and the waves ceased their raging.

Jesus never asked and never permitted prayer for Himself. You may recall the time in Gethsemane on the night before His crucifixion. He gathered together His apostles and asked them to pray. But note well, my friends, His words! “Watch and pray (for yourselves) that YE enter not into temptation.” Why did He not ask for our prayers? Why did He never permit anyone to pray for Him? Why did He not even pray with His disciples? Why did He always go off to pray alone? Very simply — He did not need anyone’s prayers! He did not need them and He did not want them. Why? Because this Jesus of Nazareth is THE PERFECT MAN, MAN IN THE IMAGE OF GOD! As the Father hath life in Himself, so has He given to the Son to have life in Himself. It is a deep mystery, beyond the comprehension of babes in Christ, but all these attributes of Jesus are the marks of sonship, the sign of the Son of man, the evidences of spiritual maturity, the very destiny of every elect saint who grows up unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ!

Can you imagine Jesus, on the road to Samaria, sitting down on a rock by the wayside, calling to Peter, James, and John, saying, “Boys, I want you to come over here and pray for me. I really need to be ministered to today, I need help, I need your strength. Ever since we left Galilee the old devil has really been after me. This depression has hit me, and I want you to lay your hands on me and rebuke this thing. It started last week when the Father showed me that someone is going to betray me. I’ve been so upset ever since, Satan wants to use that to beat me over the head. Some other things have been bothering me lately, and this head cold isn’t helping any. If I don’t get the victory soon, I won’t be able to minister in Samaria, but I know it’s just the devil fighting me!” Do you think those disciples ever had to encourage Jesus, lay hands on Him, counsel Him, pray for Him, or minister to Him? Jesus said, “The SON OF MAN came not to be ministered to, but to minister...” Ah, there is the reality of the Son of man who is the Son of God! He did not come to receive life, but to give life! He had life in Himself even as the Father had life in Himself. Within that life, yea, that

indwelling life, was every element of faith, victory, righteousness, wisdom, knowledge, and power He could ever need! If He needed courage, the courage was in the life! If He needed strength, the strength was in the life! If He needed wisdom, the wisdom was in the life! If He needed power, the power was in the life! This is a nature and a life that is not dependent upon anything without, for it is self-existent life requiring no sustenance; it is not derived from another, does not draw from anything, is abundant, unchanging, inexhaustible, all-sufficient life! This is the life of sonship, this is the stature of the son of man, man in the image of God! This is the goal of all who are appointed of the Father to be conformed to the image of the Son, to reign with Christ in the kingdom of God! How could anything less than this reign with Christ upon His throne!

My spirit rejoices today in thankfulness to my Father in heaven that many years ago He let me hear a secret from His own heart, a secret that few in our generation have understood. When He breathed into my listening heart, my whole being was charged and my entire life and ministry changed, for I could never be the same after hearing His words: JESUS IS THE PATTERN SON! JESUS IS THE IDEAL MAN! EVERY SON OF GOD SHALL BE AS HE WAS AND AS HE IS! "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." (Rom. 8:29)

LIKE HIM? IN EVERY WAY? CONFORMED TO HIS IMAGE? IN ALL THINGS? EXACTLY LIKE HIM? Oh, our Father! Be pleased to open the eyes of Thy children that they may see to what a high and holy calling Thou hast called them in Thy Son! Ah, if Jesus did not change, then these sons must come to the place where they do not change. If Jesus never apologized, because He never misspoke or did any wrong, these sons must also come to the place where they do not offend in word or deed. If Jesus received all His wisdom and knowledge from the indwelling Father, these sons, too, must receive all wisdom and knowledge from the Father within. If Jesus did not sin, these sons must not miss the mark. If Jesus never needed to be encouraged, these sons must become so triumphant in His life that they encourage all men, but need not to be encouraged themselves. If Jesus did not need to be prayed for or ministered to, these sons in His likeness, grown up into the fullness of His stature, reigning upon His throne must also have reached that place where they need not to be continually ministered to, but they minister and pour out their lives for all. If Jesus always had victory, if Jesus always was full of faith, if Jesus always did the will of His Father, if Jesus lived every moment by the life of the Father, then these sons must also live victoriously by the indwelling life of the Father!

THE PATTERN SON. THE IDEAL MAN. THE PERFECT MANHOOD. THE SON OF MAN. How awesome! "LIKE HIM." What a challenge! What were the strong points of this Pattern Son? He didn't have any — not a one! To have a strong point you must have a weak point, and Jesus did not have any weak points! Other men are noted for some one faculty or talent. Moses was the meekest of all men. Job was the patient one. Abraham was strong in faith. But Jesus was altogether lovely in every way. . .the meekest, the most humble, patient, loving, gracious, courageous, firm, wise, powerful, everything. Consider, my beloved, the incomparable symmetry of the perfections of Jesus Christ. What a balance He had! What fullness! And this glorious Personage is not something unique in the universe, He is the pattern by which your life and mine is being designed! He is the firstborn of an entirely new race of men, the SONS OF THE LIVING GOD! Christ is being raised up in us and we are putting on His image from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord!

Let me present to you this glorious company of overcomers, the new creation man, the perfect man, the ideal man, the many-membered son of man in the midst of the candlesticks, even those who have life in themselves. These are they who have discovered the river of life flowing from deep within their own beings, life full, abundant, and triumphant! They are never discouraged by any situation, nor upset by any circumstance. They are constant — not up one day and down the next. You do not find them standing in prayer lines. They are always encouraging others, but never seem to need encouragement themselves. They continually pray for others, but never seem to have prayer requests of their own. They minister to many, but do not stop to be ministered to. They are not offended by what others say and do. They love and forgive and esteem everyone. They speak the best of all men, for they know the value of all men is Christ, for He is the Saviour of them all. They are not depressed or burdened. They are not fearful, worried, or confused. They are not upset or angry with anyone. They don't quit when the going gets rough. They do not tell you how the devil has been fighting them, in fact, they don't talk about the devil at all, for the dragon has been cast out of the heaven where they dwell! They don't talk about their problems. They do not wear sad or sorrowful countenances, regardless how dark things seem. The word of Christ dwells in them richly. They have been given a new song, even praise

unto their God! They glorify God in all things, for they know that He is in control. They walk daily in wisdom and understanding, in confidence and faith, in conscious awareness of the Father's plan and will; they always have the victory, are always positive, ever rejoicing in the Lord! They walk tall and strong. They walk straight. They are constant. They press forward toward the goal, rejoicing in expectation of the glory of God!

How can one minister deliverance to another if he is bound himself? How can one furnish encouragement if he is himself discouraged? How can one impart joy when he is sad? How can one supply faith when he is fearful? How can one lift another when he is himself bogged down in the slough of despondency? How can peace be bestowed by a soul filled with anguish? How can righteousness be communicated by one with an evil heart? How can victory be given by the defeated? How can strength be ministered by the weak? Oh! The world so desperately needs NEW CREATION MEN! All creation groans for the manifestation of the SONS OF GOD! You will not see many of these kind of people in the candlesticks, but if you look carefully, you will see them arising in the midst of the candlesticks!

How totally inadequate do our words become in the light of truth of such wonder as this! Jesus is the prototype of what God intends man to be. He is God's finished product, God's ideal man. What a man! Sinless man. Perfect man. Diseaseless man. Unlimited man. Deathless man. Anointed man. Crowned man. God-man. What a specimen! There is nothing ordinary about our Christ. Everything about Him is superlative. His perfection is far beyond all question. Yet He was a man. What infinite strength out of incredible weakness! Jesus is man par excellence living and walking in the Kingdom of Heaven! He came to earth and walked among men in their realm, but at the same time walked in the realm of the heavens of God's Spirit. He was a spiritual and heavenly man who walked among earth-bound men. He had dominion over them. They planted their smartest lawyers and most learned theologians in the crowd and tried to trip Jesus up — He made fools of them. They tried to throw Him over a cliff and destroy Him — He just walked through their midst and went His way. Never man spake as this heavenly man spake! Never man lived as this man lived! Never man did the mighty works that He did!

Our Christ is the most powerful among the powerful, the mightiest among the holy and the holiest among the mighty. With His nail-pierced hands He has lifted empires off their hinges. With the same nail-pierced hands He has lifted prodigals out of the hog pen. Our superlative Christ has turned the stream of time into new channels. HE MAKETH ALL THINGS NEW! Whatsoever He touches, whatsoever touches HIM, becomes new. This is the Son of man with power; what every man should be and ultimately will be! One can never comprehend the length and breadth and height and depth of God's great plan of creation and redemption until he first understands that Jesus Christ is the revelation of the value of every man. In the mysterious mists of Eden God breathed into man the breath of His very own divine life and prophesied of this man that he would bear the image and likeness of Himself, and in due time would take his place in the Father's great kingdom with dominion over all the works of His hands. Yet today, under the curse of sin and death, sin-cursed and sin-broken, sick and weak, murderer and prostitute, proud and arrogant, mean, vindictive, and tyrannical — all that is humanity!

But is that the value of mankind? What is the value of human life? JESUS is the value! The price that is paid for an object reflects its value. The price God paid for humanity was His own Son in the image and glory of the Father. God saw beneath man's tattered garment and marred image His own omnipotent potential buried there. Love pierced through the gloom and roughness and saw a diamond in the rough, but a diamond sure enough! It was in that divine spark within man's spirit, which came from God, and capable of being renewed, that we find the reason for the cross. The cross reveals the value of every man, and Jesus is the image of redeemed and restored men!

This is exactly what the Lord Jesus taught and demonstrated so wonderfully through His sonship ministry. He spoke the words of compassion and power into the souls of all marred creatures and called them beloved children of God. He didn't call them sinners, or condemn them. He saw them as they were meant to be, as they are in the eyes of the heavenly Father. That was the value of their lives! He healed their diseases, forgave their sins, raised their dead without any conditions, and lifted them up from the mire and defilement and set them on the pathway to holiness and restoration to their lost estate that they might live again as sons and daughters of the Most High.

It would do us all a world of good to take inventory of our attitudes — how we see men. I fear that we would be both surprised and disturbed to see how often we view men out of our carnal minds rather than with the eyes of our heavenly Father — the prodigal's Father! Oh mystery of mysteries! Jesus went to the cross not only to take away our sins, He went there for the good in man, to redeem it and restore it into the image of God again. The deepest mystery of all is that God is multiplying Himself in man, and is bringing Himself into a new dimension. There is a MAN seated upon the highest throne of heaven. Not an angel, not a cherub, not a spirit, but a MAN! That man still is clothed in the body that walked along the shores of Galilee, for the cave of Joseph of Arimathea is empty, although that body has been spiritualized by the power of incorruptible life.

The dwelling place of a son of God is in the Father and the dwelling place of the Father is in the sons. The sons are the out-ricing of the Father's substance and the perfect imprint of His nature in human form. I never enjoy trying to see pictures where no picture exists, but it is plain to an understanding born from above that ultimately all men will be manifest sons of God, for the man Christ Jesus, who is the Son of the living God, died and rose again to redeem and save and restore all men to God as His very own children. That will be the glorious consummation of God's ages-long purpose to make man in His image and after His likeness. Nothing short of that can suffice. Only then will God be ALL-IN-ALL!

The kind of man God wants is exemplified in His firstborn Son, Jesus. If we want to know what all men will eventually be like, we have only to look at Jesus! The manifest sons for whom all creation groans are but a firstfruit of God's great purpose of the ages! Jesus is the Alpha, the beginning, and we, the sons of God, are the firstfruits of His harvest. God has begun a work in us and He will bring it to completion! He has also begun a work in all creation, and He will finish and successfully consummate it to the praise of His glory. Not only did God have this plan in the beginning, but the very minutest details were all figured out before He ever began. "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the ages." God knew from the beginning what He was going to do, the blueprint was complete in every detail. Only fools begin to build without a blueprint, or without the ability to finish what they start. God is no fool! He is wisdom itself, the infinite mind and omnipotent power behind all things. Nothing has been left to chance! God has planned everything step by step. He has a timetable that He goes by. Things happen at exactly the time He wants them to happen, and precisely the way He planned for them to happen.

Jesus was born when the fullness of time was come. He was manifested to the world, fulfilled His sonship ministry, died, rose, and ascended to the throne of the majesty on high right at God's appointed time. He will be revealed in the fullness of His glory in His many brethren, the manifest sons of God, according to God's timetable. Only God knows that day and hour, but there is a specific moment in the Father's plan in which the sons will be revealed. Your faith will not bring it even one second before the time! Should your faith seem to hasten the day of manifestation, it will only be because the Father gave you a greater faith to bring it sooner than it would otherwise have come. GOD is the one in control! There was a time appointed for you to be born. God knew all about you before the beginning of the creation, because you are part of His plan. You were chosen to be in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4). God knows all about your life; He knows when you sit down and when you rise up, when you go out and when you come in. God had a blueprint for your life even from the foundation of the world. He has orchestrated every event of your life. God chose your parents, the places you would live, the people you would meet, the experiences you would encounter, the difficulties and trials you would face, the blessings you would receive. It was God, my brother, my sister, who arranged with infinite care the very moment of your conversion and the circumstances that set the stage for it! It was God who exposed you to every saint of God, to every ministry, to every revival, to every moving of His Spirit and manifestation of His power that influenced your growth and development in Him and shaped your life from realm to realm. It was God who organized the precise events by which you first heard the message of sonship and the kingdom of God! It was God who touched the strings of your heart and brought forth the melody of His truth from your inward parts! Not one little detail of these happenings was by accident.

I tell you the truth when I say that had I sought for a million years to find God, to know Him as I know Him, and His great plan and purpose, I never would have found Him! Raised as a boy in a strict Pentecostal home, way out in the country from a small town in south Alabama, I tell you that out of the billions of people on this planet, and the world of religious confusion, and the darkness of the carnal mind, the odds of me finding the reality of

sonship to God on my own are less than the odds of me winning the Texas Lottery! The odds of winning the lottery are one in eighteen million. The odds of me finding my heavenly Father and the truth of His great, eonian plan and purpose are one in billions! Daily I praise God with joy unspeakable and full of glory for the way HE has led and directed my path, for all the things HE set in my way, and brought into my experience, to bring me to Him, to give me an understanding that I might know Him as I know Him, to unveil Himself to me, to teach me His truth and His ways, to reveal His kingdom and His glory, to be a Father to me that I might be a son to Him. Oh, yes! I praise and thank and glorify His glorious name for it is HE, and HE ALONE who has brought me to this hour! And it is the Lord Himself who has brought you to this day!

This is the day that the Lord has made! The light of His countenance has shined upon us! God is raising up HIS MAN in the earth in this hour! There is One standing even now in the midst of the golden candlesticks, and He is like unto a son of man! This is God's Christ, the many-membered Son of Man! Truly the Father is bringing us into new dimensions of faith, wisdom, understanding, discernment, love, authority and power — the image of God! We know that we are on the threshold of a divine breakthrough into higher realms of life and glory! I hear the voice of this Man today as the voice of many waters, and I behold His countenance shining as the sun! The glory of the Lord is arising for the whole world to see, and the kingdom of God is coming with power and great glory! May your heart be encouraged this day to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord in every challenge that lies before you!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 23

ONE LIKE UNTO A SON OF MAN [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART TWENTY-THREE

THE IDEAL MAN ANGELS ASCENDING AND DESCENDING THE CORPORATE SON OF MAN

"And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the candlesticks one like unto a son of man." (Rev. 1:12-13)

It has been said, and I believe it, that Jesus Christ is the greatest man that ever lived. I confess, however, that it is with mingled feelings that I say it. For you see, it is, by the very nature of the case, only a half-truth! The other half, revealed clearly in the scriptures, and made known to us in the power of the Holy Spirit, is this, that Christ Jesus possessed divine powers which every man may share, which makes every man great, which will save the world and deliver every man into the image and likeness of God. It takes the whole truth to reveal Christ's greatness — the corporate, complete, many-membered Christ is the greatest man who has lived and shall ever live! This is the man John saw in vision while on Patmos! John beheld in spirit a picture, a representation, and what he saw was someone who was "like a son of man" or someone in human form. It was a personage that bore the likeness of a man. Yet this One he saw was something more than an ordinary man! This One had the features and appearance of a man, but there was a glory and a majesty of His person that transcended that of any natural man! This was the image of true manhood, the new man, the perfect man, man in the image and likeness of God!

With these thoughts in mind let us look a little closer at God's purpose in man. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness: and let them have dominion...so God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him..." (Gen. 1:26-27) God the Creator was invisible to His creation. But now, creation was about to see what God looked like! As the hands of a great potter God began to scrape together a lump of red clay and to shape a model after the similitude of Himself. He molded and formed His spiritual characteristics, senses, and abilities into an outward form in the lump of clay. He then stamped the likeness of His own divine attributes into the red clay of that which was earthy. There was only one problem with this man — he was but a model out of the earth. He could only express that which was spiritual in the form of a symbol, type, or shadow. But God already had the solution to that problem. Just at that moment God descended within Himself into the deepest depths of spirit-substance and filled His lungs with a breath from beyond the veil — He exhaled that breath of divine life and blew it into the nostrils of the man whom He had formed and man became a zoe psuche — a living soul!

In this procreative act God came down to the clay model and by the infusion of His divine spirit interfaced the visible and the invisible, the natural and the spiritual, the earthly and the heavenly, the human and the divine. He breathed into Adam the spirit-substance of Himself that made Adam higher than the animals, for the very essence that made him live was out of the very life of God Himself. Man, from that primordial beginning, had spirit-substance within him. When God breathed into him, that divine breath of God was the connection between the visible and the invisible. Heaven and earth came together in the person of a man! And now we have a unique creation that has access at all times to both the visible and the invisible. He walks with God in the spirit and can carry on an intellectual conversation with the almighty Creator. He is God's representative in the earth, yea, in the whole universe; the visible, tangible expression and revelation of the invisible, intangible God! All that God was and all that God could do by the power of His Spirit this man manifested on the visible, physical plane. He was God's image and God's glory revealed in an earthly dimension so that God might be seen, touched, and known by creation!

The power, which Adam had in the beginning, was tremendous beyond the finite comprehension of men who are today dissipated and weakened by six millenniums of sin and death. I know that many claim that God's proclamation to make man in His image and after His likeness was merely a prophecy, a foretelling of His purpose to be fulfilled in man in ages yet to come. But the record clearly shows, "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him" (**Gen. 1:27**). Then some say that God did indeed create man in his spirit in the image of God, but had yet to form him into the likeness of God. But the scripture plainly contradicts this notion, too! "This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him" (**Gen. 5:1**). Adam in his bright beginning bore the image and likeness of God without the sad effects of the fall and banishment from the Paradise of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. The astonishing power of that man in the image of God was present in his life, for the first man Adam was made a living soul (Gen. 2:7; I Cor. 15:45). Adam the living soul possessed awesome abilities, authority, and dominion. Before his fall, Adam was able to freely and fully exercise this ability, since it was imparted to him by the very breath or spirit of divine life!

THE IDEAL MAN

God made a man in the beginning. God has made and is making a new man in Christ Jesus! What was fully manifested and seen in Jesus is potential in every man. Something of that same divine spirit that was expressed in Him in all fullness is also in us. Something of that same divine likeness in which we were created is hidden in all men, for every man is spirit, soul, and body. If the spirit of man did not come from God, from whence came it? If it did come from God, is there not a substance of God in it? Those who deny that the seed of God is in every man must explain to me the origin and substance of man's spirit! Or prove to me that the unregenerated man has no spirit! The very power of regeneration is the quickening of the spirit of man! Not the giving of that spirit, but the quickening or germination of that spirit in man!

It has been said that in Jesus Christ the divine and the human meet, but this is also true of every one of us. He is the true humanity who is the Son of man and the Son of God. It is not that He is super-human, but that we are sub-human! But inasmuch as we are human at all we are akin to Him. The first man and the second man are both man. The first Adam and the last Adam are both Adam. Those in the first man are in part what the second man is in perfection. The whole purpose of our lives is to become human in the sense in which He was human; to be changed into the same likeness from one glorious conversion to another, even by the Lord who is the Spirit. We are being transformed into a perfect man, that is, into the PERFECT MANHOOD! Christ is growing up in us, and the whole process of life in Christ is one in which "He must increase, but I must decrease." Paul said it so well, "It pleased God to reveal HIS SON in me," which precisely describes the life of sonship, for the Son of God is the PERFECT MAN IN GOD'S IMAGE! It is as the Spirit of Christ becomes manifest within us that we approach nearer and nearer to the true humanity as it was seen in Jesus, "till we all come to a perfect manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (**Eph. 4:13**). His possession of our lives will grow, until we are fully "strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inward humanity," being "filled with all the fullness of God" (**Eph. 3:16,19**).

The people of God today have no greater need than the need to know the power and glory of CHRIST WITHIN. CHRIST is the image of God, the scripture says. I know these words may seem to be incredible, but they are the truth — the very first mention of the "image of God" is applied, not to Jesus Christ, but to our forefather Adam (Gen. 1:26). As we consider the wonderful advent of man created "in the image of God" we can only conclude that this is a spiritual man brought forth out of the very spirit-substance of God Almighty, and bearing His own divine nature, character, power, and attributes. The "image of God" is the nature of God reproduced in man! Thus, man is the true image of God. And Jesus Christ is the image of God because He is the true man, man as he was meant to be! Jesus revealed to lost and fallen men their true origin, heritage, and destiny. He came to show man what man really is, was intended to be, and through redemption (buying back to the original) shall be — THE IMAGE OF GOD! Christ is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last, man was he was and man as he shall be. In Jesus Christ you see man as he was in the beginning and as he ever shall be world without end — THE IMAGE OF GOD! Of Him it is written, "Who is the expression of the glory of God — the Light Being, the out-ricing of the divine — and He is the perfect imprint and very image of God's nature." (**Heb. 1:3**) (Amplified). Christ, and humanity in Christ, is like a ray of light that comes from the sun — man, the extension of God, emanates God!

When the Lord lowered man into this gross material realm man possessed, by the spirit, the divine potential to overcome the flesh, sanctify it, transform it, preserve it, infusing it with the qualities of life — holiness and incorruption. Jesus, the last Adam, the Ideal Man, came and demonstrated for us this very principle! This potential in man to rule the natural is shed forth in Jesus' mighty works — by His healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, casting out devils, forgiving sins, doing miracles, and raising the dead. He transcended by His life, words, and actions all the so-called laws of the material, mortal realm by turning water into wine, multiplying the loaves and fishes, calming the sea, walking on water, by His transfiguration and rising from the dead. The great significance of Jesus' mighty works will never ring clear in our spirits until we understand that He did not perform as a unique, different, higher kind of man — all His wonderful works were the example and teaching of what is **NORMAL FOR MAN IN HIS TRUE STATE AS THE IMAGE OF GOD!** As the last Adam Jesus demonstrated all that the first Adam lost — mankind's heritage as the sons and daughters of the Most High! Little wonder, then, that He confidently and joyfully proclaimed to His disciples, **"The works that I do shall ye do also; and greater works than these shall ye do!" (Jn. 14:12)**

By His resurrection Jesus proved the spirit within to be **OMNIPOTENT**, all-conquering, all-sufficient. He met and mastered death itself by the law of the spirit of life! He took no drugs to fight infection, inflammation, or viruses. He did not depend upon health food, pure air, pure water, vitamins, or herbs to renew depleted energies. He did not require the skill of a surgeon to heal His nail-pierced hands and feet, or to bind up His wounded side, so that He might remove the napkin and grave clothes and stride out of the tomb as before. Jesus vanquished every material obstacle, overcame every law of matter, conquered every power of corruption and death, and stepped forth from His gloomy grave, crowned with the glory of divine life and everlasting victory — the role model for each and every man and woman of Adam's race! Jesus' victory over sin, sickness, pain, limitation, death and the grave was for the enlightenment of every son of God and for the salvation of the whole world! Paul writes, **"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved BY HIS LIFE (within)."** (Rom. 5:10) And again, **"If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies BY HIS SPIRIT THAT DWELLETH IN YOU!"** (Rom. 8:11) Glory be to God and peace to the fainting hearts! Christ hath rolled away the stone from the door of human hope and faith, through the revelation and demonstration of Life in God, the life resident in the **SPIRITUAL MAN!** This, my beloved, is sonship!

The truth is that every higher plane of life to which man attains, and especially the highest life in Christ, is the true reality of manhood — there is no becoming of anything of a different order or nature that is not man. **MAN IS THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF GOD**, and as God changes and matures us from glory to glory there is the quickening and fulfilling of what man by the very essence of his nature is! The more man becomes irradiated with divinity, the more, not less, he is truly man. When I write such a truth it seems to me self-evident, yet we can only know it by the revelation of Jesus Christ. There is a true humanity, which Christ came to reveal, and in Him all the unattained possibilities are secured. Man is the son of God! The whole creation is groaning and travailing till man shall be complete, the sons of God unveiled! What is the spirit of such words as these? Is it not an assertion that in the measure our sonship is lacking, man is not truly man? You see, my beloved that divine life to which the sons of God are called is the fulfillment, not the abrogation or surrender, of our humanity! The Son of Man! What an awesome term that is!

It is not the Son of God, but the Son of man who has power on earth to forgive (send away) sins! (Mat. 9:6). It is the Son of man to whom is given all judgment and authority! (Jn. 5:22,27). It is the Son of man whom the Father seals! (Jn. 6:27). It is the Son of man who ascends! (Jn. 6:62). It is the Son of man who is glorified! (Jn. 12:23). The Son of man gives life to the world! (Jn. 6:53). The Son of man sits upon the throne of glory! (Mat. 19:28). All of this, and much more, is true of our Lord Jesus Christ, and all of this is true of every son who is a member of the corporate Son of man, the body of Christ! The sons of God are nothing but true men! "Nothing but the true man?" you ask. As if that were a little thing! As if man, with any inflow of divinity, could be, or could wish to be, anything more or different from man! As soon as we understand all this, what a great, clear thing redemption becomes! It is the buying back, the making of man to be himself — the calling up out of the depths of his being and the filling with vitality of that person which is truly HE — this is salvation!

We must see the truth as it is. Man is a son of God (Lk. 3:38) on whom the devil has laid his hand, not a child of the devil whom God is trying to save. The adversary came in, therefore he may be driven out! When he is

driven out, and man is purely man, then man is redeemed. The sons of God, to all who think the thought of Jesus, are the quickened, delivered, perfected, completed man. Jesus is Himself the firstborn among many brethren. God came to reveal Himself to men and here came Christ the man, Jesus the man. If you have seen Him, you have seen the Father! No man has seen God at any time, but the uniquely begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath revealed Him, hath led Him out where He can be seen!

In Jesus we see the glory of divine manhood. We have wondered at the fact that Jesus could do such mighty works, that He could feed five thousand people from five small loaves and two fish, that He could calm the raging sea with a word, walk on water, cleanse lepers, heal the multitudes and raise the dead. It amazes us — and we think of Him as Almighty God, whom He is. But Jesus did none of these things as God! God in Christ was simply a true man again! That, precious friend of mine, is why all the laws of nature and the elements of the world and the powers of creation were subservient to Him! It was to man that God gave the dominion over all the works of His hands! Jesus was a true man, as the world had never seen man. He is the image of God, as the Son of man. The false man, Adam, is weak because of a lost dominion. But this man, Christ, the second man who is also the last Adam, is more real than any other man! Now He seeks brethren who will become in Him the real men of the earth. He could come with hosts of angels to bring His kingdom to pass in the earth. But, no! He doesn't want angels. Angels haven't been given dominion over anything (Heb. 2:5-8). Man, not creatures from other worlds, must be God's kingdom on earth!

Our world today needs the new men that Christ makes. New men are the key to everything else that must be renewed. Therefore the making of new men is the first priority of the kingdom of God! Only by the making of new men can the Kingdom of Heaven come to earth! Our world desires better schools, a better press, better government, a better business world, a better economy, better living conditions, better health, better institutions, better communities. At every point we are driven to the need for new men — a NEW CREATION! Through two world wars men dreamed and talked of the coming of a better world when nations would lay down their arms and begin to build that better world. More than half a century has gone by since the last World War and it is not only the same old world, it is a much worse world. Old Adam can never build a better world! Getting rid of communism and terrorism is no sign of a new world. That is but the militarism and politics of natural men. We cannot build a new world out of men with old dispositions, old attitudes, old hearts, and old natures. The new world for which all creation groans and travails can only be fulfilled by new men with renewed minds, new hearts, and a new spirit!

Regeneration brings a mighty change within humanity — the destruction of the Adamic creation and the establishment of the Christ within. This reality was accomplished by Jesus on the cross and through His burial and resurrection, but is made experiential in each of us through the present inworking of God. In one of his inspired writings along this line Paul Mueller says, "Only God can remove this 'man' from us. This is His battle, not ours! By the Spirit, we know the Lord is now focusing on this 'man' who is the cause of the manifestation of all evil and darkness. When once we are free of this carnal nature, there will be nothing within us that can respond to the devil's evil thoughts. Then the seed that we are shall be pure seed, identical to the Christ Seed, which shall be planted among men to establish the new creation of Christ in the earth. So shall the kingdom of God be manifest with power in all the earth, and then in the universe, that God may be all in all. And when this carnal, sinful nature is eventually removed from all mankind, Satan will have no place anywhere on this earth to plant his evil ideas and see them fulfilled. He will be a defeated foe! Then the cause of all the world's problems will no longer exist, and mankind will live the Christ Life with peace, joy and victory.

"The new order of the fullness of the kingdom of God will be free of the carnal nature, which is the man of sin, the real anti-christ. And God is now beginning this new creation order with you and me. He will no longer tolerate the evil that has been promoted in the world by the Adamic man. The Lord is not only revealing the manifestations of this evil 'man,' He also is going right to the heart of the matter. The Lord will take him out of us root, stock and branches, and eventually out of all others, so that he will never again trouble the world. The true interest and purpose of the Holy Spirit of God for His elect in this hour is not the results and effects of all the evil in the world, but rather with the cause of all evil. The Spirit of God is now dealing with the cause of all unrighteousness! And all who are in harmony with His Spirit are also in full agreement with the work of the Spirit of God for this great day" — end quote.

ANGELS ASCENDING AND DESCENDING

When the patriarch Jacob was fleeing from the wrath of his brother, Esau, he went out of Beersheba, on the border of the desert, and walked alone toward a land far to the north, carrying his staff in his hand. One evening, just about sunset, he came to a place among the mountains, more than sixty miles distant from his home. And as he had no bed to lie down upon, he took a stone and rested his head upon it for a pillow and lay down to sleep. We would think that a hard pillow, but Jacob was very tired and soon fell asleep. And on that night Jacob had a wonderful dream! In his dream he saw a ladder whose steps reached up to heaven from the earth where he lay; and angels were going up and coming down upon the steps. And above the ladder, he saw the Lord God standing.

And God said to Jacob, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac your father; and I will be your God, too. The land where you are lying all alone shall belong to you and to your children after you; and your children shall spread abroad over the lands, east and west and north and south, like the dust of the earth: and in your family all the world shall receive a blessing. And I am with you in your journey, and I will keep you where you are going and will bring you back to this land. I will never leave you and I will surely keep my promise to you." In the morning Jacob awaked from his sleep and he said, "Surely the Lord is in this place and I did not know it! How awesome is this place! I thought that I was all alone, but God has been with me. This place is none other than the house of God; it is the gate of heaven!"

The Lord Jesus makes a striking reference to Jacob's ladder in His address to Nathanael as recorded in the gospel of John. "And He saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." (Jn. 1:51) What did this statement mean? It could mean nothing else than that the Lord Jesus regarded Himself as the fulfillment of that which had been symbolized in the patriarch's vision of the ladder set up between earth and heaven. Spiritually understood it means that Christ is the ladder — the connecting link between earth and heaven, between man and God, between flesh and spirit, between humanity and divinity. The Son of man is Jacob's ladder! Christ is, within Himself, where earth and heaven meet! Nothing ascends to God, and nothing comes from God, but in and through Him. From earth to the Father's throne in the heavenlies the word is, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." And from heaven to earth the word is, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son..." (Heb. 1:1-2) "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father."

No man can come to the Father, to see and know the Father, except by the sonship that is in Christ. It is through what Jesus was and is, by apprehending the spiritual reality manifest in Him, by laying hold in faith upon the life that He is, that we penetrate the inmost heart of all existence and experience union with God. The angels of God — the messengers of heaven — have been passing to and fro between the heart of God and the heart of man in all ages. There is that within the spirit of man which will not let us rest contentedly in what is only of the earth, earthy; our angels do always behold the face of the Father; our yearnings and aspirations are ever ascending heavenward, reaching out for the kingdom of heaven. From the side of God the traffic has been no less constant. The shining ones are ever streaming down, the word of God is ever being spoken out of the heavens, the anointing is ever being shed forth. And now God has come to earth in Christ, and Christ is bringing us to the Father — many sons brought to glory! It is in Christ that heaven and earth meet, and the meeting place is man. Heaven is opened and the angels of God are ascending and descending upon the Son of man!

It is here in Christ, the Son of man, that man's true home, long shut to him, is now opened, and all that man has lost is restored in and through the second man, the last Adam, the Son of man. Heaven, the realm from which the spirit of every man was birthed, is again opened to him. Lowered into this gross material realm, by the flesh of the first man Adam, heaven was closed and man was shut out of the Paradise where heaven and earth merge, shut up in bondage to his outward nature and consciousness, and heaven and all spiritual things of the celestial world were lost to him. But now, praise God! Heaven has been opened to man, and again he can see that bright world of Life and Light and Love, from which he has so long been banished. In Christ he is made a new creature, quickened from above, to know again the presence of God and be conscious of heavenly companions, angels of God, ascending and descending upon him.

Jacob's Bethel is Adam's Garden of Eden, and both are our life in Christ. Oh, yes — it is a wondrous thing that in Christ, the ladder touching the earth beneath and the heavens above, we should in spirit hold direct and conscious communion with the saints of all ages, for truly the veil is rent and we are now come "unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Heb. 12:22-24)

We have found the gate of heaven! The gate of heaven is Christ, the Son of man! He is the ladder that brings us to the Father and to His throne in the heavenlies! God is seen and revealed at the top of this ladder! The inhabitants of that heavenly, spiritual world ascend and descend upon us in this realm where heaven and earth meet! If this realm seems dim to you, my friend, then know of a certainty that the old carnal man of the flesh must pass away and you must find your identity in the new man of the Spirit. This is the path of our transformation! As we ascend in the Spirit, we are using Christ, the ladder, to approach our Father and His throne and His world. When we ascend in the Spirit to the highest heavens, we see that it is our home where once our spirit did reside, and it is the world regained for us by the Son of man who came down from heaven. "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." (Jn. 3:13)

Can we not see by this that Christ is our access, our ladder! Take advantage of the glorious privilege we have in Christ! Upon the Son of man we may ascend into the very presence of the Father and there learn of Him all that pertains to His will for us. There we can experience communion, by the Holy Spirit, with all the saints of both heaven and earth! We are all one spirit in Christ! The open heavens are before us! As we ascend in the Spirit, we see the throne of God and the dominion of His kingdom that is coming to earth. We also hear the new word of the kingdom that the Father would teach us, His sons. It is there that we see all things as they really are. It is there in Christ in the Spirit that all mysteries are revealed. We are changed as we ascend, and we are made ministers of His kingdom as we descend! The glory of God in Jesus Christ shall fill us to overflowing, transforming us within and without, and setting creation free!

THE CORPORATE SON OF MAN

Oh, what unspeakable glory it would have been to have stood with John that day on lonely Patmos to behold this One like unto a son of man — this greater than man MAN — the Christ of God! May the Holy Spirit give us wisdom and understanding to see that when the Bible speaks of "the Son of man," it is not referring exclusively to our Lord Jesus the Christ. The deeper truth is, all the growing and maturing sons of God are also part of the "Son of man" company, for they are bone of His bones, flesh of His flesh, spirit of His spirit, the body of Christ. They are also the completeness of Him that filleth all in all! This One that John saw in the midst of the candlesticks is the Christ, the complete Christ. It is Jesus the glorious head with eyes as lamps of fire complete with all His many brethren all the way down to His beautiful feet burning as though in a furnace of fire! And when the voice of this glorious One rang out, it was not the voice of the man of Nazareth whose voice thrilled the thousands by the sea of Galilee, but the voice as the sound of many waters — many peoples — many sons brought to His glory!

With what eloquence did George Hawtin write of this One: "Was not Jesus the Alpha formed within the womb of Mary to come forth in manifestation as Christ, the head of the body? Should it then seem strange that the body of Christ, the Omega, should be formed in the midst of the church woman? Was not this the thing that John was seeing by revelation? John, who had known Jesus so intimately while He was here on earth, could plainly see the identical likeness, but his spirit told him that this revelation of Christ's glory was something far beyond anything he had ever known. This was the Christ in His fullness, the Alpha and the Omega together, the First and the Last in one, Jesus of Nazareth the Head, one body with a vast family of sons, all speaking with the harmony of a mighty symphony, for the voice he heard was as the sound of many waters."

Those who are called of God to sonship, as members of God's corporate Christ, are seen in the Spirit as the Son of man company. All that Jesus spoke of the Son of man is true of these as well as of Him! A whole year

of articles could be spent exploring just that one awesome thought, but we cannot dwell there. A dear friend in California shared the following experience which beautifully expresses the truth of which I now speak, and points clearly to the reality of that One whom John beheld in the midst of the candlesticks. "Several months ago as I walked about performing my daily tasks, as I lay upon my bed at night, in times of prayer and meditation before the Lord, or caught up in feverish activity, there began to break upon me the vision of a heavenly man. There in my mind's eye, I was beholding with unbelievable realness, the form of a man — gigantic in size — silhouetted against the dark heavenly background. The sky around him was extremely dark, and it was as though I could see through him, for the dark sky could also be seen behind him. But there, etched against the sky, outlined with a brilliant light, was that form, daily impressed upon me, constantly with me, and I began to cry out with much depth of feeling, 'Oh, God, what is it?' Somehow, I was made to know that in some measure I was beholding the resurrected Christ! I am certain that it was only a glimpse of that which is later to be revealed to all those of us who wait for His appearing, but it was a glimpse that lifted my sights to look beyond that which we see in the immediate earth-realm.

"As that vision was daily presented to me, I began to know within the depths of my being that that was a resurrection body — and that it was, in fact, the body of Christ which arose from the grave in a glorious victory over death. More than that, I was made to know by the Spirit that somehow, in some mysterious manner that it is THAT BODY — that very same body that arose from the grave and ascended to the Father — that we are being fitted into! How earthy we have been, for we have looked at the divided, carnal, worldly, un-unified camp of believers on the earth and have said, 'Behold the body of Christ.' Never have I been more convinced of anything than this: verily we are the body of Christ in that we are the materials that are being fitted into that glorious body! But THAT MAN, the GLORIFIED MAN in the heavenlies, is the body of Christ, and it is as we are fitted into that Man that it can truly be said, 'Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.' The place that He has gone to prepare is the place IN HIMSELF — in that glorified, resurrected body!"

The mystery of Christ! What could be more solemn or sacred than that? The mystery is just this — as we eat His flesh and drink His blood the resurrected body of Jesus is raised up within us as the new and glorified Son of man! God is preparing a body, a perfect man, the Son of man company to minister to the multitudes of earth as ONE NEW MAN in the fullness of God! John saw this corporate Son of man, which is Jesus in and through His many-membered body, even His own resurrected and glorified body raised up within us, in the midst of the seven churches. That shows that this body of the matured Christ is gathered out of the church, out of the church age, and truly stands "in the midst" of the churches, but yet not "in" the seven churches! There is a deep mystery here. It is completely impossible to portray a divine image in the mirror of human words. Earthly illustrations can but dimly describe things that are celestial and divine.

But can we not see here the very same picture we see in chapter twelve of the Revelation of the manchild birthed by the woman? The manchild is of the woman, from the woman, out of the woman, yet not the woman! In like manner, the "Son of man" is "in the midst" of the churches, but yet is not the churches! Just as the woman goes into the wilderness while the manchild is caught up to the throne, so the seven churches bear the glory of the seven golden candlesticks in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle, whereas the "One like unto a son of man" dwells in the radiant glory of the resurrected, ascended, and enthroned Christ of God! His is the glory of the Shekinah that shines in the Holiest of all! Do you see the contrast? The seven golden candlesticks have a flickering flame of fire from the oil within. But the One like unto a son of man has a countenance as the sun shining in its strength in the blinding light of which John fell at His feet as dead!

Christ is standing in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks representing something. The positioning of the candlestick in the Tabernacle in the wilderness has some relevance. You will notice that the candlestick was not in the Most Holy Place, but was located in what was known as the Holy Place, which is the area of the Tabernacle just before the Most Holy Place. This positioning of the seven-branched candlestick gives us some special truth about the church of this age. The church does not dwell in the Holiest of all — the place of all fullness. It does not walk in the realities of the third compartment of the Most Holy Place, nor in the blessings of the third feast of the Feast of Tabernacles, nor in the power of the third day of Full Resurrection Life. Look around you at the church world — can any deny that this is the truth? The church age has remained in the second compartment of the Holy Place, where the candlestick dwells; in the second feast, the Feast of Pentecost; and in the second day which falls short of Perfection!

It is not that the way into the Holiest has not been opened and available during the church age; it is, rather, that the church has not risen up to enter in! "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh...let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith..." (Heb. 10:19-22) Believers of the church age have with one accord sold themselves woefully short of all the great provisions of God! Christ has entered into that which is within the veil, the absolute fullness of God! He has opened up the way for men to enter into a full and complete salvation, even the realm of sonship. Jesus is the apostle of our faith. He is the sign Son, the firstborn, the pioneer and forerunner who has entered in for us. All who are to come to sonship shall follow Him through the veil and come into that wonderful fullness of the resurrected, ascended, glorified, and enthroned Lord! Millions prefer to remain in the dim flickering light of the candlestick in the Holy Place before the veil, but a people has risen up in this great day of the Lord to follow the One like unto a son of man into the radiant glory of the Holiest of all!

It is now time, above all times, for us to mightily stress these truths! I see no possibility of any long delay until the hour of the manifestation of the sons of God becomes a reality in the earth. This manifestation is the glory, not of the indwelling Spirit as the oil in the candlestick, but of the blazing Shekinah over the mercy seat in the Holiest of all; the glory of the fullness of the Feast of Tabernacles; and the resurrection life and power of the Third Day (Hos. 6:2; Lk. 13:32). The realm of sonship is an entirely new realm beyond the attainments of any in the candlestick realm!

Many priests could minister in the Holy Place, where stood the candlestick, the table of showbread, and the golden altar of incense. But only one man, the High Priest, was called to minister in the Holiest of all where dwelt the Ark of the Covenant and the glory of the God of Israel. Under the old, Pentecostal, church order men ministered by the light of the indwelling anointing in the dimness of the Holy Place realm, to call out a people for the Lord's name, to walk there in the light of the Pentecostal anointing, to eat of the bread of Christ upon the table of showbread, which is the word of God, and to offer up the spiritual sacrifices of praise and worship at the golden altar of incense before the veil.

The candlestick identifies the church with the Holy Place, for it was there that the candlestick gave its light. So you see, when we enter by the church into the Holy Place of the Tabernacle, we come into a new spiritual dimension where the lampstand begins to enlighten us, so we have a new illumination or quickening by the Spirit and the Word. The Lord did indeed light our candle and enlighten our darkness with the anointing of Christ! Now, we see new and glorious things while darkness abounds throughout the world. Christ has lit our candle, which is our spirit, with His glory to dispel the darkness within us and around us. He has also bid us enter, in our great and glorious High Priest, into that which is within the veil! And He is arising upon us, as we enter in Him beyond the veil, in the brightness of His life until we shall be totally transformed from the light of the candlestick into the brilliance of Him who walks in the midst of the candlesticks, whose countenance shines as the noonday sun! It is in this light that we are being brought from limitation into fullness, from the earthly into the heavenly, and changed from the corruptible into the incorruptible, from mortality into immortality!

The Holy Place of the candlestick is a unique position: at its entrance it touches the Outer Court, and on the other side it touches the Most Holy Place. In the Outer Court we are redeemed by the blood of Jesus at the brazen altar of sacrifice, and thus brought to a personal reconciliation to God. The Outer Court is a personal experience! It is where the sinner meets God one on one and first experiences the Lord as salvation. From there we go on into the Holy Place, into the fellowship of the church, as the corporate candlestick, where we are enlightened by the Spirit, strengthened by the showbread, and brought to a spiritual life of communion, prayer, praise and worship upon the golden altar of incense. Here, our understanding is enlightened that we have come beyond the Outer Court — yet we can still touch it. We have not as yet experienced the surpassing glory of the Holiest of all realms beyond the veil — but we can also touch it, and can enter only from the Holy Place. As we then pass in our High Priest beyond the veil we step beyond the old, Pentecostal, church order to enter from glory to glory into the fullness and power of the GLORIFIED AND ENTHRONED CHRIST! This is the throne realm that John beheld when he was caught up in the Spirit from the candlestick realm and saw a throne set in heaven, and One sat upon the throne. It is here that we reign with Christ in the kingdom of God!

In the new order of the kingdom of God the elect shall bring Life to the whole creation by the power of His resurrection. God has determined to fill the earth with new creation men — matured into the likeness of Jesus Christ! God gave Adam, the first man, the power to multiply and reproduce himself. It was through Eve, his wife, that his image was reproduced and birthed into the world. In like manner, the same power has been given to the second man, the last Adam, to reproduce Himself in the earth. And God has given this second man a wife — the church — that through her His image might be reproduced and birthed into the world. But that which is birthed is not the church — it is the very image and glory of the Christ of God! Little does this world know the glory that is about to come. A manchild is ready to be born! A Son of man is ready to appear in the midst of the golden candlesticks — the churches!

This child, this One like a son of man, shall overcome all enemies, and put both sin and death forever under his feet! He shall be caught up to the throne of God, to the realm of irresistible authority and omnipotent power! The powers of the heavens shall be shaken, thrones will topple, and the earth shall reel to and fro like a drunken man! No remote corner of the earth will remain untouched by that which God is doing! God's MAN IN HIS IMAGE shall take the kingdom, and shepherd all nations with a rod of iron! The earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord! The knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea! The curse shall be broken! All flesh shall see the salvation of the Lord! All nations and all kindreds shall come and worship before Him! Creation shall be delivered! Sorrow and sighing shall flee away! Pain and tears shall be wiped away from off all faces! Prisons will become schools and policemen will become teachers! Morticians, funeral homes, caskets, and cemeteries will all become relics of the past! Righteousness and peace shall fill the earth with joy and gladness! The nations shall beat their swords into plowshares and nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more! This shall come in spite of all the unbelief of men with little mediocre minds and in spite of all their efforts against it! It shall come by the power of the Spirit of God and the authority of His sons! The mouth of the Lord hath spoken, and none can nullify it! He hath purposed, and He will bring it to pass!

For two thousand years the church has been unable to deliver creation from the bondage of corruption because it has dwelt in the twilight zone of weakness, carnality, sickness, sin and death. But the sons of God shall partake of the fullness of Christ's resurrection life and power and glory, to become the flowing of His abundant, torrential and overflowing River of Life! The sons of God, or the Son of man company, are not just "men" after the flesh; they are men and women of God who have followed on to know the Lord, becoming spiritually mature "men" in the Spirit. They have become part of that spiritually masculine "manchild," whether male or female after the flesh. Flesh and blood has nothing to do with this! These have all been gloriously changed and wondrously transformed into the image of Christ the Lord!

Those who have spiritual insight can see the activity of Christ in His sons! They have heard the voice as of a trumpet, and have turned to see this One in the midst, and they are beholding the glory of Christ in the Spirit! Today, in this very hour, He is walking in the midst of the churches with eyes of discernment as a flame of fire, His feet of judgment burning like brass in a furnace, His voice of revelation speaking as the sound of many waters, and His glory upon His countenance as the sun shining in its strength. And we are there with Him, and in Him, by the Spirit! As the Lord walks in the midst of His people, He is proclaiming His Headship, His Lordship, and His Kingship. He is preparing a people to rule and reign with Him in His kingdom and bring that kingdom to pass in all the earth with power and great glory! Hallelujah!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 24

ONE LIKE UNTO A SON OF MAN [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART TWENTY-FOUR

HIS GARMENT
GRIT ABOUT THE PAPS
GIRT WITH A GOLDEN GIRDLE
JOINT DOMINION

"And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto a son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." (Rev. 1:12-16)

If we attempt to visualize with our natural mind the description that the Spirit gives us through John, we will come to confusion. An ancient artist has left us a canvas, which now is in one of the museums of Europe, attempting to portray Christ in heaven according to the description here in the Revelation. The result is certainly not a masterpiece! One does not need to view the canvas in order to realize how unrealistic is the portrait of a man with hair as white as snow, with face shining like the sun, with flames coming from the eye-sockets, a sword out of his mouth, with feet of burnished brass and with seven stars in his right hand. Such a picture is, indeed, absurd, and the very incongruity should teach us that the understanding of this passage lies in another direction.

Our text is one of the richest in all of Holy Writ! In fact, it is so profusely strewn with precious jewels and gems, diamonds and gold, that one hardly knows where to begin to search its treasures. Indeed, if texts could be mountain ranges then, truly, this is the veritable Himalayas of scripture! In the midst of all these mighty peaks there is yet one more, reaching out above them all. It stands out in majestic solemnity, reaching high into the heavens, perpetually enwrapped with snow and surrounded by clouds of mystery. It is the mighty mountain of God's Christ — the greatest revelation in all the world, the most profound, the most sublime. There, its snow peaks call us to ascend; they bid us to come up higher; they challenge us to climb the mountain of God!

The beloved John heard a voice and he turned to see the voice. When he turned he did not see a six-foot, blue eyed, Jesus. He saw a multi-faceted description of One who transcended any natural man! His garment, His head and hair, his eyes, his feet, his voice, his hands — each of these is a unique aspect of the revelation of Jesus Christ! This revelation of Jesus Christ will produce an unveiling of Him in the midst of the church! The purpose of the book of Revelation is not to get a revelation of some "coming Christ" somewhere out in the future, but to produce the revelation of Jesus Christ in the midst of His saints. The message of this book is more than mere information — it is destined to lead you and bring you to the unveiling of Jesus Christ within yourself.

HIS GARMENT

"Clothed with a garment down to the foot..." (Rev. 1:13)

There are many folk who like the book, "The Robe." Perhaps you like it, but I do not. Actually that robe that Jesus wore in the days of His flesh had no romantic history. I am sorry, but it did not. Some burly Roman soldier won the robe, and with summer coming on in a very hot climate he could not bear its heat and threw it into a corner. One day someone came in, picked it up, and threw it away. You say, "Oh my, that's awful!" No, my friend that is what happened to it. It has no romantic history, no special sacredness or powers, because

there was no merit in it at all. It was just a piece of cloth, no more sacred than the dirt under Jesus' fingernails. God saw to it that it disappeared! But thank God, there is another robe, the robe of Christ's incorruptible life, and that robe does have a romantic story!

In the scriptures, as often also in our modern world, a person's garment denoted his rank, position, office or wealth. This One like a son of man was clothed with a garment from the head to the feet. It was one garment for one body of many members! What is this garment? It is, first of all, the robe of righteousness. It is my conviction that it is linen, pure and white. It is the characteristic of Christ's righteousness. Every son of God is to walk as He walked. We, too, must be covered with His righteousness! Our thinking, our speaking, our actions, our attitudes, our ways should be all righteous. We are being clothed in the robe of His righteousness! "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." We will never get this picture straight until we are able to see that He was clothed with a garment down to the foot. You see, this garment is not waist length, or knee length, it goes all the way down to the feet. The feet represent the walk. The garment of righteousness goes all the way down to His walk — to our walk. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet (spiritual walk) of them that publish the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things." (Isa. 52:7) The beauty is in the walking out of the spirit and ways of God. How beautiful are their feet!

This One like a son of man is clothed with righteousness because He is the righteousness of God, He is the Lord our righteousness! He is so clothed "down to the foot" so that there is no exposure of flesh. We also are being so clothed in the robe of righteousness until no one sees our nakedness, no one knows us after the flesh, no one sees us, but only Christ can be seen! Hear now the inspired message communicated to the church at Laodicea, which describes as nothing else could the truth of the vital necessity of being clothed in the righteousness of Christ. "I counsel thee to buy of me...white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness (exposed flesh) do not appear." (Rev. 3:18) We must be so clothed upon until men cannot see our naturalness, our weaknesses, faults, and failures, but in seeing us they see HIM — the glory of HIS nature, the quality of HIS life, the beauty of HIS character, the greatness of HIS authority, the ineffableness of HIS love, the inexhaustibleness of HIS patience, His kindness, His grace, and His mercy. We are being clothed down to the foot!

This garment is, furthermore, the robe of royalty, the robe of the priest, and the robe of the judge. The qualities of king, priest, and judge are all seen in the characteristics of this One like a son of man! The robes of Aaron were robes of glory and beauty. The robe of the king bespoke his dignity, honor, and power. The robe of the judge set him apart from all men as the voice of wisdom, discernment, and authority. How much more shall the robe of the Alpha and Omega display the honor, power, and glory of God's Christ — Head and body!

JESUS IS KING, PRIEST, AND JUDGE. The Lord Jesus is a Priest who is ever merciful and compassionate. He will and does meet the needs of man, but He is also the King who demands your obedience to His wise and sovereign will. Surely He will meet your needs, but He will also demand your obedience! God is teaching His sons about both dimensions of the Melchizedek Priesthood, for Melchizedek was a king-priest. We cannot project a loving Priest apart from the firm discipline of His Rulership. We cannot preach the gospel of the kingdom without the mercy, compassion, and unconditional love of His Priesthood. And we cannot have Kingship and Priesthood with a Judge. No government is complete without all three. Christ is the one who stands and judges among His people. And know ye not that the saints shall judge the world! "And judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom" (Dan. 7:22).

Every man and woman called to sonship must learn that the firstborn Son is Priest, King, and Judge! There is a great error abroad in the land today. There is a projection of a one-sided gospel that appeals to the flesh. This is how it comes across: "God loves you, God wants to forgive you, bless you, deliver you, meet all your needs, solve all your problems, prosper you, fill you to overflowing with every good thing." And that is tremendously true! But if that is where our message stops, then we are in trouble! If we make that priestly truth our priority, we will produce a race of spoiled spiritual brats who are immature and selfish, takers and not givers. And when the clouds of adversity and trouble roll in, when the storms of tribulation and fiery trial break in unbridled fury upon their land, as they surely will, these poor folk will be frustrated, fearful, upset, and angry with God when He doesn't come running when they quote their favorite "faith" scriptures. An unbalanced presentation of truth

will produce unbalanced saints. And the land is filled with these today! They are excitedly awaiting the "rapture"! Jesus Christ wants to reveal Himself in the midst of His body not only as Priest, but also as King and Judge! He wears the governmental garment of all the branches of the kingdom of God! He is the King eternal and invincible. He is the Priest for the ages full of compassion and mercy. He is the Judge who discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart, who loves those He chastens, but scourges every son whom He receiveth! He is arising in glory in the midst of the churches in this very hour IN HIS NEW MAN FOR THE NEW AGE to reveal Himself in the SON OF MAN COMPANY as the merciful High Priest, as the great and conquering King, and as the Judge of all, and thus all shall know Him! Every tongue shall confess and every knee shall bow and all men shall partake of the blessings, power and glory that flow from God's anointed Kings, Priests, and Judges — His Kingdom!

Let all who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship know that the principles of this anointed kingdom are being established in the lives of God's elect in this new kingdom day. The Lord must be Priest today! He must be King today! He must be Judge today! The scriptures call Him a "righteous Governor." Every son of God must thoroughly and experientially know Him as Priest, King, and Judge. Why does He desire us to know Him in this way? Why is it His purpose to raise up His kingdom in our hearts? So that He can make US priests, kings, and judges! He is establishing His throne in us and is making us kings in order that HE may be able to appear and manifest Himself in the midst of the kings as THE KING OF ALL THE KINGS. The world will never know Him as the King of kings until there are kings among whom He can stand and reveal Himself as King of the kings. The world will never know Him as High Priest until there is a priesthood among whom He can stand and reveal Himself as the High Priest of the priesthood. There is no use in proclaiming Jesus as a High Priest in the heavens unless there can be a priesthood through which His love, compassion, and mercy flow out upon the earth. The world will never know Him as Judge until there are judges who have experienced His judgment within, among whom He can reveal Himself in His discernment and judicial authority! He will not reconcile the world until He has reconciled all things within His body! He will not reign through you until first He reigns over you! Do not think you will be puffed up when you come into sonship — "Ah, when I become a manifested son!" When you become a son that is just the beginning of the mighty working of Christ within as Priest, King, and Judge. When He has discerned all, judged all, reconciled all, and subjected all within us, that is just the beginning of the opportunity for the revelation of the glory of the Son of man who is clothed with a garment down to the foot! In these wonderful Priests, Kings, and Judges the demands of God's righteousness and holiness and the outflow of God's compassion, mercy, grace, and love are brought together. This is the power, glory, and authority of His kingdom!

In the Bible the ones whom God raised up as judges for His people did more than just settle disputes between individuals or hand down and execute judicial decisions. These judges were actually THE DELIVERERS OF GOD'S PEOPLE! There is one book in the Bible that is specifically named "Judges." As a book it is a thriller! Therein we read of the fearless exploits of those mighty men whom God, "the Judge of all the earth," raised up for the salvation and deliverance of His oppressed and afflicted people. Hail the Day of Judgment that began when God raised up a judge to execute judgment for His afflicted ones! For those judges were, indeed, saviours of Israel by a special anointing of the Spirit of the Lord.

Those wonderful judges were raised up long millenniums ago for the deliverance of Israel; Christ the Judge stands in the midst of His people for the deliverance of every son of God; and now, in this glorious new day, God is preparing a mighty COMPANY OF JUDGES whose responsibility it shall be to JUDGE THE WORLD in righteousness! "And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given unto them." (Rev. 20:4,6) **"To him that overcometh will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron."** (Rev. 2:26-27) "With righteousness shall He judge the world, and the people with equity." (Ps. 98:9) Thank God! The very thought of a world judged and governed by sons of God in the image of Jesus Christ leaves me absolutely breathless! Words become totally inadequate and human ability to articulate the wonder of such a thing fails completely. Yet I know it shall become a glorious and eternal reality, for the Priest, the King, and the Judge has entered powerfully into my life to set up His government within. What deliverance has been effected! What changes have been wrought! What transformations have been accomplished! What glory has flooded my soul! The wonderful work carried forth in His sons in this hour is but the firstfruit, the pledge, the foretaste, the seal, the proof, and the prototype of what He has promised for all mankind!

The priests, kings, and judges that shall reign with Christ in His kingdom are now in preparation for their awesome task. In the midst of the candlesticks can be seen this One taking form! Yes, you shall judge and govern the world, saints...but you will do it in humility and with a broken heart full of compassion and love. The first aspect of the ministry of the judges in the kingdom of God is judgment. This work, however, shall be swiftly followed by the ministries of mercy, deliverance, reconciliation, and restoration.

A beautiful picture of this is presented in chapter seven of the Revelation. "I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads" (Rev. 7:1-3). So many truths come pouring into the soul from this passage, and we shall not pause to elaborate upon them, but I am sure the reader can discern in the action of the four angels the ministry of judgment. Four is the number of that which is world-wide or universal, and winds which blow with devastating force are the symbol of judgment. Judgment is ready to come forth upon the whole world of the sea and the earth, which represent the multitudes of humanity that dwell spiritually in the sea, the lowest realms of wickedness and degradation, and those who dwell in the earth, that realm which is lower than heaven, but higher than the sea, the realm of the carnal mind which finds expression in the institutions of a moral society — religious systems, education, politics, economic and social orders of this world.

But wait! An angel ascending from the east, arising as the sun announcing God's new day, cries loudly, "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." There can be no doubt that the seal in the forehead of God's bond-slaves is the mind of Christ. Can we not see by this that no man is qualified to judge the world until he has been sealed in his forehead with the mind of Christ. Only the glorious mind of Christ brings the balance between mercy and judgment. It was, then, of this Christ-mind that David prophesied when he said, "Surely His salvation is nigh...mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." (Ps. 85:9-10) Mercy and truth are met together — praise God, what a summit meeting!

These words are pregnant with meaning. When one contemplates the impossibility of such a union, it is an overwhelming thought that mercy and truth are met together. Truth is harsh and demanding; mercy is lenient and lax. Truth condemns and devours; mercy covers and exonerates. Only when one has intermingled the ministries of priest, king, and judge are these incompatible forces MET TOGETHER! Partakers with Christ in this heavenly calling, when one actually becomes an ANOINTED JUDGE, he shares in that omniscient mind that discerns the true nature of all things, and therefore judges righteously. Partakers with Christ in this heavenly calling, when one actually becomes an ANOINTED KING, he shares that dominion, that power that is in the Spirit and by the Spirit. Partakers with Christ in this heavenly calling, when one actually becomes an ANOINTED PRIEST, he shares that unlimited outflow of mercy, compassion, and unqualified love that is derived from the heart of our great High Priest. Only one possessed of this three-fold mind of Christ is qualified to control the four winds of judgment that blow upon the sea and the earth! Only the sons of God sealed in their foreheads with the mind of Christ will be able to both judge the world in righteousness and reconcile all things to God! All others would, if given the chance, pour out unbridled vengeance, wrath, and damnation upon the rebellious!

Would to God that all who call themselves sons of God would truly see that by judgment and mercy God shall reconcile and restore all men unto Himself. His judgments are not vindictive; they are purposeful, remedial, and redemptive! Some do not believe that all nations will be saved and that all creation shall be gloriously reconciled to God! I do not hesitate to tell you that their unbelief shall not make the faith of God of none effect, nor shall it hinder God's program one bit. Their refusal to embrace God's glorious plan shall only disqualify them from being a part of that wonderful company of the sons of God through which the redemption and restoration shall be effected. I feel a great pity for those who cherish the beautiful hope of sonship, yet fail to permit the perfect work of God's grace and mercy, mingled with His corrective judgments, to be administered with divine purpose upon every man and every nation. Those who would damn men to eternal torture without mercy are disqualified from ministering God's reconciliation to the creation for whom Christ died. It is my deep conviction that none who reject and oppose the precious truth of the ultimate salvation of all men and the

reconciliation of all things to God will stand in that blessed company of the manifest sons of God. How could they? For this company of deliverers to have within its ranks men who shut the mercy of God up from men, and who understand not God's corrective judgments, would mean the destruction of the ministry of the sons to all creation! Only the Son of man company, clothed with the garment of priesthood, judgeship, and kingship can set things right and set creation free!

GIRT ABOUT THE PAPS

As John turned to see the voice that spake with him, with astonished countenance he beheld the wonder of this One "clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle." (Rev. 1:13) The word "paps" is the Greek word mastos used exclusively in Greek for the female breasts! Thus we read, "And it came to pass, as He spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto Him, Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the paps (mastos) which Thou hast sucked!" (Lk. 11:27) On Patmos we have the woman's breast while yet the speaker is like a SON OF MAN and is THE ALMIGHTY! It would not be possible to describe more vividly the dual nature of our God who is both Male and Female, the strong and mighty One, our Father, who is also EL SHADDAI, our Mother, the Pourer-forth who pours Himself out for His offspring; who gives them His flesh and His blood; who satisfies them with milk from His own bosom; who sheds forth His Spirit, and says, "Come unto me and drink, open thy mouth wide and I will fill it," who thus pours into them His very nature and life that they may grow to become His sons and His daughters! We must drink the sincere milk of the word, we must drink His very life-blood, if we are to grow and abide in Him and know Him in fullness.

All the aspects of human life — spirit, soul, and body — and the right and natural relationships, which God has ordained in our lives, are designed to reveal something in God Himself. Man has been created and formed in the image and likeness of God! God has given us eyes, therefore we know that God possesses the faculty of sight. We have ears, and by this we learn that God can hear. We have a voice and the ability to speak, revealing that our Creator also possesses the power of speech. The complexity and intelligence of the mind of man is the picture of God's own omniscience. We think, reason, act, work, and create as a revelation of the omnipotent power of Him who made us. He is as a father to His children, providing for their needs and wants, training and educating them in love and service as members of the great family of mankind. But there is something deeper than even this — something that corresponds to the tenderness of a mother in holding, nursing, nurturing, caring for, and comforting the weary and wounded spirit of her child. Mothers are the tenderest image in humanity! There is something in God which corresponds to that power of the tender and compassionate feminine nature, something of which, indeed, that feminine care and comfort is only the pale, earthly reflection. Yes, God is a Mother as well as a Father, only He is so much finer a mother than the finest mother you ever knew!

The references in scripture to God as a Mother are numerous. "As one which his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem." (Isa. 66:13) In Genesis 1:2 we read, "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." That word moved in the Hebrew indicates a "hovering" or "brooding" that began to take place upon the surface of the waters. The word also indicates a "fluttering" such as the wings of a fowl. So in the very beginning of this planet Earth we see the first manifestation of the maternal, or feminine, character of God. In the beautiful Song of Moses he says to the unfaithful people of Israel, "Of the Rock that bore you, you were unmindful; you forgot the God who travailed in your birth." (Deut. 32:18, Amplified). Here God is portrayed as a disappointed Mother who bore us and brought us forth! These words clearly involve the image of childbirth, of God as a Mother. "Under His wings," an expression used again and again in scripture, is a mother figure. Jesus said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Mat. 23:37) It is the mother-bird that gathers up her brood under her wings to feel the heat of her body, and for protection. So Christ says, in effect, "I would be a Mother to you!"

Ah, my beloved, if God by His grace has given you a wonderful father and the love of a godly mother, He has given you something of HIMSELF. Yes He has! Because all that is good in a father and a mother comes from God, from His own nature and state of being. All who read these lines who are either a father or a mother can

know how God feels. God made the heart of a father! God made the heart of a mother! God made the heart of a mother and made her the finest, the tenderest, and most loving thing you could ever know so that you could understand something about Him. You want a father, you want a mother? Come to the Lord!

The word mother is not directly used for God in the Bible. It is because with God "father" includes "mother." "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him." (**Gen. 1:26-27**) You see, Adam was both male and female within himself before Eve was taken out of his side, separated from him and brought forth into a unique expression of man. "This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him; male and female created He them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created." (**Gen. 5:1-2**). Before Eve was separated from Adam he did not know and was not initially in touch with himself concerning his own woman nature. When Adam was first brought forth from the hand of God he was created androgynous. This word is from the Greek, andros for male, gyne for female. There are such things on this planet as androgynous plants. An androgynous plant is a plant that possesses within itself both the male and female characteristics and is able to reproduce from within itself without an outside mate. There are still a few androgynous organisms beyond the plant family. God had to be androgynous because He could bring forth out of Himself! He did not need a partner! He was complete and whole within Himself! This is why some aspects of His nature as revealed in the scriptures are masculine and some are feminine.

Consider that God begat everything out of Himself and we see the pattern after which Adam was created. It was when Adam was asleep that God removed Eve from him, not from his rib, for in reality the Hebrew goes deeper than that and suggests that she was taken from his reproductive organs. Thus, the beginning of a husband-wife relationship began before Eve was separated from Adam! The church as a whole teaches that when a couple becomes married they learn to grow together, that is, they begin to form a union. In reality, the creation story is just the opposite! Adam was one (Eve within him). Eve had to be separated from him, removed from him, so that he could fully understand the union He had!

Just as Eve was in Adam, so all the strength of the Father and all the fine love and tenderness of the Mother are combined in the word "Father." It is impossible for me to explain the glory of such a thing as this for we are blinded by the impenetrable mystery of a realm that long ago passed away. Nevertheless, the moment that we understand that man in the beginning was created male and female and that male and female IS the image of God, then we can understand for the first time the awesome glory, power, and exaltation of the bride of Christ. When God formed the body of Adam from the dust of the ground, He did not make man and woman, for Adam was both in one — after the image and likeness of God! The image of God is not a body with a torso, two legs and two feet and ten toes, two arms with two hands and ten fingers, and a head with two eyes, two ears, a nose, and a mouth. The image of God is the emanation of the nature of God! You see, the Bible states clearly that in the beginning there was only God — omnipotent, omniscient, immutable, holy, perfect, who is love. But because God had a Father nature, He had to birth a Son: because when one has a father nature, the deepest craving of his nature is to beget and bring forth out of his own being an offspring in the likeness of himself. Therefore, because God had a Father nature, He had to birth a Son; but the problem was He didn't have a wife! Now this would have been a problem for us, but it was not a problem for God, because He had His wife within His own side, for in that beginning, before human flesh was, God was both Male and Female within Himself. We know this is so because everything in the whole vast universe came out of God, and if God had not been both Father and Mother within Himself in the beginning, we could not have male and female in the earth today — in His image! "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness...so God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them." Male and female — that is the image of God!

We shall not in this message consider the process by which God separated the female from the male, making Adam and Eve, man and woman, but we should carefully point out that following this separation, though existing in two bodies, inspiration declares in both the Old Testament and the New that the man and his wife, though separate, are ONE FLESH. Husbands and wives, according to the ordinance of God, are ONE FLESH, ONE UNIT, yea, ONE PERSON! The "thus saith the Lord" concerning the matter is simply stated in these inspired words: "From the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh, so that they are

no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has united — joined together — let not man separate or divide" (Mk. 10:6-9, KJV and Amplified). It was not the burning self-desire of Adam that caused Eve to come forth, but the purpose of God! It was God Himself who initiated the whole process, for the record states, "And the Lord God said, It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make an help meet for him." (Gen. 2:18) "Meet" is an old English word meaning "suitable, fit, proper, worthy." The whole flavor of the word "meet" is to fit, join, combine, agree, be in union, be together — fusion! This is true ONENESS!

When Eve had been built by the skillful hand of the Creator and presented to Adam, he had an immediate name for what Eve obviously was. Not her given name, Eve, as we term it in English, but what kind of creature she was. Hebrew is simpler than English, and more plainly explains exactly what a woman is. Ish is the Hebrew word for man and isha is the feminine form of the ish or man. Permit me to paraphrase what Adam said when Eve was presented to him. "This is now bone out of my bone, and flesh out of my flesh; because she was built out of what was taken from me, I will call her isha — a FEMALE MAN!" Adam merely added a single letter to the word which stood for himself, to define the quality of difference: sex. He was a male man and she was a female man. And God confirmed Adam's understanding that they were both exactly alike despite the obvious outward differences. They were simply two parts of the same thing! "In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him; male and female created He them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created." (Gen. 5:1-2) To both God and Adam it was one creation "in the image and likeness of God." The man's name wasn't Adam. The woman's name wasn't Adam. But their name was Adam!

Ish. Isha. Male. Female. Both Adam. Both man. Both in the image of God! Isha signifies, no matter how uncouth the sound to our ears, MAN-NESS. So in the old Latin the word for man is vir, and the word for woman is vira — a FEMALE MAN! The English word "woman" also confirms this truth, for it is a contraction of the old Anglo-Saxon term "womb-man" — a man with a womb! When Adam said that Eve must be called isha, it was as though for "wife" one would say she-man. God blessed the union of ish and isha, this one creation He called Adam.

It is also interesting to note that when God said, "Let us make man in our image," the word image is in the masculine gender. Yet when He goes on to say, "and after our likeness," the word likeness is in the feminine gender. So when the record states, "God created him; male and female created He them," the image and likeness of God is clearly revealed in male and female! Only a Father-Mother God could have created both male and female out of "image and likeness." God is unity and union, He is not two individuals, a masculine person and a feminine person. For the correct balance we must see that God spiritually possesses both masculine and feminine characteristics within Himself. In the original creation of man Adam was both male and female within Himself. This androgynous state was called "him." The female was contained within the male. HE was male and female. That is why God is called "He," for "Father" includes "Mother." We do not pray to "Our Father-Mother God," as some insist. The firstborn Son of God has plainly instructed us to pray, "Our FATHER which art in heaven." The Mother is included in the Father! Jesus came to reveal the Father and in revealing Him He also revealed the Mother nature of God within Himself. But this God is called Father! The scriptures leave no question about this at all! As one comes to know God in the Spirit, and by the Spirit, one discovers the deeper realization that God is both Father-Mother as ONE, not two separate entities as carnal-minded people love to debate the masculine/feminine issues. Nor is there any need to try and expunge from the Bible the so-called "sexist" language by referring to God as "our Parent" rather than "our Father." Those radical liberal scholars who ridiculously promote such linguistic trash know absolutely nothing about the God they are trying to represent! They are contradictors of God, opposers of God, and mutilators of His Word!

Armed with the great truth that the earth realm is but the reflection of the spirit world, we do not get caught up in the senseless struggle between man and woman, for in the spirit there is unity and oneness! God as a Father lovingly corrects, disciplines, teaches, instructs, and directs our steps. God as a Mother lovingly nourishes, comforts, soothes and cuddles the needy one. From such a fountain of loving Life can every son of God experience all the parental guidance, provision, and care needed to bring a son to the full stature of God our Father! This man in the image of God is destined to have dominion over all the works of God's hands. He is created in God's image, MALE AND FEMALE, SONS AND DAUGHTERS, to be the revelation of both the strength and wisdom of God's Fatherhood and the tenderness and sustaining life of God's Motherhood unto

creation. God makes His sons and daughters partakers of His own nature, that they, the firstfruits of Himself, may make others partakers of the same nature! Our separation unto Him makes us fit for our work, as the Lord has said, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (II Cor. 6:17-18) Sons and daughters! Male and female! Thus we also become "breasted ones" and "pourers-forth." In the sons and daughters of God is fulfilled the promise of Jerusalem, that "those who love her may suck and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that they may milk out and be delighted with the abundance of her glory." (Isa. 66:10-11)

Without male and female there can be no reproduction. That is why homosexuality is such a curse and outside of divine order — it is contrary to nature, both human nature and divine nature, it is a love for the same, and produces no seed. No reproduction out of the love of the parents can take place. That is like sons who want nothing to do with the bride of Christ, they only want to spiritually play with one another. Then there are the spiritually "lesbian" churches whose only revelation is the bride-church, and they want nothing to do with the sons! They want to do their own thing, make their own little plans and programs and have their tea parties with the other little girls. They stay with each other and make love to one another and have no acknowledgment of the call of sonship at all. But no eternal seed of God is reproduced out of such unions! Oh, they get more numbers and members on their rolls, but nothing of Christ is reproduced out of their midst. The spiritually masculine quality is missing. To bring forth life it is necessary to have both male and female!

In the midst of God's elect there must be both the reality of brideship and sonship! "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate...and I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord." The Lord is not talking about what we are naturally; He is talking about what we are spiritually! Being a man in the flesh does not make one a "son" and being a woman in the flesh does not make one a "daughter." Sons and daughters of God are not reckoned by fleshly birth, but by spiritual birth! I am writing to you of spiritual qualities. Some people have the idea that women can't be "sons," they are always "daughters." Others think a man is never a "daughter" of God. But I know women who are sons, who possess a spiritually masculine character of strength, authority, and dominion in God! I also know men who are daughters, possessing a spiritually feminine character of love, gentleness, succor, and submission to Christ! And I know many who have a beautiful blending of both characteristics! It has nothing to do with flesh at all! It has everything to do with our spiritual nature by new birth. It depends upon our calling in God, not our physical gender. Brideship and sonship are both in the Spirit and by the Spirit, and the sons and daughters are in their individual companies the body of Christ (Eph. 4:15-16; 5:22-32). Within each of us individually there is also a son and a daughter, a male and a female!

GIRT WITH A GOLDEN GIRDLE

When John the beloved turned to see this One He was girt about the paps or breasts with a golden girdle (Rev. 1:13). Divine nature held everything together in divine order! The golden girdle is in modern terms a golden belt, that which goes around the body to hold the garment in place. The golden belt is the badge of every matured, perfected son of God! The golden belt represents a state of being. It is righteousness and truth as a life out-poured! It is a spiritual possession and an omnipotent power derived from the life and character of divinity. It is the medallion of victory that engirdles the firstborn sons of God! This is significant because in the Old Testament there was a curious girdle worn by the priest and a little later on in the book of Revelation we see angels with golden girdles on. The girdle represents what unites the whole garment. The golden girdle covers the breasts and unites all the masculine and feminine attributes of God that they may flow forth in truth and righteousness through God's Royal Priesthood — the SON OF MAN COMPANY!

The beauty of this truth is further enhanced when we see that the glorious order of Melchizedek is also both male and female! The word melchi in Hebrew means "my king of" and is a masculine word. The Hebrew word zedek means "righteousness" and is a feminine word. The full meaning is "My king of righteousness." In the order of Melchizedek these two characteristics of masculine and feminine are united in one King-Priesthood ministry. Kings and Priests! The kingship speaks of the Father nature of God and the priesthood speaks of the Mother-nurturing nature of God. Until this Melchizedek order is manifested in the earth through the Son of Man

Company there will be no deliverance to the whole creation. This mature ministry of the plenitude of the Father-Mother nature of God must flow in wisdom, grace, love, power and authority in the earth!

God's name as revealed to Abraham is another significant mother figure. Father Abraham heard the call of God and departed from his own country, from his father's house and his father's kindred, and traveled to a land that God showed him. God gave to him the promise of a seed and that in this seed all the families of the earth would be blessed. After many years of experience in Canaan, this man of faith, yet without the promised seed, and seemingly without hope, was visited by the Lord. The record states that "When Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the ALMIGHTY GOD; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly." (Gen. 17:1-2)

Now this name, GOD ALMIGHTY, is both interesting and touching. In Hebrew it is El Shaddai. El means "might," "power," or "strength," and signifies the "Strong One." Shaddai is different, though it also describes power. But it is the power, not of force, but of all-bountifulness, that which is abundant, plenteous, and running over. Shaddai primarily means "breasted," being formed directly from the Hebrew word shad, that is, "the breast," or more exactly a "woman's breast." Thus Shaddai means one who "pours forth life" as a woman bears her child and then feeds and sustains it with the milk from her breast. In the same way God is the giver out of His own life as He bears out of His own substance His offspring, and then feeds and sustains and strengthens it with the "milk" of His word. Can we not see that all natural things have spiritual counterparts?

By her breast the mother has almost infinite power over the child. Some of my readers perhaps have heard the old Greek story of the baby laid down near some cliff by its mother, while she was busy with her herd of goats. The baby, unperceived, crawled to the edge of the cliff. The mother, afraid to take a step, lest the child should be startled and move further and fall over the precipice, only uncovered her breast, and so drew back the infant to her. It is this figure, which God Himself has chosen in this name El Shaddai, by which to express to us the feminine side of His Almighty! His Almighty is of the breast, that is, of bountiful, life-giving supply! Therefore He can quiet the restless, as the breast quiets the child; therefore He can nourish and strengthen, as the breast nourishes; therefore He can attract, as the breast attracts, and draw us unto Himself when we would slip away. Ah, this is the "Almighty" who appeared to Abraham and assured him that he would be blessed according to the promise. How wonderful are these things!

This means that He is the One who is the nourisher, who is able to nourish children. It is children who need to draw from the breast, and it is older children that need to be drawn from or weaned from the breast. We must be not only those who draw from the breast of God, we must also develop breasts from which others can draw. There are multitudes of people today who are destroyed for lack of knowledge and stunted in their spiritual growth for the lack of nourishment. What is called "milk" in the church systems today is often so diluted or so polluted that it ministers malnutrition, illness, and even death to those who suck at the breast. Christ the nourisher is here revealing Himself to us, in us, as us, and through us as the One who provides the sincere (undeceitful, unadulterated) milk of the word that the babes in Christ may grow thereby (1 Pet. 2:2). Some ministries today have no milk for the babes, only meat for the mature. But that is not according to the nature and order of God! HE is our Father-Mother, and every son of God who bears His image is also a father-mother! How can we shepherd the nations and deliver creation without the beautiful balance of the Father-Mother heart of God!

This One who feeds the babes is "girt with a golden girdle." The girdle speaks of control. The breasts of Christ give life — divine life, divine nature — for that is the significance of gold. There are those who minister milk to the babes but not out of divine nature! They minister, rather, out of human zeal, out of the desire to be seen and heard, to gain a place, position, or recognition, to control people's lives, to instill within the babes the carnal doctrines, programs, rules, rituals, traditions, purposes, and spirit of the denomination or movement. These frustrate the grace of God in the lives of the babes! By their organizing the people into their religious system they take the processing of God out of the hands of God, they usurp the life of God and so nullify the work of the Holy Spirit, until the babes grow up to be something altogether different than the image of the God who gave them life. The nourishment that we provide for creation must be under the control of the Spirit of God in our lives — the golden girdle!

Breasts. The divine nature has both the qualities of the masculine and the feminine. Christ is a feeder, a nourisher. I have no desire to feed on anything but Christ! That's where my life comes from! We feed on the Christ in one another. In the natural, the mother holds the little baby up against the paps and the baby feeds from the breasts. We must draw close enough to one another in the Spirit until we can lay our hands upon the breasts of our Lord. Remember where John the beloved was found at the Last Supper? He reclined with his head upon the breast of the Lord. John sat in that place of closeness to Christ, he loved this man so much, and had such an intense hunger for truth and reality, that he wanted to be in that privileged position where he could draw from the life of the Lord, to drink as it were from the paps, and eat of the substance of divinity. It is no accident that it was this same John who on the isle of Patmos beheld the glorified Christ in the midst of the churches with the golden girdle upon the paps. Everything we need is in Him!

JOINT DOMINION

Those who read these lines should meditate deeply upon the wonder of man's primordial glory — male and female — set together in splendor over the works of God's hands! All creation being set in order, one was needed to take the headship in the visible realm, to bring the authority and blessing of God's kingdom over all things. "And God said, Let us make man in our image and after our likeness; and let THEM have dominion...and God blessed THEM, and God said unto THEM...HAVE DOMINION OVER...EVERYTHING." (Gen. 1:26-28) My reader will observe the change from him to them. God blessed them, male and female, and gave them JOINTLY THE PLACE OF UNIVERSAL GOVERNMENT.

All realms from the lowest of the bottomless to the highest of the heavens were set under their joint dominion, as typified by the fish of the sea, the beasts of the earth, and the fowl of the heavens. These three realms symbolically encompass all spheres of existence from the lowest depths of darkness unto the highest dimensions of light and exaltation. Jesus confirmed the true scope of man's dominion when, as the last Adam and the Son of man, He descended into the lowest parts of the earth and then ascended up far above all heavens. He liberated the captives in the prison house of Hades and ascended up far above all heavens to reign over all things. We have been raised up with Him, and made to sit together with Him in the heavenly places, yet we are right here on earth! So being raised up to the highest heaven does not speak of a geographical or astral location, but of a dimension of spiritual reality and power. ALL POWER is given unto Him, both in heaven and in earth! This, precious friend of mine, is the magnificence of that dominion given to Adam — male and female — in that long ago beginning! Just as God is Father and Mother over His creation, so the rulership given to the sons of God must exhibit both the masculine and the feminine characteristics of God's nature. It must be Adam and Eve, the bridegroom and the bride, sons on mount Zion and the New Jerusalem bride coming down from heaven, kings and priests, truth and grace, strength and compassion, righteousness and mercy!

The sons of God are the temple of God. (I Cor. 3:16; Rev. 11:1-2,19) The bride of Christ is the city of God. (Rev. 21:9-11) That city is the holy city, the New Jerusalem. Every stone of that city is a living stone, a glorified Christ-being. Every stone is a living, ransomed soul just as every member of the body of Christ, which is the temple of God, is a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious. We cannot fully explain nor understand a mystery so awesome as this, but the eye that sees by the Spirit sees the temple as a living thing, composed of living saints. In that temple redeemed men, the sons of God, are the pillars and foundations, and Christ Himself is the chief cornerstone, from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord, in whom we also are builded together as the habitation of God through the Spirit.

In holy vision the apostle John was transported in spirit to a great and high mountain, the majestic heights of the kingdom of God, from which he was permitted to see the perfected bride of Christ in all her beauty and glory. From his lofty vantage point the eyes of John were ravished with the electrifying sight of the unequalled majesty and infinite splendor of the bride adorned for her husband. Not a city of stone as was the Old Jerusalem, but a New Jerusalem, a living city, a bride beyond compare, a virgin pure and holy, composed of incorruptible saints brought forth out of the living substance of Christ. Words utterly fail me to describe the wonder of such unsurpassable glory, for ours are but the words of men, but that holy and beautiful city belongs

to THE REALM OF THE SPIRIT. Now at last the perfection, the image of God, sons and daughters, male and female, temple and city, of which Adam and Eve were but a frail shadowy type, has come! The many-membered bridegroom, the sons of God, with the many-membered bride, the holy city, in the image and likeness of God JOINTLY RULING OVER ALL THINGS!

The nations shall walk in the light of this city, and the rulers and leaders of the earth shall bring into it their glory. The tree of Christ's incorruptible life is in the midst of it, and the water of life flows from the authority of the sonship throne of God in the midst of it. This is GOD, male and female, ruling over all the endless vastnesses of infinity for evermore! This is the Son of man with authority and power, girt about the life-giving paps with a golden girdle! Oh, the mystery of it! Oh, the wonder of it!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 25

ONE LIKE UNTO A SON OF MAN [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART TWENTY-FIVE

THE EYES AS A FLAME OF FIRE HIS FEET AS BURNISHED BRASS

"His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow..." (Rev. 1:14)

John the beloved, banished to the treacherous isle of Patmos, was in the spirit and there heard a voice, and he turned to see the voice that spoke to him. When he turned he did not see a six-foot, blue-eyed Jesus, with flaxen hair and gentle face. He saw a multi-faceted description of One who transcended any natural man! His garment, His head and hair, His eyes, His feet, His voice, His hands — each of these is a unique aspect of the revelation of Jesus Christ! This revelation of Jesus Christ will produce an unveiling of all His wonderful attributes and powers in the midst of all who receive it! The purpose of this vision is not to give us a picture of the physical appearance of the resurrected Christ in heaven, but to convey to us the glory of His unveiling in the midst of us. The message of this book is more than mere information — it is destined to lead you to the unveiling of Jesus Christ within yourself!

The head represents authority and white speaks of purity and righteousness. Christ's authority in our lives must be pure! Those blessed sons of God who are growing up into Him who is the Head are being formed in the maturity of Christ as a Headship Company. Just as there are many saints who make up each particular part of the body of Christ, so are there those who mature to share in His headship over all things. Those who function in the wisdom and power of the Headship Company in this day of the Lord must be pure! God is raising up this Headship Company in this hour, and it will not be composed of people who enter carelessly and presumptuously, who grasp after it by carnal means or with fleshly zeal, or who try to operate in this realm unprepared. This place is reserved for a people that have been purified by the nature of Him who come to His temple as a refiner's fire and as fuller's soap. When I think of the head and hairs of God's Christ, I am reminded of the words of the prophet, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Isa. 1:18)

The vision John saw of Christ doesn't mean that Jesus is up in heaven and now has hair that is as white as snow. If that was the case, then His immortality would be brought into question, as white hair on earth is a sign of aging! It doesn't mean that Jesus now looks like an old man. It's a symbol — a symbol that does not need too much interpretation except here in America. Here, we don't have them anymore — the judges with the white hair. We did have them in the early days of our Republic, but not anymore. In parts of Europe, however, the judges still wear their little wigs. The wigs are all white. It carries us back to antiquity. In the ancient civilizations, including the time of the Roman empire, the judges wore white wigs. It isn't just a symbol of old age — it speaks of wisdom and maturity.

The way one becomes a judge who is skilled in the law and justice tempered with mercy and compassion, is by years of experience. But you might be a judge with black hair, brown hair, or red hair — and that would not signify the wisdom and maturity gained through experience. So it became the custom for the judges to wear white hair as a symbol of the wisdom, maturity, and experience of their office. John in spirit beheld One who is the sum total of all wisdom and knowledge, he saw the all-wise One, the one who speaks out of the maturity of the ages. He saw the Judge of all judges in the midst of the churches! And every matured and perfected son of God shares in that stature, in that wisdom, in that understanding, and in that judgment as we grow up into the fullness of the mind of Christ! White hair is symbolic of omniscience. It is the crown of spiritual wisdom gained through the crucible of experience and testing. The scriptures clearly teach that the hoary head is to be greatly honored, for therein lies the wisdom, experience, and discernment that comes with age. Just as Jesus was

tempted in all points as we are, and grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men, so every son of God is being brought, by the dealings of God, to the state of divine wisdom, knowledge, discernment, understanding, authority and power! The experience is gained by walking with God!

There is an even deeper meaning in this. There is a very great difference between the glory of the first man Adam, and the glory of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. There is a profound and marvelous significance in the meaning of Adam's name and the marked contrast between Adam's redness of face and Christ's whiteness of head. May the Holy Spirit give understanding as I explain? In the scriptures the blood always stands for the life, and a person's name always stands for his nature. The face, in symbolic terms, speaks of the deepest part of a man's being — what we would call the heart, or the nature. In the beginning we have a man named Adam, which means "to show blood in the face!" It speaks of being red-faced, as one blushing, so that the inward nature of the blood, or the soul, is revealed through the face.

The understanding of this one point should make it easy for us to grasp why it was that Adam turned so soon from the way of his Creator to follow after the darkness of his own soul, of the carnal mind; why he did not live in the Garden for at least twenty years, or a hundred years, or a thousand years before succumbing to temptation and plunging headlong into the dismal abyss of self, sin, and death. Now since divine wisdom teaches us that blood represents life, it should not be difficult for any to see that Adam's red face reveals that from the day he breathed his first breath upon earth there was deep-seated within his being this propensity to cling to his life, to fulfill the demands of his life, to exalt himself, so he is seen as retaining the blood which represents his soul or his self-life. Sin and the fall were the natural result of this condition!

But the glorified Christ, on the other hand, is always depicted as white: hair as white as snow, head as white as snow, garments as white as snow, everything white, like an albino. Why? Because HIS LIFE is poured out...released by means of death! Upon this truth hangs the eternal hope of billions of mankind who have inhabited this earth, and it is even now the wellspring for all those blessed ones upon whom God has breathed the spirit of understanding from on high and quickened together in Christ Jesus. The truth is this: blood retained is Adam and is therefore death. Blood poured out is Christ and is therefore life! Or, as the apostle Paul expressed it, "To be carnally (self) minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." (Rom. 8:6) Jesus stated it this way: "For whosoever shall save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it." (Lk. 9:24)

This poured out life of Christ is the river of life flowing bountifully from the throne of God and of the Lamb! The Lamb has been slain! Jesus, the reservoir of divine life, released His life and the Father pours forth that eternal and incorruptible spirit into the hearts of all who believe. While our Lord Jesus walked upon earth, He alone had divine, eternal life. That life was in His blood, not the blood of Adam's self, but divine blood of the quickening spirit of God. That blood was confined to Himself. There were no other manifest sons of God! He was the firstborn of the new race of God-men, the firstborn among many brethren. Nowhere in scripture do we have any record or evidence that Jesus Christ ever imparted eternal life or the spirit of sonship to any man before His blood was shed. It should not be difficult for any man to see that if Jesus had retained His blood, as Adam did, if He had clung to His own will rather than being obedient unto death, the gate of the kingdom of heaven would still be closed and the riverbed of the great River of Life would today be as dry as the desert wadis of Arabia. There would be no other sons of God! Well did our Saviour know that, as long as His life-blood still flowed in His veins, all the rest of humanity must remain dead in trespasses and sins. He would be the only one of His kind, the only human Son of God! So He poured out His life, giving Him whiteness of face! And, blessed be His name, as we, in turn, pour out our life, we stand identified in this glorious Son of Man as the life-giving sons of God!

HIS EYES AS A FLAME OF FIRE

"And His eyes were as a flame of fire" (Rev. 1:14)

As John gazed upon this One, his attention was attracted to His eyes, which blaze like flames of fire. The spirit within was so aroused that it shone through His eyes! This description of the Son of man is most illuminating. George Hawtin has commented on this passage: "The eyes of the Son of God are completely different from all

other eyes. The eyes of mankind and of every living creature are capable only of receiving light. Our eyes receive reflections and images of things that are without, but the eyes of the Lord not only receive reflections of things without, but are LAMPS OF FIRE, shedding abroad the light of God whithersoever they are turned. Every creature and everything upon which His eyes shall fall will receive the LIGHT OF GOD. 'They looked upon Him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.' (Ps. 34:5) Even in the hour of Christ's greatest humiliation when Peter had denied his Lord, the Lord turned and looked upon him, and at that look the light of truth dawned upon this trembling and heartbroken man as he sat in his dismal despair and, being thus enlightened to the truth and to the knowledge of his guilt, he went out and wept bitterly in repentance and contrition.

"But this manifestation of the light of truth that shines as a burning flame from His eyes is merely a fleeting shadow of greater things to come. It is as a feeble candle in the night compared to the illuminating rays of the sun at noon. The day is coming and is near at hand when Christ shall be the Light of the World in the fullness of its meaning. His eyes run to and fro through the whole world and wherever He looks the light of heaven will shine. Upon whomsoever His eyes shall fall darkness will be dispelled from him and the light of Christ will shine upon him. Through long millenniums has the world sat in outer darkness and in the cold and gloomy shadows of death, but He who soon shall come riding triumphantly through the open heavens has eyes burning as lamps of fire, before whose shining darkness and shadow will flee away forevermore" — end quote. The One who has the eyes as a flame of fire is He who comes to judge and make war. Ah, He stands in the midst of the seven churches with His eyes of fire! He stands within the spirit of each one of us with eyes as flaming fire! To judge rightly He must see through and through, search all depths, look beneath all masks, penetrate all darkness, and try everything to its ultimate residuum. There is often something wonderfully luminous, penetrating, overawing, in the human eye. Men have been blinded by the look of kings. It is like the living intellect made visible, which seems to read all secrets at a glance. It is this infinitely intensified, flashing like a sword of fire that the apostle beheld in this heavenly Judge. It is an eye-flame of omniscient perception, a searchlight that penetrates to the inmost thought and intent of the heart, laying bare in its awful revelation every fiber of self, even in purposes supposed to be pure, scorching, burning, shriveling every hypocrisy, and withering away every breath of the flesh.

Oh, the eyes of the Lord! The eyes of holiness, the eyes of infinite discernment, the eyes of depthless love and burning desire for those apprehended to be conformed to His likeness. They descend into the depths of the spirit, the candle of the Lord, to search out and make known what is of soul and what is of spirit, and flash with their flame of sincerity, truth and shadowless righteousness. The word of God is quick and powerful — living and active — sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and the marrow — the deepest part of our nature. And when the glorious Son of man comes marching into our land He comes with eyes that are shining lamps of heavenly fire, penetrating, illuminating mind and heart, revealing all that is there, destroying every selfish and secret motive, consuming every vestige of the carnal mind, purifying the deepest intents of the heart, transforming and flooding the whole being with righteousness and purity and power.

Some things in our lives are deeply hidden, but the eyes of the Lord are going to cause everything to surface and be brought out of darkness. The fire of those eyes is such that all the dross is made to emerge. Do we really want the Christ to invade us through and through — to thoroughly touch every area of our lives? We will never conquer until we are conquered! This moment He is mightier in His elect than He ever was before. This moment He is doing a work vaster, stronger, deeper, more overwhelming than ever before. He will direct it from one degree of glory to another, until every member of His elect is transformed into His likeness. He will shine forth the glorious light of His illuminating eyes until we are all refined and brought forth as pure gold!

Christ's eyes of fire, and the eyes of fire of every son of God who shares His glory, are eyes of the same fire that is revealed throughout the book of Revelation. There are not two or five or ten different fires! There are His eyes of fire, and there is gold that is tried in the fire (Rev. 3:18), and it is the very same fire! Fire is taken from the golden altar and cast into the earth (Rev. 8:2-5). The same fire that releases the fragrance and power of the prayers of the saints is cast into the earth-realm and mighty commotions take place! By that fire all carnality is consumed from the sons of men, that God may be glorified in the earth-realm even as He is in the heavenlies. There are seven lamps of fire burning before the throne which are the seven spirits of God (Rev.

4:5). The Lamb has seven eyes and the seven eyes are the seven-fold spirit of God, thus they are likewise eyes of fire! (Rev. 5:6).

You see, it is all the very same fire of God in different administrations! There is a sea of glass mingled with fire (Rev. 15:2), a people who have become within themselves an untroubled sea of tranquillity, peace, and transparency, made so by the processing fire of God. All the restlessness and agitation of the carnal mind has been burned out of them! There is a fire that destroys the religious sham of Mystery Babylon (Rev. 18:8), and a great lake of fire for all the adversaries of God — death, hell, the beastly fleshly nature, the soulical false prophets, and all who do iniquity (Rev. 20:10-15). What are we meant to understand by this lake of fire which burns with fire and brimstone? We know only too well the use the church systems have made of this conception through the ages! It has had some horrific connotations and given a distorted view of the character of God. The crude idea that an all-wise and all-righteous and all-loving Creator would decree endless torment in undying flame for any of His creatures does dishonor to the name and glory of our precious Lord Jesus Christ, and it is incredible that the compassionate Saviour of mankind could ever have intended us to read into His words the notion that He will use that holy fire which He is to torture billions of souls throughout eternity.

The divine fire is the truth, the righteousness, the love of God; in a word, it is the nature of God! Any careful reader of the Old Testament will be aware that fire is often used therein as a symbol of the presence and action of God. "The Lord our God is a consuming fire." "God is love." Those are not contradictory terms — they are complimentary terms! It is no straining of metaphor to say that the love of God and the wrath of God are the same thing described from opposite points of view. How we shall experience it depends on the way we come up against it. God does not change; it is man's moral state that changes! The wrath of God is a figure of speech to denote God's unchanging opposition to sin! It is His righteous love, His holy passion operating to destroy evil. Nothing can live in that devouring flame that is of the nature of a lie or wars against the spirit of holiness!

That consuming fire is as eternal as God Himself; it is, because He is; it is that which was from the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Oh, if there be one thing for which we ought to rejoice and praise God without ceasing it is that eternal fire which will burn up all the foulness and rottenness, all the wickedness and cruelty, all the shame and wrong from which our souls have ever suffered. It is not evil which will have the last word, but righteousness; not sorrow, but joy; not hate, but love; not damnation, but salvation; not death, but life. When the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, heaven is there. When any other spirit is dominant, hell is there. It is not God who changes when we pass from one to the other, it is we who are changed by His eternal fire! All who are members of the corporate Son of man have eyes of fire! The judgment of God is in their eyes, for they judge as they see by the Spirit. Judgment begins at the house of God, and the saints shall judge the world even as Christ now judges His people. Fire devours. What is there to devour? The veil. The veil that conceals Christ in our lives! When the veil is consumed we see Him as He is and reality breaks forth.

Charles Finney went into a mill up north one time, and as he walked through the mill he spoke not a word. He just looked at the people, and as he looked at them they broke before his gaze, weeping, repenting, and crying out to God for mercy. They had to close the mill and a great revival began in which multitudes of people turned to the Lord. The move of God started with just a look — a piercing, penetrating gaze beyond the veil of men's flesh into the depths of their lives — with eyes as a flame of fire! There is power in a look when the fire of God is there!

"The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good," says the wise man. (**Prov. 15:2**) Elihu declares, "He withdraweth not His eyes from the righteous, but with kings are they on the throne." (**Job 36:7**) "The Lord is in His holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven. His eyes behold, His eyelids try the children of men." (**Ps. 11:4-5**) David was seeing the Lord's eyes of fire by the Spirit when he prayed, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." (**Ps. 139:23-24**) David did not engage in the unproductive and defeating practice of introspection. He asked God to examine his life to show him if he was harboring any fleshly way. Self-inspection is futile. We will always protect those things that most need to go to the cross! We miss things. We are prone to gloss over certain faults. We practice self-justification. But if God does the searching, it is different! His eye is sharp. His judgment is true. The window of our soul is transparent to His penetrating gaze.

And yet in light of all that, David is eager for God to search his life. He opens the windows of his life and lets the sin-destroying and life-giving breeze of the Holy Spirit blow through. He asks God's help to find and destroy the sin that lurks within.

When I read David's prayer, I am reminded of a diligent, zealous, competent customs official I once saw examining a Palestinian family's bags in the Tel Aviv airport. You haven't seen airport security until you have passed through the Ben Gurion airport in Israel! The agent took the man's electric razor apart. He unrolled his socks. He unfolded each shirt and searched the pockets of each pair of pants. He even held the lady's underwear up to the light and peered through them. He unscrewed the back off their alarm clock. He felt the lining of the suitcase and then hauled the suitcase off and had it x-rayed. And through it all the family whose bags were being inspected was not too happy with the procedure. They didn't like it!

In his prayer David took the exact opposite attitude. Had God been the customs agent, David would have been encouraging him to make a thorough search! As the Lord purges and purifies His sons we must expect to have our inmost secret thoughts, relations, and purposes revealed, searched, and judged by His eyes of fire! No court of inquiry was ever presided over by a more exact inquisitor than this! God is the critic of all the secrets of the heart. As each thought or intention passes to and fro, He searches it, examines it. Eyes as flames of fire — you can't hide from this One! He discerns behind all your masks, He can burn beyond all your appearances, all your hypocrisy is as an open book before Him. But He is not vindictive, for He is the King of a burning passion of Love! Whenever you fail, He understands, He knows what is in man, He can see right through all the appearances to what really is. He knows your heart and your desire after Him! He takes into account your weakness. Yet He will not be complacent toward you! This is the One who is walking in the midst of the candlesticks, the One who possesses all the wisdom of the ages and an unconditional Love by which He judges.

If you are called to the high calling in Christ Jesus you will behold this One who walks in the midst! He will do His work in any event, but how much better for us to present ourselves before Him and with David invite Him to do His work of amputation and excision! If we cannot cut off the offending member, let us look to Him to rid us of it. Nothing in heaven or earth can withstand the fiery glance of omniscience, which sees and knows all and can therefore judge all. His eyes pierce through the façade that we build up around ourselves and past the front the church has built around itself. There is no way we can keep anything from God! Even when He was here in the flesh, Jesus knew what was in man. One aspect of the prophetic ministry, which is the testimony of Jesus, is that the secrets of men's hearts are revealed. We may lie unto men, but we can't lie to the Lord Jesus Christ. How powerfully Ananias and Sapphira found that out! He can see right past all our pretense. To the church at Ephesus He announces, "I know thy works..." (Rev. 2:2). To the church at Smyrna He reveals, "I know thy works..." (Rev. 2:9). To the church at Pergamos He says, "I know thy works..." (Rev. 2:13). To the church at Thyatira He declares, "I know thy works..." (Rev. 2:19). And to the churches at Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea He proclaims the same solemn truth, "I know thy works!" Whatever we see up front, the Lord says, "I see behind the scenes. I perceive the underlying motives, the intents, the secret purposes, the hidden agendas, the covert schemes — I know thy works!" The Lord looks beyond what the public sees, what the billboard says, behind what the church bulletin announces, beyond all the claims, promotions, boasts, propaganda, and phoniness. The Lord's eyes of fire burn through all of man's smokescreens. Before those burning, piercing eyes humanity will throw up its façade of external righteousness and religiosity. Ah, His eyes of fire penetrate to the very core of our being!

Yet, this wonderful work of the eyes of fire is not a vengeful, implacable, destructive work, but that of redeeming, transforming Love! It cannot be stated better than it was by Rex Andrews when he wrote, "Your enjoyment of the book of Revelation will depend, to a considerable degree, on what you believe about that fire flame of His eyes. Unless you can perceive that that FIRE is pure-unadulterated-love, the LOVE which GOD IS, you will likely miss some of the most vital things intended to be conveyed by the Revelation. If you consider the flaming fire, and the two-edged sword of His mouth, and the face which is as the sun shining in its strength, as being destructive, bent on killing, you will have missed about all there is of value. That FIRE of eyes, and face shining as the sun, describe a Being-like-unto-man, whose spirit and soul and body were utterly invested, and completely possessed by, THE ETERNAL SPIRIT. And that ETERNAL SPIRIT is declared to LOVE!"

HIS FEET AS BURNISHED BRASS

"His feet were as burnished brass, as though they burned in a furnace" (Rev. 1:15).

In the Bible brass speaks of divine judgment. The feet of the Son of man are described as being not only of brass, but of fine brass. This is brass that has already been through the judgment, it has already been refined by the fire and processed — that's why it is called fine brass. The elect of God are called to judge, but they must first of all be judged! We must first judge ourselves lest we be judged. When we successfully pass through judgment, then we can mete out judgment, for we will not judge after the appearance, but judge righteous judgment by the spirit of wisdom and understanding.

As brass is symbolical of judgment, I am sure we can behold here the judgment of Christ and His many brethren through those blessed feet members of the body of Christ! As the Lord Jesus Himself judges in the midst of the churches, among the members of His body, so shall His many brethren bring judgment to the nations and to all mankind. These saints make up the feet company, who are the last members added to the body of Christ at the end of this age. They have a specific duty to perform in judgment! They shall tread upon the head of Satan within themselves, conquering sin and death, and then go forth bringing the judgment of Christ in the earth. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it (the seed of the woman) shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Gen. 3:15) "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." (Rom. 16:20) "And she (the sun-clad woman) brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne. And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world...and I heard a voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ!" (Rev. 12:5,7-10).

Judgment, we must remember, is not merely condemnation, wrath, and vengeance as so many think. The judgment of God has the distinct purpose of setting things right, and, indeed, all things will be set right and all things will be gloriously reconciled unto Himself, yea, things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, or wherever they may be. The feet members of the body of Christ, who are the sons of God to come forth in this new kingdom day of the Lord, must be purged in the fires of the Lord like no people before them. They shall tread upon Satan, sin, and death, therefore, they must be more thoroughly washed, cleansed, refined, and purified. These anointed ones will appear "like unto fine brass" as though they burned in an oven because they have been more thoroughly purged in the Lord's fiery furnace of purification. Surely this explains why the saints of this hour are experiencing such severe trials and testings, and are being so thoroughly processed by the Lord. The testings and trials we are experiencing in this hour are not so much organized persecutions from without, but very personal pressures and circumstances that try us to the very core of our being. Don't think these are a small thing! Think not, my brother, my sister, that should the government cast you into prison and take all your possessions, that you would then be tried in a greater way than in the nitty-gritty of every day experience! How we respond to the smaller, very personal challenges that daily touch our lives often speaks louder than our response to greater things over which we have no control!

The feet members of this Son of man company appear as red-hot burnished brass signifying their primary function in the corrective judgments of the Lord. Micah described this company as having "hoofs of brass" by which these anointed ones in union with their Head shall "judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it." (Mic. 4:3-4,13)

All of this issues from the mountain (kingdom, government) of the house of the Lord which is established in the top of the mountains, or at the head of all the kingdoms! Mic. 4:1). It is obvious that those members of the body of Christ who have overcome, and been formed into the governing and ruling company of His kingdom, have the responsibility of ministering redemptive judgment among the peoples of the world, rebuking strong nations

afar off by the powerful word of the Lord, and by signs, wonders, and miracles establishing peace, justice, and righteousness in the earth. The law shall go forth out of Zion (the sons), and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (the bride). When they hear this powerful kingdom gospel of peace and righteousness coming from mount Zion, the exalted mountain of the house of the Lord, confirmed by signs and wonders greater far than those God manifested in Egypt or in Israel, "many nations shall come and say, Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord." (Mic. 4:1-2) When the sons of God are thus revealed in the power of Christ's resurrection, multitudes who have nurtured the call of God upon their lives will finally see the fulfillment of that call, when in that glorious day their ministry will have arrived.

We are speaking of the greater ministry and the greater works that shall be wrought by God's elect in the full REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST! The elect who make up the manifest sons of God shall not administer the word of the kingdom in their present limited body of carnality and corruption. Instead, they shall minister the pure law and word of the Lord from Zion's holy realm in the glory and purity of the mind of Christ, and in the power of resurrection with bodies of incorruption. The present world systems were created by corruptible men, thus bringing forth the harlot systems called Babylon. We have all had enough of the rule and dominion of carnality and corruption from the man of sin. Therefore, only incorruptible, holy, perfect, and anointed individuals shall serve mankind from Zion's all-glorious realm!

A beautiful insight into the "burnished brass" of this feet company was shared by Paul Mueller in one of his booklets wherein he said, "The original Greek words for this passage tell us that those of this feet company were ignited and inflamed in the fiery furnace, which caused them to glow as they burned. They were refined in the fire of God's awesome and holy presence (Heb. 12:29). And when they were properly and thoroughly burned, cleansed, and refined, they were then inflamed by the holy fires of the presence of their Father. Those of that company were ignited and inflamed of their Father, so that they glowed with His holy love, and the deep passion of God for suffering humanity, and for the groaning, travailing creation. They were so inflamed with His holy love, fervor, and passion that they vowed to press on in God, by His Spirit, until they attained to the fullness of Christ and the manifestation of the sons of God."

A most precious writing along this line was received some time ago from Terry and Tykie Crisp, of which I shall devote the rest of this article to quoting from a portion of it. Terry wrote:

Have you ever heard anyone use the age-old idiom of "holding one's feet to the fire?" What they meant by this was that they were going to keep the pressure on that individual, they were going to give him no rest, they were going to bear down upon him with such force and intensity, that he would finally assume his moral obligations, line up with their desired expectations, conform to a certain standard of conduct or consciousness, etc. It was another way of saying that they were not going to release that person from the heat of intense scrutiny and high expectation, until they saw a change in him. Does this not describe how our Lord is dealing with His children in this hour? Yes, it is true that Jesus loves us just the way we are. And, yes, His love for us is unconditional. But aren't you glad that He loves us so much that He will not leave us in that condition? His highest desire for each of us is that we should ultimately look like Him; and He will go to any length to make this a reality! Therefore, He holds us in the fire, even when we kick, and scream, and think we've had enough. He knows just what it will take to achieve the objective; and works incessantly toward that goal, in spite of our objections! He is content that once we share His vision, then we shall understand why it was necessary!

There are several things we might mention about the appearance of Christ's feet; chief of which is the fact that John's description of them was never meant to be taken literally. This should be apparent, since he referred to them as being "like unto..." This shows plainly that he was speaking in a metaphorical sense; he was creating a word-picture in the minds of his readers, and what an excellent picture he gives! Secondly, we would add that the mention of His feet speaks figuratively of His walk. It is another way of commenting on the expression of His life; the demonstration and exhibition of that life as He makes contact with the earth realm of humanity.

While reading over this passage I noticed something conveyed in the Greek, which is almost overlooked when read only from the Authorized version. There is a condition described here, which plainly reveals God's ultimate, eternal purpose for holding not only Christ's feet to the fire, but ours, as well! The word "burned," as used in the King James translation, should more accurately be rendered, "glowed." Is there a difference? Most

assuredly there is! We know that in order for something to burn, its composition must be of a combustible nature. But for something to glow, it must be of a more enduring substance! Now, both burning and glowing are responses to the fire. And for a short duration, even that which is in the process of being burned may emanate a momentary glow, much the same way a "falling star" shines temporarily, until it burns out. But know ye that in the fullness of time, the fire will at length reveal the true constitution of a thing. Beloved, it is an undeniable fact: the fire cannot be fooled! If the substance is ignitable, it will eventually be reduced to ashes; if it is not, then it will simply be refined to the highest degree of purity. The fire makes manifest the basic make-up of the material, and openly declares its consistency for all the world to see!

Looking again unto Jesus, our Author and Finisher who gives us faith, we see that when our Lord trod upon this earth, He gave us the perfect example of what it is like to have "feet like unto fine brass." Why, He was the greatest firewalker that ever lived! For centuries, men in various parts of the world have mystified multitudes of spectators by walking upon hot, glowing coals of fire. In fact, in some cultures, a walk among the fiery embers was even required of those who had hopes of being initiated into the ranks of their priesthood. It was looked upon as an act of moral purification. But without fear of contradiction, we can boldly declare unto you that no one ever did it quite like Jesus! You see, He encountered all the trials and temptations common to mankind. He was faced with the same kind of pressures wherewith each of us are familiar. There was no area of His life which escaped the all-searching flame; in no thing was He spared!

We are persuaded that the pressures Jesus encountered were more intense than what any of us might even imagine at this time! Many years ago the question was posed by wise old Solomon, "[Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?](#)" (**Prov. 6:28**) The answer, up until that time, was a resounding NO! Every man or woman who had ever passed through the fiery path of fleshly lust, trials, or temptations had always come out with "charred feet," so to speak. Every one of them had "flammable" elements in their "soles"; that is, elements which responded poorly to the heat! Oh, they might have been victorious in one situation, only to turn around and find themselves "flame-broiled" in another form of testing. We know this to be true, because according to the divine record, "ALL have sinned (missed the mark), and come short of the glory of God."

But when Jesus stepped forth on the human scene, He bore an entirely different testimony! We read that **He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."** (**Heb. 4:15**) It mattered not whether He was being tempted with one of the common sensual allurements which appeal to the natural appetites in man, or whether He was being led along the fiery pathway which passed by the house of that "great harlot," religious Babylon, whose sweet, seductive influences had slain many strong men. (Prov. 7:26-27) Regardless of whether He was walking through one of those challenging natural circumstances which is of a frustrating nature and had the potential of causing Him to "lose His cool," or whether He was being forced to pass through the flaming words and the false accusations of His chief critics, He always did what was right! He calmly kept His composure! No matter how hot "the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire" made them (Isa. 54:16), and no matter how intense the heat became under His feet, there was absolutely nothing in Him that would ignite! Much to the devil's dismay, Jesus simply would not burn! The flame would not kindle upon Him! Why, He wouldn't even blister! In fact, the hotter the adversary made the trial, the more fervently Christ's feet "glowed!" He radiated such an intense purity, such indescribable peace, such absolute discipline and self-control, the multitudes were astonished by Him! They could not help but admire this man's walk! He was totally above reproach! Ah, beloved, we believe that it was because of this very thing that He had such influence with the people! They understood that what He taught them, He had first walked out Himself! He not only instructed them in the overcoming life; He demonstrated what it was like to have power over the fire!

The question might be asked: how was it that Christ was able to walk through the midst of such tremendous fires, and remain unsinged? How did He keep from being overwhelmed by them? We believe that one of the main reasons was that He stayed focused in the heavenlies! He kept His eye on the Lord of the fire, instead of looking at the fire itself! You see, while His feet were walking out the purposes of God in the earth, His head was in the heavens! (Jn. 3:31) He was not the least bit overwhelmed by the fire, because He understood its origin! He knew from whence it came!

This is the destiny of those who yield themselves unreservedly to the Lord! Even now, the feet of God's king-priest company of "firewalkers" are being conditioned in the flames of fiery trial and daily tribulation; and even

as we write, a bed of coals "seven times hotter" than in any previous generation is being prepared! The stage is being set; the world will be watching! What a breathtaking sight this will be! We need not fear, however, for once He has consumed everything in us that can be burned, and refined the metal of our inward nature to its highest degree of purity, then, regardless of the temperature, we will simply glow all the more with the glory of God!

You see, at such a time we trust that God will have already taken "the burn" out of the fire for us; and by then, there will be nothing to threaten us, to make us afraid! The fire is an enemy to us only so long as there are things in us that respond negatively to it, or as long as there are things that we are afraid of losing to it. But when we truly get victory over it, it will not matter! The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory, which shall be revealed in us! As did our Lord Jesus, we, too, will "glorify God in the fires," by walking in a way that magnifies and radiates His holy name (nature) to all creation! As prophetic confirmation Isaiah says, "Fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; THOU ART MINE... when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." (Isa. 43:1-2)

Praise God for the hope of His calling! As we become victorious over every Adamic tendency in us now, we will then be able to stand calmly and triumphantly with the Lamb on a sea of glass mingled with fire, having nothing to hide or be embarrassed of. Our feet will glow like His! (End quote).

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 26

ONE LIKE UNTO A SON OF MAN [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART TWENTY-SIX

SEVEN STARS IN HIS RIGHT HAND A SWORD OUT OF HIS MOUTH

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet... and as the sound of many waters..." (Rev. 1:10,15)

What is that voice which is as the sound of many waters? "The voice of the Lord is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the Lord is upon many waters." (Ps. 29:3) Water is one of the primary elements. Every part of our being is composed of elements, which come out of the seven days of creation. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void: and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." (Gen. 1:1-2) We first meet the voice out of the waters early in the book of Genesis. The voice of the water actually exists within it. Many of us have had the experience of sitting by the seashore, or a great waterfall, in a meditative moment, listening to the sound of the waters. In that time of reflection it seems the waters speak to us! Tranquillity is ministered to our soul and peace to our mind. Answers and solutions to difficult problems and the stresses of life form within our consciousness as we contemplate in the stillness the voice of the waters. Inspiration and revelation arise from within!

Water is representative of life. The voice of many waters is the voice of the fullness of life! What can man do without water? Nothing! Without water we will die within a few days because our very bodies are composed of 65% water. We were formed in water in the womb. In that long ago beginning the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters and there it was that God spoke! "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said..." His voice was first heard upon the waters! Creation began out of the waters by the word of the Lord! The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. Face speaks of personality, as though there is a person trying to appear through the waters. The face is the expression of the intelligence of the mind. It speaks of knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. The Spirit of God brooded over the face, over the personality of the waters. And then God spoke! He spoke out of the waters!

From the dawn of creation there comes to us the sound of the voice of many waters. It is HIS voice. It is the voice of the Lord! Darkness was upon the face of the deep, the very great deep of the waters. And there it was that the almighty God spoke and said, "Let there be light!" And the light shined out of the darkness of the waters. God speaks in the darkness within ourselves, out of the very great deep of our being, and light dawns upon the face of our waters, understanding springs forth in our mind and heart. The voice of the Lord that quickens us, the word of the Lord that awakens within the revelation of who we are and who He is, that brings salvation and the day of the Lord, is upon the face of the deep and is the voice of many waters.

"And I heard a voice from heaven as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps." (Rev. 14:2) This is naught but the voice of the 144,000 sons of God standing on mount Zion! Just before John heard this voice of many waters he saw a Lamb that "stood on mount Zion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads." Then he heard the voice of many waters! The forehead is that part of the face the bespeaks of the mind. Out of that mind the voice speaks. Just as the Spirit of God in the beginning spoke His creative word out of the deep of the waters, and upon the face of the waters, so the Spirit of God now speaks out of the face of the deep in us, out of the mind of Christ in the sons of God!

The word of the sons of God is the voice of many waters! It is the voice of One in the midst of the candlesticks! Water is life. Water saves, water refreshes, water cleanses, water rejuvenates, water creates, water births. Ah,

methinks I hear the voice of the Lord as the sound of many waters! Why many waters? Because there is no longer the only begotten Son of God — that was Jesus of Nazareth — there are now many sons coming to His glory! These many sons are the many waters! The foreheads upon which the Father's name is written, the minds in which are formed the mind of Christ, the personalities in which are formed the nature of the Father, are the face of the very great deep over which the Spirit of God now moves and out of which He speaks. It is the voice of the Son in the sons. It is the voice of love and restoration, the word of salvation and release, the power of redemption and resurrection that shall bring deliverance to creation from the bondage of corruption.

How can I be so certain that the voice of many waters is the voice of the sons of God? The apostle John gives this remarkable description of the vision he saw. "Then I looked and lo, the Lamb stood on Mount Zion, and with Him a hundred and forty-four thousand who had His name and His Father's name inscribed on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven (out of the realm of the Spirit) like the sound of great waters and like the rumbling of mighty thunder; the voice I heard seemed like the music of harpists accompanying themselves on their harps. And they sing a new song before the throne of God...no one could learn to sing that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who had been ransomed from the earth (realm)..." (**Rev. 14:1-3**) (Amplified). There is no doubt that the voice of many waters is the very same voice which was the music of the harpists and also the voice that sings the new song which no man can learn but the 144,000 who are the sons of God. It is clear that the voice, the harp music, and the song are but different descriptions of the same reality. A new song is a new message! A new message is a fresh word, a living word out of the realm of the Spirit!

When in chapter seventeen of the Revelation John was caught away into another astounding vision it was explained to him by the angel which showed him these things that waters mean peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues (Rev. 17:15). Can we not see by this that in the symbology of the book of Revelation many waters means many people. This is a many-membered body of Christ! There are many sons coming to glory! So he's not talking about "waters" speaking, rather it is "many people" speaking. It is many people but yet only one Voice. When John heard the voice of the Son of God through many members it wasn't the clamor of six hundred and sixty-six different denominations proclaiming six hundred and sixty-six different doctrines. The babble of so many diverse messages would not have sounded like the beautiful harmony of harpists harping and would have been unintelligible to his understanding. He heard a multitude of redeemed men and women out of every people and tongue and nation speaking the same word! They were in agreement, from their mouths proceeded the living words of God without discrepancy. They were speaking in the Spirit and by the Spirit. They had come from numerous backgrounds, diverse cultures, various races and nationalities, different dealings and processings of God, yet there was one word and revelation of God pouring out of their spirits! They did not belong to the same church order, they had not attended the same Bible school, they had not sat under the same ministries, they had not been in the same revivals, they had not read the same writers, they had not shared the same experiences, but they had been brought by the Spirit to the same word and reality in Christ! If you could read the letters we receive from around the world, from Europe, Asia, South America, the nations of Africa, Australia and New Zealand, and many other areas of the world, you would see just how true and powerful this is. We regularly receive letters from brethren in little villages in far-away places with strange sounding names, who were not in the Latter Rain move of 1948, nor in any of the other revivals we have experienced here in America, and when they share the revelation of the Christ, the purposes of God in this day of the Lord, the truths of reconciliation, sonship, the kingdom, and the processings of God in their lives, it is abundantly evident that we don't have one thing over them in any way! And they were not taught it by man! This phenomenon is not the result of any concerted effort, or any organized venture by any group to raise up a "sonship" movement in the earth. Oh, no! It is the result of the sovereign moving of God in the earth! It is the Lord Himself calling out and forming His elect! You can sit in a great auditorium with five thousand people and if everyone is chattering away about their own things it is a confusion of tongues. But should all speak in unison, reciting, for example, the Lord's Prayer, you can understand every word though it is spoken by five thousand voices. John heard a multitude of people speaking the same thing by the Spirit — the living word of God!

SEVEN STARS IN HIS RIGHT HAND

"And He had in His right hand seven stars..." (Rev. 1:16) "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches..." (Rev. 1:20)

Caught up in Spirit John saw a divine revelation. In the right hand of Christ were seven stars, which are the seven angels of the seven churches. The seven angels reside in His right hand because the right hand is the hand of authority, power, dominion, and blessing! Throughout history, there have been those anointed of God who have seen some connection between the stars and the messengers of God. This connection can easily be made because both stars and the ministering spirits are called "the host of heaven" in the Bible. There are several beautiful passages that provide the indisputable link between the two, of which I will cite only one. "Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord from the HEAVENS: praise ye Him in the heights. Praise ye Him, all His ANGELS: praise ye Him, all His HOSTS. Praise ye Him, SUN and MOON: praise ye Him, all ye STARS OF LIGHT. Praise ye Him, all ye HEAVENS OF HEAVENS." (Ps. 148:1-4)

The natural sun is the brightest luminary in the natural heavens. And to help us in correctly interpreting the meaning of the spiritual sun, Genesis 1:16 informs us that God made "the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night." Here we first have the idea expressed of both the sun and the moon being rulers. Then we find that God, the supreme Ruler, is called in the Word a "Sun." "For the Lord thy God is a SUN and a shield." (Ps. 84:11) Also, our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings, is called "the Sun of Righteousness." (Mal. 4:2) He rules! In Matthew 14:33 we find, concerning saints who are to be kings and priests and rule with Christ, that they are compared to the sun. "Then shall the righteous SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the kingdom of their Father."

Here in the book of Revelation we have seven stars, which are the seven angels of the seven churches. Now let us face some facts. We have listened to fairy tales much too long. In the first place we discover that the word "angel," instead of being a translation, is but an evasion, being the English form of the Greek word *aggelos*, which to the average person means nothing at all. The Greek word *aggelos* means nothing more than "messenger." And in every occurrence of the word "angel" in our Bibles, that is the word that should have been given. The word *aggelos* is simply a pure Greek word without any particular meaning except what we choose to give it, and people oftentimes have the notion that it means a man with wings, whereas, if a man did have wings, he has no muscles to move them — a most ridiculous thing!

Get the thought, now, that an angel is a messenger and read the word "angels" always with its proper translation, "messengers." The Greek word *aggelos* has just the direct meaning "messenger," one sent with a message, the personal representative of the Sender. What the person or being looks like or where he is from is completely irrelevant to his being a messenger. Whether he be a man, a spirit, or any other kind of creature makes no difference whatsoever! Anyone sent with a message is a messenger — an angel. If there would have been Western Union messengers in Bible times they would have been called "Western Union Angels," for angel means messenger. It may mean a messenger from hell, or a messenger from heaven, or a messenger from some man on earth; any messenger sent by a king, or any other person, is in both the Hebrew and Greek languages, an angel of that person. Even a homing pigeon would be an angel! It is simply one commissioned to bear a message. Yet that is not the end of the matter!

Let it be known with truth and assurance that there is a correspondency between all the sevens in the book of Revelation. How clearly we first see this in chapter one where the Lord Jesus reveals the mystery of the seven stars. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches. Then further on there are the seven lamps of fire which burn before the throne which are the seven spirits of God. And there are seven horns and seven eyes of the Lamb which are also said to be the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. It is my deep conviction that all of these "sevens" are but different aspects or facets of the same reality — the seven-fold Spirit of God, the absolute completeness and fullness of the Holy Spirit! The fullness of God in Jesus Christ is the seven spirits of God! The fullness of Christ in you is the seven spirits of God! The seven "angels" of the seven churches are the seven spirits of God — the fullness of the Word of God as Christ in us!

It will greatly aid our understanding to realize that in the Revelation where the word "angel" is again and again employed as a symbol the meaning is not the angel or messenger himself, but what the angel or messenger

stands for — the message! The message bespeaks of a word — there is a spiritual activity in the heavens of God's Spirit by which a word is communicated, the mind and voice of God reveal a truth, an activity, a purpose in the unfolding plan of God. Therefore, when we see the word angel in the book of Revelation let us think of a message, a revelation, or a word from the Lord! This is the power and authority of the Christ by the Spirit in His word sent to the churches. His word is not humanistic prattle. The seven stars are that spirit-ministry to the church that proclaims the living word of God!

Just as these seven stars are "in" the right hand of God's Christ, they also ARE His right hand! This meaning is often expressed in common speech, "He is my right hand man," meaning, the one who carries out my instructions, and accomplishes all my will. The seven angels are the seven-fold SPIRIT of God, and the seven stars are the seven-fold WORD of God which issues out of the Spirit, that word which never returns unto Him void, but accomplishes that whereunto it is sent. Each of the seven angels is a SPIRIT and each of the seven stars is a WORD. Each angel or star, each spirit or word, reproduces Christ in the members of His body!

As the revelation John saw progresses, we see a theme unfold before our wondering eyes that discloses to us a deep mystery. A lamb appears in the midst of the throne! This is very meaningful, for the lamb in the book of Revelation is not the lamb of mount Calvary. The lamb in the book of Revelation is the lamb in the throne, not the lamb on the cross. The lamb in the book of Revelation is the lamb standing on the heavenly mount Zion, not the lamb hanging between two thieves on Golgotha's hill. The lamb in the book of Revelation is in the throne in the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, not outside the gate of the Old Jerusalem in the land of Israel. He is the lamb of the throne! He is the lamb of a people! He is slain — that is, He is pouring out His Life, but not as the man of two thousand years ago, but as the Living Lamb of God in the midst of His government of sons!

Now notice, in the midst of the throne there stood a lamb, as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth (Rev. 5:6). Then we find that "out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God." (Rev. 4:5) Take note that the horns and eyes are in the lamb that is in the throne. The seven spirits of God originate from the lamb in the throne! But they are "sent forth into all the earth" (Rev. 5:6). Thus there is an emanation out of the throne of the seven-fold spirit of the Lord that radiates out until it penetrates and fills all the earth and every dimension of creation. The seven lamps of fire which burn before the throne are the first aspect of that emanation! These correspond to the seven golden candlesticks, which are the seven churches, which are made up of all those individuals whose spirits, as the candle of the Lord, have been lighted by the Spirit of God, and that is the light of the seven churches! The horns and the eyes of the lamb are in the throne. The seven spirits of God issue out of the very nature and authority of God in the lamb! But the light of the seven lamps or candlesticks burn before the throne. There has now been a movement, for both that which is in the throne and that which is before the throne are the seven spirits of God — which eventually are sent forth into all the earth! As the seven spirits of God radiate out from the throne, the church is therefore the first expression of that emanation! The light is the illumination of the Spirit of God!

In consideration of these beautiful truths it will be instructive to look at another significant scene in chapter eight of the Revelation. "And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets." (Rev. 8:2) Before God! Before the throne! Can we not see that the position of the seven angels is identical with the position of the seven lamps of fire, which are the seven churches. The great truth is that these are the seven angels of the seven churches! Consider this, my beloved. The seven horns and the seven eyes are in the throne. Seven lamps of fire are burning before the throne. And now there are seven angels, and they are standing before the throne, that is, in the seven churches. Furthermore, the seven angels have seven trumpets — a seven-fold message. They are sounding forth a word! As you study chapter eight you will see that these trumpet sounds go forth into three dimensions — the sea, the earth, and the heavens. These are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth! Can you see that the seven angels are the seven spirits? And the trumpets they blow are the seven-fold word of God which issues forth out of the spirit. Oh, how wonderful are these things! As you follow these seven angels all the way through the book of Revelation, you will find that their relationship is to everything that happens to the three realms men live in upon earth. They sound the trumpets that affect the earth-realm. These same angels pour out the vials that affect the earth-

realm. Follow these seven angels and you will see how they are identified with every activity of God that affects the earth-realm!

The seven spirits are the seven angels. When they are in the throne, they are eyes and they are horns. When they are before the throne they are seven lamps and seven angels. But when they are sent forth into all the earth they are seven trumpets! It is all the seven spirits of God in different administrations. Yet, when you stand in the earth-realm, viewing this vision from an earthly perspective, the seven spirits appear as seven stars! John was standing on the isle of Patmos as a prisoner, banished to those rocky shores as a criminal, suffering the pains of trial and tribulation, standing in his isolation perhaps in discouragement, but most certainly in a state of lack, shut in, hedged up, surrounded about, a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed; and from that vantage point he beheld a vision of the Lord of glory in the midst of His people, and in the right hand of this glorious One he saw seven stars. If you are in the throne you will see the seven spirits of God as the horns and eyes of the lamb. If you are before the throne you will see the seven spirits of God as burning lamps and seven angels. As you move away from the throne you will see the seven spirits of God as seven trumpets blasting forth. But if you stand in the confinement of Patmos and in the darkness of the valley of the shadow of death, you will see the seven spirits of God simply as seven twinkling stars up in the heavens of God's Spirit!

The deep mystery is that we are looking at the same things from different vantage points. Not only are the seven spirits, the seven angels, the seven horns, the seven eyes, and the seven lamps of fire all the same reality in differing applications, but the seven stars are also the same! To further indicate the influence of the seven-fold Spirit and the seven-fold Word upon the churches, the Lord is pictured as holding both the seven spirits and the seven stars in His right hand. **"These things sayeth He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand" (Rev. 2:1).** **"These are the words of Him who holds in His hand the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars" (Rev. 3:1, Phillips).** Several other translations bear out the fact that Jesus not only has the seven spirits, as the King James Bible says, but that He holds the seven spirits and the seven stars, or it could be said that He holds the seven spirits of God, even the seven stars.

Many say — and I once taught it myself as a hangover from the traditional teachings of the church systems of men — that the seven stars or seven angels are the pastors or ministries of the churches. Through my lifetime I have read two or three hundred books on the book of Revelation. I have listened to scores of tapes on the book of Revelation. And I have heard quite a few sermons on the book of Revelation. Ninety-nine percent of the time they told me that the seven stars and the seven angels were the pastors of the seven churches! Well, first of all, in the days of the early church they didn't have pastors! They had elders and other ministries, but there was no position called "the pastor." Look "pastor" up in your Bible Concordance and see how many churches had a man called "the pastor." Not one! See how many times, when Paul and the other apostles wrote to the churches, they addressed "the pastor." Not once! Paul commanded Timothy to ordain elders (plural) in every city, and when the apostles addressed the ministry of the churches, or met with the ministry of the churches, they spoke with and met with the elders, not "the pastor." The position of "the pastor" didn't exist in Bible days. It just isn't in the Book! It is an invention of the carnal, man-made, Babylonish church system. So we do know that "the angel" of the church was definitely not "the pastor" of the church!

I am convinced by the Spirit of God that these symbols bear a deeper spiritual meaning beyond that traditional teaching. The truth is that we are dealing with inward spiritual realities and powers — not external forms, structures, and systems. The stars or angels are heavenly dimensions of the body of Christ, not outward or earthly aspects. This inner power or spiritual essence of a thing is seen all through the book of Revelation! As John saw things in the Spirit and by the Spirit, every person, every thing, had its angel. God proclaims and executes His will by angels (Rev. 7:2; 14:6,8,9; 15:1,6). He addresses His Christ by an angel (Rev. 14:15). Christ acts and reveals His truth by an angel (Rev. 1:1; 20:1; 22:6). The waters have an angel (Rev. 16:5). Fire has an angel (Rev. 14:18). The winds have an angel (Rev. 7:1). The abyss has an angel (Rev. 9:11). In all these instances the "angel" appears when the persons or things spoken of are represented as coming out of themselves and as taking their part in speech or action. Can we not see by this that the seven stars or the seven angels of the seven churches are representations of the seven-fold anointing of the Spirit of God within the church — the Spirit of Truth!

There are seven spirits of God, and each of these seven spirits has an "angel," that is, an "anointing," a "message," or a "word." The seven stars are the seven-fold fullness of the word, the revelation, and the authority of God, which comes forth out of the seven spirits of God. If we now know the Lord in greater fullness and maturity, we will realize that He has ministered to us in the power and glory of each of these seven spirits and by each of these seven stars or seven angels, or the seven-fold fullness of His word! And just as our Father has ministered each of these seven spirits and the fullness of His seven-fold word to us throughout our spiritual experience, so also will we receive, experience, and manifest all the fullness of these seven spirits and the seven-fold fullness of His word, revelation, and authority at the appointed hour. Then we shall know Him and reveal Him in all the glorious fullness that He is! That will be the manifestation of the sons of God, which will set creation free!

The elect, to whom has been imparted the seven stars, the seven-fold fullness of the word of the Lord, are protected from being oppressed and confused by the voices of "strangers." They receive their word directly by the impartation of the living Christ, they now hear within themselves the voice of Christ and follow Him, and are then secure in His mighty hand. The pathway before all the elect may differ in some small details, but the predominant principle remains and is active within each one — THEY HEAR THE VOICE OF THE SON OF GOD WITHIN THEMSELVES AND BY THAT VOICE THEY LIVE. This is the "angel" of Christ, and the angels of the churches! This is the anointing, the revelation, the message, the word, and the authority of Christ for us! The pathway to life abundant, to the glory of our full redemption and transformation, is one of following the Lord alone. As we are made partakers of the fullness of His word by the seven stars, we follow Him who alone is able to lead us to the fullness of His life.

Some man may come by promising sonship if you follow him, sit at his feet, give yourself exclusively to his ministry and movement, but the elect will not be taken in by the carnal, self-exalting promotions of such false prophets, for they have the seven stars and the seven angels and hear the clear voice of the inner Son. Christ and only Christ will lead us to the fullness of sonship — to the Christ-life necessary to break the fetters of sin, limitation, and death and release creation from its bondage to corruption. Because of the indwelling "angel" of the Christ, the elect need not that any man teach them. Oh, yes, we encourage one another, confirm the dealings of God to one another, and exhort one another, but the Teacher is within! The Prophet and High Priest are within! The Messenger is within! The Witness is within! He will faithfully lead each one of us to our appointed destiny in God. Men will draw us away and lead us astray. Men will lead us into the ditch. The only purpose in our writing to the elect of God is to encourage every man to know the Lord for himself, to point every man to the living Christ, not to draw men to ourselves or our ministry in any way.

The wonderful truth of the indwelling Christ, who is the Word, is that we need not convince anyone of the truth of our message. Those with whom you must plead, beg, coddle, coax, explain and explain, debate, and argue in order to get them to "see" the truth are not apprehended to sonship! Those who are predestinated to the adoption of sons and receive the seven spirits of God are made of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord! (Isa. 11:2-3). There is an immediate inward response to the truth! Every time God has sent a word to me, I found that I was ready to receive it. It was as though I knew it all along, but did not understand it. When the word came my heart leaped for joy, for I knew inwardly the voice of the Son of God! There is an Eastern proverb that says, "When the student is ready, the teacher will appear." If you are trying to "teach" someone deeper things and they just can't "get it," then the student is not ready! They are not apprehended at this time.

This is not their hour. When we proclaim the revelation of the Lord all the apprehended elect of God respond with joy and thanksgiving! Christ is speaking within His elect, and when He speaks, He declares the same message, the same word, thus confirming His truth to each one. If someone does not receive the same truth, it is because of the dealings of Christ within, maintaining the order of His kingdom so that no one invades a realm in God that is beyond their calling. The Christ within is "the witness of God." The same John who received the seven spirits of God on Patmos also wrote, "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which He hath testified of His Son. He that is believing into the Son of God hath the witness in himself." (1 Jn. 5:9-10) Indeed, the witness of God is within, and He is leading us to the fullness of our inheritance, the Christ Life.

The elect are in this hour hearing the voice of the Son of God, the voice of the witness within them. And in hearing His voice, these chosen ones are forsaking every vestige of the world, the flesh, and the carnal church orders, and are entering into the life of Christ. Those who hear, and continue to hear, are being changed and transformed into His image! The transition from death to life is progressive, taking place line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little. However, as we look back on our pathway of spiritual transformation and growth, we are able to see amazing progress! And one day, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, we shall burst forth into a full manifestation with such splendor and speed that will amaze us.

The following words from the writings of Paul Mueller are so very confirming and profitable for each of us. "To all who read these lines, regardless of your place in God, or the depth or height of your walk with Him, you will benefit from these blessed truths. To have the understanding that Christ is within you, speaking to you from within, guiding you hourly and daily in your walk with Him, revealing His truths as you progress spiritually, and conquering all within you that is of the realm of corruption, little by little, is the understanding that you too are progressing unto that realm of His life and perfection. Christ is within you to bring to naught things that are of this corruptible realm. Therefore, your todays and tomorrows will be more successfully lived, for they are being lived in the light of the indwelling Christ. O the wonder of the Christ within! He is the light that has shined into our hearts, revealing the knowledge of the glory of God, a light and glory that shall eventually inhabit our entire being, spirit, mind and body, so that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. If it were possible for us to attain to the perfection of His life, without the Lord's help, we would then take the glory. But, it is impossible for us to receive that life apart from Him! Therefore, He will receive all the glory when we are finished, fully perfected, and in His image and likeness" — end quote.

A SWORD OUT OF HIS MOUTH

"And out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword." (Rev. 1:16)

The sword that goes from the mouth of Christ is without doubt the sharp two-edged sword of the Word of God. His name is called THE WORD OF GOD. He is the LOGOS. "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made." (Ps. 33:6) This is He who was in the beginning. "In the beginning was the Word." (Jn. 1:1) This is the Word that was God. "And the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (Jn. 1:1) In Him was life and the life was the light of men. This is He of whom it is written, "He sent His Word, and healed them." This is the Word that is sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. In this vision the One like a son of man is represented as being armed with a sword, two-edged and sharp, passing out of His mouth, indicating that His chief force lies in the action of His lips uttering words. His force is truth — truth expressed by His mouth in words. He goes forth to battle wielding only the weapon of Truth. Christ does not come to avenge blood or slay in battle as other conquerors have done. His words smite all who hear them! As someone has said, it will smite them with conviction and bless them with conversion.

The apostle Paul says, "Take the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God." (Eph. 6:17) When the legionnaires of Caesar girded on their belts and fastened their breastplates in position and took upon themselves their helmets and picked up their shields and swords, they were going forth conquering as a conqueror, to travel across the face of Europe for Imperial Rome, and to conquer all that came before them. How does the Christ conquer? By His WORD!

When I speak, or write, I manifest spiritual influences; and the force of these influences is proportionate to the inner power, and their effect is proportionate to the state of reception of my hearers. Words are thus seen to be the representatives of spiritual forces. The action of spirit on spirit is appreciable by the senses; but could we look behind the veil of nature when a crowd or a congregation is swayed hither and thither by the speech of one man, we should see that the influence exerted was as real and actual as muscular force. From this we learn that words are not mere sounds, but are the sheaths or cases of spiritual life, and on this ground we at once see the force of the Lord's declaration, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." (Jn. 6:63)

The Lord's speech is the manifestation and influence of His inner life poured forth upon those to whom He speaks. An incident in the life of Jesus, recorded in Luke, chapter seven, provides a picture in which may be

discerned the POWER OF THE WORDS OF GOD. As He approached the gate of Nain there met Him a funeral procession, a widow's only son carried out to burial. Moved with compassion for the sorrowing woman He bade her dry her tears. The astounded crowd heard Him address the figure upon the bier: "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise!" The power of the speech of the Prince of Life pierced the realm of the dead! The lad sat up and began to speak. The tender Christ delivered him to his mother, and made effective His command, "Weep not!" Her son was not only brought back from the gates of the tomb, but was restored to her as a gift from the Lord BY THE POWER OF HIS WORD.

On another occasion Jesus had come up to Jerusalem to attend the feast. As He reached the city He came to the Pool of Bethesda and He looked into the pool. There were five porches around that pool. He passed through the porches, and at last came to a poor man, sick for thirty-eight years, who had been pushed away from the sacred spring. The man was startled as he heard the Voice. "Wilt thou be made whole?" He looked up into the face of a Man who was looking down at him, asking that strange question, "Wilt thou be made whole?" There went right down into his heart a strange sensation, his whole being vibrated like a harp when every string is touched by a master hand. "Wilt thou be made whole?" Gently he explained that he had no man to help him into the pool, but that others, when he was coming, step down before him. Then he waited with his eyes fixed upon the Man who had so strangely appealed to his will. He got ready, for the very next moment he heard the voice of Him who is the Resurrection and the Life say, "Rise, take up thy bed and walk!" And in a moment there came into his body with that Word, power; and he rose, took up that bed, rolled it up and walked home, set free from the bonds of Satan who had bound him for thirty-eight years. Oh! The power of the flaming sword of the Word of God that proceeds out of His mouth!

As the Christ of God is a many-membered body, so is the sword that goes out of His mouth. The word of God is spoken in the world today by the body of Christ on earth, and that word flows forth as the sound of many waters. There are not to be two swords — one out of the mouth of the Lord, and the other out of the mouths of His ministers. There is one sword, and it is HIS. Our quotation of scripture, our knowledge of the Bible, and our understanding of truth is not the sword of the Lord! The sword of the Lord is that word which proceedeth only out of His mouth, and out of ours as we are made one in Him. The sword of the Lord bespeaks of a purified people, holding forth the word of Life in the power of the Holy Spirit, and how we praise God for this company!

The Spirit of God is forming and fashioning a people, a glorious company, from whose lips flash forth that clear word of the Lord which shall cause the traditions and unrighteousness of man to utterly come to naught. It was said of our Lord and Elder Brother, "Never man spake like this man." (Jn. 7:46) "What thing is this, what new doctrine is this? FOR WITH AUTHORITY commandeth HE even the unclean spirits, and they do obey Him!" (Mk. 1:27). "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him!" (Mat. 8:27) That which was manifest in Jesus Christ shall also be seen in His many-membered-brethren-company. There are preview glimpses of this even in God's servants in the Old Testament. With what boldness did Elijah the prophet pronounce unto Ahab, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." (I Kings 17:1) God's elect has at this time received the "firstfruits" of the Spirit, the "pledge" and "down payment" of that fullness revealed in the firstborn Son of God. We have witnessed the movings and miracles of God on a certain level as the sick have been healed and wonders done in the name of Jesus. Oh, yes! I have seen these things with my own eyes, and miracles have on occasion been wrought through even my word, and the laying on of hands. But all we have experienced up to this time is but a taste, an appetizer, a small sample of the glory that is coming! When our hearts are fully prepared for it, the pure and powerful word of God shall cause His servants to ride victoriously. Naught shall be able to stand before God's army of sons bearing the two-edged sword of HIS WORD! Not demons, not sickness, not sorrow, not limitation, not death, not the elements, not nature, not religion, not rulers, not governments, not anything! How glorious shall be the advance of this mighty company.

Fear not. Have hope. Believe in hope! It is God's good pleasure to yet renew the face of the earth. Surely all these things shall come to an end. All the inhabitants of the world shall learn righteousness! Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more! The government of God shall be established over all the kingdoms of men! All the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ! They shall not hurt nor destroy in all His holy mountain! They shall all be without spot and blemish, loving one another, even as Jesus loved us! Sin, sickness, and death shall be swallowed up in all mankind!

You, my beloved, are called to be a part of the firstfruits, even if the total harvest has not yet come. You are to wield the mighty sword of the Spirit. You are to ride forth in majesty as the expression of God's kingdom on earth. You are to utter His burning word of authority, redemptively smiting the earth with the sword of His mouth!

When man was banished from his Edenic realm of life, glory, and dominion, the record states, "So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way to keep (guard) the way of the tree of life." (**Gen. 3:24**) Man must be excluded from the tree of life until a provision should be made by which he can approach and partake of it. Nor is Adam merely driven out of Paradise; but a guard is assigned to the place to make any approach to it impossible, just as watches are stationed in the vicinity of fortresses, army camps, and many other highly sensitive buildings and restricted locations. The Cherubim were placed to "keep the way of the tree of life," and it is interesting to note that the word here for "keep" is in the Hebrew shamar, meaning "to guard, to protect, to defend, to hedge about as with thorns." I have heard brethren say that the Cherubim were to "keep" the way of the tree of life in the sense of keeping the way open, maintaining accessibility, but this is not the meaning of the text. The statement following makes this plain, for the Lord explained, "Lest he (Adam) put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever..." (**Gen. 3:22**) The flaming sword was a prohibition. The illustration is clear; if you would keep your neighbor's cows out of your garden you must fence it with a good thorny hedge or a few strands of barbed wire! Thus, life was denied to mankind by God, and so death came upon every man, even those who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression.

Moreover, those Cherubim at the gate of Eden did not have a metal sword to ward off such as would approach, but the Hebrew denotes a movable sword, that is, a flash or a flame, such as of lightning, which is unsteady and blinds the eyes. This flame or lightning is depicted as having the form of a sword that is in continuous motion, moving to and fro. Because of the cutting, searing, flaming sword of the Cherubim, no human being made his way across that dread portal! The tree of life, yea, all that Eden represents, was guarded by the power of death, it became untouchable, divinely unapproachable. From that day Adam's life before the gate became a continuous denial of the realm from which he was excluded. It was a flight and a search upon the cursed ground of the carnal realm to find what he had lost, and then a repeated, desperate rage against the power with the flaming sword; he continually ran against it, it always stood in his way, and the sword was formidable, preventing his circumventing it. Nothing is plainer in the whole Word of God than the fact that the Cherubim with the flaming sword were not stationed at Eden's gate to point, direct, or guide men back into life, for, in that event, man surely would have entered back in! They were placed there for the express purpose of SHUTTING MAN OUT FROM LIFE!

The cherubim bespeak of a realm of dominion by a flaming word. The word that proceeds from the Cherubim is typified in the flaming sword. The word "sword" is found in the Bible over 400 times. That indicates the tremendous importance the Spirit of God attaches to it. There are both the positive and the negative connotations. The apostle Paul, speaking of the whole armor of God, admonishes the saints to "put on...the sword of the Spirit, WHICH IS THE WORD OF GOD." (**Eph. 6:17**) Then the writer to the Hebrews declares that the sword of God's word is "QUICK." Quick means living and active — LIFE-GIVING! "For the word of God that speaks is alive and full of power — making it active, operative, energizing and effective; it is sharper than any two-edged sword." (**Heb. 4:12**) (Amplified). Ah, yes, here is the sword that conquers the death in us and GIVES LIFE! As it is written, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing...for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life!" (**Jn. 6:63; II Cor. 3:6**) The sword of the Spirit is the quickening, energizing, life-giving WORD OF GOD!

I shall not hesitate to explain to you, dear ones, that there are two aspects of the word of God. Jesus Christ is the Word — the Logos — THE LIVING, CREATIVE WORD! But there is also that word which Paul calls "the letter." The letter is the outer hull, the record and history, the laws and commandments, the rules and regulations, the types, shadows and figures, the external ordinances, rituals, ceremonies, and feasts; the visible form of the word which tells us, in terms understandable by the natural mind, many things about the Living Word, Jesus Christ. As I meditated upon the Cherubim and the flaming sword in Genesis, the Spirit spoke within me, saying, "The flaming sword is a word!" Then in a sudden burst of divine illumination the truth of it dawned powerfully upon me. Christ is the Word, the Living Word, and IN HIM IS LIFE! But the flaming

sword at the portal of Eden is a word, not the Word, not the living Word, but the form of the Word, that is, A WORD about THE WORD!

It should be clear to any thinking mind that the law given by Moses was a word from God. Many, many scriptures confirm that it was the very Lord Himself who spoke to Moses giving him the laws, commandments, judgments, and ordinances. Therefore it is called "the law of the Lord." Yet Paul, in speaking of this word from God, calls it "the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones." Then he further designates it "the ministration of condemnation." You, see, the law could only condemn! The only way the law could give life was if one perfectly kept it, but for every broken law there was a penalty. And no one was ever able to keep it! "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Therefore the law with all of its commandments, ceremonies, rituals, sacrifices, and observances is a dead word, it is form without essence, law without life, shadow without substance, chaff without kernel, it is the letter that killeth! It is "a word" about "The Word" and therefore shuts men up unto the dominion of death. It should not be difficult to understand that as Jesus Christ is the Living Word of God, the sword of the Spirit that quickens, so is the Letter of the Word a deadly sword, killing rather than quickening. Ah, two words and two swords! The flaming sword of the Cherubim is the word of the law, which is a ministration of condemnation and death. It keeps men out of Eden, away from the tree of life! But the sword out of the mouth of God's Christ is a living sword that excelleth in glory as the ministration of Life! Under the anointing a brother said, "The creative power will be invested in the sons of God and we will step out of infinity with eternity to work with the creative word in our mouths."

The old Saracen warriors were famous for the swords they carried. A few of these old swords still exist, among them the famous Damascus blades. These blades are said to be made of finely woven steel wires fused together in a secret process by a charcoal of fire. The amazing thing about these swords is that they were so pliable the sword tip could be doubled back to the hilt without breaking. They were so strong that they could pierce any medieval armor. Their two edges were so sharp that they could halve a silk handkerchief in mid-air. The sword of the Spirit, which is the living Word of God, is fused of many threads of truth and reality. By the secret processes of spiritual power, these threads are being gathered into one mighty weapon of truth — the many-membered Christ of God! This is a sword that never wears out! Its edge is never blunted! On its blade no rust ever yet has gathered! It cuts to heal! It smites to save! It kills to make alive! It is the sword of the Spirit. Now is the time when it calls for the strong hands and brave hearts of God's sons to wield it!

It reminds me of a little story I once heard about some Quaker boys who were going on a picnic. They were going up a mountain with their basket filled with apples and other good things. Some mean boys were harassing them, but they quietly went on their way until they had passed them; then they threw their apples down at them. At first the boys thought they were stones. When they saw the red apples they changed their minds, picked them up and ate them. That is the way of the sons of God! The sons of God will win because their weapons are so good! It is the bread of Life! While we go forth fighting sin, flesh, sickness, sorrow and death, we will give the world something to eat, something to live on, something to change them from corruptible to incorruptible. Hallelujah!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 27

ONE LIKE UNTO A SON OF MAN [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART TWENTY-SEVEN

I FELL AT HIS FEET AS DEAD
HE LAID HIS HAND UPON ME

"And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned I saw...one like unto a son of man...and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." (Rev. 1:16)

When Jesus Christ, the sign son, was transfigured on the mount before the wondering eyes of His disciples, we are told that "His face did shine as the sun, and His garments became white as the light." In the Gospel of Mark we are told that "His garments became glistening," which, in the Greek, means, "to lighten forth, flash forth like lightning." Within that form of man dwelt glory ineffable! As He prayed upon the mount of Transfiguration, He opened a little way the robe of humanity with which He had covered Himself when He came down to earth, and His majesty and glory burst forth! The truth is that this was a "breaking forth" of the glory of the incorruptible life of God flowing through the veins of Christ's perfect humanity! With this wonderful thought in our minds let us with reverence consider the words of the apostle John wherein he wrote, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." (Jn. 1:1,4,14) "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (Jn. 8:12)

In one of George Hawtin's writings he shared this beautiful thought: "You have heard of the light of a candle. You have heard of the light of the stars. You have heard of the light of the moon. You have heard of the light of the sun. But this is the light of life! When men speak of the light of the sun, we understand. When they speak of the light of the moon, we understand. May we not now understand the truth of Christ's words: the light of life?" The glory of the transfiguration was the momentary unveiling of the glorious heavenly light of Christ's life. It was in truth the manifestation of the light of life promised by our Lord, "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (Jn. 8:12) It shone from His face. It glistened from His garments. It surrounded Him like a halo. It emanated like a blazing sun. His eyes were like lamps of fire — the light that swallows up all darkness and death of the carnal realm. There on the mount of Transfiguration His disciples beheld Him in the glory of the light of His incorruptible life. This was resurrection life, kingdom life, sonship life, immortal life! And, beloved, this beautiful picture tells us what our incorruptible bodies will be — the glistening light of life that Christ Himself actually is!

I remember following a guide deep down a winding path into the Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico. We entered a kind of underground amphitheater and were asked to sit down. Then all the lights were turned off, and we were surrounded by a darkness thicker than any I have ever experienced. No matter how long we waited, no tiny ray of light made its way down to where we were. The darkness was so thick that we could almost feel it. No one moved. Since that moment I have often thought about what it means that "God is light; in Him there is no darkness at all." The human situation, apart from God, is much like being deep in a cavern with the lights off. There's no way to know which way to go, what to do, or how to get where we belong. Then God comes in, in the power of His Spirit and by the glory of Jesus Christ, and it's as if the lights go on and we can see! We find our way by following His way. We learn who we are, who our Father is, and all we need is wondrously discovered in the light of His countenance! In the glory of Jesus God shows us not only where we are but also how to get to our ultimate destiny!

The Roman emperor Trajan said to one of the believers in the true God, "I understand that you believe that your God is everywhere. And He dwells among the nations. I should very much like to see Him." To which this believer responded, "I am afraid, sire, that no mortal eye can look upon His glory and that person live, for He is too glorious for the eye to behold." "Nevertheless," said the emperor, "I am your king and I command you that

you show me your God." "Very well, sire, but before I do, I think it best that you look upon one of His ambassadors before you attempt to look Him in the face." And with that, he led the emperor Trajan outdoors on a bright and dazzling midday. He bade him to look up into the sun shining in the heavens. The emperor exclaimed, "I cannot, for the light dazzles my eyes!" The believer said, "If you cannot look upon one of His ambassadors that carries the message of His creation to the world each day, then how shall you look into the face of God, Himself?"

Spiritual bodies are represented as shining as the lightning. The heavenly messenger who came to roll back the stone from the door of the sepulcher where Jesus had been lain was described thus: "His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow." (Mat. 28:3) We have already mentioned the transfiguration of Jesus upon the dizzy heights of Mount Hermon where "His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light." (Mat. 17:2) When Saul of Tarsus met this same Jesus following His resurrection and glorification, the shining was so bright that he fell from his horse and his sight was destroyed as by a blazing sun; and yet "the men that journeyed with him saw no man." And it is written, "Who maketh His messengers spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire". (Heb. 1:7) Moses walked with his flock along the backside of the wind-swept desert when "the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of the bush." (Ex. 3:2) And while shepherds tended their flocks one starlit night just outside Bethlehem, suddenly, "the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid." (Lk. 2:9)

These were one and all appearances of spiritual beings from the spiritual realm. It is a wonderful fact that the elect sons of God are destined to rule and reign with Christ in the kingdom out of that higher sphere. Any man who thinks the sons of God will be flying around on airplanes and renting great auditoriums and stadiums for massive crusades has missed the point of sonship altogether! The realm of manifest sonship is a presently unexplored and unknown realm of life so far as we are concerned. If you want to know the full glory of manifest sonship look not at Jesus of Nazareth, but behold the Christ who came out of the tomb in the power of resurrection! The natural mind cannot think itself into such a realm of life as this by any kind of confession, positive thinking, or self-induced raised consciousness! It is only by the inspiration of the Spirit of God that we ever get a glimpse of a realm so transcendent and glorious. No man knows the things of God, but the Spirit of God does, and as God wills we are given understanding.

John saw the manifestation of this glory of sonship on the holy mount with Jesus, and again on the isle of Patmos when in Spirit he beheld the splendor of this One like a son of man whose countenance was as the sun shining in its strength. Today by the Spirit of revelation the curtain is beginning to open and some are seeing that which lies before us to be apprehended, praise His wonderful name! It follows of necessity that man's being, because it is unsuited to the spiritual world, must be changed by the power of God. A bird would need a mighty change to be able to live under water, or a fish to live in the air; but the Lord promises a much more striking change to those who are predestinated to be manifested as the sons of God with power! "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." "Who will transform and fashion anew the body of our humiliation to conform to and be like the body of His glory and majesty, by exerting the power which enables Him even to subject everything to Himself" (Phil. 3:21) (Amplified).

In a starless night all is black; but from the moment that the dawn has kindled its first beacon-light of vivid crimson on the ice-clad mountain peak, it fires — summit after summit — the splendor of the hills, and flows down their sides in rivers of molten gold. The streams flash into silver; the sea burns beneath the flood of radiance; the fields burst into color; the forest leaves and dewy flowers gleam with millions of diamonds; the whole world thrills and burns with luster and life beneath the brilliance of the noonday sun. Like that is the radiance of the Son of man whose countenance is as the sun shining in its strength! All things are revealed in the light of His countenance, which is the glory of God. God is light; He is that light, bodiless and imperceptible, from whose inexhaustible fountain our earthly light is but a faint spark, or a dim shadow.

Thus, in the prophetic scriptures the Lord is symbolized by the sun. The natural sun is the brightest luminary in the natural heavens. His countenance as the sun helps us to interpret the meaning of the spiritual sun. The light, which Christ is, is the sun of God's spiritual solar system. "For the Lord God is a sun and a shield." (Ps. 84:11). The twenty-seventh Psalm begins with this word, "The Lord is my light." This phrase is found frequently

in the Psalms, as for instance in **Psalm 36:9**, "For with Thee is the fountain of life; in Thy light shall we see light." And again, "O send out Thy light and Thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto Thy holy hill, and to Thy tabernacles." (**Ps. 43:3**) The wonderful significance of this One whose face shines as the noonday sun is beautifully expressed by the Psalmist, "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance." (**Ps. 89:15**) Light is the very substance of God, it is the essence of His own person, being, and nature. It is embodied in Him. Light originates, emanates, and radiates from our heavenly Father! From the brightest star in the universe to the tail of the tiniest firefly — all light comes from God!

The glorious Son of God is the One in whom the unapproachable and utterly incomprehensible glory of God is made manifest! As we only know the sun by the light that shines from it, so is God's Christ the outshining, the revelation of God's glory! As the light that shines from the sun is one nature with it, so every son of God is of one nature with the Father! As the light that shines from the sun is one substance with it, so the sons of God are the very substance of God in the earth! Friends, Christ is the light, the light is within; it must break through, it must arise and shine, it must have pre-eminence in our hearts. The glory of God is the emanation or radiation of His nature, and as we are filled with His glory we radiate His nature to creation. This is the real purpose of our calling! The Christ within, not the doctrine of sonship, not the truth of reconciliation, not the word of the kingdom, not another man's revelation, not another man's faith, but your own INDWELLING LIGHT enables you to manifest as the One in the midst of the candlesticks whose countenance is as the sun shining in its strength! Other people can follow the wandering stars and the falling stars, vainly chasing after the illusive light within them, but, praise God, there is a people in whom the God of light is being formed and birthed, partakers of His divine nature, conformed to His image, a new life found within, even the light of life. As the light of God increases in the elect in this hour, we are being brought to the place where all our need is fully met by the INNER SUFFICIENCY of the indwelling Spirit, not from that which comes from without.

"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee." (**Isa. 60:1-2**) There is a people UPON WHOM OUR GOD IS ARISING! He isn't going to arise in the skies of the physical heavens, as the church-world ignorantly expects, but upon His people. His glory will not be seen streaking across the physical heavens, but upon His people. Darkness does cover the earth, and gross darkness the people, but in spite of the abounding desolations of wickedness and trouble, we live in the most glorious hour of all time for the people of God! The prophetic voice of the Lord is in the earth proclaiming with a great voice as of a trumpet that God is preparing His king-priests for the grand task of bringing reconciliation, restoration, and transformation to the whole fallen world order. Nothing that man has done has so desolated the world that it is beyond hope! One glorious Son of God came into a world of pagan darkness and ruthless power and by the Spirit of His Life conquered all the gods of the pagans and altered the course of world history. That divine seed that fell into this earth has sprung forth in the hearts of millions and is now ready to bring forth its harvest — many sons brought to His glory! For two thousand years the world has seen the candlesticks; now is the time for them to see the One in the midst of the candlesticks whose countenance is as the sun shining in its strength!

In the very midst of all this darkness upon the land and gross darkness upon the people, God is arising upon His chosen ones. He is rising in my heart! How joyful we are that God, who is the Light, gets right down where the darkness is. He does not come from afar to dispel the night, for "God... commanded the light to shine out of darkness" (II Cor. 4:6). First, God has met us right where we are. Some of us have been in some pretty dark places in our lives! But God commanded the light to shine out of our darkness, and the dawning of God's day within us has blazoned our sky and made us a body of light to usher in a new day for all creation. The brightness of our rising brings the dawning of the new day! As we shed His glory abroad, we are lights in humanity's sky — so let no shadow of self keep your light from shining, but fill the earth with the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ!

We are appointed to shine as the sun. We have now come to mount Zion, to the city of the living God as a shining scene of great splendor and brightness and dazzling beauty. It is not our desire to merely see the light, or tell of it, or paint it, or live in it — as fine as all that is. We must BECOME THE LIGHT. "YE ARE the light of the world." "YE ARE light in the Lord." How unworthy and unprepared for such a calling we feel some times!

But, precious friend of mine, you may be poor, weak, unknown, unheralded, unlettered, despised and rejected of men; but if, through grace, there is a link connecting you to that "One in the midst of the candlesticks," then you are, in very deed, a son of the day, and destined, in Father's purpose and time, to shine in that celestial sphere, that region of glory, of which God's Christ will be the central sun forevermore. This is not your own doing. It is the result of the counsel and operation of God Himself who has given you the light of life, joy and peace, triumph and glory, in Jesus Christ.

Yet, should you be a total stranger to the hallowed action and influence of divine light, if your eyes have not been opened to behold any beauty in the face of the Son of God, and no attraction to that place in Him in the midst of the candlesticks, then, though you possessed all the wealth of the nations, though you had the power of a king, though you had all the learning of an Einstein, though you were enriched with all the treasures of human philosophy, though you had drunk in with avidity all the streams of human science, though your name were adorned with all the learned titles which the schools and universities of this world could bestow, though you were piously devoted to the grandest creeds, traditions, rituals, ceremonies, and service of the revered religious systems of earth, yet you are A SON OF THE NIGHT, A CHILD OF DARKNESS; and are just as dark, just as void, just as formless and empty, just as cold and dead as was the desolate earth and the dark abyss, from which you came, before that memorable day in which God first said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

We must first see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ shining in our hearts and then it will be radiating forth to enlighten the earth. Isaiah said of the desolation of the earth, "And they shall see the glory of the Lord." Oh, yes! ALL shall see the glory of the Lord as it was upon the countenance of Moses, as it radiated forth from the whole being of Jesus Christ, as it shone in the face of Stephen. And the glory of the latter house must be greater than the former! There must be a sense that the glory of the Lord is filling His temple. The glory of the Lord so filling the temple that the priests will not be able to stand and minister. All that is of ourselves, all that is common and ordinary, all that is done by rote must be hushed and fall down in prostration before the very presence of the glory of God, because it is from underneath the threshold of the house that the living waters flow out, from the deepest dimensions of our lives. Out of that low place and out of the temple and the tabernacle of our God there will be that expression and that shining forth of the brightness of the glory of the Lord and the excellency of our God. The beautiful expression of His life, the marvelous operation of His spirit, the authority and glory of His power — THE EXCELLENCY OF OUR GOD!

We were all born into a world of darkness and death. Christ is appearing within us as Light to begin to dispel the darkness and give us hope. His light within us is making it possible for us to trust our Father to bring us to a complete transformation. The darkness of this world becomes light all around us, for Christ, the source of all light, is shining brighter and brighter within us to dispel the darkness of the carnal human realm. His light within us is manifested as a greater revelation of the truth, by increasing His faith within us, by raising up His nature of peace, joy, love, confidence, power and victory in all the happenings of our lives. We now see things in the world more positively, for we know our Father is in control. We have learned this experientially, by His great faithfulness in our own experiences, testings and circumstances. We now see all men in a different light by the true spirit of unconditional love, mercy, grace, reconciliation, and restoration. This is all the LIGHT OF CHRIST! The more positive outlook we now have is not due to a new teaching, a new mindset, a new form of meditation, psychology, hypnotism, mind control, or mental imaging. Those are all soulish things! The kingdom of God, the nature of God, and the glory of Christ does not come by soul power! But it is the direct result of a greater degree of the Light of Christ within us, by the Spirit. IT IS THE LORD!

The following words by George Wylie are very precious and meaningful. "I often wondered how it could be that God was omnipresent; that He could be everywhere at once, as the Psalmist said, "Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me." (Ps. 139:7-10) God can be everywhere, and fill the universe with Himself because the glory of God is the radiation of His being into the whole cosmos. Every living being has an "aura" or "emanation" of its life. This "aura" or "emanation" is identical with and corresponds to our nature, and is our nature and personality radiating from us into our surroundings, and it

affects everything around us. With the people of God it is a radiation that flows from our spirits, and the stronger our spirits are the greater the radiation.

"God is likened to a sun, so that bright orb that shines out there in space is a type of God. Let us look at this for a minute. Though the sun is more than ninety million miles away in space, it radiates light, heat, energy, and life to everything on the earth. The nature of the sun is that of light, heat, and energy, and it radiates itself into all our solar system. Though it is over ninety millions miles away from us, if it weren't for our atmosphere, the light and heat would burn everything to a crisp in a matter of minutes. How much farther its radiation goes, I have no idea, but it could travel an inestimable distance into space. The sun supplies us with light, heat, energy, and life. Without it no life could exist on this planet. The sun is the source of all this! God is a sun, and what the sun is to this earth, God is to the universe! HE is the life, light, and energy that pervades and radiates through the universe, supporting and sustaining all creation. Just as our sun radiates into our solar system, and supports and sustains natural life on this planet, so God radiates Himself into the entire universe to support and uphold all things.

"The glory of God is the radiation or emanation of His nature and power, and this glory surrounds Him. As we become partakers of the divine nature, we also radiate the glory of His nature! This is the real purpose of our calling! We receive His glory when we are made partakers of His divine nature, and there is no other way by which we can enter into the glory of the Lord. When the scripture says that God is bringing many sons to glory, this is not some geographical location He is going to take His sons to, but a realm in the divine spirit that belongs to eternity. God brings us to glory by recreating Himself within us, giving us His nature, reproducing in us His image and likeness, filling us with His fullness, until the light of the glory of that divine nature radiates from us to give light and life to all creation. As the Son is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person, when we are conformed to the image of the Son, then we also become the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person! We are being changed into heavenly, spiritual, life-giving beings!" — end quote.

"His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." (Rev. 1:16) The countenance is the face. The face stands spiritually for the inward nature for the face is the revealer of one's inmost being. Our faces reveal much about us — often more than we wish! The beauty of a person is upon their countenance, for from the eyes, the lips, the expression, the light of the inner man shines through and thus he is known as a man of light or of darkness. Every emotion and desire sheds expression upon the countenance. The hidden man of the heart finds language in a look. A furtive glance, a blushing cheek, a pensive line, a nervous lip, a shining smile, a troubled eye or a beaming eye will reveal what speech would conceal. There are faces that betray weakness and instability. There are faces that reveal sin and dissipation. Other faces betoken determination, firmness, strength, confidence, contentment, and character. The world has no portrait of the lowly Nazarene who walked the shore of Galilee. But the power of the Spirit of that Man within us reveals the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ!

There is a deep mystery to the body of Christ, and even a deeper mystery to the glorious Head of that body. Robert Wise reported in one of his books an amazing incident in the life of Cecil Hanson. Incredibly, in 1940 Cecil was pronounced clinically dead for approximately 20 to 30 minutes. During those lost minutes he entered one of those extraordinary adventures of leaving his body and this world behind. During this period of being dead he discovered a number of things that defy the imagination. Ultimately he felt God directing him to return to this life and to rear his small son, Van. He came back to dedicate his life to raising the boy who would otherwise have been orphaned. Van's mother had died in childbirth and Cecil had not gotten over the blow. During those missing minutes his hostilities disappeared and he was ready to pour himself into the little lad. Ultimately, Van grew to be an outstanding person. Today he is an oral surgeon and countless lives have been touched by his faith as well as his medical skill.

And what happened to change Cecil's life so dramatically? During that period of "twilight" he encountered Jesus in person. In those moments he looked fully into the face of the risen Christ and beheld Him in all of His glory. It is Cecil's description of His face that embodies a deep mystery. He saw the face of Jesus as a marvelous mosaic made up of hundreds of small facets. Each piece added a shade or line to the total picture. So in looking into this composite face he could see the countenance of Christ! But as he looked he could see

hundreds of parts. The startling realization was that the mosaic pieces were not tile, metal, or glass. Each small section was a clear, distinct cameo of someone's face! As Cecil stared fixedly at the face there was a pulsating fluctuation between the total face and the cameo sections. One minute he could see the Face and then in the next he was aware of hundreds of faces! In awe Cecil began to recognize what was revealed in each of those cameos. They were all people he knew! Moreover, they were all people who had loved him and shown the compassion, kindness, and goodness of Christ to him during his life. Overwhelmed in worship and amazement, Cecil bowed before the risen Lord. In the lingering moments of that experience, anxieties, fears, and doubts were healed. When Cecil "returned" to start his life again, the many-faceted face of Jesus guided him through the years ahead.

I FELL AT HIS FEET AS DEAD

"And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead..." (Rev. 1:17)

When Moses desired the vision of the glory of God, he was warned that no man could see God's face and live. No man can stand in the full blaze of divine glory! The glare of the eastern sun on desert sands has dazed men's eyes; the fierce, gleaming radiance of sunlight on the snow-clad hills has blinded human sight, and none can, with the naked eye, behold the sun in the sky. How, then, can our mortal vision turn its gaze upon the glory that is ineffable? When John on Patmos saw the glory of the Son of man the glory so overpowered him that he felt like a man whose very life was taken and there was no strength in him.

We might think that John would have leaped and danced and shouted for joy in the presence of the revelation of the glory and fullness of Christ. But this blessed saint of God, who had lived near to the heart of Christ while they walked together on earth, this man, who with wonder had seen the Galilean control the very elements, who once was awed by the transfiguration and struck dumb by the glory of Christ's resurrection, this man who had experienced the blazing glory of Pentecost, now falls as a dead man as he beholds this Christ not as He was at first, but as He is at last. Truly John was changed from glory to more excellent glory by beholding the glory of God's Christ! My prayer is that all who read these lines may clearly see that beholding His glory causes the old you to shrink and wither away and die while the new man, the Christ man in the image of God, matures and grows up into His likeness. As the glory of the revelation of Jesus Christ shines upon us, things that belong to the old Adamic creation pass away like the fall leaves and, behold, new things are born.

Saul of Tarsus many years earlier was fulfilling his commission of slaughter when he was arrested by the voice and vision of Christ on the Damascus road, and the man, in the dazzling light brighter than the noonday sun, fell to the ground, blinded by the glory. Ezekiel did not see the Lord; he did not see even the glory of the Lord. He saw only "the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord." Ezekiel caught just a glimpse of a reflection of divine radiance, but that was enough to floor him. He fell down in awe!

"Behold, I am vile," said one man in the Bible. This was not said by Cain in a remorseful moment after his murder of Abel, nor by Judas after he had betrayed the Lord into the hands of His enemies; instead, it was the utterance of one of whom God said, "**There is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil.**" (Job. 1:8) Was Job's language the result of extreme depression, induced by his terrible afflictions? Was it when he first received the news of his terrible calamities? Not at all! For then he exclaimed, "The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord!" Was it when his friends reasoned with him and reproved him? No, for then he vindicated himself and argued of his uprightness. Let us notice when it was that Job uttered the words, "I am vile!" IT WAS WHEN THE LORD APPEARED TO HIM AND GAVE HIM A STARTLING REVELATION OF HIS OWN WONDROUS PERFECTIONS! It was when he stood in the all-penetrating light of God's holy glory and was made to realize something of His surpassing majesty.

Ah, when a soul is truly brought into the presence of the living God, boasting ceases, our own righteousness is turned to corruption, and we cry with the prophet, "Woe is me! For I am undone!" When God makes to the soul a personal revelation of HIS GLORY, that individual is effectually convinced of his own wretchedness. The more we are given to discern the ineffable glory of the Lord, the more will our self-worth wither. It is in God's light, and in that only, that "we see light" (Ps. 36:9). When He shines into our understandings and hearts, and

brings to light "the hidden things of darkness," we perceive the utter corruption of our humanity, and are abominable in our own eyes. Thank God for it! For when we stand in the blazing light of Him who is a consuming fire the nature of the Adamic man of sin is slain by the breath of His mouth!

John "falling as one dead" before the majesty of God's Christ has nothing to do with the silly, carnal experience of being "slain in the spirit" as practiced by many in the Pentecostal and Charismatic realms today. Now don't get me wrong — there is a genuine experience of actually falling under the power of the Holy Spirit! Elaine Cook printed a testimony from our long-time friend, Rita Kahr, with an added comment by Elaine, which I deem important to share here, for it reflects my own observation and concern through many years of walking in the Spirit. Rita says:

"I was in a group where people were being prayed for and were falling over, 'slain in the spirit.' I wasn't sure if this was real or not, so I resisted the one who was putting some pressure on my head and I stood my ground when everyone else had fallen over. The question I put to those who had fallen down was, 'Did anything happen to you? Did the Lord speak any thing to you, or show you anything?' Their reply was, 'No.' It was plain to see that they counted it a thrill to have been knocked over by the Lord. On another occasion, a brother in my home was just lightly touching the people and they were falling over. Before I knew what had happened, he had touched me and I had fallen too. I didn't feel the Lord, nor did I feel holy! I tried to pretend that something had happened. I talked to others later and they seemed happy just to have had this experience, but I protested that God is purposeful and would not do anything unless it was for a purpose. I began seeking the Lord, asking, 'Is this real? Is your purpose just to give us a thrill?' Months later, I had an experience of truly being slain in the spirit. I found that there is a real, and there is a counterfeit of the real! God showed me that He is purposeful in all that He does and that we are to test the spirits and prove all things."

Elaine added the following comment: "Rita shared this with us when we met her on our trip. It was refreshing to meet someone who questioned the validity of this particular manifestation. I too, have had those who exerted pressure upon my head to push me down. Like Rita, I felt there must be some purpose to it and I would resist any man trying to fake the power of God. A certain TV evangelist who was busily trying to make a name for himself would copy a certain famous evangelist by throwing his arm out and causing the people to fall down. It looked like the mighty power of God! But the Holy Spirit rebuked him with these words: 'You are prostituting the gift of God.' This solemn warning shook him to the core and was the means of the Lord bringing him out of that place of trying to be 'Mister Big' to the place where he now sees the message of sonship and understands that the soul life must be laid down" — end quote.

We have to get beyond dead doctrines, religious traditions, and soulical experiences. We have to see the living Christ, for He is the Word of God, the Truth of God, and the Reality of God. It will take more than sermons on sonship and exhortations on perfection to make us perfect sons in God's image! We must SEE HIM to be changed into His likeness! We must see Him as He is. It is going to take more than singing choruses, clapping hands, shouting Amens and Hallelujahs, and preaching to one another about the deep mysteries of God to bring us to the knowledge of God. We shall have to MEET HIM as Thomas and Paul and John met Him! We must see Him in the Spirit and by the Spirit, we must hear His voice speaking to us out of the deepest recesses of our spirits. We must commune with Him in the glory of God that radiates from the face of Jesus Christ. Sonship can only come by personal association with Christ Himself! I am willing to stake all that I have and all that I am on this one bold assertion: No man or woman can ever be changed into the image of God or put on incorruptibility and immortality until he has cast off the yoke of the carnal mind and the bondages of human tradition and religion and has MET THE FIRSTBORN SON PERSONALLY, COMMUNED WITH HIM INTIMATELY, and continued to walk in the light and glory of what he sees.

The promise of this vision assures us of the perfecting of the powers of our spiritual life. When Moses desired the vision of the glory of God, he was warned that no man can see God and live. No man can stand in the full blaze of divine glory until he himself corresponds in nature to that glory! When John on Patmos saw the glory of God's Christ he fell as dead in the overwhelming presence. Our nature is not constituted to bear the blaze of uncreated light. But this restricted nature is not for ever! For the burning radiance of His holy light shining upon us releases us as we are exposed to it from the obstructiveness of our own impaired senses, and then with purged heart, renewed mind, and quickened life we shall perceive Him.

George Hawtin penned some beautiful words along this line which express the real truth of it. "I have often thought," he wrote, "of the wonderful words no man can SEE GOD AND LIVE. Oh, how often we have quoted that wonderful passage as proof that we may not hope to see His face. Will you allow me to reverently say something else? Though it is true that no man can see God and live, it is equally true that no man can see God and die. Men do not die in God's presence, neither do they live AS THEY USED TO LIVE, but they are TRANSFORMED. Hallelujah! They are changed; they are transfigured; they come into THAT SAME IMAGE of Him who created them. In whatever measure God reveals Himself to man, to that same measure you are changed and nothing can avoid that conclusion."

I know why some folks can't die to flesh — when you see HIM, you die. I know why some preachers preach themselves instead of the Lord Jesus, why they can't preach without reminding the audience of what good preachers they are, how great their word is, how chosen of God they are, how blessed the people are to have their ministry, why they promote themselves and seek to gain a following and build a kingdom around themselves — if ever they see HIM, self will fall at His feet as dead! Truly we are changed by beholding the glory of the Lord, as the apostle said. You won't see the Christ until you start looking for Him, and you won't find Him until you go where He is revealed. He is fully, totally revealed in His glory in the realm of the Spirit! He is revealed in the midst of the golden candlesticks, in the midst of spirits that have been quickened by His Spirit and set on fire from that fire which He is.

HE LAID HIS HAND UPON ME

"And when I saw Him I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not..." (Rev. 1:17)

I do not find it humiliating to fall down before Him. Paul fell off that swift, majestic horse into the dust on the Damascus road, and the Lord Jesus dealt with him. Then do you notice that He said to him, "But rise and stand on thy feet." Only the glorious Christ of God has ever lifted a man out of the dust of the carnal mind and the fleshly nature and put him on his feet in the light that cannot be approached unto. John on Patmos saw the glorious Son of man and said, "I fell at His feet as dead." Then he continued, "And He laid His right hand upon me." And in that blessed moment John arose to behold in spirit glorious things never known by man.

The scriptures portray the right hand of God as the hand of strength, power, salvation, blessing, and anointing. The implication is that the right hand of God is the good hand of God doing wondrous things! The Psalmist confirms this when he says, "In Thy presence is fullness of joy, at Thy right hand are pleasures for evermore." (Ps. 16:11) Again, "The voice of rejoicing and salvation in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly. The right hand of the Lord is exalted." (Ps. 118:15-16) To this the prophet Isaiah adds his inspired testimony: "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." (Isa. 41:10) In the Old Testament, whenever God is portrayed as manifesting His power, it is done so with His right hand or arm. "Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power." (Ex. 15:6) "O sing unto the Lord a new song; for He hath done marvelous things: His right hand, and His holy arm, hath gotten Him the victory..." (Ps. 98:1) "Though I walk in the midst of trouble, Thou wilt revive me; Thou shalt stretch forth Thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and Thy right hand shall save me." (Ps. 138:7) Numerous other Psalms express the same thought. In the New Testament, after His resurrection, Jesus was by the right hand of God exalted, and made to sit at His right hand (Acts 2:33-34; Heb. 1:3,13).

This speaks of Jesus Christ, the firstborn Son, our Forerunner. He is exalted to the right hand of God! That is therefore the calling of every son of God! He is the positive force of God in the universe "who is gone into heaven (spiritual realm of government) and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him." (I Pet. 3:22) There is no greater prize than oneness with Christ. The inspired apostle exhorted the saints in Colosse, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God" (Col. 3:1). The message is clear — the elect of God are to SEEK THE THINGS OF CHRIST AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD. Seek the things of the right hand! What a word is that! There are your orders, dear child of God who treasures the hope of sonship. People tell us that we are too

concerned with deep things and with high things. Nothing could be higher than the realm of God's right hand! Seek it! Seek it! Seek it! That is the word of the Lord to every one who is conscious of being risen with Christ. Seek to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might! Seek the anointing of His power! Seek to rule and reign with Christ! Seek to be victorious in all things! Seek to be a blessing to creation! Seek to become His salvation unto all the ends of the earth! Seek to rule by His love! Seek to do wondrous things in His name! Seek to reconcile and restore all things and all men to God! That is what it means to seek the things of Christ at the right hand of God! Some of the greatest truths of the word of God are the ones that lie hidden like pearls of great price, unnoticed by the careless but available to all who will search prayerfully and diligently in the depths of God.

John fell at the feet of Christ as a dead man. Then the Lord laid His right hand upon John! The deep mystery here concerns what was in the right hand of Christ that was laid upon John. Christ held in His right hand seven stars! I want you to see the picture. John was in the earth realm on the isle of Patmos. He felt like we feel. He was weak, as we are weak. He was discouraged, as we are sometimes discouraged. He was limited, as we are limited. He was in tribulation! He was shut up, hedged in, compassed about by infirmities. But in the spirit and by the spirit He saw One, and he saw in His right hand, in the hand of authority and dominion and power, seven stars, and they were the seven angels of the seven churches, which are also the seven spirits of God! He fell as dead. What happened in that blessed moment when John died? The King of glory came and laid His right hand upon him!

Do you know what the laying on of hands is for? Impartation! The laying on of hands is presented in scripture as the indication of the transferal or bestowal of the power and authority of both God and men. It was used as a means of setting apart men to particular offices or ministries. Through the laying on of hands there was the impartation of virtue and anointing to enable one to fulfill that office or ministry unto which he was called and separated. I remember well when hands were laid upon me in the Latter Rain outpouring. In those days of God's moving we had what was called "confirmation services." The confirmation service was rooted in the scripture (along with others) which says that the apostles went from city to city "confirming the souls of the disciples." (**Acts 14:21-23**) The teaching was that every child of God should be confirmed in the body of Christ by prophecy with the laying on of hands. The presbytery would come and lay hands on the saints as the Spirit directed, and by prophecy with the laying on of hands one's calling and ministry would be revealed, gifts of the Spirit would be imparted, and each one would be established or set in his place in the body of Christ.

I will never forget when hands were laid on me in Toledo, Ohio. One of the first words to come out of the mouths of the prophets was, "Yea, thou shalt be a teacher of the kingdom of God!" I didn't even know what the kingdom of God was! I had not the foggiest idea what the kingdom of God was about. But I do believe in confirmation! I do believe in impartation! And I cannot deny that the spirit of the word of the kingdom of God was that day imparted into my life by prophecy and the laying on of hands! It was only shortly thereafter that a mighty quickening came upon me and the revelation of the kingdom of God burst forth in power within my spirit, and I began to proclaim it from coast to coast and from nation to nation. On that day of my confirmation, another word that was spoken by the prophets was, "...and yea, thou shalt have the gift of prophecy!" When the prophets were all finished they stepped back and one said, "Brother Eby, the Lord has said that He gives you the gift of prophecy — now prophesy!" I was astonished! But I opened my mouth and the first prophecy ever to pass through my lips began to pour out! That, my friend, is impartation! And all through the Bible impartation was accomplished by the laying on of hands. Men have received strength to be healed by the laying on of hands. Multitudes have received the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. Wonderful gifts of the Spirit have been imparted to members of the body of Christ through the laying on of hands. Bishops, elders, deacons, and other ministries have been separated unto God and equipped with a special anointing by the laying on of hands. The laying on of hands by the Spirit brings impartation of the life and power of God.

The question follows — when Jesus put His right hand upon John that day so long ago, what happened to the seven stars in His hand? HE PUT THEM INTO JOHN! Can we not see that the King of glory imparted to John the seven spirits of God! He laid that hand, that held the stars, on John, and there was a mighty transformation! From that moment forward John began to see new and glorious things, he began to experience fresh and

wonderful things. The old cocoon of his natural life cracked. A door stood open in heaven. John was caught up into a higher realm! What he saw was the revelation, the unveiling, the uncovering of Jesus Christ!

Christ held in His mighty hand the seven stars, the seven-fold word of God, the full revelation and power of that word which originates out of the seven spirits of God, and He lays this hand upon John and imparts the vision, authority, and power of that spirit-word to John, who is the symbol of every overcomer in Christ! We are participators in this divine drama! The seven stars, which are the seven angels, which are the seven spirits, which contain the seven-fold fullness of divine revelation and truth, were given to John that by them he would write to the seven churches! The Lord Jesus put this high and holy knowledge of the purposes of God, this heavenly illumination of His will and ways, this divine anointing of His spirit of wisdom and power, into John. He laid it on his mind, impregnated it into his spirit, and only then did He give the charge to John: **"Write the things which thou has seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks."** (Rev. 1:19-20)

And now, praise His name, Christ has laid His hand upon us! John is the symbol of every overcomer in Christ! Truly we have heard the great voice as the sound of a trumpet and we have turned to see the voice. Oh, yes! We have seen the golden candlesticks and have beheld this One in the midst like a son of man. We have within ourselves fallen as dead men before the glory of Christ the Head, and He has laid His hand upon us and there is a mighty impartation and transformation taking place in this hour! And now we are seeing wondrous things and experiencing great and mighty things that we knew not!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 28 THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART TWENTY-EIGHT

THE SEVEN CHURCHES RACHEL AND LEAH

"What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia...the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches." (Rev. 1:11,20)

The church means the "called-out." Church is ekklesia in the Greek which is a compound noun made up of ek, meaning "out," and klesia, meaning "called." When joined together we have the literal meaning in English of "out-called." The word occurs 115 times in the Greek text. In the King James Bible it has been rendered 112 times by the word "church" and three times by the word "assembly." The English word "church" came from the Greek expression kuriakon doma meaning "house of the Lord." By a long trail over Teutonic Europe came the word kirk and finally church. Because of this many people think of the church as a building, but the true building or house of the Lord is the living organism of the body of people in whom Christ dwells! And while the word church does indicate this body or house of the Lord, it is still not quite true to the original, which means simply and only "out-called." Any other idea or significance than this has been added by man.

We go back to the New Testament for the beginnings of the church; and when once we are there it is wonderful how simple it all is! Jesus Christ comes and preaches the gospel of the kingdom, and manifests the life of God. He stands with His shining nature upon the hill of the truth He has to preach. He is lifted up, by and by, in the fullness of His sacrificial death upon the cross. Then He rises from the dead, ascends into the heavens of God's Spirit, and pours out this Holy Spirit upon His disciples. Toward His light, soul after soul is drawn out of the darkness of ignorance, sin, and death. Into the power of His resurrection one life after another is summoned out of the death of trespasses and sins. It is all personal and individual at first. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." It is this man and that man that is summoned. "Follow me," "Follow me," says the Master, and Matthew leaves his tax-table standing in the street; and the sons of Zebedee pull hastily in from the blue waters of Galilee to give themselves to the Lord, who has called them from the shore. To His most intimate disciples He gives the command, "Go and tarry in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." It is all personal and individual.

And what came next? Why, the most natural thing in all the world — that which must always come when individual men and women believe the same truth, receive the same experience, or share the same vision and purpose. When did a group of scholars ever sit at the same teacher's feet and not become a school? When did a host of separate men go and volunteer to fight the same enemy and not be drawn into an army? When were a multitude of atoms ever filled with one magnetism and not brought into magnetic communion with one another? All the individual believers in, and followers of, Christ become one in their common life, love, and hope. And so out of the crowd of disciples comes the corporate expression of the church!

What Jews call a synagogue and what we call a congregation means simply a gathering of people together. That is the idea behind a club, a conference, a meeting. But the church means something different from this! Its members are people who have been called away — who have left something behind — who have come out of some place, condition, or state — who are separate and even peculiar. That is the significance of the Greek term ekklesia. It is not an "assembly" as some say, although all the individual members are indeed a group. But it is not the "meeting" that makes them the church — it is the fact that they have heard the Master's call and have been drawn out of their former understanding, walk, condition, and purpose. They are the "out-called"! They are individuals who are being instructed, prepared, and trained to receive their orders to march

forth as the army of the Lord! Yet it is not the army that makes them the ekklesia, rather, it is the fact of their out-calling that makes them the ekklesia!

Ray Prinzing has shared an instructive word: "We speak of this as being 'the church age,' and so it is, for this has been a time of CALLING OUT — out from the world, out from the flesh, out from the religious, etc. that we might be gathered unto Him. The church is not a building anymore than the inner sanctuary of our lives is a building. For of a truth the called out are a people! Furthermore, it is a very progressive calling out — out — and out some more! Out of darkness into light; out of error into truth; out of the earthly into the heavenly; out of the bondage of the systems of man, into the freedom of the walk of the Spirit; out of religion and into a blessed relationship with Christ. And do take note, it is not just an OUT, it is also an INTO — INTO CHRIST. It does not necessarily imply a coming out from the fellowship with others, unless one has substituted meetings instead of communion with Christ, and rely only upon 'group therapy' for solving their problems, rather than turning first and foremost to God Himself. If peoples, groups, fellowships usurp HIS place in your life, then He will say again, 'Come out of her, my people' (Rev. 18:4), for He is a jealous God, and desires that we be only His" — end quote.

The truth is that the church in any age consists of a people that is CALLED OUT. They are called out by God, called out of the world, called out of their human, earthly identity and consciousness, called out unto God in the Spirit. Furthermore they are called out of every religious system on earth including those systems that have the audacity to call themselves "the church," but who in reality are the inventions and programs of man. The church is the called out ones, and they are called out by God and they are called out unto God. Their ears know His voice and not the clamoring voices of strangers. Well they know by the Spirit that the Babel of voices which clamor to be heard from the pulpit, from the radio, and from the VOB television network (Voice of Babylon) are too often the voices of strangers who seek to draw away disciples after themselves and their grandiose programs and promotions, and not to bring men into living relationship with Christ in the Spirit.

So churches today appear to be quite different from what Jesus had in mind when He said, "I will build my church." He wasn't talking about building a structure, organization, or meeting — He was speaking of building men, building lives, of building up a people into Christ to be the habitation of God by the Spirit! "I will build my church" speaks of bringing forth spiritual maturity in the sons of God! The body of Christ is "built up" by spiritual growth, not by adding more and more babes to the family, wonderful as that is. And Christ said, "I will do it!" "I will build my church!" Again He said, "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." (Jn. 15:16) Today people choose a church of "their choice." When a large evangelistic campaign comes to their city, the evangelist may be cooperating with any number of other churches in an interdenominational sense, and members of many denominations may be urged to attend with their congregations. At the conclusion of an impassioned appeal, the evangelist may invite hungry hearts to come forward and "accept Christ." Thus people are led to believe it is up to them to "choose Christ," and not up to Him to "choose them!" And finally they are instructed to go out and attend the church of their choice!

The following words by Ricky Evans are so true and vital for God's elect today. "We are called out, separated. The calling out, the separation, is from the ways of the world. These separations are of an inner nature as God separates the soul from the spirit in us (Heb. 4:12). We may cease to go to certain places we were accustomed to going in the past and doing certain things that we used to do, but the true separation, calling out, is an inner change which brings forth His life in us. We may have come out of Babylon, but God is working to get Babylon out of us!

"Church is not something you do. Church is not something you initiate. It is something, which happens to you independently from you. You are called out. You can't call yourself out! You must be called out by God. Abraham didn't just decide one day to call himself out of Ur of the Chaldees. God, the God of glory, appeared to him and called him out. God initiated the action! God made the first step toward Abraham. God exposed Himself to Abraham and the appearing of God is what called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees. The appearance of the God of glory was what called Abraham out of his family, out of his own land.

"We must free ourselves from a 'meeting mentality.' We have boxed God in to 'the meeting.' Whether it be in a building, a home, or somewhere else we must rid ourselves of this 'meeting mentality.' One only needs to

watch as individuals gather and the appointed time arrives, the change, which comes over people, to realize the 'meeting mentality' has set in. Suddenly people assume an air of what they deem to be 'spiritual.' The preacher's voice changes to his 'official voice.' People try to 'get in the Spirit' so there will be a good 'meeting.' This will continue for an hour or two, depending on the group, and then the 'meeting' is over and people can relax and be themselves again until the next appointed time. The meeting becomes all-important. The meeting becomes the hub around which we build our lives.

"We have been separated from the world and separated unto HIM. Anything and everything, which keeps us from the Father, will find itself coming under the pruning knife of our great vinedresser. Sad to say, much that has been called church has been responsible for keeping people from an intimate relationship with the Father. The upheaval within what is called church is nothing more than the pruning knife of the Father as He cuts away that which does not bring us to Himself. As men build their kingdoms to revolve around themselves, God is drawing all men unto Himself. As men try to fill our lives with their programs and activities, our Father longs to fill us with Himself. Is it not the very desire of our Father that we all know Him? (Heb. 8:11). Are not our gatherings meant to bring forth a greater reality of our Father's presence with us? (Mat. 18:20). Yet we find pastors preparing all week for one or two 'meetings.' They prepare their 'message.' They plan how they can orchestrate that time called 'church' so as to create a utopia which will attract more people to their building. When meetings don't seem to do the job, they create programs and activities, something that will draw the people and keep them active. Fill their lives with busyness so they won't realize or feel the void within!

"Preachers prepare 'messages,' traveling from meeting to meeting trying to excite the crowds, getting the people emotionally stirred so they will come back to the next meeting with their friends. People live from meeting to meeting. They run to get their fix! Another shot in the arm of Jesus, hoping that will keep them till the next meeting, hoping it will ease the pain of life until the next fix. When Sunday and Wednesday are not enough, they look for another meeting. Perhaps Tuesday or Friday, or both. All the above is simply 'meeting mentality.'

"We would not negate the fact that there are those pastors and traveling ministries who spend time before the Lord and have a word for the body of Christ! These do not spend their time trying to create 'messages,' these are those who have been with the Father and the Father has spoken a word into their lives. The word has become a part of their lives and not just a 'message.' They have a responsibility to feed the sheep and may spend hours studying and praying, but they are not looking for a message. They are hearing from the Father and their time is spent searching and seeking a better understanding of that which the Father is saying. Their time is spent allowing the Father to work the truth He is speaking into their heart, into the very fibers of their lives.

"By no means would we demean our gatherings or their importance. But friend, there has to be a change from the present system of things! We find ourselves standing in the midst of an over-lapping period as we change from Shiloh (form) to Zion (life). Those who want life will come out from the lifeless forms of Shiloh and climb the heights of Zion! The life of the Father is pulsating in our lives! The Christ is manifesting Himself in our midst! It's not the meeting we long for it is the Father who is now manifesting Himself in our midst. Oh, we must see the voice in the midst! We must see the Christ declaring the Father in our midst! It is not 'meetings' that change lives, it is the 'one in the midst' who changes lives! When we read in the book of Acts how the early believers gathered daily from house to house or in the temple, it was not because they were preached at to 'be faithful to come to the meeting and God will bless you. If you're not faithful God will get you.' They had come into contact with the Christ! They weren't told they had to gather together — they wanted to! Christ was becoming more and more real in their midst. The life within was growing. The kingdom of God was flooding and overflowing their very being. There was no need for threats to persuade them to gather together. Christ was their reason! Are you not beginning to hear a song echoing from deep within your being? Does it sound like an old familiar song that you can't seem to remember? Is this not the song which the morning stars sang together and caused the sons of God to shout for joy? (Job 38:7). Friend, this is none other than the Son declaring the name of the Father in the midst of His brethren! The Son is singing praises to the Father in the midst of your being! The Son is walking through our midst singing praise to the Father!" — end quote.

When God speaks of the church, He means the called-out ones wherever they may be found or for whatever reason they may have been called out. Oh, how we pervert this word in our everyday conversation! We talk to people about "going to church." What "church" do you belong to? Why don't you come to our "church?" Or, if the meeting is going exceptionally well, with blessings all around, we say, "Now we're really having church!" We use phrases like, "That is a Baptist church, that is a Pentecostal church." We have changed the true meaning of the word church from a calling out to mean a building, an organization, or a meeting. Thus in our minds the meaning is lost, the reality covered up.

An article which came across my desk, and bears the name of no author, has beautifully articulated this great truth in these words: "There are groups of God's people everywhere, each in different stages of growth and experience. Some people are called out of the world but do not believe in any further experience or revelation. Others are called out from those who have embraced salvation to a further experience of sanctification. From the sanctified people are called out a Spirit-baptized people. From the baptized people are called out a gifted people. From the gifted people are called out a fruitful people. And finally there is a calling out of those who have reached the maturity of sonship. The particular body of people with whom you identify undoubtedly was called forth at one time from some other group of God's people! Around your present revelation of truth, therefore, you are the called-out assembly. There is therefore a church within a church; a wheel within a wheel. "In Gideon's army there was a special chosen company of three hundred; an army within an army. In David and his four hundred men there was an Israel within Israel who finally took the kingdom. Israel was called 'the church in the wilderness' (Acts 7:38). They were God's called-out ones. They were called out of the bondage of Egypt. Many stages of consecration may be witnessed even amongst natural Israel. There was a company called 'the mixed multitude' that went up out of Egypt with Israel and then there was Israel in general who were called to a greater measure of consecration as the people of the Lord. Then from amongst them there was a tribe of the priesthood called to a still closer walk with the Lord in a still greater measure of consecration. Of all that came out of Egypt by Moses, Joshua and Caleb alone, with the younger generation, were called to a still newer experience of entering the Promised Land. All these companies were called-out ones, but some were called to go where others refused to go. The New Testament church called forth by the apostles was called forth from what remained of the church in the wilderness (Israel) with the addition of the Gentiles who were called out through the ministry of the apostle Paul. This proves that one church or called-out people can come forth from another church or called-out people.

"From the formal and sectarian ranks and the confusion of Babylon a church is now coming forth: a church of spiritually endued saints, called out to attain the maturity of sonship. God is now raising up the builders to build this new body who will be a habitation of God through the Spirit, and they in turn will perfect all the others who are called out, and raise their experience from the glory where they now reside unto the glories that are above them. This will continue until all believers have been raised to perfection, until the entire church will be a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. God recognizes all believers as being His children, but He does not recognize them all as being of one stature. He sees some as babes, some children, some young men, and some fathers" — end quote. Let us always remember that regardless of which company of called out ones we pertain to, ALL of the Lord's people, on whatever level of growth and experience they have attained to, are on some plane God's called-out or His church!

THE SEVEN CHURCHES

The seven churches in the book of Revelation are seven realms to overcome, seven opportunities to be victorious. What is the church? You are the church. I am the church. We are all the church. So we are the seven churches! You are the seven churches! I am the seven churches! We are all the seven churches! Just as the seven spirits are but one spirit in fullness, so the seven churches are but one church in its completeness. All the characteristics of the seven churches may be found in each of us individually as well as in every local body and also in the whole universal church collectively. In each of our experience there is the capacity to partake of everything that the seven churches represent. I, you, all of us may be tested in each area of its negatives or excel in each aspect of its positives. The seven churches are seven realities and seven potentialities within ourselves. The seven churches are within you, my beloved, or else we are of all men most miserable, for none of us is the whole church nor are all of us those seven churches that existed in Asia in that long ago. If the whole reality is not within each one of us, then the promises to the overcomers are not fully

available to us. We would each be able to attain to only one — the one pertaining to the church we identify with!

If the seven churches represent seven church ages, as many teach, then we have a problem! You would be able to appropriate only the promises to the overcomer that belong to the church age you live in. Furthermore, if we are now in the Laodicean church age, as many assert, the only promise we can claim is that of throneship. To the church of Laodicea the Lord says, **"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne" (Rev. 3:21)**. That is a beautiful promise and a wonderful calling! But if this is the Laodicean church age, we would be denied the promise of eating of the tree of life, given to the church in Ephesus; we would be refused the promise of not being hurt of the second death, given to the church in Smyrna; we would be prevented from eating of the hidden manna, and receiving a white stone and a new name, as promised the overcomers in the church at Pergamos; we could by no means be given power over the nations to rule them with a rod of iron, for that promise was made only to the overcomers in the church in Thyratira; we would be prohibited from partaking of the promises to the overcomers in Sardis of being clothed in white raiment, and that our name will not be blotted out of the book of life; nor could we in any way become a pillar in the temple of God, or have written upon us the name (nature) of our God, or the name of the city of our God, or the new name of God's Christ — for those promises could only be experienced by those overcomers out of the Philadelphia church age!

So, when we see by the spirit of wisdom and revelation that all the saints of the entire church age are the seven churches, that you and I today are the seven churches, that the seven churches are within each of us, and that God has given this revelation in a mystery that the carnal mind cannot comprehend, then we are filled with the secret wisdom that comes only to the mature in Christ. My hope in Christ is that I may lay hold upon all the overcoming promises of my Lord and find that abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of Jesus Christ the Son of God! I open wide my heart to receive of all the rebukes, admonitions, chastenings, encouragements, commendations, and promises to all the seven churches! They are one and all mine, and they are yours! I am, as you are, and as we all are, the seven golden candlesticks. As soon as I turn and behold that great truth, as soon as I know who I am, know my identity, know my birth, know who my Father is, know the kingdom to which I pertain, and know my calling; as soon as I turn and behold the seven golden candlesticks and see them lighted within my own soul and in my spirit; then do I begin to understand in the mind of Christ what is the height and the depth and the length and the breadth of the reality of Christ in me the hope of glory!

The word church, as I have pointed out, is from the Greek ekklesia, meaning the "called-out." There is a meaning connected with that word which denotes that these called out ones are in progress, from one position to another. They are involved in movement. Ekklesia is not a static position! The called out are called out from something and unto something. Many people believe they have been called out from the world, from the values of the world, from the ways of the world, from the spirit of the world, from its philosophies and concepts, and from the flesh, from sin, from death; but they have no concept at all of what they are called unto. They have the idea that the church itself is what they are called unto! But the church is merely the vehicle of the calling — not the calling itself. The church, the calling out, denotes movement. What you were called out from is not the church, nor is that which you are called unto the church. The church occupies the territory between these two things!

It is like a man who boards a train in New York City going to Los Angeles. The train is the vehicle of his movement and travel, to carry him from his point of origin to his destination. The train is a wonderful experience, but it is not his destination. He has no plan to live permanently on the train. By the train he is able to move from New York City to Los Angeles. In like manner the church is the instrument of God by which He carries the called out from the Babylon of this world unto the fullness of the kingdom of God! It denotes movement. We are called out to move from one point to another, ever ascending from glory to glory and from realm to realm in our experience of Christ. Sonship and the kingdom are via the church. But the church is neither sonship nor the kingdom! Those who overcome within the church realm will inherit the kingdom, and those who overcome within the church realm will attain to sonship. Hear it! **"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." (Rev. 21:7)** The church is not our destination!

All over the world today there is a curious people being called and drawn to a union in the high places of the Spirit where their very nature and existence are being changed. What is emerging in this hour is the birth of a manchild, a life out of a life, a people out of a people, a company out of a company, a son out of the bride, to produce the full image of Christ Jesus in the earth again. The fully manifest presence of His glory and power, of His life and light and love, will mark the beginning of a transfer of the powers of this dying age into the hands of a people that has apprehended the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. The whole purpose of redemption is to save, deliver, quicken, restore, and transform mankind according to the life and truth that are in Christ Jesus. This involves the calling out and raising up of a body of sons in His image, filled with His wisdom, knowledge, love, grace, and power to be the instrument through which Christ will appear on the earth again in the fullness of Himself to liberate all men and all nations from the tyranny of sin, ignorance, poverty, limitation, sickness, pain, sorrow, and death. On the immediate horizon is this very emerging presence of Christ manifest through a many-membered body called out from every form of background of religion, nationality, and ethnicity!

"I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Mat. 16:18) I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH. What wonderful words are those of Jesus the Christ! And He is still building that church. There is no man or group of men who may of themselves build this church. It is not their church, it is His church, the body of Christ, and He will build it! It is a church, which is dependent upon no ministers upon earth, however much it values those who proclaim the word of God to its members. The life of its members does not hang upon man-made church membership, nor upon Old Testament style outward forms of rituals, ceremonies, types, and shadows such as water baptism and communion, nor any other natural, outward, external observance. Truly it was the Old Covenant which "stood in meats and drinks, and divers washings (baptisms), and carnal (outward, fleshly, natural) ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation (change)." (Heb. 9:10)

This church has only one Head, one great Shepherd, one chief Apostle and Bishop — and that is Jesus Christ. He alone, by His Spirit, admits the members of this church. Till He opens the door no man on earth can open it — neither bishops, nor presbyters, nor evangelists, nor pastors, nor boards, nor convocations, nor synods. Let a man be called, touched, awakened, and quickened by the Spirit of the Lord, and in that heaven-blessed moment he becomes a member of this church. There is no church membership in heaven or in earth apart from this. God Himself must call you out and God Himself must set you in. Only God can do this! "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." (Acts 2:47) Any other form of church membership is a bare-faced sham, an invention of man, a carnal-minded mockery of that which is true. The moment you are born of God's Spirit you are a member of the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven (Heb. 12:23).

Every effort on the part of man to have you join yourself with one of the man-made organizations falsely called "the church" is an effort to lead you astray from your union with Christ the Head and that divine work which the Holy Spirit accomplished when He placed you by His power into His body, which is the true church. The misguided and false shepherds would seduce you to commit fornication with that bawdy mother of harlots and her prostitute daughters of many denominational names. How cunningly and seductively do these preachers perform the work of Satan by telling their converts to "join the church of your choice!" God's thought is not the church systems of man; it is not churches as organized denominational systems; it is not propagation of denominational teaching and enterprise. God's thought is to have a people in the earth in whom, and in the midst of whom, Christ is all, and in all. That is the church! In the thought of God the church begins and ends with this — the life of Christ formed and reproduced in a people! He passes by the great institutions, the so-called "church" and He is with those who in themselves are of an humble and contrite spirit and who tremble at His word. God's thought for us is that One, even Jesus Christ, who is the fullness of God in bodily form, should be our fullness!

The church that mankind is building is visible. The church that the Christ is building is invisible, but it is the powerful and all-inclusive one! The church that men build is earthly and seeks physical, material blessings; but the church that the Christ births out of His life dwells in heavenly places and is blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus! Lively stones, living stones, stones of another world, are being daily added to this church and it is growing and becoming more powerful in the Spirit with each passing day. The church is the miracle of Christ's resurrection life appearing again in a people upon the earth! At just the right time, at God's

appointed time, this living church will be made known to all men everywhere, and begin to openly work to bring the whole of creation into the fullness of God. Hallelujah!

RACHEL AND LEAH

There is a wonderful story in the Old Testament, which illustrates a beautiful spiritual truth concerning the church. It is the story of Jacob and Rachel and Leah found in chapter twenty-nine of the book of Genesis.

The story relates how Laban had two daughters; the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah's eyes were weak and dull looking, but Rachel was beautiful and attractive. Jacob fell in love with Rachel, so he said to Laban, "I will work for you for seven years if you will give me Rachel your youngest daughter for my wife." Laban responded, "It is better for me to give her to you than to another man. Stay and live with me." So Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed to him but a few days, because of the love he had for her. Finally, Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife, for my time is completed, so that I may take her to me."

Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast with much to eat and drink. But when night came he took Leah his daughter and brought her in the darkness to Jacob. Jacob took her into his place and had intercourse with her. When the morning sun arose Jacob saw his wife, and alas, it was Leah! Jacob promptly found Laban and confronted him, "What is this you have done to me? Did I not work for you all those seven years for Rachel? Why then have you deceived and cheated and thrown me down like this?" And Laban said, "It is not permitted in our country to give the younger daughter in marriage before the eldest. Finish the wedding feast week with Leah, then we will give you Rachel also, and you shall work for me yet seven years more in return." So Jacob complied and spent the wedding feast week with Leah; then Laban gave him Rachel his daughter as his wife.

Jacob had been promised Rachel, but after the wedding, when he woke up in the morning, he discovered he was with the wrong woman! How could a man marry a woman, take her into his tent, spend the night with her in his bed, make love to her, and not know he had the wrong woman? I never knew the deep significance of that event in the life of Jacob until God shined the blazing, penetrating light of His revelation upon my life. I woke up one day in my spiritual experience and realized that I was not joined to Rachel. Don't you know that that is what has happened to us all? Did not most of you who read these lines wake up one morning in your walk with God and realize you didn't have the woman you thought you married when you received Christ? You joined yourself to the church, thinking you were coming into union with the beautiful, desirable, pure bride of Christ, but the woman you entered into intimacy with was not the woman you thought you had! I admire Jacob for the courage he had to accept what had befallen him and because of his great love for the woman he desired he first confronted the issue, and then he abode with Laban for another seven years. He would not be denied!

Leah represents the church systems of man. It is easy to settle for tradition, but you need courage to hold out for what you want in God. I wonder how many of us would have worked another seven years for Rachel! It would be very easy to settle for less than God has called us to. How very easy it would be to settle for the feast of Pentecost rather than paying the price required to press on into the feast of Tabernacles. It requires no effort at all to settle for the immaturity of the church realm instead of laying hold upon sonship to God. It takes courage, patience, and faith to go beyond the weak-eyed (lack of spiritual vision) Leah, to leave the in-part realm of the church world behind and blaze the trail into God's highest and best — the beautiful hope of fullness and maturity in God!

So much depends upon our vantage point. Let all men know that though we desire Rachel and are willing to work another seven years for her, the fact remains that Leah is of God. Leah is the mother of Israel. The church realm, the church system as we know it, is of God, regardless of how weak-eyed it is, how grotesque it is, how organized it is, how apostate it is, how dead it is, how fleshly and carnal it is, or how alive it is — the measure of life that is in it is of God! Most of us have had some degree of contentment with the church system at some time in our life. There was a night when we received Leah to ourselves, not knowing any better because of the great spiritual darkness that enveloped us. There was a night when we slept with Leah in our

tent and enjoyed her pleasures, we delighted in her programs, her rituals, her ceremonies, her methods, her promotions, her doctrines, her ways, for we wist not who she was!

I remember well my early days in the church system, I thought I had found the highest purpose of God in the universe. I presumed that I had found the ultimate reality of God attainable in this life. Now I have woke up under the dawning rays of the new day of the glory of Christ and realize that what I was first joined to was not what I hungered and thirsted after! It was not what I wanted. From the very beginning there was a sense in my deepest heart that somehow there had to be more, there must be something greater, fuller in God. I discovered that I was attached to the wrong principles, the wrong expression, the wrong spirit, the wrong doctrine, the wrong objectives, the wrong name, the wrong hope, the wrong activities and program. Oh, yes! In the shimmering light of day I was able to clearly see that what I had did not measure up nor did it satisfy. It left a great and profound void in my life. It was the weak-eyed Leah, but by the spirit and revelation of God we have caught a glimpse of Rachel and been ravished in our hearts!

We have no desire to harm Leah, no desire at all to hurt her, denounce her, ridicule her, destroy her, or even to put her away — we just cannot settle for her! We are willing to work another seven years, we are willing to pay the required price to gain Rachel! We have set our faces to go after what we want! And Leah probably has a problem with it, but we want Rachel. We don't want Leah. We are sick of Leah. We are tired of Leah's weak-eyed religion with no vision of God's great plan and purpose. We are weary of Leah churches. We are burned out with Leah people. We are worn out from Leah's carnal programs and dead works. Leah in Hebrew means dull. Oh yes, she's dull! That's what the old order (elder daughter) church systems are — they're dull, slow-witted, dense, undiscerning, humdrum, lifeless, spiritless, tasteless, monotonous. They hold nothing for us anymore!

Rachel was initially barren, but Leah was fruitful. You will find that carnal, traditional religion multiplies disciples rapidly. People flock to these carnal, man-centered appeals that promise naught but blessings upon the flesh. People love to be entertained, and the popular churches are expert entertainers! Therefore Leah bears many children, while the beloved Rachel appears barren.

Do you know what Rachel did? She kept her father's flock (Gen. 29:9). She did a man's job. Rachel was a shepherdess. Rachel kept her father's flock, she brought them out for watering, and Jacob couldn't believe she was doing a man's job. His response was, "This is my woman!" Rachel typifies the realm of the overcomer, the realm that, though it appears as a woman, the church, is in reality fulfilling the role of a man, the sons of God. I want Rachel! I'm willing to wait for Rachel. I'm willing to work, to expend all my time, all my energies, all my hopes and dreams, to get Rachel. She will be mine. I will be joined to that beautiful realm of God's glory and beauty and power. And though she bore far less sons than Leah, she became the mother of Joseph, the bearer of the birthright, who more than any son of Jacob serves as the type of Christ and His body, the sons of God. As Joseph ascended the throne of Egypt, and fed the nations in the years of drought, so shall the sons of God be given power over the nations and shall shepherd and feed them under the rule of the kingdom of God. Sonship is the hope of all creation. It is the hope dearest to the heart of God. Therefore I admonish you this day — HOLD OUT FOR RACHEL, HOLD OUT FOR THE PROMISE, HOLD OUT FOR THE BIRTHRIGHT!

Hold out, my brother, my sister, for the truth and reality and not just a blessing. Hold out for life and immortality, not just a healing or a miracle. Hold out for the fullness of God, not just a touch of God. You don't need the traditions and programs of religion, you need Christ manifested in your body, soul, and spirit. I'd rather be dead than reproduce the nonsense of religion. I'd rather be buried than dwell in Babylon again. It's easy to marry tradition and reproduce! People love to say they are disciples. People love to say that they follow Jesus. And they do follow Him — just as the Galilean multitudes followed Him in that long ago for the loaves and the fishes. Men still flock to the loaves and the fishes. And men still walk away, flee, and forsake the Lord when He teaches the deep things of God, when He points out the narrow road that leads to the life of the kingdom, and when it leads to the cross.

It is easy to marry tradition and be joined to the blessings. I traveled and ministered for years among people who wanted me to be joined to them in that religious state where I just tickled them, entertained them, baptized them, prayed for them, blessed them, healed them, and taught them a whole lot about the devil, the antichrist,

the tribulation, the end of the world. Today I have left all of that behind. The one consuming passion of my life is to grow up in Christ as a son of God. My desire today is to overcome all things, to be filled with the mind of God, to lay hold upon the glory of God, to be perfected in the nature of God, to be swallowed up by the life of God, and to apprehend the power of God. I want to see all creation delivered from the bondage of corruption — I'm not the least bit interested in the limited, tired, time-worn, dead-end methods of the past. I want Rachel! I must have Rachel! I will pay any price for Rachel! I will get Rachel!

I write these things to those who are the called out for this great day of the Lord. Truly we have been called out by God to be about our Father's business, to fulfill His redemptive, restorative, and governmental purposes in the earth. We are a people with a purpose! As we walk in the Spirit we are receiving power and authority in the earth to accomplish the will of God among men! This is the work of the Holy Spirit! Just because we assemble together at a place called "church" on Sunday does not mean we are the Lord's ekklesia or that we do what God calls us to do at such a gathering. There is nothing sacred about "going to church" if the Spirit of God has not called us together! When a believer hears the true "calling out" it is the Holy Spirit calling him out to Himself, revealing His will, and empowering him to accomplish His plan. It has nothing whatever to do with going to a "church" building where we do all sorts of things which may or may not have anything to do with the work of God! Oh, how we have been cheated by Leah! Let us press on, dear ones, until we get Rachel!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 29 THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART TWENTY-NINE

SEVEN CHURCHES – THE WHOLE CHURCH GOLDEN CANDLESTICK

"What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyratira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea...the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches." (Rev. 1:11,20)

The book of Revelation is clearly addressed to "the seven churches which are in Asia." Considering the purpose of the book of Revelation, why is the book addressed and delivered to seven specific churches only? Only by the revelation of the mind of the Lord can we understand this! An important key is found in the repeated use of the number seven. Numerology has always been a subject of special interest to students of the scriptures. There are two major errors people fall into when considering the mystical significance of numbers in the Bible. On the one hand numbers are looked upon as a sort of "talisman." That is to say, numbers are viewed as having power to influence events. This concept underlies the idea of so-called "lucky numbers." The theory is that certain numbers are likely to favor you more than other people or more than other numbers. Implicit in this is the notion that the numbers have some kind of magical power — thus they are a talisman, charm, or fetish.

The other error is in the use of numbers for validation. By this we mean the concept that the occurrence of certain numbers may show divine approval of some action you are undertaking or about to undertake. The fact that your new address, for example, is 777, 888, or some multiple of seven or twelve may be taken as an indication that God has led you to this place. But in the scriptures there is no use of numbers as talismans or for validation of human actions. Numbers are used two ways in the Bible. They may refer to a literal number or they may be used as symbols or codes to convey a spiritual, metaphorical, or allegorical meaning. While several numbers have some sort of mystical significance in the Bible, the ones of primary importance are three, four, seven, and twelve. Interestingly enough, all of the numbers convey some aspect of completion, wholeness, totality, perfection, or power.

In the book of Revelation numbers do not actually define amounts at all, but they represent concepts. The number twenty-four, for example, is meaningless as an amount — there are not exactly twenty-four elders sitting on twenty-four thrones up in some far-off heaven somewhere; but what the number signifies, the priesthood of God, is vital. The number 144,000 mentioned in the Revelation is relatively unimportant as a number; but when we understand that it is a multiple of twelve, and that twelve is the number of divine government, then twelve squared by itself times a thousand (the number representing the day of the Lord) represents the absolute fullness and perfection of divine government within a people in the day of the Lord!

Seven is very significant in the economy of God. It is the most frequently used number in the Bible! The Hebrew word for seven is sheba. From it is shaba, meaning "to be complete...to seven oneself, i.e. swear by repeating a declaration seven times." That is how the ancients swore, by repeating the oath seven times instead of placing their hand upon a Bible or merely invoking the name of God. Seven speaks of completion, fullness, perfection. Nothing can be added to or taken from it without it becoming marred. Being a prime number makes it divisible only by itself. The week is complete, full, and perfect in seven days. Seven completes the colors of the spectrum. There are seven notes in the musical scale. The cells of the human body completely replace themselves every seven years. Jesus said that when the unclean spirit is cast out of a man, but the man's house (body) is not filled with God, the spirit returns with seven others more vile than itself and the end of that man is worse than before. Mary Magdalene had seven devils cast out of her. Armed with the knowledge of the significance of the number seven in scripture it becomes clear that in both of these

cases the Lord was speaking metaphorically. Rather than seven devils, there was total or complete possession by sin and demonic power! Thank God, in the midst of that unfathomable depth into which Mary Magdalene had fallen, she was forgiven, delivered, and lifted into life by Jesus!

This magnificent number seven is used for the grouping of many things, which John saw in his visions on the isle of Patmos. In chapter one we find seven golden candlesticks which are the seven churches, seven stars and seven angels which are the messengers of the seven churches. In chapter four there are seven lamps of fire burning before the throne which are the seven spirits of God. In chapter five we see a scroll sealed with seven seals, and a Lamb with seven horns and seven eyes which again are the seven spirits of God. Also there are listed seven things that the Lamb receives — power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and blessing. In chapter six the Lamb opens the seven seals, one at a time. In chapter eight John saw seven angels with seven trumpets. In chapter ten we find the mysterious seven thunders, which John was not allowed to describe. In chapter twelve there is seen in heaven a great red dragon having seven heads and seven crowns on his heads. In chapter thirteen a beast rises up out of the sea having seven heads. In chapter fifteen we see seven angels carrying seven vials (bowls) which contain seven plagues, which are the “wrath of God.” In chapter seventeen we find a woman riding a beast which has seven heads. These seven heads are described as seven mountains (kingdoms) which have seven kings. In chapter twenty-one we again see one of the same seven angels who had the bowls which had contained the seven plagues and thereafter in the book of Revelation there are no more sevens. Everything from that point onward is counted in groups of twelve!

SEVEN CHURCHES — THE WHOLE CHURCH

The seven churches are in Asia, which is actually Asia Minor, and were located on the western end of Asia bordering on the Aegean and Mediterranean seas. It is a small area now in Turkey, about the size of Oregon. The seven cities mentioned in our text form an irregular loop or circle. The order in which the cities are named is that in which a messenger naturally might be sent, as he followed the great circular road that bound together the most populous and influential part of the province. Ephesus, the chief city and capital, naturally is mentioned first; then Smyrna, located about forty miles to the north; then Pergamos, some fifty miles further northeast. From there, continuing clockwise around the loop, your next city will be Thyatira, some forty miles southeast; then Sardis, thirty miles farther south; and Philadelphia and Laodicea, about thirty and seventy miles to the southeast of Sardis.

It is also interesting to note that this circle of churches lay in the very territory where the apostle Paul had labored as an apostle, founding many of the churches. Without doubt the epistle of Paul to the Ephesians was circulated around this same circle of churches, for it was the custom in those days for letters to one church to be shared with all the others. As we read the messages of the Lord Jesus to the seven churches we are made painfully aware of the fact that the anointing, glory, holiness, and power of the early days had already lost much of their freshness and potency, as the second generation of believers came along. We shall find that the same conditions which prevail in the church systems today were already manifest in the primitive church of John's day!

The churches are seven in number because seven in the Bible is always the number of completeness. Remember! There were many other local congregations existing contemporaneously with the seven mentioned in Revelation. The seven churches to whom John wrote were not even the most important! The churches in Corinth, in Rome, in Iconium, in Lystra, in Derbe, in Miletus, in Antioch, in Heliopolis, in Colossae, in Thessalonica, in Babylon, or even Jerusalem itself, are not mentioned. Instead these seven are singled out! Their selection, however, is deeply significant. These cities where the churches existed lay along the Imperial Post Road. This Roman highway was built about 133 B.C. It is because God knew these seven were facing patterns of trials, tribulations, errors, dealings, faith, steadfastness, victories, and triumphs that would be common to all the Lord's people down through the entire church age. The spiritual instructions are, “He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churchES” — PLURAL! Thus the Spirit tells us that every believer should hear what the Spirit says to ALL the churches! That is another positive evidence that the seven churches do not represent seven church ages. If we are currently living in the Laodicean church

age, as many assert, then we would need to hear only the word sent to the church at Laodicea! But every overcomer is admonished to hear ALL THAT THE LORD SPEAKS TO ALL THE CHURCHES!

Therefore, however much there may be in the seven messages to the seven churches having applicability to the seven churches existing in John's day, or the church in previous times and generations, the messages must be considered in relation to the complete church throughout the age. The messages are prophetic! They are to the whole church realm of yesterday, today, and tomorrow! The seven churches represent not only the conditions existing at the time John wrote, but conditions which may be expected to reveal themselves in the midst of the Lord's people throughout the entire age. That is precisely why that, out of all the churches existing in John's day, exactly seven were chosen for this Revelation — the number of totality and completeness!

The key to all the mysteries of the book of Revelation is found in the very first chapter, where the occasion of the writing of the book, by whom it was dictated, and for whom it is intended, is made crystal clear. It was given to John by the angel of Jesus Christ — by the Holy Spirit — to be sent to the seven churches. The seven churches represent the complete church. The key to all the mysteries of the book of Revelation is — THE CHURCH! The church is — THE CALLED-OUT! The book of Revelation is therefore the unveiling of Christ's wonderful, marvelous, awesome dealings with every saint of God whom He is calling out! If God is calling you out of any realm of the world, or the religious, my brother, my sister, you may expect to experience within yourself all the things written in this book!

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” (Rev. 2:7) “Blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears, for they hear.” (Mat. 13:16) “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy.” (Rev. 1:3) When the Lord Jesus wanted His disciples to realize they could understand His words only because God had opened their ears, He used this expression. Our Lord uses this phrase seven times in the book of Revelation! The seven churches with all their virtues and problems represent different spiritual states or conditions in the whole church realm. What these churches did right before the Lord we are called to do, and what they did wrong we must abandon, asking God to purge and purify us from it. These churches represent for us the progressive way to the throne of God; for the final promise to the overcomer in these churches is that to him it will be given to reign with Christ upon HIS THRONE. As each of us overcomes spiritually within ourselves all that these churches faced, we receive the greatest reward of all — His mind, likeness, nature, glory, and power!

The meaning of the names of the cities in which the seven churches were located have a special and prophetic significance. Asia itself, for instance, means slime or mire, an apt type of the world, of sin and death, of the carnal mind and Adamic nature, and the false religious realms out of which we have been called! Ephesus means desired or desirable, a term applied by a lover to the woman of his choice. Smyrna means myrrh, a symbol of sorrow, suffering, and death, an apt picture of the trials, troubles, and tribulations through which we are passing on our journey into perfection. Pergamos means marriage, elevation, or firm union, and truly each of us is married to, and in firm union with, either the flesh or the spirit! The meaning of Thyatira is incense, bespeaking of the outflow of grace, praise, and worship through our lives. Sardis means remnant or escaping ones, signifying that God is always bringing out a remnant unto His purposes. Philadelphia means brotherly love. Laodicea conveys the idea of the people's right, the people's judgment, or the people's choice, expressing the negative aspect of the rule of the flesh and the carnal mind of which the Lord says, “I am about to spew you out of my mouth.” Those who overcome in this realm are qualified to REIGN WITH CHRIST ON HIS THRONE! None of these names are irrelevant, for they were chosen by divine wisdom to speak to us of the great works of God in the lives of His elect! The church at this city or that indicates the Lord's people who are at that particular stage in their growth, development, and overcoming in Christ! One may be at the stage of suffering, another at the stage of the offering up of spiritual incense, while others are at the stage of brotherly love, and many are at the place of choosing between their rights, their ways, their will — and HIS!

The spiritual condition in these churches and their standing with God varied greatly. We may be sure that the messages sent by Jesus to these churches applied to each of them personally, yet we may be equally certain that the messages were prophetic and were intended to portray the spiritual condition of the church throughout the age, and indeed our very own circumstances and experiences! If the things written therein were simply literal and intended to address actual events and conditions in the churches of that day, then it would be

difficult to see how they could serve as “signs” and “symbols.” **(Rev. 1:1)** Ingenuously seven actual Asiatic churches were selected by the Holy Spirit in which were found the traits which have been used by the Lord to prophetically set forth His dealings with the church as a whole and within each of the Lord’s called out elect individually. Oh, the wonder of it! Oh, the mystery of it!

Thus we see Christ, the very spirit of Christ within each of us, walking in the midst of the churches as Judge, with eyes as a flame of fire, searching the thoughts and intents of the hearts of all the called out ones, inquiring how far each of us has answered to, or departed from, our heavenly privileges and potentialities. The Lord passes sentence on what He finds, approving what is right and condemning all that is contrary to His nature; warning as regards the evil, and giving encouragement and strength to the overcomer! It is within that the Christ is walking, and it is within that the judgment is taking place!

Let me illustrate. God dwells in our spirit. Our spirit is the Most Holy Place typified by the Most Holy Place in the tabernacle of Moses. God in His glory dwelt in the Most Holy Place of old, over the mercy seat, between the Cherubim. Now, “He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.” There is the fullness of God in the Most Holy Place of our spirit! In the words of the Lord to the Laodicean church, we see a remarkable picture of God coming out of the Most Holy Place to fill all realms. **“Behold, I stand at the door and knock,”** says the Lord. **“If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”** **(Rev. 3:20)**. This has traditionally been understood in the light of the pictures men have painted of Jesus standing at the outside of a door, knocking, to gain admittance. The preachers have preached that Jesus is on the outside of the Laodicean church, standing at the door, knocking, trying to get inside the church!

Christ, however, is not outside the church, not even the lukewarm Laodicean church! If He were on the outside, it would not be His church! The church is the very house of God and the temple of the Holy Ghost! (II Cor. 6:16). The body of Christ is the residence of the spirit of Christ, else it ceases to be His body! Nothing can be simpler than that. Matters not how weak, how sick, how carnal, Christ is never on the outside of any child of God! I do not doubt that many who read these lines are convinced that He is outside some of the churches you know — and He indeed IS outside the systems of man. But the church is composed of people, not the systems of Babylon they are held captive in. Ah, Christ is in your spirit, in the deepest and innermost part of your being, knocking to gain admittance into the outer departments of your life, into your soul and into your body. He longs to enter into your soul and into your body in the fullness of Himself that He may fill and transform your whole being with the glory of His presence and the power of His life!

John was one of the “three mighties” who walked with the Lord in the days of His flesh; he was with Him in the Mount, he lay in His bosom and, above all others, has received the distinctive title as “that disciple whom the Lord loved.” It was fitting that the man who had leaned upon the breast of God’s Son and heard the inmost beating of His heart, should become the depository of His most intimate thought in respect to the course of the church in this age. And such is the case! This is the picture we see in the book of Revelation. The seven churches of Asia are saluted by John. He was shown the seven candlesticks “which ARE the seven churches.” God raised up a prophet that could see and foretell in detail the entire church age before it could transpire. This is what the messages to the seven churches are all about! John beheld the good and the evil of the church age. He declared the blessings and the curses of this age. He saw the strength and the weakness of the church, and indeed of each one of us. He saw the church in its beginnings and in its consummation. He beheld the true church of the Lord Jesus Christ and he exposed the false church systems, the swaggering harlot of this age with her unholy spirit, her false doctrines, her man-made organizations, and her carnal methods and programs. John shows forth the full revelation of all the fullness of Christ and His church during the age and the glory that should follow!

A tremendous revelation was given to the beloved John on Patmos! The seven churches that he saw in the Spirit represent THE WHOLE CHURCH REALM THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE CHURCH AGE. If you want to know what the church is like, look at the seven churches! There you have the divinely inspired portrait of the church realm painted by the brush strokes of the Holy Spirit. Were they not imperfect, carnal, childish, idolatrous, heretical, rebuked — a realm of mixture and duality? The Lord commends and praises them on one hand, while warning and rebuking them on the other hand! Some of the saints are praised for their works, labor, faith and love, while others are warned of impending judgment if they fail to repent. These seven

churches reveal the true state and condition of the whole church throughout the age, and both history and personal experience testify conclusively that John was shown aright! Who can dispute it? The early church was a church of mixture and duality — flesh and spirit, truth and error, law and grace, spirituality and carnality. Even a casual perusal of the New Testament reveals this! And from that day to this, make no mistake about it — ALL CHURCHES HAVE BEEN THE SAME! They are today!

There is a church in El Paso, Texas. There is only one church in El Paso. I belong to that church. I have not joined any of the denominations or movements of men, but I belong to the church in El Paso because I live in El Paso and Christ has a church in this city. I cannot escape it! I could deny that I belong to it, but that would not change anything. People tell me they have come out of the church. It is impossible to come out of the church unless you are severed from Christ, for the church is His body! And if you have come out of the systems of men you are still the church because that is what the church is — THE CALLED OUT! Now let me tell you something about the church in El Paso. It is a carnal church! Oh, it has some spiritual people in it, alright, but the church in El Paso is a carnal church. How do I know? Whereas one says, “We are of Luther,” and another says, “We are Baptist,” and another says, “We are Pentecostal,” and yet another says, “We are of Christ,” are they not carnal and walk as men? (I Cor. 3:1-4). And should the church age continue for another thousand years the church would not have changed — the revelation of the seven candlesticks immutably declares it! The seven candlesticks are the seven churches! The seven churches are the whole, complete church! And the condition of the seven churches is the condition of the church throughout the age! Only the overcomer changes. And only the overcomer receives the promises! Very little is promised to the churches. The great, heavenly, and eternal promises are made to the overcomer alone!

GOLDEN CANDLESTICKS

It was once a mystery to me why the Lord would symbolize the church in its condition of weakness, immaturity, and carnality by seven “golden” candlesticks. Gold is the symbol of deity or the divine nature. How could gold serve as the figure for a realm of mixture, for the gold of the candlestick was pure gold — unmixed! This was a deep mystery in my mind. Then one day the Spirit of the Lord spoke within me and it came with such clarity and with great power! The church is not composed of so many bodies sitting on pews. We do not have a church simply because a number of saved people have gathered together. Oh, no! The church is a thing of the spirit. It is the “city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” and the “general assembly and church of the firstborn which are written in heaven” and the “spirits of just men made perfect.” (Heb. 12:22-23) It is God in my spirit that makes me the body of Christ! I may have mixture in my life, but my regenerated spirit is pure! My spirit is the very offspring of God! (Heb. 12:9). He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit! (I Cor. 6:17). Christ dwells in my spirit, and my spirit is the seed of God within me! (I Jn. 3:9). I need no processing in my spirit, although I do need processing in my soul and body realms.

Let me give you an illustration. In the world there is a lot of wealth, an incomprehensible amount of wealth. The natural resources of this earth are mind-boggling. And yet, is it not a fact that in the midst of all the riches of this marvelous planet we’re living on there are literally billions of people living in poverty! In most of the countries of the world millions of people live in squalor, ignorance, disease, limitation, and servitude — yet the earth is abundant in wealth. There’s gold in the vast oceans of the earth, but it’s so diluted that it’s unusable to the normal person. There are treasures that are buried in the sea, but there have been only a few of earth’s inhabitants that have been able to bring up those stout Spanish galleons with their marvelous treasures, and recover them. There is gold on strange planets in distant galaxies, but nature is too intractable, the distances are too vast, and the human lifespan so short that men are unable to go and secure it.

How different things would be if only we had gold mines that were very close to us, that were near at hand, that were accessible to us, and convenient! How different things would be for some of us if we knew we had a gold mine in our backyard, perhaps concealed behind the rose bushes, unknown to our neighbors, and unknown to the government. How secure we would feel if on a summer evening we could chat with our neighbors over the fence, water our lawn, and play ball with our children knowing that when the sun sank below the horizon we could sneak out under the cover of night and mine a little bit of the gold out of our private gold mine at the edge of our house, behind the rose bushes. Wouldn’t it be wonderful when income tax time came, if we didn’t have to worry about anything? Just slip out in our mine and get a few nuggets the size of walnuts! Or when there

was a tragedy, a hospital bill, an unexpected expense, or whatever might come we could just get a few bags of gold dust out of our gold mine and pay those bills. Or perhaps we want to travel to far away places with strange-sounding names, but we don't have a rich uncle and we haven't won the lottery, so we sneak out again and get some gold out of our gold mine, and we're able to fly away and go wherever we want to go — travel the earth, see the sights, live like a king, with no lack or limitations whatsoever. Oh, how delightful that would be!

I'm here to tell you that you have a gold mine! It's not beside your house. It's not concealed behind the rose bushes. IT'S IN YOUR SPIRIT! Yes, my friend, you have a gold mine. Each person who now reads these lines has a gold mine and it's closer to you than the air that you breathe, closer even than the blood that courses through your veins. The gold mine that you possess is GOD in your spirit! The infinite resources of divinity dwell within your spirit! All the power of the omnipotent Creator is in your spirit! The omniscient mind that framed the galaxies abides in your spirit! All the riches of the glory, wisdom, knowledge, righteousness, joy, and peace of the almighty Father are rooted in your spirit! God is incorruptible, immortal life; indestructible light, and infinite love — and God is in your spirit!

You are the sons and daughters of the Most High God. The very life of God is within you today as your very own life. In that life which you are there is no limitation whatever. Now I am aware that even in "kingdom" circles we often find very little difference in where people are living experientially than we find anywhere else in the world. Many of us have been struggling in our spiritual life, and we have been struggling because we have not understood the work and reality of God, the way of God in our lives. Our struggle has been with the earth realm, with the carnal mind, the flesh nature. We have contended with our apparent weakness and limitation. We have wrestled with pressures from the world around us. We have felt condemned by our mistakes, failures, and errors, and have tried to climb up out of the pit that we perceive ourselves in, endeavoring to extricate ourselves by self-effort, to somehow overcome and evolve out of that world we have been held captive in, to ascend into the realm God has apprehended us for.

All the time of our spiritual poverty we have had a gold mine hidden within us! We have the full power of overcoming life right within our spirit! Paul put it this way: "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Rom. 8:10-11) Your spirit is much deeper than your mind, your emotion, or your will. Deep down on the inside of you, where your true life dwells, you are a spiritual being, a divine being, a truly God-being. That is where you are alive! "The spirit is life." That is where you are pure and righteous! That is where you do not sin, neither can you sin! (I Jn. 3:9). That is where Christ in you is your hope of glory! Your body (outer man) is dead because of sin, but your spirit is alive because of Christ's righteousness within it. Once you know where life really is, you have discovered the gold mine within! LIFE IS IN YOUR SPIRIT! What is true in your spirit is who and what "you" truly are!

When you get beyond the flesh, to the gold mine deep behind the rose bushes, you begin to draw your resources out of the vast, limitless gold mine of the life, power, and victory within your spirit. You begin to function out of your spirit instead of out of your mind, emotions, and passions. Soul and body can then be brought to line up with the life that is deep on the inside of you; you will find that your body which has been dead in trespasses and sins of the flesh will begin to change. "He shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." How true that is! That is the way of life! Where your soul once demanded its own way and its own rights of selfhood and self-expression, it now cries out for righteousness and reality. Your body and soul will control you unless your spirit quickens them. You can be a Christian for a hundred years, but if you have not learned to live out of the gold mine of your spirit, soul and body will still manifest themselves through you, setting themselves up as lord. Do we really know what is on the inside of us? We have within us, within our spirit, the uncreated, indestructible, immortal, omnipotent life of God! Soul and body will con you, they will delude, deceive, mislead, bamboozle, hoodwink, cheat, and swindle you! They will trick you into living a natural, carnal, deficient or ungodly life, until you have a revelation and realization of the riches of the heavenly life down on the inside of you. Once you get down beneath the surface, under the house, behind the rose bushes, to live out of the secret springs of life in the spirit — you will discover life and that more abundantly!

Most believers live this dual life, this split personality existence. Sometimes they think and act out of the spirit, while at other times they function out of their outward natural life. Does that mean they are not the Lord's people or the body of Christ? Not at all! Christ lives in every regenerated spirit! We are His by redemption and Christ dwells in our hearts by faith. This explains why the "golden" candlesticks had so many problems and were chastened by the Lord! Because He has bought us by His blood and quickened us by His life in our spirit, we are His people, His body, His church, His out-called ones. Therefore we are called "golden" candlesticks although we are not yet righteous or perfect in all of our thoughts, attitudes, or actions in our outer man.

Truly we are the Lord's "holy" people even though we may not yet be perfectly conformed to the image of the Son. Let me explain! To be holy means to be sanctified. To sanctify means TO SET APART or TO SEPARATE. The word is applied to people, places, and things — as Sinai among the mountains; the Sabbath among the days of the week; the Temple among all buildings; the city of Jerusalem among the cities of Israel; the Priesthood of Levi among all the tribes of Israel; and Israel among all the nations of the earth. For example, the Lord Jesus shows us that gold, if used for the Temple, as a gift, when placed on the altar, becomes sanctified or holy (Mat. 23:17-19). All the gold in this world is for human use and is therefore common; however, if a portion is separated and placed in the Temple for God's use, it becomes classified as holy, set apart. Again, if an ox or a sheep is among the herd, they are for human use and are common. When chosen and placed upon the altar, however, they become an offering unto God, being separated unto holiness. It is altogether a matter of whether they are for ordinary use or whether they are separated and belong to God. Before they are separated, they are common; after they are separated, they become holy. Therefore holiness means all that pertains to God, and all that is of God, unto God, and for God!

But beyond this there is a deeper thought. Why were people, places, and things set apart? Was it not because GOD WAS THERE? He came down in might and glory on Mount Sinai; therefore they needed to set the bounds around its base, and it is known as "the holy mount of God." It was His presence that made it holy! He selected Israel to be His peculiar people, and the house of Aaron to be His priests, and the royal line of Judah to be His kings; therefore they were isolated from all others. He appeared to Moses in the bush, glowing with the light of the Shekinah; therefore the spot was holy ground, and the shepherd needed to bare his feet. In other words, it is the presence of God that makes holy! There is only one Being in all the universe who is intrinsically holy. Holiness is the attribute of His nature and of His nature only. He is by nature, wisdom, power and being set apart from all beside. So we can never be holy apart from God; but when God enters the spirit of man, He brings the quality of holiness with Him. Thus the presence of God in man IS HOLINESS. HE is our only hope of righteousness!

We cannot reform our carnal mind or Adamic nature. It doesn't work! Only by the overwhelming presence of God in our lives can body and soul be brought into union with the nature of God in our spirit. Laws, rules, regulations, condemnation don't change anything. That is why we say to every man, to every person who has a sin consciousness or a sin problem — EXPOSE YOURSELF TO THE PRESENCE OF GOD! We could try to get them to do better, we could lay laws upon them and tell them they can't be a follower of Jesus and do the things they do, we could cast them out of our fellowship until they straighten up and do right, but that would not help them at all. We must help them find their gold mine! The gold mine is the presence of God in their spirit. That is where life is! People don't need condemnation — they need help! "GOD is our help." The help of God is within the gold mine of God's presence and life within the spirit of every man! Only the presence of God can make us holy! Salvation is wholly of God. The High Calling is wholly of God. Sonship is wholly of God. Priesthood is wholly of God. Immortality and eternal life are wholly of God. Perfection is wholly of God. "Ye shall therefore be holy for I AM HOLY." (Lev. 11:45) is a statement of fact, rather than a call to become a "good" person in word and deed. We are separated unto God by His life in our spirit, and only by yielding to His life within does holiness become revealed through the totality of our being!

This brings us to a truth that is at the same time both wonderful and dreadful. The seven churches in the book of Revelation had all kinds of problems, yet they were "golden" candlesticks and Christ walked "in the midst" of them in terrible glory! You see, we are prone to look back on the early church through "rose-colored glasses," seeing only the ideal, the positive, and the good. Many preachers are trying to build up a "New Testament

Church,” to reproduce the exact order they see in the churches in the days of the first apostles. Some even tell us that we can’t make it into sonship unless we are submitted under the ministry of a “New Testament Church.” They haven’t thought this through! Do they really want to reproduce the New Testament Church? When you do that, here is what you get! By the mid-50’s AD, the Galatian churches were steeped in doctrinal error. The Ephesians struggled with the bondage of the law. Even the Philipians, the fruit of Paul’s most successful labors, were marred by selfish ambition and disunity. The Colossian church was overrun with heresies and legalism. The Thessalonians, as stunning as their conversions were, yet were beset by outbreaks of immorality and apocalyptic fanaticism. The Corinthians had experienced the most dramatic manifestation of the power and gifts of the Spirit, yet notwithstanding this, they had profound problems with sexual perversion and moral misconduct, false doctrines, drunkenness from an excess of wine right in the meetings at communion, and total confusion and chaos in the manifestations of the gifts! Wouldn’t that be a wonderful “New Testament Church” to reproduce! The fact is, ALL churches ARE already New Testament Churches without trying to reproduce anything! The portrait of all churches is graphically drawn by the pencil strokes of the Holy Spirit in the seven churches of Asia!

Can we not see by this that the work of the Holy Spirit is always perfect in its origins, however the vessels through whom and upon whom the Spirit moves are often flawed and broken, and capable of the most grievous of sins and errors and extremes. THIS IS THE PICTURE OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES! Let us UNDERSTAND! The church has not been a perfect realm, just as none of us have been perfect. The candlestick realm is the vehicle of our overcoming! The seven churches represent for us the progressive way to the throne of God! God has deliberately put us in an imperfect church as a training ground for overcomers! This is God’s school! As each member of God’s called and chosen elect overcomes spiritually within himself all that these churches represent, we truly become qualified to receive the promises and finally REIGN WITH CHRIST UPON HIS THRONE! Sonship is via the church! I’m not talking about the organized systems of men called churches, I’m talking about our living relationship with Christ in an imperfect state! Actually we travel through the churches, overcoming first in one area, then in another, until we have overcome within ourselves all that the churches represent. When we have overcome in one God “calls us out” unto the next. The seven churches are seven stages of our out-calling from realm to realm until we are perfected in the image of Jesus Christ to stand in the fullness of the mind, nature, will, glory, and power of God!

Have the flaws in your own character, my beloved, been magnified in your eyes until you despair of ever attaining to the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus? Today I point you to CHRIST THE HEALER. Think not for one moment that Jesus Christ is the healer only of diseases of the body! He has come to cleanse His church, to sanctify and purify His elect, to purge and refine and make every whit whole His children called to be sons. I declare to you today that HE IS THE HEALER AND PERFECTER OF HIS FAMILY. He purges out of His kingdom all things that defile and offend. Listen! The great and wonderful mercy of the Christ receives all who have blemishes, and His power heals all who walk with Him in the light of His presence. Have you received the call to sonship? Then be of good cheer! “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved without blemish unto the unveiling of our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Thes. 5:23). If we are to be cleansed, healed, made whole and preserved without blemish there is only one way, and that is shown in the verse that immediately follows the one quoted above: “Faithful is HE that calleth you, WHO ALSO WILL DO IT.” What a word!

We have now come to the close of the church age and God is ready to change the order. The hour has arrived for the manifestation of the sons of God gathered out of the church age, and the rule of the kingdom of God over the nations. That which God is bringing forth for the next age will be perfect, it will be sinless, deathless, and gloriously victorious! There will be no weakness or failure in all of God’s holy mountain! The sons of God shall not go out with power to heal the sick, cast out devils, and do signs and wonders, but with no power to be honest, pure, and holy. You won’t have to worry about them swindling you out of your money, seducing your wife, being caught in some homosexual act, lying, cheating, deceiving, swelling up with pride and pompousness like a frog, manipulating the Lord’s sheep for their own profit, or building another tower of Mystery Babylon around their ministry. God won’t do it that way this time!

You can have imperfect apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, and imperfect Christians, but you can’t have IMPERFECT MANIFESTED SONS OF GOD! Sons of God won’t carry on their cars the

bumper sticker that proclaims, “I’m not perfect — just forgiven!” If God were to give unlimited power into the hands of men with character flaws, imperfect lives, and corrupt hearts, they would become the most despicable race of devils, monsters, and tyrants the world has ever known. They would wreck the kingdom of God in short order and creation would never be set free. But God is preparing a people in this hour to receive kingdom power and authority. He is preparing our hearts, purifying our souls, cleansing our motives, changing our desires, raising up grace and truth and righteousness in our inward parts. Fear not, little flock, for it is the Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom! He will finish His work and cut it short in righteousness!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 30

THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART THIRTY

THE LIGHT OF THE CANDLE STICKS THE SEED—PLOT OF REVELATION

"What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia" (Rev. 1:11)

According to our Lord's parable of the wheat and the tares, the kingdom of heaven during this past age was to be an age of mingled blessing when the seed of the kingdom of God would be planted and begin to grow and develop in the hearts of a chosen company who would believe on Christ. It was to be an age when true and false would be side by side in the same pew, when wheat and tares would grow in the same field, when sheep and goats would roam the same pastures, when good and bad fish would be caught in the same gospel net. So alike were the tares and the wheat that the Lord Himself declared that men should not try to separate them, but that both should be permitted to grow together until the time of the end when God would send forth His angel-messengers to divide the wicked from the righteous, the spiritual from the carnal, the sheep from the goats, and the wheat from the tares. (Mat. 13:36-43)

This mixture in the church — the wheat and the tares — becomes, later on in the Revelation, the gaudy harlot riding astride the beast of the carnal nature and worldly government. This great whore is described as "arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication." (Rev. 17:4) Ray Prinzing draws our attention to the fact that even as the seven infant churches were "golden" candlesticks, though beset by flesh, error, carnality, and abominations of various kinds, so this wanton harlot carries in her hand a "golden" cup. Ray wrote, "Golden bespeaks of things of intrinsic value, or, spiritual things. There is no doubt that religious Babylon has held in her hand a golden cup — treasures of truth, spiritual enrichments, revivals, times of divine visitation, but she has also mixed in of her own abominations, gross manifestations of the flesh, idolatry, carnality, spiritual adultery, whatever filthiness can be mentioned, it is all found in that cup, and then it was given to men to drink, until all the earth has become drunken with this awful mixture of flesh and spirit.

"Again this is noted in Daniel 5:2-3, as Belshazzar 'commanded to bring the silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple, and they drank wine in them.' They would take hold of the cup and place in it their own wine, and dishonor the true by mixing it with the false. As the spirit of man is joined to the spirit of the world, the spirit of self-aggrandizement, stroking their own ego, yet all the time claim to be doing it for the Lord. It's Babylon — CONFUSION — taking the things of intrinsic value, the songs of Zion, the quickened Word, the precious blood of Christ, the anointing of the Spirit, and mixing it all up with the frivolity of the flesh, equating loudness as the anointing, emotional outbursts are thought to be spirit-movings, and it is amazing how many are ready to drink from this cup — to become drunken with spiritual fornication, party-time mixing of the holy with the profane. Yet the Word speaks loud and clear, 'Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot partake of the Lord's table, and the table of devils' (I Cor. 10:21). Participation in Babylon's cup must end!" — end quote.

Again, consider the parable of the wheat and the tares. The master told his servants to ignore the tares and let them grow together in the wheat field until the harvest. Although the tares were the predominant plants in the field, it was not a tare field — it was a wheat field, and the crop, which the Great Sower is interested in, is the wheat! The Lord had planted the wheat, and an adversary had crept in during the night and sown tares. And thus it has been during the length of the church age, nearly two thousand years, there have been the true children of God, of God's planting, and false believers, false doctrines, false ways and works, of Satan's planting! For these two millennia, the professed church of God has been endeavoring to convert the world to "Christianity." But this effort has been unsuccessful, since it is out of harmony with God's plan for this age. The

plan for this work to be successfully completed, as we know, is the new age of the manifestation of the sons of God. Considering the spirit which controls the pseudo-church, it is not surprising to discover in the warnings to the churches in the Revelation, that, instead of effectively converting the world, it finds itself in danger of being converted to the world!

I spent a number of years in my early ministry seeking out a "perfect church." On a few occasions it appeared that I had actually found one! The people were so loving and consecrated, the worship was so glorious and heavenly, and there was such a purity of the revelation of the Lord! But when I stuck around for just a little while, the undercurrents of strife, jealousy, division, flesh, sin, and corruption began to surface. All was not as it seemed! Suppose you had been searching for the perfect church back in the days of the early church. Suppose you had been traveling around in search of the one true church armed with the following list of criteria: (1) perfect doctrines and revelation (2) total dedication and zeal (3) perfect harmony and respect among members (4) no sinners, hypocrites, or non-believers in the church (5) perfect love and consecration (6) perfect worship and order in the Spirit. You could travel from Jerusalem to Galatia to Rome — probably to every congregation mentioned in the New Testament — and you would not be able to find the perfect church based on your criteria!

Many people have searched for the perfect church today and have given up in frustration; some conclude that the Bible must be all mixed up, and maybe God doesn't really exist. Others reason that, since the perfect church doesn't exist, they'll have to start it! Or they fall prey to the cults or cult-like churches who claim that they and they alone, are the one true church. Millions have cast aside family, friends, jobs, even the Word of God for the false sense of warmth and security offered by organizations claiming to have the only truth or to be the one true church. Well, thank God, the complete membership roll of the church is found only in heaven, in the realm of the Spirit, not in the computer of any organization on earth! Only by the Spirit can we know those who are truly His!

Through many years of experience I have learned the valuable lesson that as long as there is even one imperfect person in a church you do not have, nor can you have, a perfect church. By God's design the churches are full of imperfect, immature, needy, and broken people, whom God is in the process of restoring and making whole! If you are looking for the perfect church in the candlestick realm of the Holy Place, you are truly making an effort in futility! There is no such thing! The seven golden candlesticks are prefigured by the candlestick in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle of Moses. In the Holy Place the oil of the candlestick burns out, the wick from day to day needs trimming, the bread on the table of showbread contains leaven, a type of evil, and will grow stale, needing to be replenished. Everything in that realm is corruptible, imperfect, and temporal! We are forced to accept every group of people on the basis of their degree of maturity and perfection, for when they are compared to the stature and perfection of Christ, they fall short. Thus, we can proclaim with those who sang the song of Moses unto the Lord, "FOR THOU ONLY ART HOLY!"

What another word of wisdom Ray Prinzing shared when he wrote: "We recognize that we are neither fully out of the old, nor totally into the new, and therefore we offer no condemnation for anything or anyone in this time of transition. 'Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.' (I Cor. 4:5) Our heart desires to truly WORSHIP HIM, IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH, yet as we come together betimes, and have our services, we readily admit that we carry over the forms of the past, to sing, pray, preach — it is all we know. And some mix in more of the old traditions with the new moves of the Spirit, while others try to remain as free and flexible to His leadings as possible. But I dare say, we are not yet true thoroughbreds in our worship! But we also have confidence that HE will complete His work in us, and ultimately we shall freely and joyfully render unto Him the worship which He desires. While we wait for the establishment of HIS KINGDOM, however, we have no desire to build any more with the 'old stones of Babylon.' This leaves us without any current identification, no institution, no label, no brand, and we confess that we are but 'pilgrims and strangers' passing through this present age, for we have here no continuing city, but we SEEK ONE TO COME. Praise God!" — end quote.

The seven churches of Asia with their mixture of truth and error, flesh and spirit, are a picture of the church, the one church, the New Testament Church, the true church, throughout the church age! God's people, for the

most part, are IN BABYLON. How could the Lord say, "Come out of her MY PEOPLE," unless the church is dwelling in spiritual Babylon, just as Israel of old was in captivity in the literal Babylon. My point is this: We cannot draw clear lines between the church and Babylon! Babylon is a system. The church is a people. Multitudes of the people who make up the church are IN BABYLON! They are controlled by Babylon, they have absorbed the ways and culture of Babylon, they think like Babylon, they talk like Babylon, they act like Babylon, they enjoy life in Babylon! And yet the people themselves are NOT BABYLON! Coming out of Babylon does not then make you the church. All of God's people are the church, including those in Babylon! When God calls you out of Babylon you are His "called out" on a different or higher level than those in Babylon who have been called out of sin and the world. But both are "called out" and all are "the church!"

This is a great mystery, and my prayer to God is that He may give all who read these lines the spirit of wisdom and revelation to perceive and see the true nature of all things. The Babylon system calls itself the church. It is not the church! Someone says, "That is a Baptist church," or, "that is a Methodist church," or, "that is a Pentecostal church." There is no such thing as either a Baptist church or a Methodist church or a Pentecostal church! They don't exist! There is a Baptist religious organization and system, which calls itself the church, but it is not the church. The living redeemed people are the church! And the Baptist religious system is Babylon! So here we have a seeming contradiction! On the one hand we do not call Babylon the church, while on the other hand we refer to the people in the religious systems as the church. It is because much of the church is in captivity in Babylon! Now, there are those who "come out of Babylon" and they appear to be "another church." Some even deny that those in Babylon are the church! But the truth becomes very clear as we consider the seven churches of Asia! Most of them were already living in some form of religious Babylon, yet they were the Lord's church whom He both praised and rebuked!

In chapter one of the Revelation we see the Lord Jesus walking in the midst of the churches with eyes as a flame of fire and feet like unto brass, as if they burned in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters. This is the prophetic spirit of Christ in the midst of the churches! The Son of God walks in the midst of the churches in judgment. His eyes pierce through the façade the church has built up around itself, and His feet bring the refining fire of God every where He steps. The message is clear: The Lord Jesus is the authority over the church! Some ministers, whether apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, or teachers, try to be little dictators over the Lord's people. Many churches have been spiritually devastated by leaders who take advantage of the Lord's flock. But the pastor is not the authority over the church — the One we have to deal with is the One who walks in the midst of the churches!

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that HE might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that HE might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. 5:25-27)

Make no mistake about it, HE WILL HAVE A GLORIOUS CHURCH, and it is the result of building — He is both the Author and the Finisher. There is a tremendous purging process on the horizon among the many groups and institutions of man, for although the systems themselves are Babylon, yet those within the systems are HIS PEOPLE. They may be but abused and brainwashed babes in Christ — but He will finish in them what He has begun! Oh, yes, there is a work begun, and salvation is a process, and those touched with His salvation are HIS, but in need of much purging and processing. The responsibility is HIS, for it is He who has redeemed them unto Himself, and line upon line Christ will work in each heart, every man in his own order, from glory to glory, until every man is made complete in Him. God is performing this great work in His firstfruit company now, and we are experiencing what it means to be refined by fire, purged, purified, changed, transformed and conformed to the image of the Son of God! For the called-out firstfruits the place is HERE, and the time is NOW! The work taking place in the lives of God's sons in this hour is but the first step in God's great redemptive, reconstructive, and restorative purpose. When God has finished His purifying, all who name the name of Christ will advance into heights and depths in Him! Mystery of mysteries, Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it that He might sanctify and cleanse and present it to Himself a GLORIOUS CHURCH without spot, wrinkle, or blemish. The final vision of this glorious church is the NEW JERUSALEM COMING DOWN FROM GOD OUT OF HEAVEN PREPARED AS A BRIDE ADORNED FOR HER HUSBAND. This is not Israel,

the wife of Yahweh — this is the church, the bride of Christ! The New Jerusalem is the ultimate reality of the church!

THE LIGHT OF THE CANDLESTICKS

"The seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches." (Rev. 1:20)

Candlesticks are for light! In the opening verses of the Bible we read, "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light" (Gen. 1:3). "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: He made the stars also." (Gen. 1:14,16).

I would draw your reverent attention to the words used here for light. The Hebrew text of Genesis 1:3 says, "Ye hi or: wa ye hi or." The nearest to a literal translation our language will permit is to say, "Light be, and light was;" or even better, "Exist light, then exists light." Our English word, light, appears again in the English translation of the Bible in the plural form in the fourteenth verse, "God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens." There is, however, a vast difference between the word for light, the substance, in verse three, and the one translated lights in verse fourteen. In verse three the Hebrew word is or, while in verse fourteen the word is ma-or. This latter word is best translated as "luminary, light container, or light holder," and these light holders are placed about throughout His universe like street lights in a big city. We have the same distinction in the Greek where phos appears as light, the essence, and phoster as the word for a light container. The ma-or, then, are the great luminaries such as the flaming suns, and even their reflecting satellites called moons, the meteors, and the nebulae; but or is the very substance and essence of light.

In the Old Testament symbology the Hebrew word used for light, when speaking of God as light, is or, that is, light substance; and in the New Testament the Greek word for light, when speaking of Christ as light, is phos, that is, light substance. The significance of this is noted when we see that the characteristic word for the body of Christ as light in the New Testament is phoster, or light holder. Jesus Christ then is The Light and we, as His body, are the luminaries which contain or shine forth the light. **THUS WE ARE THE CANDLESTICK!** The most significant appearance of this word in connection with the body of Christ is in **Philippians 2:15**, "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights (phoster – light holders, luminaries) in the world." This word is comparable to the luminaries of the Old Testament. The ma-or, or light containers. **In Revelation 21:10-11** we find, "And He showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, having the glory of God: and her light (phoster) was... clear as crystal." The candlestick realm, when purged, cleansed, purified and matured becomes the holy city, the New Jerusalem shining with the plenitude of the glory of God!

So beautifully is the truth unveiled, in the New Testament writings, that Jesus Christ is the Head of His body, and that His body is the church! (Eph. 5:22-33; II Cor. 11:2). It is a beautiful thing to contemplate, a precious thing, a wonderful thing. Jesus is the Head, and the body, though being many, is one body. Everything of its life and interests and doings originates from the Head. The Christ within is the life of each member. In the book of Revelation the churches are the lamps in which HE burns and shines by His Spirit, and the light, which shines is His own life. As lamps, or candlesticks, the churches are the forms into which His Spirit flows as oil. In them His word burns as light. The members of the body of Christ are the forms by which the Christ of God appears as light in the world! It is not the forms themselves which are to appear, but the light that burns and shines in them. In Him, then, the forms become lights or luminaries. "YE are the light of the world."

God's first concern has always been for His people. You ask, Is He not equally concerned about the world? Of course He is — and that is why He has placed the candlesticks in the world, to be the Light of the world! Some say to me, "Don't bother me with those deep revelations — my burden is to reach the world for Christ." Those who speak thus have missed the whole point! The candlesticks are just dim lights in a world of darkness, and when the candlestick flickers and goes out, as it has in so many churches, then darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people. God is after something greater than the candlesticks! The light of the candlesticks is seen in the opening chapters of the Revelation, but when you come to the closing chapters there are no

more candlesticks, just the holy Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, having the glory of God! Then it is that the nations walk in the light of that city, and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it.

The "deep revelation" found in the visions of John between the candlestick and the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, is the revelation of God by which we are changed and transformed and brought from the candlestick to the throne! The Lord wants to walk in our midst with ever-increasing Light. If you want to forget the "deep revelation" and just remain a flickering candlestick in the world, then go ahead! You can do some good, you can affect some souls and bring blessing to some people. We can all be a blessing! But if you really, truly desire to reach the world for Christ, you must give yourself to becoming the overcomer who shall be a son of God, who shall inherit all things, and in whose light the nations and kings of the earth shall walk! The path of the just is just that way — it shineth more and more unto the perfect Day!

The Lord has promised greater works than those He did, greater works than any of us have seen in our lifetime, because He has all power in heaven and in earth to invest in His people as they are prepared for it. You want to reach the world for Christ? The greatest thing you can do for humanity in this hour is to pay the price to become a manifest son of God! The whole creation is groaning, travailing for the unveiling of God's sons! We ourselves are groaning within ourselves in mighty, heart-wrenching travail, seeking God for the adoption, the placement as sons, to wit, the redemption of our body! This is the word the Lord is speaking by the mouths of His prophets in this day, and we are compelled to give ourselves to it, to yield ourselves under the mighty hand of God, to wait upon the Lord, until we receive the greater glory from on High! There is little hope for this sin-cursed world until the next great move of God, the greatest ever seen, breaks in power and great glory upon the horizon! Let us not settle for less, let us not sell creation short!

God's work in us begins by making us a new creation with a new nature, a new spirit, and a new mind. The light of the candlestick is at the top of the candlestick. It is my earnest prayer that the Spirit of God will give each one who reads these pages the spirit of thoughtfulness and revelation. If your spirit is able to grasp the truth of this you will see that "the light of the body is the eye" or the understanding, and it is the mind that must be renewed and enlightened by the spirit of Truth, giving light to the whole temple of God. Just as the light is at the top of the lampstand, so is the mind at the top of man's body. "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind." (Eph. 4:23) "That...the Father...may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." (Eph. 1:18)

Christ is seen standing in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, representing something. Since Christ is pictured as standing right in the midst of the candlesticks, He is the One who is actually fueling, or supplying the needs of, the candlesticks, as His Spirit is represented by the oil. Christ is thus embodied within these seven churches. Even the positioning of the candlestick in the typical Tabernacle in the wilderness speaks powerfully to us. You will remember that the candlestick was not in the Holiest of all, but was located in what was known as the Holy Place, which is the area of the Tabernacle just before the Holiest of all or the Most Holy Place.

This positioning of the seven-branched candlestick gives us some special truth about the church age. The church does not dwell in the Holiest of all — the place of fullness! It does not walk in the realities of the third compartment of the Tabernacle, the Most Holy Place, nor yet in the glory of the third day, the fullness of the Day of the Lord. The church of this age has remained in the second compartment of the Holy Place, in the second feast, the Feast of Pentecost, and in the life of the second day, which falls short of full resurrection and perfection. "Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us: in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: His going forth is prepared as the morning; and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth." (Hos. 6:1-3) "Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected." (Lk. 13:32)

Believers of this age have with one accord sold themselves woefully short of all the great promises of God! Christ has entered in to that which lies within the veil, the absolute fullness of God! He has opened up the way for men to enter into a full and complete salvation, into the realm of sonship. Jesus is the apostle of our faith.

He is the sign Son, the first-begotten, the pattern Son. All who are to come to sonship to God shall follow Him through the veil and come into that wonderful fullness of the resurrected, ascended, glorified, and enthroned Lord. It is now time, above all times, for us to mightily stress these truths! I see no possibility of any long delay until the manifestation of the sons of God becomes a reality. I know not the day or the hour, but it is my deep conviction in the spirit that we are now in the generation that shall witness this marvelous unveiling. I live daily in the expectation of the glory of God! Should my eyes grow dim and my gait unsteady with the passing of the years, I shall still rest in hope of the glory that shall be revealed!

Thus it is written, "Then the Lord will create over all of mount Zion and OVER ALL WHO ASSEMBLE THERE a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over all the glory will be a canopy. It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain." (Isa. 4:5-6, NIV) Mount Zion represents the spiritual place of reigning with Christ! If we are ascending mount Zion in the Spirit, and beginning to reign with Christ in the Spirit, the glorious light of Christ must be always shining from within us. David, who reigned gloriously from the mount Zion of old, spoke from experience when he said, "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And HE SHALL BE AS THE LIGHT OF THE MORNING, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain." (II Sam. 23:3-4)

The sons of God are those elect and chosen ones who shall eventually rule over men. And we are to do so with the light of Christ shining out from within us to dispel all the darkness in people and in all the kingdoms of men. We are to be filled with so much of the light of Christ that we will shine forth as the sun in its brilliance, when it rises over the horizon to shed its rays over all the earth. All the inhabitants of the world, being ruled by the power of the Spirit within the sons, will then grow in the Spirit "as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain." All men will be set free from their bondages of sin, sickness, ignorance, selfishness, limitation, human government and religious domination, and will then worship the Lord in spirit and in truth, and walk in the word of God within them. They will grow to the full stature of Christ, in the light of the glory that is seen in us, in the power and glory of the kingdom of God! They shall grow up into righteousness, understanding, love, faith, and power with God until eventually even the shackles of corruption and death shall fall from off their lives. Creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption. And our growth to the full maturity of sonship manifest will make all this possible!

It will be spiritually instructive for us to understand how that in the Tabernacle of Moses there were three different kinds of light. And by this light there were three different kinds of order. In the Outer Court the sun was the light, but there was night in that realm for when the sun went down in the western sky the Outer Court was veiled in darkness. Then in the Holy Place there was the candlestick, and there was a glimmering light in that compartment, not a very bright light, but a light sufficient to illuminate that realm by day and by night. That light was produced out of an indwelling, out of oil that was in the candlestick producing light. It was not a perfect light because the wick had to be trimmed daily, and the oil must continually be replenished. There was a necessary service rendered to that candlestick by the priests to maintain the light, just as we have needed the ministry of the word, the dealings of the Spirit, and seasons of refreshing and times of revival in order to rid our lives of recurring carnality, keep a supply of oil, and maintain the light of God burning in our lives. That is the Holy Place! But you know, when you enter into the Most Holy Place, the Holiest of all, the light of that realm is the Shekinah, the blazing, penetrating fullness of the glory of God, and there are no shadows and there is no night there! It is eternal light! The Shekinah is not dependent upon anything. It is not drawn or derived from any earthly substance. It doesn't have to be serviced. There is no wick to trim, no oil to pour, no priestly ministrations of any kind to maintain it. It simply is, because God is!

Yet, the candlestick is a wonderful encouragement and edification to all who are pressing forward into God. The candlestick was kept burning in that Holy Place "from evening to morning before the Lord." This statute was given to show us that the light of the Spirit is always available to us, even during these dark, spiritual hours of our walk in the flesh. We will never be left alone in this world with its troubles, testings, and trials, for we are assured that His light is always shining in our hearts to guide and direct us on the pathway we should take, by the Spirit. Therefore we should be filled with the oil (anointing) of Christ at all times, whether it is a time of more light as He sends seasons of refreshing to cause us to blossom and grow up in Him, or the time of the darkness of a spiritual night, for His light is always shining in His heavenly, spiritual Tabernacle within us. By

His glorious light within, we are able to make it through this dark night with faith, understanding, illumination, confidence, and trust in Him. Not only will we make it through this dark night of trial and testing, but we will do so triumphantly and victoriously, overcoming every obstacle, hindrance, and limitation of the flesh realm. We will turn our darkness into glorious Day as we walk in the light of the indwelling Spirit, ascending at the golden altar of incense to worship our Father in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, where we are enabled by His life to pass beyond the veil into the eternal and immortal glory of the Holiest of all! In order to enter in beyond the veil the glorious light of Christ must always be shining from within us so that we do not stumble as we make our way from realm to realm.

While the church is a light to the world, the light of the candlestick in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle reveals clearly that the light is, first and foremost, the revelation of Christ within ourselves to guide us on our journey into God. The Holy Place typifies the church realm, for it was the realm of the candlestick. When we step through the door, which separates the Outer Court from the Holy Place, immediately we come under the influence of the light of this candlestick. Everything in the Holy Place is seen in the light of the candlestick which is the light of Christ in our spirit. Your light is a flaming expression and manifestation of the glory of God and is fed by the oil that is put in your vessel. That's what the candlestick is all about; it is the life of Christ living in you!

It is the illumination of Christ, the anointing within, which draws us northward to the table of showbread where we begin to fellowship with Christ in His word. We begin to sup with Him and He with us. We hear His voice and take into us His word, which is made strength and sustenance to our new creation life. We then move on to the golden altar of incense to proclaim the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. This is not the soulful, toe-tapping, hand-clapping, dancing music we hear in many places. This realm of praise and worship is the declaration of His virtues out of a heart of brokenness, love, consecration, and adoration. This is the realm of praise in the spirit and by the spirit, which God begins to inhabit. This is the place where our transformation begins! The golden altar is the final piece of furniture in the Holy Place — located just before the veil into the Holiest of all. The incense is a cold, hard substance which, when placed upon the fire on the golden altar, is transformed into a spiritual fragrance which wafts it way through the veil into the Holiest of all! This is the place where we are changed and begin to pass from the Holy Place into the Most Holy Place. When we have passed through the veil there is no candlestick; rather, the glory of God in the full power of Christ's resurrection is the light of that realm!

The candlestick was to burn continually, which speaks to us of living in a continual awareness of the presence and revelation of the Lord. When we stepped into this Holy Place of the indwelling Spirit the light of His glory released in our lives permeated the whole room. How we thank God for the light produced by the candlestick in the Holy Place, though it is limited in its power and range of illumination. We're grateful for the "in-part" realm, for only by passing through the dim light of the Holy Place can we enter on in to the blazing Shekinah of the Holiest of all! The revelation of the Lord in this Holy Place (church realm) is always calling us onward. The revelation of the Lord within ourselves will never leave us in the same position where we receive it. This should let us know that as wonderful and glorious as this Holy Place is, it is not the ultimate in God! He is ever calling us toward the Most Holy Place, into Himself, in that dimension of fullness where it is His glory alone that fills the room. In the Most Holy Place there are no distractions of wick-trimming and making sure there is adequate oil in the lamps. There is only the constant, unchanging, undiminished, brilliantly shining glory of His all-consuming presence! In the Most Holy Place there is no more labor of baking and replenishing the bread on the table. There is now the eternal, incorruptible manna within the ark of the covenant! In the Most Holy Place there are no more distractions of periods of burning incense — times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord — seasons of God's movings through our prayers, praise, and worship. There is only the abiding law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, the state of being His nature by which we are all that He is!

There has been a light coming from the candlestick, the church, which allowed us to see all that is in this realm and to find our way into all the purposes of God that pertain to this realm. The light of the candlestick is the illumination of the Holy Spirit through all of the anointings, revelations, gifts, ministries, and graces which quicken our lives. The light of the candlestick enables us to find our way to the table of showbread where we feed on Christ as the word of God in one another, for **"the bread which we break, is it not the communion (fellowship) of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of**

that one bread." (I Cor. 10:16-17) The light of Christ in the candlestick also makes it possible for us to arrive at the golden altar of incense before the veil where we offer the incense of our prayers, praise, and worship, and very being, unto the Father. It is this place, when truly in the Spirit and by the Spirit, which opens the way for us to enter in beyond the veil into the Holiest of all. Now we can understand this realm of the candlestick — the church!

THE SEED-PLOT OF REVELATION

Some of us have surely noticed how all truth in the book of Revelation is germinative in the seven churches. We find the seed-plot for all that happens throughout the whole book in the experience of the seven churches! Thus it will be seen that the germs of all those evils which in the days of their fruition bring God's judgment into men's lives, and upon the Lord's people collectively, are already at work in the midst of those who have been called out of the world unto salvation. The Lord's word to the churches, "Repent, or I will come unto thee and do thus and so..." cannot be separated from the judgments we see later throughout the book of Revelation. His warning to the churches is not one thing and the judgments that follow another thing. They are the same thing! The very judgments that fall upon men throughout the book are in very fact the fulfillment of Christ's warning to the churches! They are not judgments upon Israel, Russia, China, the Arabs, Europe, or America — they are the corrective, remedial, redemptive judgments upon those apprehended of God by which we are purged, purified, and transformed into the image of God's Son! The judgments recorded in the book of Revelation tell the story of how the evil began as tares sown in the field of God's kingdom, the means used by the adversary to sow and develop them, and the wonderful process by which the Lord sends His messengers and gathers the tares into bundles and burns them. When this great work is fulfilled in us, then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father!

When our lovely Lord Jesus came into this sin-cursed world bringing the word and power of the kingdom, He ushered in a new and glorious age. It is very doubtful that any in those days had the remotest idea that it was the Father's intention to take the next two thousand years to complete the great work of preparing the kings of the kingdom! Jesus came to bring in the new age of the church, the seed-bed in which the kingdom could grow and develop to its next stage. When the conditions are fully ripe for this next stage of the kingdom, this age will completely pass away. How our glad hearts rejoice in the sacred knowledge that we are standing even now at the dawning of the next new age and the greater glory of the kingdom that it brings!

The Word of God contains mysteries which little by little are opened to us like the opening of a rose. In His wonderful kingdom parables Jesus revealed the great mystery of the progression of the kingdom from stage to stage and from realm to realm. He said, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof." (Mat. 13:31-32) Again, "Behold, a sower went forth to sow; and when he sowed, some seeds (the word of the kingdom) fell by the wayside, and fowls came and devoured them. Some fell upon stony places...some fell among thorns...but other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold. Who has ears to hear, let him hear." (Mat. 13:3-9) And yet again, "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way..."

As Jesus taught, it is like a farmer planting his seed in the soil. He makes the field ready and plants the seed in the ground. The seed lies buried under the earth, lost from sight, of course. If I had my way, I would expect a field full of corn tomorrow morning! After all, I put a lot of time and energy and money to prepare this soil and plant this seed. I did the right thing. I sowed the seed. An experienced farmer understands, however, that it is going to take time for the seed to sprout, to grow, to develop through all its stages, and ultimately bear fruit at harvest. The consummation doesn't come immediately nor instantly, but in season. Seedtime and harvest! That is God's method of operation in everything He does. It's been this way since the beginning, when God took six "days" to fashion the heavens and the earth, and it will continue to be His way throughout all the limitless ages. The Lord is ambitious, but also very deliberate and methodical. He enjoys growth and expansion! That is the way of His plan and purpose, always. Do not despair, precious one, if the work of God in you seems very slow. As long as there is some progress, however infinitesimal it may appear to the eye, GOD

IS AT WORK! He will never leave you nor forsake you, even through the long, cold months of winter when nothing is happening, He will not abandon the work of His hands, nor will He turn from His purpose in you. God will complete that good work He has begun in you! Oh yes, He will! You see, this is the deep mystery of the kingdom of God. Jesus has taught us that it comes like silent leaven, grows like a grain of mustard seed, develops like corn, which is "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."

The good seed, this extraordinary seed, is our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Word of God. It is a very good seed, for it is the germ of spiritual, divine life! It is the incorruptible seed! When this seed was planted in the earth it began to grow vigorously and brought forth first the glory of the early church. Then, from move to move, from visitation to visitation, from revival to revival, from dealing to dealing, this seed has grown and multiplied and reproduced in the earth and now it is time for the cash crop that will bring blessing to all the families of the earth — the manifest sons of God! The sons are the final product of the planting of the Lord, the precious fruit, the seed exactly like the first seed that was planted — Jesus Christ! The sons are the increase of the kingdom of God within the Lord's elect. Within that first, extraordinary seed was a preview of the kingdom when Christ in His entire body of sons will appear in the glory of sonship. And that, precious friend of mine, is how the kingdom of God will also increase and expand from age to age throughout the ages of the ages with the unending increase of God! Think about it! Just as Jesus was the first seed for this age, bringing forth a harvest of many sons, so the sons are the first seed for the next age. What an increase of the kingdom they will bring! And the harvest out of the age now dawning will be the seed-bed for the age that follows after that. And of the increase of His kingdom there shall be NO END!

The kingdom is like seed that is planted, sprouts, grows, passing through various stages over time, until at last it produces the fruit within which is the seed just like the original seed planted — only multiplied many, many times! In the time of harvest, we shall bring forth seed identical with the seed of Christ that was planted in the fertile soil of our hearts. We shall then become more seed exactly like that original Seed that was planted in our hearts! When Jesus was asked by His disciples to explain the parable of the wheat and tares, He said, "The field is the world; the good seed ARE the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one." (Mat. 13:38) Let us pay attention to the words of Jesus. "The good seed are the children of the kingdom." In this parable He is not viewing us as having the seed within us, or as having the kingdom planted within us, as He does in other parables. Rather, He presents us as being "the good seed." In other words, Jesus saw us as being equal with Him, as a good seed just like the original Seed of Christ. We are becoming like the original seed of Christ through the planting of the incorruptible seed within us, but Jesus saw us as being already complete. Jesus saw us as, not the "blade," or the "ear," but He saw us as the "full corn in the ear." He saw us as seed to be harvested! The seed that we are becoming is identical to the original Seed of Christ that was planted within us. And this seed shall be sown again to reproduce many times over according to the power of the original Christ-seed.

The kingdom of God operates by God's law of reproduction and increase. Just as all vegetation and animals and humans in the world are brought forth by the law of germination, growth, and increase, so is the law of the kingdom of God! Nature is but the outward, visible revelation of God's spiritual principles. Just as it is impossible for a wheat seed to produce apples, so it is impossible for the Christ seed within us to bring forth anything but Christ. As the Christ was planted within us, so that original seed must bring forth not only the spirit of Christ, but also a body just like His glorious body! God will give us a body like that of Christ, either by transformation while we live and stand upon our two feet, or by resurrection from the dead. The body that we receive must be exactly like the seed of the resurrected Christ who has been planted within our hearts (I Cor. 15:38). The Christ seed that we are becoming will have the same life that is in Christ. The seed will come forth with the likeness of Christ, the mind of Christ, the nature of Christ, the righteousness of Christ, the compassion of Christ, the mercy of Christ, the love of Christ, the miracle-working, creative power of Christ, the fullness of Christ! It must be this way, for the law of God reveals that everything must "bring forth after its kind." The seed to be harvested is identical to the Seed that was planted! The seed that we are becoming shall be scattered abroad to reproduce after His kind, filling the earth with kingdom sons just like us and, more importantly, just like Jesus Christ!

Armed with the understanding of this blessed truth, can we not see the importance of our wise Husbandman putting His chosen ones to the test, that He might prove us, purge us, and purify us from all that is not the

perfection of Christ? It must be so, for if the tares of the carnal mind and fleshly nature were left to be harvested with the Christ life the kingdom of God would be a horrible mixture of flesh and spirit, truth and error, righteousness and corruption! Thank God that at the time of harvest, when the sons come to spiritual maturity, **THE TARES ARE SEPARATED FROM THE WHEAT!** The tares are gathered and burned in the refining, purging, purifying fire of God! Truly this gives us understanding of our present life and its difficulties! His truth is setting us free within ourselves from the fears, weaknesses, errors, limitations, and bondages of the flesh, of sin, and of religion. And how blessed and privileged we are to see the truth as it is in Christ!

There should be no need to remind any who read these pages that there is a negative side of this principle of sowing and reaping. In the parable of the wheat and tares a remarkable fact is revealed, the fact of continued mixture; up to the end of the harvest the field is a mixed field; it is a field divided between wheat and tares. And both the wheat and the tares are in the Lord's field — in His church! An enemy sows tares in the midst of God's wheat. Now notice — the tares are sown after the wheat is sown! So this is something that happens to the spiritual life of the children of God after they have been quickened by Christ! I do not doubt that this enemy is the devil of the carnal mind.

The kingdom is birthed into us in an infinitesimally small beginning. But it comes with sufficient power to begin to change our lives! The government of God begins in that undistinguished place where the spirit of Christ takes root in the inner life. Little by little we begin to become aware of what God wants in our life, and the paths of obedience begin to be learned. The desire is created within us, by the new genetic makeup of our mind, to want to do His will. We want to do what He wants us to do and to be what He wants us to be. It is right there that an enemy comes into the Lord's field, and begins to sow tares! The tares look just like wheat, but they are not wheat, and they are not the Lord's planting! It is right there that the church systems begin to lay upon the Lord's people their own man-made laws, requirements, rules, regulations, commandments, creeds, traditions, rituals, ceremonies, programs, works, and a whole world of religious tomfoolery, and leads the child of God down the dead-end street of man-made religion! Oh, yes, an enemy hath done this!

It may be quite a revelation to some to realize that tares look and act exactly like wheat, but a tare is a weed. It grows like a stalk of wheat and is identical to a wheat plant except at the time of harvest. The wheat at harvest time has a full head of grain and is bending over with the weight of the grain. A tare is not bent over with the weight of grain for there is nothing but an empty head of chaff. Only at harvest time is the distinction between wheat and tares clearly visible. No doubt all of us have come into contact with tares! We have worshipped with them in services. They went through the same religious motions. They knew how to praise the Lord at the appropriate time, or when the worship leader instructed them to. They even prayed with apparent devotion, but all of their prayers were self-centered. They diligently studied the scriptures, but all of their interpretations were literalistic and carnal. They spoke the name of Christ, and did all kinds of religious things, especially at Christmas, Easter, and in all kinds of programs, concerts, drives, and works. Indeed, the tares have been with us all through our spiritual pilgrimage! And they really do look like wheat! It is only when you come to the harvest, when the Husbandman looks for the **MATURED CHRIST-LIFE IN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT** that it becomes evident that this is not the Seed!

"Let both grow together until the harvest." (Mat. 13:30) Jesus was clearly stating that both realms would grow side by side, in the same seed-plot, until the time of harvest. Harvest bespeaks of full maturity, when each seed has reached its ultimate potential, size, capacity, and brings forth the fruit of what it is in the fullness of itself. And indeed both realms of the spirit and the flesh have been growing together in the church, in the candlestick realm, just as Jesus said they would! The wheat represents the kingdom saints, the sons of God in the fullness of Christ's life, nature, and power. The tares represent the carnal minded Christians of man's false religious systems. It could be no other way!

Multitudes who read the book of Revelation do not grasp the deep truth of why the Spirit began the book with the messages to the seven churches and then goes on to all the horrendous scenes that follow. The natural mind fails to get the connection! But this miscalculation arises from the failure to discern the difference between a seed-plot, where the seeds are planted, cultivated, and grown, and the immeasurable harvest that is to follow! The truth is, the messages to the seven churches are not something separate from, or different than, the events in the rest of the book! They are intricately related, the one grows out of the other; they are the very same images, pictures, events, and realities presented at different stages of development!

Let us now notice that the first three chapters of Revelation are introductory. Introductions can be of two types. Those which are casual, serving merely as the opening of the door, bearing no vital relationship to the real heart of the matter to come later in the main body of the work. And those which are absolutely essential, laying out in embryonic fashion the very essence of all that is to follow. Revelation's three chapters of introduction are of the latter type! Every great theme of the book is already found in compact and concise form, in these opening letters to the seven churches. IF ONE UNDERSTANDS THE INTRODUCTION, ONE HAS GREATLY GRASPED THE ESSENTIAL IDEAS OF THE ENTIRE BOOK!

As I stated earlier, all truth in the book of Revelation is germinative in the seven churches. A great mistake that many have in their minds is the notion that the seven churches are one thing and the events described through the seals, trumpets, and vials are something else. Such is not the case! The messages to the seven churches are given first because the church is the seed-plot for the development of the seed — both the wheat and the tares! Oh, yes! The church is the seed-bed of everything that happens in the whole book of Revelation! It all begins there! The beasts, the women, the cities, the shakings, the judgments, the glory — all these things and many more are found in seed form in the seven churches. All the mighty things that manifest out of the sea, the earth, and the heavens are there in the seven churches in embryonic form. As a plant grows and develops, and the blossoms and fruit come, so does every seed of good and evil in the seven churches become full grown and full blown in the chapters that follow!

Notice how it is that the little seed of Jezebel, the fornicating false prophetess in the church at Thyatira, grows and increases in numbers, organization, and stature until she becomes "the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication." (Rev. 17:1-2) Consider how the little seed of the doctrine of Balaam in the church at Pergamos, increases and intensifies until it brings forth in the earth the corporate beast of the false prophet who has "two horns like a lamb, and speaks as a dragon." (Rev. 13:11)

Then there is the little seed of the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes by which the Lord's people are brought under the fleshly dominion of men who set themselves up as lords over God's flock; and this group of pastors, bishops, overseers, superintendents, etc., these usurpers of Christ's Headship over His body grows and aggrandizes until it becomes "that great city Babylon, that mighty city" which "is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies." (Rev. 18:2-3) Then the seed of the struggling little "overcomer" in each of the seven churches, to whom such glorious promises are given, increases in wisdom, stature, and authority in the Spirit until he becomes 144,000 sons of God standing upon the heavenly mount Zion, the very pinnacle of power and dominion in the kingdom of God!

John sees the seven golden candlesticks — the church — later on in the Revelation, this time no longer a flickering light in the secluded darkness of the Holy Place of the Tabernacle (the church age), but now become a glorious wonder in the heavens of God's Spirit, clothed with the dazzling glory of Christ as the light of the noonday sun, a glittering crown of twelve stars of divine government upon her head, and the moon of the cold, reflective light of ritual, law, ceremony, and all outward religious ordinances and forms put under her beautiful feet. She is about to give birth to a manchild, a mature son, the manifest sons of God, who shall rule all nations from the throne of God in the Spirit. The little seed of the candlestick has now become the glorious sun-clad woman in the heavenlies! And the little seed of the overcomer has become the manchild upon the throne of the universe!

We could go on and on, but for the present these few examples suffice to show clearly how the seven churches are the seed-bed of all the great events pictured in the Revelation. Every seed in the early church, good and evil, has now grown up in the earth as a mighty power to be reckoned with in this day of the harvest when the tares shall be separated from the wheat! J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 31 THE CHURCH IN EPHESUS

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART THIRTY-ONE

THE CHURCH IN EPHESUS
I KNOW...YOUR WORKS!
I KNOW...YOUR PATIENCE!
THOSE WHO SAY THEY ARE APOSTLES

"Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks." (Rev. 2:1) "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches." (Rev. 1:20)

John calls the seven stars and the seven candlesticks a mystery. A scriptural mystery, however, is not something which cannot be understood, but rather something which can be understood when it has been revealed. It is a hidden truth, veiled, concealed in some sign or symbol, until it is opened to the understanding by the quickening of the Holy Spirit and then understood by those to whom it is revealed. So then, it is a revelation! The seven stars and the seven candlesticks are no longer a mystery when the explanation is given that "the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks are the seven churches." He holds the angels or messengers of the churches in His right hand while His position among the churches is in the midst.

Now I would draw your reverent attention to a most significant point. The King James Version of the Bible prefaces each message to the churches with these words: "Unto the angel of the church at Ephesus...or Smyrna...or Pergamos...or...write." It sounds as though John is writing TO the messengers of the churches. But such is not the case! John is by no means communicating the message TO the messengers, rather BY or THROUGH the messengers. In an even deeper sense John is receiving the message FROM the messengers. The messengers are not the recipients of the message from John, but in and with John they are the active force by which the messages are received and delivered to the churches.

Let us UNDERSTAND! Charles Williams in *The Place of the Lion* made the following astute comment about prepositions. "It was good of you to look for Quentin...or good in you. How accurate one has to be with one's prepositions! Perhaps it was a wrong preposition that set the whole world awry..." The preposition "unto" in the command of the Spirit to John is, in the Greek, in the dative case. Greek is different than English, and in the Greek language of the New Testament the dative case is used to signify not only "to" and "for," but also "in," "with," and "by." Let me give you a few examples of such usage where the very same preposition is used that is translated "Unto the angel of the church...write."

"For if through the offense of one many be dead..." (Rom. 5:15) "For if by one man's offense death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace...shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5:17) "Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia and was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea which were in Christ." (Gal. 1:22) "That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" (Eph. 5:26). "Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power..." (Heb. 1:3) "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree...by whose stripes ye were healed." (I Pet. 2:24) "For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old..." (II Pet. 3:5)

The word "by" in each of the preceding passages of scripture is the identical form of the preposition used in chapters two and three of Revelation where it is translated "Unto the angel of the church...write." But the meaning is that it is "in" or "by" or "through" the angel of the church that John should write, not "unto" the angel

or messenger! The Emphatic Diaglott correctly renders this phrase: "BY the messenger of the congregation in Ephesus, write..." There is a world of difference between writing TO a messenger and writing BY or THROUGH a messenger! The true sense of the action is reflected in the following passage where the same preposition is used again, "Until the day in which He (Jesus) was taken up, after that He THROUGH THE HOLY GHOST had given commandment unto the apostles whom He had chosen." (Acts 1:2) What is really being said is just this: "BY the anointing, BY the spirit of revelation, BY the spirit of prophecy, BY the word of the Lord, BY the dispensation of God unto the church at Ephesus...write!"

There are seven star-angels and there are seven churches. Each message concludes with the thrilling and commanding call, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches!" And that is what is meant! John is not writing to a messenger, rather, it is by the messenger that he writes, and the messenger IS THE HOLY SPIRIT, for the churches that receive the message are admonished to hear what "the Spirit" is saying! Each message is given from Jesus, it is through or by the Spirit, and there is a dispensation of the Spirit designated for each church. The dispensation of the Spirit for each church is typified by a star or messenger, which is the symbol for the ANOINTED WORD OF THE LORD to that church! Thus it was by the seven angels, which are the seven spirits of God, that John wrote to the churches! Only when we understand that the seven stars, the seven angels, and the seven spirits are the very same thing does the mystery become REVEALED! These are deep and very sacred principles of God. And today, my beloved, unless we, too, are quickened by these same seven spirits or seven angels, or seven stars, which are the seven-fold word of God by the seven-fold spirit of God, we will understand absolutely nothing of what we read in the book of Revelation! Only as we become personally identified with the seven stars, the seven angels, and the seven spirits are mind and heart quickened to the truth as it is in Jesus.

You will notice that in the book of Revelation from chapter one all the way through chapter twenty-two there is angel after angel involved in the unfolding revelation of Jesus Christ. Do you know who these angels are? They are ministries, agents, messengers, spirits, anointings, voices, revelations, words, spiritual powers and manifestations of God by which He accomplishes His mighty works in His elect and in the whole earth! These are His spiritual ministers! "He maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire." (Heb. 1:7) The symbolic term "angel" is used in the Revelation to show that the ministry and action comes from heaven, it comes in the Spirit and by the Spirit, it comes by the word, authority, and power of God. That is the kind of ministry that at pivotal times in earth's history has been loosed in the earth and in this new day of the manifestation of the sons of God is loosed in the earth, and shall be over and over again until the kingdom of God triumphs over all. There are no literal angels with wings flying around over the earth doing these things, for it is all by the Spirit!

The first error many make is believing that the "angels" of the churches are the pastors! It will come as a shock to some to learn that there was no such position of "the pastor" in the churches in the days of the first apostles! Even the apostles Paul and Peter never once wrote to any church addressing, or even referring to, "the pastor." The term is completely foreign to the word of God and entered in later years as an invention of the man-made religious systems of Babylon. Though God truly speaks to His people through ministries — through apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, and others — He speaks to His elect BY HIS SPIRIT. If it is not by the Spirit, then God has not spoken! The "angel" or "messenger" of Jesus Christ is the Holy Spirit! How plain this is made by the apostle John in his Gospel, the very same John who wrote the book of Revelation! "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things." (Jn. 14:26) "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth...He shall testify of me." (Jn. 15:26) "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." (Jn. 16:13-14) Now notice the correspondence between these scriptures and the following: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel (messenger) unto His servant John." (Rev. 1:1) "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches...and the Spirit says..." (Rev. 22:16-17) Oh, yes! The "angel" of Jesus Christ who is sent from Him, who testifies of Him, who reveals Him, who shows His chosen ones things to come is none other than THE HOLY SPIRIT OF TRUTH!

The angel of Jesus is the Spirit of truth! Angels throughout the Bible were sent to men to impart revelation, to deliver a message, to speak a word from God. In the Old Testament Daniel had an instructing angel. Zachariah had an instructing angel. Ezekiel had an instructing angel which told him about the events that were to come. It was an angel that notified the Virgin Mary of the Son she was to bear, and angels announced His birth to the shepherds attending their flocks by night. But that old order has now passed away, for God has sent the Holy Spirit Himself to guide the elect into all truth! The only angel we need in this new day of the kingdom of God is the Spirit of truth, the very Spirit of Christ!

The ministry of the seven churches is the ministry of the Son of God who has the seven spirits of God. In the symbology of the book of Revelation one of the seven spirits is the messenger or revealer of each church. The seven spirits are identified by the prophet Isaiah. "And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." (Isa. 11:2) In the symbolism of the Revelation there is a spirit that goes with each church. The spirit, when "dispatched" to the church, is called an "angel," the angel or messenger or revelation of the word of the Lord to that church. When you know which of the seven-spirit-star-angels is speaking in the exhortation to each church, the understanding is vastly enhanced. Each of the seven spirits, and thus each of the messages to the churches, represents a stage or aspect of our growth and development into the fullness of Christ.

Can we not see by this that even the angels in the book of Revelation are wonderful symbols, representing the living word of God communicated by the spirit of revelation! An angel came and showed these things unto John — that is, a powerful word of the Lord came to John out of the heavenly realm of the Spirit, speaking mysteries to his heart and passing before his spiritual eyes visions of wonders to come. The proof of this is found in John's own statement as to how the revelation was received. "He sent and signified it unto His servant John: who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all that he saw." (Rev. 1:1-2) The voice of the angel was merely a figure for THE LIVING WORD OF GOD BY THE SPIRIT!

The seven angels of the seven churches are the seven-fold spirit of God. So the angel was not saying to John, "Write to the pastor, and tell the pastor to tell the church that I have this for them, and that against them." That wasn't the message at all! Rather, it is "By the angel of the church... write!" That is, by the dispensation of the Spirit, by the anointing, by the word of the Lord to the church... write!" An angel is a messenger. Therefore, what we are talking about is a word! God says, "I am sending a word. It's a word of my Spirit. It's out of the seven-fold spirit of my own nature, mind, power, and glory. John — by the angel, by the Spirit, by the operation of God in you write this word and send it to the churches. Don't write something to the pastor, but in the Spirit and by the Spirit send forth the word!" The entire book was written in the Spirit. John was in the Spirit when he received it, and he wrote it by the Spirit. That is the word that is alive today! It's not the word that you hear from my lips, or read from my pen; it's not the word that falls upon your natural ear or your physical eye. It's the word that comes by the anointing, by the spirit of revelation, by the illumination of the mighty God — that is the word that enlightens your mind, penetrates your heart, transforms your life, and brings forth within you the revelation of Jesus Christ! The seven angels are the seven spirits, which are the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne (Rev. 4:5). The seven angels are the seven stars in Christ's right hand. The seven lamps are also the seven angels with the seven trumpets standing before God (Rev. 8:2) sounding forth the word of the Lord! Therefore He says, "By the angel...write!"

We meet these seven angels, and other mighty angels besides, throughout the book of Revelation. When God desires to reveal something, or to accomplish a work within His elect, or in the earth, He sends forth a symbolic angel — a word, a move of His Spirit, a manifestation of His power — out of the heavens of His Spirit. Oh, yes! The new word of the kingdom, the word of God's new order of kings and priests for the new age, must come "down" from God out of heaven into our earth. It is the message of an angel, or a heavenly messenger, even a spiritual anointing and a divine, creative word from the Lord that will transform us into the glorious image and likeness of Christ (Rev. 10:1-7). It is also by a message or the word of an angel or a spiritual anointing and a divine, authoritative word from the Lord that great Babylon, the three-fold systems of man's creation, shall fall to rise no more (Rev. 14:8). The anointed word of our Father, sent from the heavens of His Spirit to the earth, declares it to be so and also begins the process that makes it so!

THE CHURCH IN EPHEBUS

"By the angel of the church in Ephesus write..." (Rev. 2:1)

Ephesus is the first mentioned church of the seven. Ephesus was a city of about two hundred thousand people. It was a great city and had a huge outdoor theater which could seat about twenty thousand people. It was a place of resorts, and the Roman emperors came there. It was a city constructed of white marble, a beautiful place, and Paul commented on that. The city was considered as the greatest city of Roman Asia. It was also a seaport with a very good harbor. A Roman writer called it "Lumen Asiae" or "The Light of Asia." What was the source of its greatness? It was the Gateway of Asia. Ships plying the waters of the Mediterranean sea could enter this fine harbor. Ephesus was the end of the road from far off exotic places of the east. Travelers and goods bound for Rome passed through this city. When Christians were shipped to Rome to be flung to the lions, Ephesus was the port of embarkation. Ignatius called it the Highway of the Martyrs. Its position made Ephesus the wealthiest and the greatest city in all Asia.

The city of Ephesus was a beautiful city but was probably best known in the ancient world for its sexual perversion. This is what many thousands of people came to the city for! The world-famous temple of the goddess Diana was located in the city and every form of immorality was centered in the temple worship, for "sacred sex" was one of the prominent features of the cult of Diana. It was one of those cities where, like Las Vegas today, if you wanted a "good time" and you were unconverted and didn't care what kind of good time you had that was the place to go. Ephesus was a city one went to to sin — everything was legal. The temple of Diana was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Inside the temple was an altar built to Diana in front of three velvet curtains. Behind the curtains was the image of Diana. The image was so ancient that no one could remember where it originated, which fostered the belief that it literally fell from heaven. If you see a picture of the image of Diana you would wonder why they worshipped such a hideous likeness! Diana was not a beautiful woman, she was a repulsive, dark, squatty figure, covered with dozens of breasts on the front, each representing a different aspect of her character. Among other things she was the goddess of fertility and sex. Around her worship were some of the most bawdy and vulgar orgies of the ancient world. About her, day and night, unceasing music was played and everything that appealed to the senses. Her temple worship made use of some ten thousand girls and women who were called "holy women" because, as history shows, they "united" male worshippers with their goddess. In some instances there were male prostitutes and sodomites for the women and effeminate. It was an ugly affair all the way round, and the worship of Diana literally smelled of hell. In the midst of such a city we find one of the assemblies of Christ set as a light in a dark place!

The first church to whom Christ spoke was Ephesus and the reason the order begins there is because Ephesus is the "mother church" for all the other churches in that part of Asia. The seven churches literally began out of the church at Ephesus. The letters that were sent to these churches probably started at Ephesus, as was the custom in those days, they circulated letters from church to church. The first letter was addressed to Ephesus and the remainder were undoubtedly directed to the churches in the order that the letters would be circulated, for they were seven letters within one letter — the whole of the Revelation being but one book.

The following remarkable words reveal how Ephesus became the beginning point of all the seven churches. Paul had come to Ephesus "and he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. And this continued for the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." (Acts 19:8-10) The seven churches were all in the area around Ephesus, but they formed a circle. They were not a great distance from each other, some were only ten miles from one another, others were thirty or forty-five miles from another. By the time the book of Revelation was written Paul was dead, and John had become sort of a spiritual overseer to the seven churches before he was banished to the isle of Patmos. Amidst the afflictions of Patmos his heart was still in those churches.

In the letters to the seven churches the Holy Spirit deals first of all with THE EPHESIAN CONDITION. "By the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and

how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars...nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love...but this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate." (Rev. 2:1-6) The EPHESIAN CONDITION is one that the Lord partially compliments. Here is a body of believers who toil and persevere for the sake of Christ; they can't endure wickedness; they have discernment and are not carried away by false ministries; they endure many things for the gospel's sake; and most of all the Lord could say of them, "You hate the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate."

Ephesus was the church closest to Patmos. The city was located in a very desirable location, and the name means "desired" or "desirable." This has a spiritual meaning to the Lord's elect. We must learn that in the Lord's eyes we are desirable! Those called to sonship are losing their former religious sense of unworthiness, their sin-consciousness, spirit of condemnation, inferiority complexes, and are being delivered from all depressions, for we are truly a new creation in Christ! Ah, yes, my brother, my sister, the Father of glory chose you — picked you out for Himself as His special own, predestined for a purpose — before the foundation of the world, and before the times of the ages. "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto placement as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." (Eph. 1:3-5) And of His Zion company, those who ascend into the heavenly heights of authority and dominion with Christ upon His throne, the Lord says, "For the Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it." (Ps. 132:13-14)

It is a beautiful truth that the Lord thinks of each one of His elect as desirable. He desires us! To understand this you must read the Song of Solomon and wait before the Lord until He reveals the deep spiritual meaning of that book in your heart. As a bridegroom desires his bride, so the Lord desires us! He does not look upon our outer man of flesh with its imperfections and corruptions, but upon the inner new creation man of the spirit. In our spirit we are truly holy and without blame! On the personal and individual level, when we come to the place in our experience of becoming a bridegroom, possessing within ourselves the spiritually masculine characteristics of the sons of God, then we desire our bride. Our bride is within ourselves — our soul. That is how the soul is saved! Within me my spirit desires my soul as its bride and woos her to become one life in the union of love. When spirit and soul are united in marriage within ourselves, they then clean up their house (the body) so that sin is forever put away and the house can be glorified with incorruption and immortality. All this the Lord desires for His elect and is fulfilling it within us by His Spirit!

To each of the churches, before ever He praises or corrects them, before ever He requires anything of them, He gives a revelation of Himself. Notice the revelation of Himself He gives to the church at Ephesus. "These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks" (Rev. 2:1). In the book of Revelation everything is presented as a "message" sent in writing to the churches, but that is only the symbol. The reality is that CHRIST REVEALS HIMSELF in that capacity to that people, whoever, whenever, or wherever they are in the history of the church. The revelation He gives to each OF HIMSELF is what it is going to take for that church, or the people in that state or condition of their spiritual lives, to overcome. Each church represents people in a particular spiritual dimension of their growth and development in Christ, and it takes that unique aspect of the revelation of Jesus Christ unto them and within them for that people in their particular condition, state, and circumstance to come to the fullness of Himself. The people in THE EPHESIAN CONDITION need to know by the Spirit that Christ holds the administration of their lives in His all-powerful hand, and that the Lord of glory truly walks in the midst of them!

I KNOW...YOUR WORKS!

"I know thy works, and thy labour..." (Rev. 2:2)

It was mid-March when the young man gave his mother a little package. He told her that inside were seeds for an unusual flower that would spring up and blossom within two weeks. So she put the seeds into a pot of moist soil, placed the pot in a sunny window, and waited for the miracle. But the pot of dirt just sat there. When April 1 rolled around, the son stopped in to ask how the flowers were doing. His mom got a pained look on her face and said there was still nothing but dirt. Her son started laughing and said, "April Fools!" The "seeds" he had

given her were actually the hard little tips of turkey beaks he had picked up at a local farm. When you plant something, great things won't happen unless there's life inside the thing you plant! The Lord says, "I know your works." He neither condemns nor praises the works, He says simply, "I know." Oh, yes, He knows! There are works of life and there are works of death. The Lord is actively purging each member of His elect in this hour from all the dead works of man's carnal religious efforts. He is bringing forth life in the inward parts that we may bring forth the fruits of righteousness in the earth!

The burden of the Spirit is to conform the Lord's people into the image and likeness of Christ. Oftentimes He will lead us in wilderness ways of isolation, testing, and proving, for His ultimate desire is to lead us close to the heart of God, and therefore His dealings are designed to bring us to an humble and contrite heart. Some have the notion that because we are at the "end-time" we've got to come up with ingenious plans to get the job done. Many today are promoting their own grandiose schemes to convert the world to Christ! And He who is Lord of the church is crowded out of His temple, and replaced with the zeal and wisdom of the flesh! Many seek to use the Holy Spirit to do their bidding and bless their efforts, rather than waiting upon the Lord to manifest His life in them. It is the mighty working of the Spirit of Life within God's sons that shall bring forth the revelation of Jesus Christ in this Day! The firstborn Son did only those things He saw the Father doing. For thirty years He saw nothing as He stayed in Nazareth growing in the knowledge of the Father and learning His ways. Then one day, when He was ready for it, the Father showed Him a work and He stepped forth to Cana of Galilee and turned water into wine. From that day forward the mighty works of God were wrought through His Son! They were God's works, for He had waited upon the Father to manifest His life from within. So shall it be in this Day! To those who go about doing their own works, and to those who wait upon the Father to do His works, the Lord says, "I know thy works!" We may fool men, but the Lord knows!

I KNOW...YOUR PATIENCE!

"I know...thy patience." (Rev. 2:2)

Patience is mentioned twice in verse two and verse three. In a church of that stature, as the mother church of all the churches in Asia, with all the false teachers coming through, all the weirdoes, nuts, and flakes coming from all the other places around, false teachers of the Judaizers and Knostics and myriad others, they needed patience to try each one of these by the discernment of the Spirit and see what these doctrines were, and what the hearts of these individuals were.

The Lord's called and chosen elect also need patience concerning the work of God in us! If you've taken a trip with young children, you'll recognize the question, "Are we almost there yet?" It's an annoying question for parents, especially when it comes about twenty minutes into a day-long drive. But the Lord's children are not innocent of such questioning either! "O God, aren't we there yet? Haven't we been through enough? Are the sons about to be manifested? Do we have to endure this night much longer? Isn't it time for our change? Is the work about finished? Will I make it in to the high calling before I go by way of the grave? Are we almost there?" The three most common words heard among believers in time of crisis are: "Lord, do something!" It is completely contrary to our nature as human beings to stand still and do nothing when we face perplexing trials. In fact, waiting patiently for God to act is probably the most difficult thing about the walk of sonship! Even those with deep dealings of the Lord in their lives sometimes panic when the Lord doesn't move according to their timetable. We often give God deadlines and time limits. We cry, "Lord, when are you going to do something about this? If you don't act now, it will be too late!" But I do not hesitate to tell you, my beloved, God is never too late! Mary and Martha found that out when their brother, Lazarus, died and was buried! He always acts — and not according to our schedule, but His.

The Lord is calling a people unto Himself in this new day of the kingdom who will trust Him in every crisis. Indeed, He often leads us into situations that are frightening, critical, difficult, in order to teach us His ways. He tests us to reveal in our hearts whether we are able to stand still and see the salvation of God! Every called out one should pray that the Lord will open his eyes and show him the eternal truth of these words of scripture: "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and He delighteth in his way" (Ps. 37:23). The Hebrew word for "ordered" here means "prearranged, step by step, fixed, ordained by God." This means it is God, not the devil, not some freak accident, but the Lord Himself who leads us into difficult places. We may cry out,

"Lord, why are you allowing my crisis to continue?" But the truth is, not only does He allow our trial, He arranges it! And that is hard on the carnal mind!

I firmly believe every step I take is ordained by our heavenly Father. And if that is indeed true, then I know that God will never lead me to the brink of a difficult situation only to abandon me. He wouldn't say, "Okay, Preston, I've directed you up to this point. Now you're on your own!" No! Our wonderful Father is absolutely faithful to every one of His sons, in every situation and circumstance. Whenever God requires anything of man, there is always a reason for it. The reason so many people fail to attain to great heights in the Spirit is because they are unable to see God's purpose, and therefore they fail in the faith that lays hold upon the great heights that are in Him. His word to you today, precious one, is just this: "Will you be the one who won't panic — who won't charge God with forsaking, abandoning, and failing you? Will you stand still in your crisis and testing, leaning upon the faithfulness of your Father, trusting Him to reveal His power in you?" That is the stuff sons of God are made of!

A dear brother shared the following. "In this fast-paced age, to tell someone to wait brings some difficult problems. A child sees all his presents for his birthday and yet must wait until the date arrives. Oh, the excitement that he feels, for he contemplates the pleasures hidden just under those pretty wrappings for him. In like manner, we know some joys of the kingdom. They are like the outer wrappings of the child's gifts. We anticipate the full glory of the kingdom of God, but also know that we must wait. The first picture the word 'wait' sets before our eyes is as the child and his presents. Time holds him back from receiving what is his. He sits and with anxiety waits for the hour when he will be free to possess them. His waiting is an exercise in patience. Our waiting upon the Lord has this element, yet is much greater! When we wait upon the Lord, we twist together with the One for whom we wait. The boy aims his sight on receiving what is his by the promise of a birthday. Time passes, and with each moment of thought upon his gifts, he is uniting to his ownership of them. He sees the big wrapped box in the corner and thinks, 'This is mine. I wonder what it is?' Whatever it is, he unites to his possession of it. So also do we wait upon God!

"In the spring of 1979 I attended the graduating ceremony of the Bible school I attended before God sent me back to Missouri. Now, they had a guest speaker at their meeting. He was recognized as one who hears from God and shares what's on God's mind for the moment. As he came to the podium, before him sat the young graduates. Without an introduction or even a hello, he began to speak in a mild voice the word God wanted these to hear. His voice became louder and more intense with each sentence. Finally, his concluding statements were at the top of his vocal range, yet without breaking the richness of his voice. He went through several Old Testament characters attaching the word wait to each one. He said, 'Abraham, God has called you to birth the son of promise, but you must wait. Wait you must! Isaac, you must wait for the time for Rebecca to come. You must wait! Jacob, wait and wait and wait you will for Rachel your love. And wait you will to have your name changed to Israel. You will wait! Joseph, you must wait for the day of deliverance. Yes, Joseph, you must wait! Wait, yes wait David you shall to be king. David, you will wait. Wait! Wait! You must wait!' — end quote.

To all who treasure the beautiful hope of son-ship to God, who yearn to see the fullness of God revealed in His elect; to all who long to see creation set free from the bondage of corruption; to all who hope in Christ for the perfection, completion, and fulfillment of all He has promised those who follow on to know Him in this Day; to one and all I say, "wait!" "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him." (Ps. 37:7) "But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." (Rom. 8:25) "Be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." (Heb. 6:12) "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." (Heb. 10:35-36) Patience is often lacking when God does not seem to accomplish His work in our lives, or in others, or in the earth as quickly as we think He should. But every son must understand this great truth — God seems to use delay as a choice process in the development of character and faith! Wait! Be patient, saith the Lord! Every promise of God will be fulfilled in His appointed time, when every necessary preparation has been completed in each son. God will finish His work and show forth His glory in us. He will do it! He is doing it! The work of God in us today is setting the stage for God's great tomorrow. Not one thing shall fail of all that He hath spoken!

THOSE WHO SAY THEY ARE APOSTLES

"Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and has found them liars." (Rev. 2:2)

The setting for the passage above is a time when Paul is now dead, Peter is gone, and John has only a few more years to live — he is the last of the twelve apostles — and already false apostles are rising up in the midst of the Lord's people. It seems that false apostles always tell you they are apostles. In fact, we usually have only their word for it that they are apostles! I've noticed through many years that true apostles rarely open their mouths to tell it. Notice the wording — "those who say they are apostles." We find something happening in their day that is characteristic of the church in every generation and age, especially in this climatic hour of the transition of the ages. In John's day there was a massive rising up of people who declared themselves to be apostles, and were not. Does that not sound a little familiar today?

There has never been an hour when so many self-appointed apostles were coming out of the woodwork as this hour in which we stand. I have no hesitation in telling you that the vast majority of them are not apostles at all, for they do not the works of an apostle. This is the day of false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ; and no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light; therefore it is no great wonder if his ministers also be transformed as ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works (II Cor. 11:13-15). Any preacher who can come up with a unique twist of doctrine, an apparent gift of some kind, and a liberal dose of charisma can gain a following and start a little movement around himself, imagining that he is an apostle.

As the elect of God you have a divine obligation to investigate, scrutinize, and seek the Lord about everything that I teach or that anyone else teaches! You have an obligation in the Spirit and by the Spirit to observe my life and the life of every minister of God. I have no right to expect you to blindly follow my words or ministry in any fashion or form. But I do earnestly pray that you will make sure of all things, search the scriptures, and be led by the Spirit of truth within you! The word of the Lord is sure to all who humbly and sincerely follow on to know the Lord, for He says, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (Jn. 7:7). You will know within yourself, by the anointing abiding in you. If you do not know the truth within yourself, then you do not yet know the truth! If you know the truth you can share it with me and I will say, "Amen!" When I share what the Father is saying with you there is a witness in your Spirit even if your conscious mind was not aware of the truth, you know that in the depths of your spirit you already knew that! "But the anointing which you have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." (I Jn. 2:27) You can trust the anointing within you, my friend! It is the oracle of God within the spirit of every anointed son! Never, never, violate the voice of God in your own spirit. God's true sons are not ruled over by men claiming position and power over other men's lives. The Father Himself loveth us and showeth Himself unto us! How precious that we can encourage and confirm one another in the glorious word of God for this new Day! But there are no "sonship popes" in this kingdom realm!

Paul spoke of a higher realm than the religious works and orders we have known in the church realm of our day when he said, "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish. To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life." (II Cor. 2:14-16) Paul said that it is our purpose to "make manifest the SAVOUR (fragrance) of the knowledge of Christ in every place." Only a person who is completely possessed by Christ and walking in the Spirit of God can even know how to do that, for all of us have in the past been so dependent upon our doctrines, our forms, our ways and methods, so that we have made manifest the KNOWLEDGE, rather than the FRAGRANCE of the knowledge! What a difference there is, and what an impossibility to walk in it apart from the complete destruction of the soulical man! That is what the elect are called to in this new kingdom day, to be the fragrance of the knowledge of Christ. Truly we are being so changed, so transformed into the spirit of the Son, so exuding His love, goodness, mercy, grace, wisdom, glory, and power until the scent of His sweet and beautiful nature emanates and flows forth out of our lives. The very fragrance of Christ thus becomes a teaching — men learn of Christ by seeing Him as He really is in those who are truly His body; at last they come to understand His heart, behold His beauty, appreciate His

ways, and are completely captivated by His spirit through the fragrance of the knowledge of Christ emitted from our lives.

This is ministry on a higher level than it has been known in the old-order church realms. The thing God is after in this hour is an ESSENCE-MINISTRY, the outflow of Christ from a people that has broken through all form into the very spirit of the word and are, therefore, equipped to breathe the breath of life into the souls of men. The ministry of the manifest sons of God will not be like any of the church order ministries we have known! This ministry will have nothing to do with organized meetings, buildings, pulpits, sermons, choirs, programs, baptisms, communions, worship services, pastors, apostles, organizations, promotions, or any thing we have known in the past. Jesus had none of those things, and He was a manifest son of God! Jesus simply was the essence of the Father in the earth — at all times, in all places, and in all power! He was the fragrance of the knowledge of God!

Men weren't saved, healed, delivered, quickened, and transformed because of the eloquence of His sermons, the anointing of the choir, or the beauty of the worship. It was the very love, compassion, and goodness of God that exuded out through the pores of His life, permeated the atmosphere, and touched and transformed all that came under its power. And it worked everywhere all the time — not in a "meeting" organized in a "building." The fragrance flowed out of His life in the streets, in the homes, in the business establishments, in the fields, on the mountains, by the seashore, in the synagogues and the temple, even at feasts, weddings, funerals, and in the cemetery!

Those who move by the essence-life of the Father have no set form in which they move. No one can point to their work and say, "Lo, here is Christ, or there is Christ." The meeting doesn't begin at seven and end at ten. You cannot set your watch by what is going on, as is the case in most church services! They have no need to sing for an hour and preach for two hours in order to bring men to the point of faith, or for their gift to work. There is no such order or program! All those methods belong to the old and passing religious order of the church age. Those who shall move in the higher order of manifest sonship and the kingdom will be like Jesus; today they may use the method of anointing eyes with clay, tomorrow they may spit on them to perform the same miracle of opening the blinded eyes, and the next day they may do nothing more than send a word. A fragrance — nothing anyone can get his hand on and say, "I know how you operate in this realm, I know how it is done," or, "I know what you believe!" Just an essence... just a savour... nothing concrete... like the wind!

This is that which Jesus was talking about when He said, "As the wind blows and you don't know where it came from or where it goes, so is everyone that is born of the SPIRIT!" No one can categorize those who are born of the Spirit, for they believe all things spoken by the anointing and believe nothing spoken apart from it. They do only what they see their Father do, and speak only what they hear the Father speak. That's why there are no regular meetings in the kingdom realm, no rented halls, no advertising, no organized crusades, no worship leaders, no special songs, no program, no sermonizing, no staged altar calls at the end of the sermon, or any other religious form.

The Jews had their prescribed forms of religion, their laws, synagogues, temple, sacrifices, priesthood, and all the rest. But Jesus came and demonstrated the kingdom of God, what it is, and how it works. And what He demonstrated has little to do with anything we see done in churches today! He CRACKED THE FORM OF THE FORMER AGE and brought forth the essence of it, and established the essence. Jesus cracked the form of the sacrificial lamb and brought forth the essence of it within Himself! He became the lamb, not the lamb from which flowed the animal life of the brazen altar, but the Lamb of God from whose hands, feet, and side flowed the incorruptible life of God in the Spirit! It flowed down Calvary's hill, it flowed through Jerusalem, it flowed through the land of Israel, it flowed to Antioch, to Ephesus, to Corinth, to Rome, to all the ends of the earth.

When the essence was brought forth, the form fell. God saw to that! He sent Titus in to take care of that with his armies in A.D. 70, and they not only felled the form of the law and the old covenant, but the whole city of Jerusalem, the temple, the priesthood, the rituals and ceremonies, and the whole nation of Israel! Lambs are no longer sacrificed! But the quickening Spirit of Christ has been sent into our hearts as we eat His flesh and drink His blood in the Spirit! Christ cracked the form of the law and brought forth the essence of it within

Himself, by fulfilling all righteousness in His sinless life. Christ cracked the form of the temple by bringing forth the essence of it within Himself, His own body becoming the habitation of His Father by the Spirit. Oh, yes! Jesus cracked every form of the former age and brought forth the essence of it within Himself! It is that essence...that fragrance of the Father's life that changed everything wherever He went!

Those pressing on into the purposes of God for this day are not concerned about the titles men take to themselves, all of which pertain to a passing order, those who say they are apostles, or something else. Our deepest prayer to God is that we may just become the fragrance of the knowledge of Christ IN EVERY PLACE! That, my beloved, is the higher order of the kingdom of God on the earth!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 32

THE CHURCH IN EPHESUS (continued)

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART THIRTY-TWO

"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." (Rev. 2:4)

Some believe that the messages to the seven churches have no relevance to the sons of God because they describe the conditions in the old-order church realm, not the state of the overcoming elect. These believe that only the promises to the overcomers relate to those called to sonship who have already come out of the church age. But I would be remiss if I did not remind you, my beloved, that each promise to the overcomer begins with the phrase, "To him that overcometh will I give..." The question follows: To him that overcometh what? And while it is true that we are called to overcome everything that would dominate our lives to the detriment of our spiritual walk, yet the thrust of these messages to the churches is not about overcoming cussing, smoking, and drinking, but overcoming the very spiritual conditions that are revealed in the seven churches, that is, among the Lord's people!

While we might like to pride ourselves that we have already fully and forever overcome all these things, and no longer pertain in any sense to the old-order church realm, I do not hesitate to tell you that I know many who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship and are following on to know the Lord who are still in the process of overcoming in many of these areas. If the work of overcoming would now be complete in each of us, would we not already have received all the promises? Therefore, until we have all attained the absolute fullness of everything the Father has apprehended us to, the messages to the churches are still relevant to our present walk. Nothing can be clearer than this! Otherwise, how could we know and understand where and what it is that we still must overcome?

The saints in Ephesus had left their first love, and the One who walked in the midst was unrecognized and only dimly known. What is that first love which is here described as outweighing all their wonderful works? Think of it! Labor — steadfastness of toiling on and on for His name's sake; patience — the endurance to bear up under testing; uncompromising — the refusal to fellowship evil; discernment — they had tried the false apostles and found them liars — not a bad record at all! "Nevertheless..."

This is one of the most mis-understood passages of scripture in all the Bible. Most teachers have looked at this departure from the first love in the sense of having left something we once had. The idea usually expounded is that there was a quality of love that we possessed in the beginning of our walk with the Lord which we have departed from. That is certainly true in a great many cases! But the understanding I have received from the Spirit is that there has at times been an experience in our walk wherein we have left or departed from that which should have first place in our lives, we have neglected that which we should love and esteem preeminently. What do we love the most? What are our priorities? What is it that grabs our attention and gains our affection most readily? What is it that consumes most of our thoughts, time, and emotion? That is indeed our first love, although not the first love the Spirit has in mind! If steadfastly trusting and praising God in all things, walking out the nature of God, and doing all the Father's will in every situation is down the line in priority in our lives, then we have fallen short of that which must have first place in the life of every son of God.

It is interesting to note the precise meaning of the word "first" in the original as used in the phrase "your first love." "First" is from the Greek *protos* meaning "foremost, best, chief, principle, prime, paramount, cardinal, main, supreme, crowning, supreme, number one." Your first love is therefore your paramount love! Your supreme love! Your crowning love! Your most important and most imperative love! What a message that is!

Christians spend a lifetime trying to recapture early experiences with the Lord. They mistakenly believe that the immature, romantic love they first experienced when they came to Christ is the greatest quality of love —

the first love. But think about it, my friend, does not true love grow, develop, increase, intensify and deepen through the years? I know I loved my wife when we got married — Lorain was eighteen years old and I was nineteen. She was so sweet, so innocent, so pure, so pretty, so very desirable! Oh, how “in love” we were! That was young love. But is young love the best love? In those early days, should Lorain have left me or been killed in some horrible accident, almost certainly I would have gotten over it in a few months or in a few years, married again, and gotten on with my life. But after 48 years together, raising three children together, passing through the hard times and the good times together, standing by each other, truly getting to know each other, trust each other, and depend upon one another, there is now a bonding, a depth, intensity, quality, and power of love that our “young love” knew absolutely nothing about!

Today, I would gladly do anything, pay any price, spend my last dime and suffer the loss of all my world’s goods to save her life or care for her — so deep does our love go. Young love, childish love, untried love, immature love, romantic love is not the greatest love and that is not the love the Lord rebuked the Ephesian church for having left! Christians mistakenly assume that going back to the first love is returning to the zeal, fervor, and excitement of their early relationship with Christ. They grieve over having lost some kind of youthful enthusiasm for the Lord. It’s true, many believers have grown cold and dry — but going back to a more innocent time is not enough and does not express the deeper truth of this text.

WE SHOULD NEVER GO BACK TO WHAT WE WERE AT FIRST! Who wants to return to the cradle, the bottle, the nursery, kindergarten, or to the distresses of adolescence? Some get saved out of selfish interests — to escape hell, to get blessed or healed, or simply because they want peace of mind. None of us really knew the Lord, nor did we understand who He truly is, His ways, His truth, or His great plan and purpose in our lives and in creation. We knew so little! I have no desire to go back to my early days either naturally or spiritually! Our understanding was deficient, our experience limited, our wisdom incomplete, our zeal without knowledge, our works were, for the most part, the dead works of religion, and our love for Christ was more emotion than devotion! I would not want to return to anything **LESS THAN I NOW HAVE ATTAINED!**

When Jesus uses the words “first love” He speaks not of the childish and immature love we experienced when first we met the Lord. He’s referring to exclusive love — first place in our hearts above all other things! The Christians in the religious systems today are satisfied with merely an entrance into the family of God where as children they can enjoy the many blessings and wonderful benefits of God’s mercy, kindness, and goodness. Their eyes are blind to the higher purposes of God, and any efforts to lead them on to higher ground are rebuffed and resisted by a human reasoning that asks why one should waste time on “deep things” when they are already saved and “on their way to heaven.” But the new birth, while it is the most astounding miracle of the ages, is, nevertheless, but the birth of a mere spiritual infant. There are many further steps that must follow this birth if one is to come into all the glories and the full heritage which is prepared for those who follow on to know the Lord.

The life of God is a free gift of unmerited mercy and favor. But there is a vast kingdom of spiritual heavenly wealth and power and glory and usefulness that is given to those who grow up into the fullness of Christ! In the wonderful family of God we can give ourselves to become either spiritual paupers or heavenly billionaires! We can remain thumb-sucking children or mature in wisdom and stature to become kings and priests upon the throne of the universe! Once we see by the Spirit the high purposes of our heavenly Father in calling us to sonship, there is no more desire to return to any stage of spiritual development or any hope that we ever had before! **THE WILL OF THE FATHER IS OUR FIRST LOVE! THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS IS OUR FIRST LOVE! THE FULLNESS OF GOD HIMSELF IS OUR FIRST LOVE!** Here is the test, my beloved, here is where those in **THE EPHESIAN CONDITION** must overcome — we cling to the Lord of our first love, our chief love, our best love, our paramount love! The overcoming ones do not neglect to yield themselves to the purpose and calling of sonship to God! Their priority is not in doing all kinds of religious works, getting all kinds of worldly blessings, or in trying to convert the world by the antiquated methods of the old church order. The fullness of the righteousness and power and glory of God’s heavenly kingdom on earth, the image and likeness of Christ within, and our full stature and inheritance in Christ Jesus, is the supreme quest, the first and highest love of our life! We cannot, dare not, leave our first love! We cannot, dare not, will not settle for less!

The elect of God are true worshippers, for by supreme love they worship the Father in spirit and in truth. One can only fully and maturely love God when he loves also His ways, His will, His word, and His purposes. There is a second word that goes with worship. It is the word adoration. It is a term of endearment. There is passion in that word! "O, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" (Ps. 96:9). Worship is a love affair; it is making love to God. You know, according to the Jewish sages, it was David who wrote this Psalm on the day he brought the ark into Jerusalem. His first wife, Michal, the daughter of Saul, who represents the rule of the flesh, witnessed David bringing the ark into the city as he danced in the Spirit and sang before the Lord, and the scripture says that as she watched from her balcony she despised him in her heart. Sure she did! She discovered that David loved God more than he loved her, more than he loved the fleshly ways of the soul and the carnal mind, and that he was making love to God in the spirit. Is that not the same reason why the fleshly religious folks in the church systems of man often despise the called-out elect of God? Worship without love is like a flame without heat; it is like a rainbow without color; it is like a flower without perfume. There is spontaneity and intensity in love. It has a tenderness, an eagerness, and an expectancy in it. God is bringing His elect into that place of the intensity and expectation of love by which we anticipate the full fruit and inheritance of our union with Him! In the union of love we are being made one with His mind, His will, His nature, His glory and His purpose. The overcomer will never leave this first and highest love!

**In union with God there is rest that's complete,
There is joy, and there's peace without measure.
In union with God we can sit at His feet,
And enjoy this wonderful treasure.**

**He's coming to us as our hearts yearn for Him
And we're changed in the light of His glory;
The Father is pleased as with gladness He sees
His likeness brought forth in this union of love!**

Come near to the holy men and women of the past and you will soon feel the heat of their desire after God. They mourned for Him, they prayed and wrestled and sought for Him day and night, in season and out, and when they had found Him the finding was all the sweeter for the long seeking. Moses used the fact that He knew God as an argument for knowing Him better. "Now, therefore, I pray Thee, if I have found grace in Thy sight, show me now Thy way, that I may know Thee." From there he rose to make the daring request, "I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory!"

God was pleased with this intensity of desire, and the next day called Moses into the mount, and there in solemn procession made all His glory pass before him. In meekness Moses sought nothing for himself, but all for the glory of God. Through faithful communion with God Moses became acquainted with God's intentions. He was able to see far into the future and understand what the Lord purposed to do in distant ages. His wise heart knew what would evolve from the confusion and disorder of the day. He knew that from among the stiff-necked people he led the Lord would raise up a prophet like himself, and that prophet would be God's Christ who would, as a Son, do all the will of the Father and only those things that pleased the Father. He saw, furthermore, that by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit the Lord would raise up other sons of God who would be manifest out of the church age in the fullness of HIS LIFE. Out of his love relationship with God he received the revelation of the Father's purpose; out of our love relationship with the Father we are blessed to be made glad partakers of the reality of what Moses saw!

David's life was a torrent of spiritual desire, and his psalms ring with the cry of the seeker and the glad shout of the finder. Paul confessed the mainspring of his life to be his burning desire after Christ. "That I may know Him!" was the goal of his heart, and to this he sacrificed everything, if by any means he might apprehend that for which he was apprehended by Christ Jesus, for Christ in all His glory, wisdom, righteousness, and power was Paul's first love. He never left his first, his supreme love! The church world for the most part is content to know about Christ, but the heart of every apprehended member of God's called and chosen elect will never be satisfied until we fully and completely KNOW HIM!

Any man can come to know something of the acts and the ways of God, but only those who walk with Christ in the heavenly places of the Spirit can ever come to know Him in the most wonderfully personal and intimate manner. This depth of “knowing” Him is like the intimate relationship of a man with his beloved wife, in which love he seeks to reproduce after his kind. In fact this is precisely the way in which the scriptures in a number of cases make use of the word “know” — to declare the giving and receiving of human seed in the act of love. We read that “Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain” (Gen. 4:1). This statement does not mean that Adam was able to recognize his wife as she walked about the house! “Knowing,” in the sense of recognition, does not beget children! When Adam “knew” his wife he intimately and fully explored her physical and emotional being, and she “knew” him in return in a personal, familiar, and private way that words could never communicate. Only by the experience of the sexual relationship does man know woman in this sense, and she him.

In like manner, it is only in that exquisite relationship where the believer completely yields himself to the spirit, presence, mind, will and desires of the Lord, and proves by his wholehearted response that he totally and truly loves the Lord that he knows and is known of God. A husband and wife, by means of the act of “knowing,” become ONE FLESH; so Christ and the believer, by the spiritual act of “knowing,” become ONE SPIRIT. **“Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? But he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit” (I Cor. 6:16-17).** As we truly come to know the Lord in the ecstasy of spiritual union, His seed is raised up in us and His image and likeness is reproduced within us as the son of God. This truly is the first love — the foremost, the crowning, the chiefest of all!

From the earliest years of my memory there stirred deep within my bosom an insatiable longing after reality. Though only a child, I wanted to know Him who redeemed me, who made me His own, who came as the pattern and forerunner of all that we are called to in God. I wanted to intimately know the Christ; oh, how I wanted to KNOW HIM! At the tender age of twelve the Lord revealed Himself to me in a remarkable manner, flooding my life with billows of His presence, power, and glory. I had found the Christ and my heart was filled with joy because of the love I had for Him. I wanted to be near Him, and become like Him. I wanted to be conformed to His image and be the expression of Himself in the earth to humanity. He was to me the Center of all things and the most important Reality in the universe! From that moment Christ was the ONLY REALITY. He filled the skies. He filled the earth. He filled heaven and hell and all realms above and beneath. He filled my life and flooded my heart with love, hope, and expectation of the glory of God. He spoke mysteries into my spirit. He enlightened my understanding concerning His great plan and purpose to restore all things and all men unto Himself. He raised up in my heart the hope of His kingdom coming in earth as it is in heaven. He showed me the throne of His dominion and our call to sit with Christ upon the throne of His power over all things. He unfolded within the depths of my being the wonders of His awesome holiness, His ineffable glory, His fearful majesty, His inscrutable wisdom, His unsearchable ways, and His merciful, wise, glorious, and all-encompassing plan for creation. Christ in me in all His glory is truly my FIRST LOVE! Can we not now understand what a sin, what a tragedy, what a failure, what a loss it would be to leave our first, supreme, transcendent love! Not the immature love of our beginning in Christ, but that love above all loves, the greatest, highest love, the love of loves — Christ Himself!

The most important thing for any person who has received the call to sonship is to have a relationship with the Father — not merely an experience, not a creed or doctrine or religious program and activity — but relationship, a real presence in your life that you know and that is made unto you strength, wisdom, understanding, faith, life, love, and power. By way of illustration, the earth has a relationship to the sun, all things in our solar system and on earth have a relationship to one another, and only this perfect relationship makes life possible on earth!

An example of this is to be found in the unique position and size of the earth in relation to the sun and the other planets of the solar system. Were the earth only a few miles closer to the sun, we would all be burned to a crisp and our tombstone could read, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant!” On the other hand, were the earth only a little farther from the sun we would all be blocks of ice. Were the earth smaller than it is — as the moon, for instance — the power of gravitation would be too weak to retain sufficient atmosphere for the needs of life forms. Were the earth as large as Jupiter, or even Saturn or Uranus, the power of gravity would be so strong as to render man’s movements difficult. Were the earth as near the sun as Venus its burning heat

would be unbearable; were it as remote as Mars there would be scarcely a night, even in its warmest zones that would be free from snow and ice. Then look, too, at the perfect proportion of the earth's land and water. If the ocean had only one half of its present area the earth would receive only one-fourth its present rainfall. But, on the other hand, if the area of the ocean should be increased one-eighth the rainfall would be increased four times, and the earth would become a vast swamp. Truly these wonderful relationships display the marvelous intelligence of the Creator!

In the spiritual world our relationship to Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, is altogether as vital as the earth's relationship to the sun! It is by relationship that we learn to respect Him, draw from Him, depend upon Him, love Him, and live by Him. Spiritual relationship is not cosmic law. Many people have the idea that they can learn certain facts about God and then walk with Him. That's not relationship! That's not how you have a relationship with your husband, your wife, your children, or your best friend. You don't search out a certain law that they live by and then relate to them on the basis of that law. That's not relationship! Yet that's how vast multitudes of Christians think about the Lord today! They think they have His doctrines in their head, and His rituals, ceremonies, and ordinances in the church, and by believing the doctrines, attending meetings, singing songs, saying prayers, going through the motions of worship, doing religious works, and observing the ordinances they suppose that they have a relationship with God. But that's not relationship!

You say, "Then, what is?" INTIMACY OF FELLOWSHIP AND VITAL UNION! First of all, you have to communicate to relate. That's where prayer, praise, and worship come in. Prayer is not designed primarily for asking or petitioning God for things — prayer is communication and communion with God! Prayer is seeking after the presence of God, the voice of God, the knowledge of God. This brings us near enough to experience God in the spirit, and by the spirit exploring intimately the very personality, mind, heart, and being of God. Relationship is the key! We are being saved, changed, matured, and transformed by relationship, not by knowledge or laws or observances. I have seen hundreds and thousands of people who sat in pews listening to doctrines of salvation, doctrines of sanctification, doctrines of the Holy Spirit, doctrines of the kingdom, doctrines of perfection, doctrines of sonship, doctrines of the feast of tabernacles, doctrines of the most holy place, doctrines of the third day, doctrines of life and immortality, and they are no closer to the reality of any of those things today than they were when they first heard them. Doctrine, teaching, and understanding don't make anything happen! You've got to have a relationship.

God is causing His true elect to seek this, pursue this, extend themselves to this, and make it personal in their lives at all times and in all circumstances. Intimacy of fellowship and vital union — that's where it is! That is how truth becomes experiential, that is how sonship becomes life, that is how the purposes of God become power and reality within our lives. God is raising up and maturing a seed in the earth. Those who walk with Him and live with Him in this significant hour are becoming that seed and are being made a harvest of salvation and righteousness unto all the ends of the earth. God gave His firstborn Son thirty years to mature in the life of the Father within Him. And now many sons are growing up into the fullness of Christ!

Relationship with God is a Song. It's a song in your heart, it's a melody in your spirit — joy unspeakable and full of glory! It's like when two people fall in love — they are like two songbirds. As soon as the arrow of love pierces the heart all things are transformed; in that exhilarating moment nothing else matters anymore. All that matters is that loving song that has occurred between two individuals who are now lost in one another. And that is what relationship with God is like! It's a love song. The message of the inner chamber, the Holy of holies within our spirit, is the message of those who have been brought into union with Christ. The Holiest of all is the conception chamber, the place of union. It is not a place outside of us, it is not an experience, it is not found in some church or group or meeting, or in heaven someday. It is that place in the deepest part of our being, right within our spirit, where the life of God ravishes our heart, and we are made one in love.

The Song of Solomon is the reflections of king Solomon and is a revelation of love and union. In the Song of Solomon the king purposed to bring the Shulamite maiden into his conception chamber, into the most intimate part of his life. The Shulamite is not just any woman, she is not merely a little illiterate, unkempt, desert girl with dirt underneath her fingernails and needing a bath. Oh, no! She is undoubtedly from the tent of the leader of the tribe, the wealthiest family among the Bedouin. She is a princess — a royal natured person of exquisite

beauty and enchanting personality. She is unusual, unique, special and unsurpassed in poise, grace, mental adeptness, ability, and loveliness.

The significance of the Song of Solomon is found in the distinctions that come forth between the various characters. There are four main characters, two male and two female, although one female is a group — the daughters of Jerusalem. The interplay between these four characters is the key to the book and the secret lies in identifying the voice — the one speaking. The importance of this drama is rooted in the fact that in the beginning God created man, male and female. And within each of us are the characteristics of both male and female — spirit and soul. Anyone who has read the Song of Solomon knows that it is very sexual in content, it's about the intimacy of love, about coming together, about the union of two people, male and female. It is not about something you do out in the world, in public, but it's private and personal. And that's how our relationship with Christ is — it's not something we do in church — it's a secret love within ourselves.

Christ is in your spirit, dear one, and He seeks to come into your soul fully. He wants to affect the way you feel, the way you think about things, the way you act and react, your deepest desires and all of your will. That's how it is in relationship! Over time a couple start to think like each other, act alike, and even look like each other because they are knowing each other through each other. And that's how it is between the spirit and the soul, between us and the Lord! In relationship we no longer keep rules, believe doctrines, observe ordinances, or do works to please God. We simply begin to think like the Lord, desire like the Lord, act like the Lord, talk like the Lord, walk like the Lord, and look like the Lord! We are not conformed to a law, but now share His life at the most intimate, deepest, and powerful level of our being!

Every one of God's called and chosen elect is brought to the place of accepting the Lord into our soul. I'm not talking about raising your hand or going forward in a revival meeting, I am speaking of entering into a relationship with the Lover of your soul. It is not a matter of receiving a gift from the Lord — union is far beyond gifts! The Lord invites us to the deepest and most intimate and exhilarating relationship that can exist between two people — the relationship of love! Love is a power greater than anything we can imagine, for God is love. As infinite as God, so is the depth and height of all that the Lord expresses in love. This is the first and foremost love we must realize as we enter into relationship with God. This is the supreme, first love!

The meaning of the message of the Song of Solomon is just this — a song. Singing is one of the major themes of scripture. In the book of Revelation, when the elect of the Lord move into a higher place in the Spirit, they sing a new song. The songs of the Bible came by revelation of the Holy Spirit, indeed, they were revelations of the Holy Spirit. Moses revealed by song. David revealed by song. The Psalms are songs. They are music. They are singing. They are a symphony. David ordained a whole realm of ministry just for songs. Paul spoke of "singing and making melody in your heart unto the Lord." The Bible is full of songs! But of all the songs that have ever been sung, Solomon's is the song of all songs. It is called "The song of songs, which is Solomon's" (S. of S. 1:1). "Song of songs" is a term like "King of kings" or the "Day of days." It denotes that which is higher, finer, supreme, superlative, unexcelled! A song in scripture means a message. Thus, the "song of songs" is truly the MESSAGE OF MESSAGES — the greatest and highest message of all!

It is the message of love. It is a song of love-making. It is a song of intimacy. It is a song of union. You know what happens when you fall in love, everything else sinks into the shadows, and you are consumed by this one fixation of your life. The grass appears greener, the sun shines brighter, the air smells fresher, the birds sing sweeter, your step is quicker, and all creation is alive, vibrating harmoniously to the melody of your awakened soul. This is the song of creation — the eternal song of love! That is why the Song of Solomon is in the Bible. It is a book of love — in the very Book of God! It's not a poem. It's not a theatrical drama. It's not a novel. It's not a sex-education manual. It's a REVELATION! It's about who we are, why we are who we are, and how the relationship between Christ and the church, the relationship between our spirit and our soul, works.

I view the story of the Song of Solomon differently than I did in the past. I once saw the male character in Solomon's Song as king Solomon himself, and the female character was a little desert girl whose beauty Solomon had discovered in the wilderness and brought her into his harem. The king fell in love with the Bedouin maiden, and in return she fell in love with the king. That is how the story is usually taught. As you carefully read this story, however, you find something else altogether. It seems that this exquisite Shulamite

girl was sent out to work in the vineyards in the hill country north of Jerusalem where the blazing sun had turned her olive complexion black. How beautiful she must have been when one day king Solomon, traveling through his kingdom, upon passing the vineyard, found her so comely that his heart melted within him. Exercising his right of authority he ordered that she be escorted to his court and made ready for his pleasure.

Once there, Solomon sought, by every means in his power, to woo and win the lovely Shulamite girl. At the palace she was surrounded by the many careful attentions of the attending ladies, King Solomon's servants, the "daughters of Jerusalem." Her sun-burnt skin was carefully rubbed with precious aromatic oils and spices. She was also bedecked with ornaments and chains of gold to please the king. Solomon wooed her as he praised her beauty and lavished affection upon her. He told her of his desire for her; the women of the court told her about the splendid life she would enjoy as Solomon's wife. The mightiest and wealthiest king of that day offered every inducement at his disposal to accomplish his ends.

The great king Solomon, however, was in for a surprise, for the girl loved a shepherd boy from her home region and the little maiden's heart was faithfully fixed upon her first love, her true love, her only love — her Beloved! She would not be tempted nor intimidated by all the gold and glitter lavished upon her, nor by the urgings of the women who attended her. She refused to be moved by all the king's enticing advances and intense flatteries. She was desperately in love with her one and only Shepherd and her mind and heart were stayed on him. Throughout all her trying ordeal, she remained faithful to her lover. She adamantly said, "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine. I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me." Not once did she deviate from that loyalty. Nothing that the king could offer her could change her mind. Nor could his threats make her yield. She blotted out the enticements of Solomon's glittering palace with the recollection of her beloved. How tenderly she spoke of him! How often she whispered the words, "My beloved!" While her body might be held captive by Solomon, her heart went winging its way to the hills to relive over and over again the tender moments she had shared with him whom she loved so much. As she roamed about the city she was constantly looking and listening for the One whom her soul loved. In the end Solomon was forced to let her go because she stayed true to the love of her heart. Joyfully she returned to the shepherd whom her soul loved.

In former days we have used king Solomon as a type of Christ wooing his bride, the church. Let me tell you something about king Solomon. When Solomon became king he married the daughter of Egypt's Pharaoh. It is in the record that though he "loved the Lord," he practiced idolatry (I Kings 3:3), a strange mixture. Then there follows the story of his wisdom and prosperity, and the houses he built, one for the Lord, one for his Egyptian bride, and one for himself (I Kings 3:7-8). But he also "loved many strange women," a union prohibited by the Lord to His people. Some twenty years or so after his accession to the throne of Israel, he had "seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines" (I Kings 11:3) and, "his wives turned away his heart...after other gods...and he did evil in the sight of the Lord," and slipped into terrible idolatry. Jerusalem became filled with temples and shrines and altars built to the strange gods of his many foreign wives.

SOLOMON IS NOT A TYPE OF CHRIST! He is a type of the world, especially of the religious world of the harlot systems of man. He is a type of Mystery Babylon the Great, of whom it is written, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies." (Rev. 18:2-3) And to the lovely little Shulamite held captive within the clutches of this glittering religious enticement the call goes out, "Come out of her, my people!" (Rev. 18:4)

In its spiritual application the bride of Christ is the Shulamite, Christ Himself is the Beloved, and Solomon represents the world, the realm of the carnal mind, the exalted and powerful religious realm, the distraction that once took all of us captive, and which seeks to woo our hearts away from that precious Shepherd lover who dwells right within the spirit of each of us. But in the end, as we, the elect of God, learned by the spirit of life within us what it means to remain firm in our first love, our supreme and true love, keeping our hearts pure and our passions reserved, Solomon in all of his glory has been forced to loose us to go to the One we love! That is the Song of songs! That is the Message of messages!

A dear friend of ours, Jackie Caporaso, has shared some precious insights into this. She writes, "God's precious sheep are as this little Shulamite. They have been taken captive to a lustful and ruthless system
FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 32, The Church In Ephesus [J. Preston Eby] ~ BIBLE STUDY 7

which thinks nothing of stripping and using them to appease their voracious appetite for fame fortune, and rulership. The young maiden knew that her heart did not belong to the king, and that none of his carefully planned enticing tactics could possibly separate her from the love of her true beloved. Many of God's precious sheep have been in the king's court, the powerful religious systems of our day. Their spiritual beauty and abilities have been exploited. They have been made to give themselves to programs which keep carnal organizations going strong. They have been pressured to build the king's desire for bigger and better harems — congregations — that he might satisfy his greedy appetites. This is a time of severe testing for the sheep. The Voice of the Shepherd is calling unto them! 'My sheep hear my voice,' Jesus said, 'and another they will not follow.' He will deliver and heal them!"

The love of the Beloved is a special one. The Shulamite is not a concubine, she's not a queen, and she's not a virgin — one of the daughters of Jerusalem. She is the only one of her mother, she's a unique reality, a special soul. That is what God is after — a special soul. You cannot have a relationship with someone and be intimate with them, and not spend time with them, care for them, and know them. Love is not casual, love is not sex, love is not infatuation, love is not a one-night stand, love is not a mistress, love is not a clandestine affair. There is a deep mystery between Christ and the church! The word "church" is from the Greek word *ekklesia* meaning "the out-called." God's elect, chosen ones have been called out both from something and unto something. If you have been called out of anything, out from any realm, you are the church on some level! That's what constitutes who we are. We are the "called out." We are called out of the world, we are called out of the flesh, we are called out of our own desires, hopes, plans, and ambitions, we are called out of the worldly, harlot church systems of man, and we are called out unto the Lord. We are called out to a special relationship with God! We are called to walk with Him, to follow hard after Him, to pant after Him as the hart pants after the waterbrooks, to keep ourselves unto Him and unto Him alone. We are called to experience Him and know Him in the deepest measure and most intimate expression of being.

The message of the Song of Songs represents that element of our experience of Christ into which we shall move more fully as we enter into the feast of tabernacles, into the third day, into the Holiest of all. The significance of the Song of Songs is that there is an awakening of the feminine side within each of us, and the church is His bride. The reason we are collectively His church, or His bride, is because the feminine side of being, our soul, has been awakened within each of us individually by the Christ in our spirit. There are two compartments within the life of every person — there is a male and there is a female reality within each one. Within every regenerated person there is the consciousness of Spirit, the Beloved, the Bridegroom, the Great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls; and there is the Soul, the part of us that is wooed by Christ in our Spirit.

Christ is not just in some far-off heaven somewhere, for He truly dwells within each of us! "Christ liveth in me." (Gal. 2:20) "For He abideth with you, and shall be in you." (Jn. 14:17) In these simple words our Lord announces that wonderful mystery of His indwelling which is the fruit and crown of His redeeming work. It was for this that man was created! It was for this, God's mastery within the heart, that Christ came to bring us to the Father. It was for this that Christ returned as the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Dwelling consciously within us He would prepare us to receive Him as our Lord — as Bridegroom. We will never understand the deep mystery of the Bridegroom and the bride until we know that Christ is the Bridegroom and that Christ lives in our spirit. If you give godly consideration to these simple truths, you cannot avoid the conclusion that THE BRIDEGROOM IS WITHIN YOU! There is a place within you, in the bridal chamber of your life, in the Holy of holies of your very being, where the Bridegroom dwells and comes out of that place and woos you into a relationship with Himself.

The reverent heart is made to wonder at the unmistakable simplicity of the ways of God. Long centuries ago the apostle penned these meaningful words, "We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the FATHER OF SPIRITS, and live?" (Heb. 12:9) All of God's elect know now by the spirit of wisdom and revelation that GOD is the FATHER OF OUR SPIRITS! He is not the Father of religious rituals or static creeds; He is not the Father of man-made religious organizations; He is not the Father of your flesh; He is not the Father of your carnal mind, your self-will, your fleshly desires, or your soulish emotions. You can never know God in any of those realms! He is not there!

God is the God of your spirit, and you must be in your spirit to be with God and touch God. Today I am sitting in my office in El Paso, Texas. If you go to Dallas you will miss me! If you go on any other street, you will miss me. If you stand outside my house on the street corner, you will miss me. You must come to the door and enter my dwelling to be where I am and know me. And you must enter in to where God is to know Him. God is the God of our spirits! We all need to turn to the spirit. From thence is the fountain of all life! It is a blessed day for any man when he makes the amazing discovery that Christ Himself is the Bridegroom; that this Christ is in our spirit; that the Bridegroom is thus in our spirit; when our soul pants after God the soul turns to Christ in our spirit, and it is there that we know union with God!

The natural mind, the human will, our carnal emotions and fleshly desires are all aspects of the soul. The soul is our natural, human consciousness! Regardless of whether a man is walking in the mind, after his own will, or his natural emotions and desires, he is soulish. Every man that lives by these senses apart from the life of the spirit is a soulish man. Therefore it is very easy to discern whether a man is soulish! I would be remiss if I failed to point out that the soul can be moved upon to act religiously — and what a fine act it is able to perform! The soul can be taken into a meeting where a religious atmosphere is created by a man at the pulpit; with a suave and dynamic personality he tells you to stand up, sing, clap your hands, raise your hands, praise the Lord, say Amen, etc. By the rhythm of the music and movements of the body the soul is stirred and takes on the appearance of spirituality. And yet, the source of all this is not the sovereign and spontaneous OUTFLOW OF HIS LIFE IN THE SPIRIT, but merely the contrived actions of the soul! When none of these “good” things are motivated from within by the spirit, it is still naught but the vanity of the soul!

When we can recognize what type of person is soulish, it is not difficult to realize what kind of person is spiritual. Since a soulish person lives by the mind, will, emotion, and desire of the natural life, a spiritual person is one who does not live by these. A spiritual person thinks by the spirit, desires by the spirit, wills by the spirit, acts by the spirit, and speaks out of the spirit. The spiritual person is not one who acts religious. Most people who have a religious aura about them are not spiritual at all! A spiritual person simply allows the spirit to be the source and master of all their action and behavior. The spirit in them occupies the preeminent position; the soul in them is in the position of submission, under the government of the spirit and dominated by the spirit. They are not like soulish persons, who let the soul dominate in everything; they deny the preeminence of their own mind, will, emotion, and desire by entering into union with the spirit and yielding to the high desires of the spirit! Thus they allow the spirit to BE LORD in them; they allow the spirit to direct their whole being so that they become the expression of the spirit. Whenever they encounter a situation they do not draw from their mind, will, emotion, or desire; rather they draw from the life of Christ in their spirit to understand what is the mind, the will, and the way of the spirit! These are spiritual, living by the life of the spirit, and the soul acts only in union with the spirit, as the outward expression of the indwelling spirit. It is Christ in the spirit who becomes the Bridegroom that ultimately is fully joined to the soul — receives the soul into itself. This is the Song of songs, the Message of messages!

The wonderful goal, however, is not just our will, our mind, our emotions, and our desires submitted to His will and way, but ONLY HIS WILL! In the marriage union of spirit and soul, of Christ and the church, there is one new creature, Christ, with one mind, one will, one emotion, and one desire — HIS made OURS. This is union! Blessed union! It is not merely His mind controlling our mind; it is our possessing HIS mind. It is more than just “fill me” with more of God, but a being swallowed up into Him, that henceforth it is “no longer I that live, but Christ that liveth in me” (Gal. 2:20). This is UNION! This is what all of God’s elect are yearning for and experiencing more and more every day — that we have a constant outflow of our true inner nature. As Paul wrote, “Stop assuming an outward expression that does not come from within you and is not representative of what you are in your inner being...but change your outward expression to one that comes from within and is representative of your inner being.” (Rom. 12:2, Wuest)

That’s how you get to know yourself — when you meet the corresponding reality to yourself within yourself your true nature is awakened within you. A woman doesn’t know all that it means to be a woman until she falls in love with a man! It is in that intimate and exquisite experience that all her feminine qualities are awakened within her. And it is the same with a man, when his masculine capacities are awakened within him and fulfilled in their totality. You are actually changed — expanded, broadened, increased, intensified, amplified, made complete — when you enter into a relationship with the beloved one of the opposite sex. In that union you

come to know yourself in a way you never could by any other means. It causes your true feminine or masculine potentials to be called forth, expressed, utilized, and fulfilled through that exchange.

It is just the same between Christ and His bride, between the spirit and the soul! The fullness of what He is and the fullness of what we are called to be are revealed in the union of love! When our soul bows low before the spirit, yields to the wooing of the spirit's love, submits to the will and way of the spirit, to find itself in union with the spirit, that is when our true identity is discovered! As long as our soul is doing its own thing, walking in our own way, after our own desires, fulfilling only the promptings of our own mind, we know neither who we are nor why we are who we are. That is most of humanity! But as we, the firstfruits of God, seek the Lord in our spirit and enter into union with Him, the eyes of our understanding are enlightened and we are granted the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of HIM.

The Shulamite, as she went about Jerusalem searching for her Beloved, said, "I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer" (S. of S. 5:6). At night she was out looking for him and we read, "The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the wall took away my veil from me" (S. of S. 5:7). The watchmen of the wall represent the ministers of the carnal church systems. It was the watchmen and keepers of the walls around the Lord's people who should have gladly assisted the Shulamite in finding her Beloved, but instead they began to mistreat her in the most brutal ways. It is truly irritating to those who are appointed to lead and tend the sheep, for those who should go before the flock and first partake of every pasture and all the fruit, to have those whom they esteem as "dumb sheep" start out and run ahead of the shepherd, and the pasture in which they are staying and keeping the rest of the flock. Nothing will stir up persecution as this will! But it is because the sheep have heard the voice of the true Shepherd, instead of those appointed by man!

Many of us have had this experience who have kept step with God in His on-going revelation and walked on with Him, regardless of cost or separations. And how some of us have been smitten by the watchmen! No greater indignity could be offered an oriental woman than to take away her veil. In those days it was only harlots who went about unveiled. The watchmen taking away the bride's veil denotes the removing of her covering — the misrepresentation and slurs cast upon her, the claim that she has no covering, therefore she cannot be considered acceptable in the city, for shame is cast upon her. How many churches have acted in this way to the Lord's faithful chosen ones who cry out for Him! We are not received by them, but of course we have no desire to be. We are accused of being "Lone Rangers," unsubmissive to authority, uncommitted to the brethren, and worse things. Because of the veil being torn away from her condition and distress, the Shulamite was urged on to greater love and fervency in seeking him whom her soul loved. And we, too, never before have we loved Him as we love Him now! Never before has He seemed so sweet and desirable to us, as He does now! And never before have we been so determined to find Him, to know Him in all His fullness as we are now!

So the Shulamite says to the daughters of Jerusalem, "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my Beloved, that tell him that I am sick of love (love-sick)." To which they respond, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? What is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou doest so charge us?" (S. of S. 5:8-9) And to those today who are following hard after Christ in all His fullness the old-order church daughters of Jerusalem say, "What is there about your message that is so much better than anybody else's message? What is there about your hope that is so much better than anybody else's hope? What is there about your experience that is so much better than anybody else's experience?" They ask out of ignorance because they have neither seen Him nor known Him as He is!

She goes into a description of Him that was rooted in her knowledge of Him. She knew Him! She could describe Him! She could praise and extol and say everything her heart felt about Him because she knew Him. She knew what she was after. And so do we know today who is our Beloved and so do we know what we are after. We know the beauty of His appearing, for He has disclosed Himself to us. We know the wonder of His ways, the marvel of His salvation. We know what is the hope of our sonship in Him — it's beautiful, it's altogether glorious, and there is none like unto our Christ, our Beloved! There is no hope greater than His hope, no faith more powerful than His faith, no love stronger than His love, no purpose more excellent than His purpose, no life more abundant than His life, no peace deeper than His peace, no joy more exhilarating than

His joy, no righteousness more pure and holy than His righteousness, no power more triumphant than His power, and no throne higher than His throne! Aren't you glad!

Ah, yes, CHRIST is our chief, foremost, supreme, first love! We shall never leave our first love!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 33

THE CHURCH IN EPHEBUS [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART THIRTY-THREE

**REMEMBER...AND REPENT!
I WILL REMOVE YOUR CANDLESTICK
THE DOCTRINE OF THE NICOLAITANES**

"Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." (Rev. 2:4)

I am moved to begin this writing by sharing from the pen of a precious brother in the Lord, Hollis Vaughn, of Marshall, Texas. He writes in his little booklet THE WINEPRESS the following fascinating story:

I shook the cobwebs from my head as I went to answer the knock, which had awakened me. I don't think too clearly at two o'clock in the morning; so it was little wonder that he looked different standing there in the dark. He was obviously upset and concerned about something, so he didn't say much as he slumped into a chair next to the couch. I guess I must have appeared somewhat dazed from being jarred awake from such a sound sleep. So we sat in silence for awhile as each of us wandered through our maze of thoughts.

John had been my pastor all my Christian life. He had always been there when I needed a strong arm to lean on or a word of counsel. But he was more than my pastor, he was a dear friend. He had sat hours on end as I had poured out to him the intimate details of my mixed-up life. Never once had he condemned me. Never once had he expressed shock or disappointment. True, he had corrected me. He had many times, like a skilled detective who pieces together the evidence, pointed out the areas in my life where the enemy was able to enter and harass me. He had even rebuked me on occasion, but never had he condemned or belittled me. He was a rare individual who would never betray a confidence. But now, here he was, looking as if he needed to have someone who would listen to the deep hurts and complaints of his heart.

John breathed out a long sigh and began to speak as if he were just thinking out loud. "She doesn't really know me or understand my needs after all these years." I was now wide awake! I don't know what I had assumed John's problem was, but I most assuredly didn't think Mary could be the cause. I didn't understand her at times and often she seemed to be caught up in her own little world; nevertheless she was an exceptional woman. She was outstandingly beautiful for her age and seemed to be the ideally devoted wife. I almost felt like saying, "Cheer up, John! Things will look better in the daylight." But I restrained myself for this was not the first time he had come knocking at an odd hour of the night. I felt honored that one of such stature would come to me, but deep inside there was the unanswered question, "Why does he wait until the middle of the night to want to talk? Why doesn't he come over for lunch or discuss these things over coffee or when we go fishing? Why these bizarre hours?"

There had been so many mornings when I had stumbled about with bloodshot eyes and incoherent thoughts; and my wife would remark, "You had company last night. Pastor John again?" She was used to these visits and never resented his coming, although I'm sure she also wondered why he didn't come around more during the daylight hours. He was so busy with the huge church that he pastored that I fully expected him to share some problem he was having with the deacon board or the music department. But Mary! I never expected that, and I suppose he sensed my shock as we sat there in semi-darkness.

"Mary just doesn't seem to understand my needs," he continued. She's so energetic and compulsive. She will dive into housework or cooking with such excitement. It is amazing how much she can get accomplished. But then at night — when I want quality time with her — she's so exhausted she can't respond. I know the children are a drain on her and so many people come to her for counsel and advice — she has little time left for me. I'm hurt, and I'm lonely and just a little angry!" I sat bewildered as I listened. As yet, John had not asked a

question, for which I was grateful. I certainly had no answers. I was numb with shock. I could not imagine that this giant among men had problems of such magnitude that he would be so visibly moved. Finally admitting that he may have some marital complications, I could not possibly imagine how I could offer any solution. After all, John was my confidant. He had given a sympathetic ear to my perplexities and had given me godly counsel all these years. Perhaps, he just wanted to talk. The least I could do was listen.

"Do you know, when we first fell in love, she used to sing to me. She had an old beat-up guitar which she strummed as she sang love songs to me. It was always out of tune and she didn't play well, but I loved those times." His voice seemed to trail off into some distant memory as he continued, "Since then she's taken voice lessons and uses taped background music. The church loves it — but I miss her off-key singing and that old guitar." I watched John as he seemed to slip back into one of the rooms of his memory — trying to recapture some priceless moment long past. My heart was now aching for him as I, for the first time, saw a side of him I had never seen before. He was deeply in love with Mary, and she was hurting him. He felt rejected. I knew instinctively that he had not come for any answer nor some word of counsel that I might have. He just wanted to talk — to bare his heart.

John glanced up suddenly and caught me off guard with the fierceness of his look. "I've always wanted a large family," he blurted. I couldn't believe my ears. Their family was so large now that it was a joke to all the neighborhood. I'd never seen so many completely different children in one family. There were one or two who definitely took after John. They had his temperament and depth. The rest were like a patchwork quilt of Mary's little quirks and compulsions. I couldn't believe John was being critical or was hurt because of the size of his family. With what I'm sure amplified the incredulous feeling I was experiencing, I sputtered, "But John, you have a house full of children. They're running over each other now. Mary's not a baby factory. She's run ragged taking care of the children you now have."

I felt a little twinge of irritation at John for his unreasonable desires. His eyes locked onto mine, and his next remark left me reeling in shock and disbelief. "Most of our children do not belong to me. I did not father them. I love them and care for them as if they were my own, but I did not father them." I sat in stunned silence. I had known John and Mary for most of my life. Even before I had become a Christian they had been a "thing" in the neighborhood. Everyone knew they would marry eventually. I knew something that many did not know. Mary had been married before to a very cruel and abusive husband. He had left her bruised and bleeding on more than one occasion. I also knew that she had brought no children into that marriage. I could not believe that Mary was adulterous. I had seen her flirt with many men, but rather than be critical, I passed it off as just being her friendly, outgoing personality. There were times when she had been extremely friendly with me — perhaps too much — but then, we'd known each other for a very long time.

"John, do you mean to tell me that Mary has been unfaithful? Are you saying other men fathered most of your children?" By this time tears were streaming down His face; and I could see the deep hurt in his eyes. He nodded imperceptively and softly continued, "It's no secret that Mary has been married before. Her first marriage left her spiritually and emotionally scarred. There is within her an area that pulls her back into that same type of situation again and again. It's as if she's trying to punish herself by some destructive action. She has come to me time and again in deep remorse and tears, begging me not to throw her out and not to stop loving her. Of course, I can't do either for my life is wholly wrapped up in her."

I walked over and put my arms around him and felt his whole body convulse with sobs. We held each other for just a moment and I was thankful that no prying eyes were viewing this scene lest it should be misunderstood. Then I asked very softly, "John, does anyone else know about this? Have you discussed this with others?" He nodded, "Yes, there are a few who know, but not many." "Has anyone talked with her, counseled her, admonished her," I asked. I was hoping this wouldn't get out of hand. What a foolish thought, for it had been out of hand for years! Again he confirmed, "There have been many who have talked with her and warned her of the consequences of her actions. But it's worse now than it has been in a long time."

"Would you like for me to speak to her?" I asked. I didn't quite know what I'd say, and besides I was somewhat nettled that John had shared all these things with others before he had come to me. But that would soon be clarified. "Yes," he answered. "Go tell my wife that I want her, not her services. Tell her that I am saddened by

her frenzied activity. Try to convey to her how much I miss her love songs and that I don't get joy out of her singing to others. Most of all, beg her to stop seeing her lovers and flirting with strangers. Tell her for me. Maybe she will listen to you." He sighed heavily as he rose to leave; and even as he was walking out the door, I heard myself saying as I had so many times in the past, "Please don't stop loving me. I'm sorry I have run after other lovers and have not been faithful to you! Please help me get my priorities in order!"

Does that sound like something strange to say to your pastor? Well, you see, my pastor was actually Jesus; and Mary is this flirtatious church with whom He is vitally concerned. This is something the Lord actually disclosed to me in the night hours as He revealed to me His wounded heart. In the book of Revelation, Jesus speaks to the seven churches commending them for their strength and faithfulness, but lovingly pointing out their failures. The first letter is to the church at Ephesus; and His reproof to her was, "But I have this against you, that you have left your first love." I feel sure, since this is the first in order, that it likely heads the list in importance.

The first complaint He shared with me was, "She doesn't understand me. She's so busy she doesn't have the energy nor time to spend in intimacy with me." Most Christians mistakenly believe that time spent in "God's house" is all that is necessary for their spiritual growth and productivity. May I suggest that most time spent in the average church service is not only poor quality but in many cases actually wasted. Most church meetings bless us, but not the Lord! In the majority of cases, it has been our intellect — our soulish man — which has been fed rather than our spirit!

Martha (in the scriptures) was so busy. I'm sure she was cooking and washing pot and pans — all the necessities which accompany having a guest in the home. She wanted to be a proper hostess. She received a startling shock when Jesus told her in so many words, "Martha! With all your service, your cumbersome toil and worry, you're still missing the precious treasure that Mary has discovered by sitting at my feet. You think it is wasted time, but it is the most precious time you could spend." Our heavenly husband is after quality time spent in His presence. There is no substitute of equal value.

His next concern was how His wife sang for others and to others, not to Him. This is one of the most deadly traps into which singers fall! To my knowledge there is not one reference in scripture where singers sang solos for the congregation. After their great deliverance from Pharaoh and the host of the Egyptians, Moses and the sons of Israel sang a song unto the Lord. It fills almost all of the fifteenth chapter of Exodus. The entire fifth chapter of the book of Judges is an account of the song which Deborah and Barak sang unto the Lord because of His great defeat of Sisera, commander of the armies of Canaan. The closest thing I can recall where a man ministered in song and music to another person or persons is where David played before Saul; and the evil spirits departed and Saul's spirit was quieted. Notice, David did not play to Saul nor for Saul, but before him. He simply worshipped the Lord in Saul's presence and that anointed playing was more than the demons could take. I think there is a place where a person can play and sing unto the Lord in the presence of the congregation, and the Lord is pleased and the people are blessed. But that is extremely rare! Usually, "special singing" is ministry to the house rather than to the Lord. Most singers spend the bulk of their time in preparation of arrangements, enunciation, voice inflection, background music, proper microphones and P.A. systems, stage posturing and gestures. For whom is all this energy expended?

I'm sure the Lord is not only grieved but angry with the shepherds, whose primary responsibility is to bring people to the true Shepherd and ever direct their affections toward Him; however, they have set themselves up as the "vicar of Christ" or a Nicolaitane overlord who rules the people by cunning speech, overpowering personality or outright deceit. The bride of Christ is drawn away from her true Husband by craftiness and sleight of hand, lured into a bed of adultery where she is seduced by strangers. This immoral union brings forth children who are assumed to be sons of God; when in fact, they are sons of the devil. God loves them and cares for them, but they do not have the blood of Jesus flowing in their veins! Because of our spiritual anesthetics and easy birthing, we have invited numerous children into the family of God, promising them a life without suffering and pain. True, our family has increased in numbers and the ranks of our brotherhood have swollen; but our Father is grieved because so many are illegitimate. The unfortunate thing is that they truly believe they are part of His family!

I could almost wish that when we miss the will of the Father we, and all those about us, could hear His voice of displeasure immediately, loud and clear. In my childish way, I think it would be simpler if, on occasion, the Lord thundered His disapproval! Then we wouldn't run after all those strange lovers. Then we wouldn't give birth to illegitimate children. Then we wouldn't "entertain the troops." We would sing only to Him! Then we wouldn't become so exhausted trying to earn merit points and little stars by our names. Then we would have more quality time to spend in His presence. Right? WRONG!!! The truth of the matter is, God does speak to us immediately when we miss His will. It is not a voice which causes the mountains to tremble, nor does it gush forth out of fire and smoke; but it is a still small voice coming forth from the altar of His temple — deep within your bosom — if you are His child. He still thunders His disapproval at our whorish attitudes and behavior, but His voice is muffled and muted by the pandemonium of other voices. Sadly, most Christians do not even know the voice of the Beloved! — end quote.

REMEMBER...AND REPENT!

"Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent..." (Rev. 1:5)

The call to those in THE EPHESIAN CONDITION is to repent of having left or deserted their first love, their foremost love, or the love of the highest. The Greek word for repentance is metanoia meaning A CHANGE OF MIND. Yet that itself can miss the mark. A better rendering would be TO TAKE ANOTHER MIND. A man may change in the conceptions of his mind, thus bringing himself to another viewpoint, but with the possibility of being just as mistaken in his new opinion as he was in his former. But to TAKE ANOTHER MIND brings into being A NEW CREATURE, one who cannot revert back to the old viewpoint or adopt another faulty reasoning out of the limited powers of the old mind. So let us see that repentance has to do with the taking of another mind, a mind beyond us, not simply a new decision of our old carnal mind. It means putting on the mind of Christ! There is to be no mixing of the old leaven with the new bread. This is extremely important for each of God's elect in this hour as we follow on to make it fully into the camp of the overcomer who inherits the promises!

Every son of God must repent! I have heard it said that sons do not need to repent, only those in the old-order church systems must repent. But "he that overcometh" certainly will repent or he will never be an overcomer! By repentance the Lord is leading us to change our spiritual directions, and causing us to walk in the new paths of His will for those called to be conformed to the image of Christ, to reign with Him in His kingdom. Every son is even now repenting and preparing himself for the changes that must take place as we put on the fullness of Christ. We repent every time that the Father brings changes in our lives, as we qualify to be His instrument to bring the new order of the kingdom of God to the nations of earth. We repent of clinging to anything other than HIS HIGHEST for us, for His highest is that "first" or "paramount" love — the LOVE OF THE HIGHEST.

Because we have repented we are no longer concerned about being nominal Christians, or possessing gifts, or becoming apostles, prophets, or bishops, or getting to heaven when we die. Because we have repented, we have taken another mind, and we now desire only GOD'S HIGHEST AND BEST! Because we have repented we are putting on the mind of Christ and seek only those things which are above at the right hand of God, where Christ sits (Col. 3:1). We are being changed into the image and likeness of Christ, and we shall be priests of God after the order of Melchizedek, for that is what Christ is doing at the right hand of God in the heavens of God's Spirit! We shall be kings with Him, for He is a king and a priest after the order of Melchizedek. As a king and priest of God in the glory of His kingdom we shall minister that same Life, which we received from Him, to the masses of humanity, delivering them from the curse of sin and death. This ministry is reserved for the overcomer. And the overcomer is the one who truly repents of every lower realm and seeks the FOREMOST LOVE or the LOVE OF THE HIGHEST!

Then the Lord says, "repent, and do the first works." (Rev. 2:5) The first works are like the first love — not the childish, immature, zealous works we did when we were first converted, but the principle works, the works of the highest order! These works are the works of faith and love as we submit to Father's dealings in our lives to bring us into the fullness of His purpose. Love! That is certainly one of the "first works" as Paul said, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as a sounding brass, or a

tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing. And now abideth faith, hope, and love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." (I Cor. 13:1-3,13)

I WILL REMOVE YOUR CANDLESTICK

"Repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." (Rev. 2:5)

This is divine discipline! When the Lord says, "I will come quickly," He means in judgment. "I will come in discipline, I will come in correction, I will remove your candlestick, I will take it out of its place." The candlestick is the church! Some churches have seasons, they are there for a while and they are gone. Some are shut down by divine judgment! True, they have great pomp and programs and activities, but they no longer have a deep and genuine walk in the Holy Spirit. Why are we called to the gospel of Christ? So we can become religious technicians promoting grandiose programs? Oh, no! We are placed in the world to shine, to illuminate with the light of Christ. That is the purpose of a candlestick! "Ye are the light of the world."

What is the use of a candlestick if it has no spiritual light of Christ! The Lord tells these people that if they do not repent He will come to them in judgment, swift and effective judgment, and remove them from being the light-bearing children of God. It was a coming that might not take place! The Lord said, "I will come if you don't repent." Sadly, the actual Ephesian church in Asia never repented. So God allowed the light to go out. Later on the darkness of Islam swept over the land where this church had been located. There is no lampstand in Ephesus today, for there is nothing but the ruins of a once great city. In Ephesus there is no church at all! The church from the corridors of which thousands proclaimed the greatness and the glory of the Christ of God, has now passed away.

I visited Ephesus a number of years ago, and there is nothing there but scattered shells and columns of once majestic and beautiful buildings. We saw buildings that obviously the apostles Paul and John had stood in, but there was nothing there but heaps of stones and collapsing walls. And in the villages and cities of that area there are no church buildings to be seen, only mosques. The epistle to the Ephesians is read the world over, but there is no believer in Ephesus to read it. They did not repent; they did not stay focused on the "first love" and the "first works" which God was really after in their lives, so they were removed. Ephesus, of course, in keeping with the pattern of the book of Revelation, was merely a typical church, and the Lord's solemn warning signal flashes out to this day to be heeded by every man and movement that is of the Ephesian spirit and character. And that is about all of them!

The removal of the candlestick means the snuffing out of the light. It means the lifting of the anointing. It means the fleeing of the presence of God. It means the cloud will move on, while the people remain in the wilderness. It means the people will still be carrying on, singing their songs, clapping their hands, preaching their sermons, promoting their programs, doing their works, going through the motions like a robot — but there is no Life! The glory has departed from the church systems of men, the old order is dead, the spiritual light of Christ has gone out, the once glorious works of the Spirit have been removed, and God has moved on. I wonder how many candlesticks have been removed from our communities, towns, and cities and the people do not even realize it! Because the people are still gathering together week after week, polishing their candlestick in the darkness of their carnality, they realize not that the light is missing! We see a lot of excitement, a lot of emotion, a lot of zeal, a lot of promotion and activity, and hear a lot of beautiful music emanating from church groups all across the land, yet methinks that many of them do not realize that the Lord has removed their candlestick — they are no longer the true spiritual Light of Christ in the world! Having a form of godliness, they deny within themselves the power thereof. The church cries out to the world to repent, and believe the gospel. But the living Christ is crying out to the church to repent!

A story might be appropriate here. Before the time of electric railroad-crossing gates an old fellow was in charge of one particular crossing. Sitting in his little cabin at night, dozing in and out of consciousness, he

would sometimes hear the rattle of the tracks in the distance. He would then quickly grab his lantern from the wall and run out into the night to warn any cars that a train was coming. But one time he had waited a little too long. Headlights were already coming up the road and the train was fast approaching. Hurriedly he ran down the highway, swinging the lantern in a wide arc back and forth, screaming, "Stop! Stop!" At the last minute, he jumped out of the way of the car as it raced past him and smashed into the freight. When the authorities put the old fellow on trial for negligence, his astute railroad lawyers proved beyond doubt that the young people in the car had been drinking and that the old gentleman was respected in the community and considered trustworthy. He would probably have gotten off, but the prosecuting lawyer happened to ask the old man in an unguarded moment, "In your hurry, old timer, did you think to light the lantern?" Ah — swinging the lantern is not enough — there must be a light! Ringing bells, singing hymns, clapping hands, preaching sermons, performing ordinances, having outreaches, is not enough — there must be spiritual light in the lampstand!

Only by yielding ourselves continually to the voice, leadings, and dealings of the Spirit can we truly be His light in brighter and brighter measures. The surest way not to have further light is to not walk experientially in the light that has been given us. If all we know is the teaching or doctrine of reconciliation, sonship and the kingdom, and do not experience the out-working of the spirit of reconciliation, sonship and the kingdom then we, too, have knowledge rather than reality, and doctrine instead of life. We have received from God His revelation! Are there areas where He has revealed His truth to us, yet we have ignored it or not yielded to its in-working? In that case, the Lord calls us to repent. Should we fail to repent He will pull down the shade of heaven upon us and no more light will be forthcoming until we experience what we have received! He will remove our candlestick. It's just as simple as that!

THE DOCTRINE OF THE NICOLAITANES

"But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate." (Rev. 2:6) "So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate." (Rev. 2:15)

When the Lord was showing John on Patmos what the seven churches would be like, He commended the church at Ephesus because they hated the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which the Lord also detested. In Pergamos, the third church, these deeds had become accepted doctrine, which the Lord also hated. For whatever reason the Lord chose not to let history record the precise teachings of the Nicolaitanes. He does, however, want us to understand just what this bunch of hooligans is about and therefore He has given us one infallible piece of evidence.

There are three named heresies among the seven churches — the Nicolaitanes, Balaam, and the woman Jezebel. None of these are identified under these names in church history, despite the frantic efforts of historians to tell us that Nicholas and Jezebel were real persons — even going so far as to blacken the good name of Nicholas of Antioch (one of the seven deacons of Acts 6:5), as the guilty party. It is said by some that Nicholas founded a movement of apostates who had pagan feasts and were most immoral in their behavior. They taught that in order to master sensuality one would have to know by experience the whole range of it first. Naturally this spawned the most bizarre and wanton orgies and other fleshly endeavors as a necessary step on the road to perfection. Thus the historians applied to them the two Old Testament names that symbolized such extravagances: Balaam and Jezebel. Since Balaam corrupted the people of Israel and thus conquered them, it was said that Nicholas did likewise. This group was supposedly forced out of Ephesus and found a place of establishment in Pergamos. But the problem about this belief is that it is not true. There is absolutely no history for it. It is at best tradition, but I view it as mere myth and folklore — a fairy tale!

The names are symbolic of the heresies they represent. When a name appears in the scriptures its meaning sheds light upon the spiritual reality behind the name. What was this thing God hated but man loved and would not stop doing? What are these Nicolaitanes? We'll understand it when we know what the name means! The word comes from two Greek words: nikao, which means "to rule over or to conquer," and laos, which means "the laity or the people." Put these definitions together and you get a domineering ruling class within the body of Christ whose main agenda is to get the upper hand, conquer, subordinate, and subdue those who they consider "less gifted," "less knowledgeable," and "less qualified" than themselves!

In the religious world there are those who are called "clergy" and those who are called "laity." Where do you suppose these titles came from? "Laity, lay person, and layman" are all derivatives from the Greek word laos mentioned above! This is a title that has come to us from religious Babylon! The clergy are called the "reverends," "doctors," "pastors," "teachers," "evangelists," "overseers," "bishops," "ministers," "priests," "superintendents," "leaders," etc. These are often termed "men of the cloth" — men who wear special attire as a matter of identification as "clergy." These are the people who have the power, authority, and lordship! The rest of us poor folks are just "laity."

What were the "deeds" of the Nicolaitanes? They were exalting the "clergy" over the "laity"! The clergy class were dominating the laity, the people. The clergy were exalted whereas the laity were abased. The clergy became the authority, they became the fountain of all truth, they had the last word, and the laity were the "dumb sheep" that were instructed to follow and do what they were told. I once read that the saddest thing that happened to the church was when it stopped being a family and became an audience. Most people have missed the point completely; they conceive of the church as a drama wherein they are merely spectators. In this drama the minister is the principle actor, God is his prompter whispering His lines in his ear — should he chance to forget them — and the congregation are the critics who pass their judgment upon the performance when all has been said and done. This can be perceived by the comments of many people to the minister (actor) who has now made his way to the front door to receive the acclamation of the spectators. "Good job, preacher! You really did a good job today. You really let 'em have it!" Or the comment, "The choir was really beautiful today." The whole idea expressed seems to be that it was a drama; it was a performance, a show, and you express your acceptance and your approval. You are the critic and it is up to you to pass your judgment.

We have here a "caste system" of "clergy" and "laity" which has been clearly and soundly repudiated by the firstborn Son of God! The firstborn Son, the pattern Son, the proto-type of what the life of sonship is all about, said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men hold them in subjection; but it must not be so among you. On the contrary, whoever desires to be first among you must be your slave; and whosoever may desire to take rank among you, let him be your servant: just as the Son of man came not to be served, but to serve. You are not to be called teacher, for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth father, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. And you must not be called leaders, for you have one Leader, the Christ. He who is greatest among you must be your servant. Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whosoever humbles himself shall be raised to honor." (Mat. 20:25-27; 23:8-12, Amplified and Ferrar Fenton). Men love to rule, even though God has called all of us to serve one another. How many churches or groups can we point out today who observe these words of the Lord Jesus? THINK ABOUT IT!

God's people, since the days of king Saul, have been accustomed to appointing kings, priests, prophets, bishops, pastors, teachers, elders, deacons, overseers, leaders, and rulers of all kinds, to hear the word of the Lord for them, and rule over them by it, instead of hearing and knowing the Lord for themselves. But that old order has since passed away! It has not passed away for those who remain in religious Babylon, but God has established a new and spiritual order for His elect who are in Christ. This new order is not really new, for it is the very same order the Lord Jesus gave to His disciples! It is the order of sonship! And this new order of the spirit of sonship replaces all those substitutes, whether they be bishops, pastors, priests, elders, or anything else. Oh, yes, there are spiritual ministries in the body of Christ! But these spiritual ministries are servants, not leaders or rulers. In this new kingdom day God is making His elect to be sons of the Father with the spiritual ability to HEAR all the Lord would tell us and to KNOW Him by personal experience of His fullness. No longer do His called and chosen ones submit to the lordship of others who can hear and act "for" them, but as brethren in the body of Christ they share the same mind, nature, life, and power and so admonish, encourage, confirm, and bless one another as each joint supplies. ONLY THE HEAD RULES! There is one Head and one Leader, even Christ, who dwells within. These are such simple principles, and so divine, that one would think all men could understand, but the carnal mind never understands!

The word of the Lord is coming forth today! This fresh, new word is not given only to designated apostles, prophets, pastors, or teachers. It is better, rather, to avoid those who claim such titles and offices and turn your spiritual ears to the heavens of God's Spirit, and hear for yourself what your Father has to say. The word that

you receive will then be confirmed by all who are walking in the Spirit and hearing from the Father. How beautiful this is! What safety there is in this order of the Spirit! Father's anointed word of life, wisdom, power, and authority is radiating out of the Spirit of the Son within us. Let us HEAR HIM and then obediently DO all He tells us to do! Christ alone is the true Head, Lord, and King of all His elect and chosen ones. His faithful and obedient elect are hearing His pure word from His pure mind. And they are fulfilling His word, walking out His righteousness and will out of His holy nature and power. They are worshipping Him in spirit and in truth, as our Lord told us to do, and not after the traditions of the church systems. By these necessary principles of consecration and yieldedness unto the Lord, those called to sonship are becoming a holy, separated people unto the Lord, prepared to serve His holy kingdom purposes in all the earth.

I do not seek to revile, but rather to speak the truth in love as I warn all who seek after life, immortality, and sonship to God to flee from the deeds and doctrines of the Nicolaitanes as you would flee from a poisonous snake or a lion in the jungle. Let us reverently consider together just how this heresy entered in among the Lord's people. What a flood of light fell upon the world in the ministry of Jesus and His apostles! Then following His ascension, by the gift of the Holy Ghost which is the spirit of Christ, the Lord came again in mighty Spirit power to indwell His people. The church was birthed, and gathered from Jew and Gentile alike, a vast multitude into its bosom. The shadows of the law were replaced by the glorious and eternal reality of a living, indwelling Christ. In those few holy years Christ Himself within was the only Head of the church and unity and harmony flowed like a river and the body of Christ was one. There was no government but the government of the Spirit. Love and wisdom shone like the sun from the mind of God. When the human body knows no government but the government of its head, all is order and unity, and there is health and power. So also it was with the body of Christ!

And what glorious days those were! One only has to read the book of Acts to see how much God blessed His people in those days. Mighty signs and wonders were performed as God confirmed His word with signs following. The word of God, anointed by the Holy Spirit, swept the world like a prairie fire. It encircled the mountains and crossed the oceans. It made kings to tremble and tyrants to fear. It was said of those early Christians that they turned the world upside down! So powerful was their message and spirit. In spite of persecution it grew and multiplied, for God dwelt mightily in the midst of His people. The knowledge of the glory of the Lord covered the earth as the waters cover the sea.

Even before the apostles had departed their earthly life, a spirit and system had set in among the saints of the Lord and many people were wearing the Babylonish garment. They were instituting rules and regulations, laying down laws, formulating creeds, observing days, establishing sacraments and ordinances, elevating human government, becoming disciples of Paul, of Apollos, of Cephas, and of many others. The babble had begun and the mysterious man of sin was raising his ugly head. Before too many years had passed men began to set themselves up as "bishops" and "lords" over God's heritage in place of the Holy Spirit.

There was a whole group of leaders that rose up in the churches just about the time the first apostles were passing from the scene — the very time John received his revelation on Patmos! Church historians refer to them as The Apostolic Fathers. One of these was a man by the name of Ignatius. Ignatius was the second bishop of Antioch that city in Syria from which Barnabas and Paul set out on their famous missionary journey (Acts 13-14). The ancient church historian Eusebius says Ignatius was appointed as the second bishop there about A.D. 69. A number of Ignatius' letters, written to various churches such as Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, Philadelphia, and Smyrna still exist. I have read these letters, as well as those of others of the so-called Apostolic Fathers, and it is quite astonishing to see with what prominence and emphasis THE DOCTRINE OF THE NICOLAITANES comes across in each!

Again and again Ignatius exhorts the saints, "Since, then, I received your whole congregation in God's name in the person of Onesimus, a man of inexpressible love and your bishop, I beseech you by Jesus Christ to love him and, all of you, to be like him. For blessed is he who gives you the gift, worthy as you are, of obtaining such a bishop. Therefore it is fitting for you to run your race together with the bishop's purpose — as you do. For your presbytery is attuned to the bishop like strings to a lyre. For if in a short time I had such fellowship with your bishop as was not human but spiritual, how much more blessed do I consider you who are mingled with him as the church is with Jesus Christ and as Jesus Christ is with the Father, so that all things are

harmonious in unison! If the prayer of one or two has such power, how much more does that of the bishop and the whole church? Let us therefore be eager not to oppose the bishop, so that we may be subject to God. And the more anyone sees the bishop being silent, the more one should fear him. For everyone whom the master of a house sends for his stewardship, we must receive as the one who sent him. It is obvious, then, that one must look upon the bishop as the Lord Himself... obey the bishop and the presbytery with undisturbed mind."

Instead of conquering by the power of the Spirit and Truth, as in the early days, men began to substitute their ideas and their methods. Soon the glory and power, the presence of God in the morning time church began to be eclipsed, and the power of carnal-minded men gradually took the place of the awesome presence of God. Consequently men's carnal understanding was put upon the scriptures, and as the Spirit of Christ fled from their midst, men established a vast and elaborate system of substitutes to take the place of reality. A "falling away" of a massive and dreadful nature arose until the church of Christ became gradually the religion of antichrist!

If the early church had been organized after the manner of the harlot church systems of today, the records would have been quite different from what they are. We would have had some reference to our Lord's installation of the apostleship with great ceremony, Himself sitting somewhere in state as a Pope, receiving the apostles in scarlet robes. We would have some record of how Paul set in "the pastor" over each church, how Paul later returned to visit the churches and met with "the pastor," and how the sick should call for "the pastor" of the church, and let him pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. We would have some reference to the need for the church to be recognized and chartered by the State so its ministers could legally marry the young and bury the dead; we would have some specific examples of how Jesus and the apostles conducted funerals, performed weddings, and how the pastors did dedications. There would be some instructions about how to organize the church with a church "board," how to "call" a preacher, how to hire and fire ministries, how to promote building programs, and the importance of the choir.

I could go on and on and on — believe me, I could! There is no end to all the things we once accepted as normal, necessary, scriptural, and spiritual which have absolutely no foundation in the order of God's Spirit. Praise God, the consuming fire of HIS dealings and processings in our lives is thoroughly purging and cleansing our hearts of ALL the spirit and ways of man's religion, leading us to once and for all forsake ALL the traditions and trappings of religious Babylon, that HE may take His royal seat upon the throne of our hearts and lead us in the paths of His kingdom. The ministers of man's religion carry within them the nature of this world's bestial system, and they do everything patterned after the ways of the world — to build a name for themselves, to gain and usurp control over other men's lives, to establish a creed or a movement, to solidify a power base under them, for financial gain. The true ministries in the body of Christ carry in them the nature of Christ, taking the way of the cross, being stripped of all fame and earthly glory, going without the camp to bear reproach and shame because of what GOD has spoken into their heart. They seek no power over other men's lives, no control, nothing for themselves. They do no works that the flesh can boast in, they assume no title, no identification that the world recognizes. They build no kingdoms about them, establish no hierarchies, but are living epistles of Christ, examples to the flock, and servants of all.

Jesus is the Pattern Son! He is the firstborn among many brethren. Let us prayerfully and reverently consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our profession! He wanted nothing of the religion of the Pharisees. He held nothing but contempt for the organized religion of that day, for the blinding traditions of the learned and prestigious Rabbis, the distorted doctrines of the Pharisees who walked about with the most imposing and pretentious titles, clothed in elaborate and gorgeous vestments, loving the chief seats in the synagogue, and binding upon the people heavy burdens, grievous to be borne, with all sorts of rules and regulations, extrapolations of the law. Because He was a Son, Jesus' center was in nothing of earth, nothing of the traditions of men. Jesus never concerned Himself with external structures of organization, hierarchy, buildings, programs, creeds, ceremonies, promotions, or any other carnal thing. He ministered LIFE, LIGHT, LOVE, REALITY AND TRUTH. Period. He was unusual. He would not follow the methods and techniques of the world. He would not go with the multitude.

In Jesus' message to the church at Ephesus He says that He hates the deeds and the doctrine of the NICOLAITANES. He hated it when He was here on earth, He hated it in the church at Ephesus, and He hates

it today. Every son of God hates it! I hate it, and every reader of these lines who has received the call to sonship hates it! The rule of man is an abomination to the spirit of sonship!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 34

THE CHURCH IN EPHESUS [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART THIRTY-FOUR

HE THAT HATH AN EAR

"But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate." (Rev. 2:6) "So thou hast also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate." (Rev. 2:15)

When the Lord was showing John on Patmos what the seven churches would be like, He commended the church at Ephesus because they hated the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which the Lord also detested. In Pergamos, the third church, these deeds had become accepted doctrine, which the Lord also hated. When a name appears in the scriptures its meaning sheds light upon the spiritual reality behind the name. What are these Nicolaitanes? We understand when we know what the name means! Nicolaitane comes from two Greek words: nikao, which means "to rule over" or "to conquer," and laos, which means "the laity" or "the people." Put these definitions together and you get a domineering ruling class within the body of Christ whose main agenda is to get the upper hand, conquer, subordinate, and subdue those who they consider "less gifted," "less knowledgeable," or "less qualified" than themselves!

In the religious world there are those called "clergy" and there are those who are called "laity." These are titles that have come to us from religious Babylon! What were the "deeds" of the Nicolaitanes? They were exalting the "clergy" over the "laity"! The clergy class were dominating the laity, the people. The clergy exalted themselves whereas the laity were abased. The clergy became the authority, the power, the lordship in the church. They became the fountain of all truth, they had the last word, they called all the shots. The rest of us poor folks are just "laity," the dumb sheep that just follow and do what we are told.

When there is a great move of God there always follows a move of man. I have been blessed by God's grace to be a part of some great moves of God that came into the earth in former years. These were sovereign moves of the Holy Spirit, and He moved upon those He chose to move upon. What glory there was! What power! What manifestations of the Spirit! What revelation of the Lord in the midst! What discernment by the Spirit! What liberty for the Holy Ghost to work! What love and respect for one another! It was God overflowing men beyond themselves.

Well do I remember the day when the revival reached a certain point and a meeting was called. Some of the spiritual leaders had reached the conclusion that having begun in the Spirit we now needed to be made perfect by the flesh. Oh, that's not how they expressed it! They had reached the conclusion that because of the increase in the work of God we needed a little more cohesion and structure. It was imperative upon us to take some measures to "protect" the work of God from certain extremes, from the immature, from false doctrine, and from the wolves. In that decisive moment the long arm of flesh reached out in the name of the Lord to put its clammy hand to the beautiful work of the Spirit! As this effort was organized the deeds of the Nicolaitanes became the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes and a new man-made "order" was inaugurated. I do not hesitate to tell you that I fled from their midst as fast as my legs would carry me, never to return! Today there is barely a flicker of the revelation and glory of those former days.

Man seeks by the wisdom of the carnal mind and by fleshly means to protect and control the move of God — supposedly to keep it pure, to safeguard it, to preserve and maintain the status quo, and to keep out all who are not worthy. As soon as man puts his hand to the move, the Spirit flees, the anointing lifts, and the glory departs! Soon there is no life anymore — everything becomes organized, structured, controlled, systematized, just a going through the motions of what was once a beautiful flow of life and light and power. This concept of the "authority" of God's ministers shows up after every new moving of the Spirit of God in the earth! It is showing up now among sonship and kingdom people! The phraseology changes from time to time, but the

basic concepts remain the same. But whatever the phraseology or methodology, it is still THE DEEDS AND DOCTRINE OF THE NICOLAITANES!

Where, then, is safety to be found? Safety lies only in such a recognition of the absolute folly of the control of leaders and the utter apostasy of the religious systems of man as will lead us to pass by all merely human authority, tradition, and methods to seek only and always the divine illumination and sovereign guidance of the Holy Spirit of God! Nor do we exclude ourselves from the list of those who should not be followed. We are human as the rest and our works are not yet perfect before God, though we follow after, if by any means we may apprehend that for which also we have been apprehended of God. We do hope that all who read these lines may be able to grant us this one grace — the highest compliment that we can crave — that the burden of our message is to point all men to a personal, living relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and to the infallibility of the mind of Christ within each one who has received the spirit of sonship!

The following prophetic utterance given through sister Alma McClure speaks directly to our hearts. "O, look not ye to another, saith the Lord, the holy One of Israel! You are MY sheep; you have been purchased by MY love and sacrifice! I am the Good Shepherd, who has loved you with an everlasting love! LOOK TO ME! For I am a jealous God, and I will not share my glory with another! Why do you look to man, and heap upon him honor and glory? Why do you look to your human pastors, preachers, prophets, and writers as though they were the source of your salvation, your sustenance, your life? Why do you look up to them with reverence, with praise, with pride in them, and swoon at their feet, calling them wonderful, marvelous, mighty men and women of God? Why will you follow after men, rather than after ME? Why will you be blinded by their personalities, their eloquence, their own soulish enthusiasm, which you accept as my anointing?

"O my people! You are MY PEOPLE, and the sheep of MY PASTURE! Return, return unto ME! You have your eyes on those who are or should be MY SERVANTS! You do not even realize that your eyes, your thoughts and your hearts are not centered and focused on ME! You think you keep your eyes on me, but so often, in reality, your eyes have strayed off-center, and although you are aware of me, and your songs contain my name, and your words include praise to me — yet you have let some man or woman step in front of me! You look to the man to speak for me, and have your eyes on him!

"Know you not that when you give glory to man, you are not only opening yourselves for deception, but you are setting that man up for a fall? You are placing that one in a dangerous position, for the Lord must cause that one to come down from his pedestal! Any spark of pride that may be hidden in his heart will be fed and grow dangerously by YOUR praise and exaltation of that man or woman! Awake, thou that sleepest, and return unto ME! I, alone, am your Good Shepherd! Come to ME, and I will feed you with the bread of life, and honey out of the Rock! I shall give you the water of Life, and cause that water to be a living well within you, springing up to satisfy your thirst, and to flow out to bring life to needy souls around you! O, come unto ME, and I will give you all that you need! I will raise up faithful shepherds, who will feed you, and will take no glory for themselves. They will continually point you to ME, and you will no longer say, 'Isn't this man (or woman) wonderful!' But you will see only ME, and say, 'Wonderful, wonderful Saviour, Redeemer, the Most High, who is King of my life!' And you shall worship ME, in Spirit and in Truth!"

Those seeking power want to control, to rule over others. They want to take charge and get their way. They're not interested in leading by example, by humility, love, counsel, mercy, goodness and the anointing of the Spirit. They manipulate and maneuver to be in a position of authority so they can control others and coerce them to get in line with their vision. Though some accomplish this as masters of deceit, hiding the real truth behind a façade of pious words and pretended spirituality, their domineering spirit becomes evident when those who are supposed to follow don't, but go on to follow the leading of the Spirit. "Anathema!" cries the ruler. "Rebellion!" cries the tyrant. "Zap!" goes the whip. Power people have little tolerance for people who persist in seeking the mind of the Lord. The religious ranks are swollen with these power grabbers! Authoritarianism is not confined to denominations. It simply appears wherever and whenever prideful, though sincere, men are in authority. Though it has recently resurged under various titles and guises, such as "shepherd," "bishop," "set man," etc., it is an error that will sap the life of God's saints wherever it gains control.

From generation to generation it surfaces under different names, but its three basic tenets remain the same: (1) When we speak, it is God speaking. (2) To resist our authority is to resist God's authority. (3) Those resisters must be marked as independent, rebellious, and divisive; and must in turn be withstood and publicly denounced and humiliated.

There are precious life-giving ministries in the body of Christ! God is raising up faithful under-shepherds who care for the Lord's people and serve the elect of God. These minister in the Spirit and by the Spirit in love, humility, and grace. Some of the so-called "offices" have been greatly abused! In both the Old and New Testaments the word for "shepherd" and "pastor" is the same word in Hebrew and Greek. A pastor is simply a shepherd, and a shepherd is a pastor, both naturally and spiritually. The Spirit of God has dealt with me deeply and consistently through many years that the Lord's people should purge their conversation, purify their terminology, and remove from their thinking processes the multitude of unscriptural expressions carried over from Mystery Babylon. We have both parroted and coined a great many terms that have been so misleading and have led us astray from the way of the Spirit.

We, like the babes in the harlot's house, often refer to a minister of the gospel as "the pastor" of our church, or some other congregation of saints. To hear all the Christians today constantly talking about "our pastor," "their pastor," "your pastor," "my pastor," and "the pastor," one would certainly be led to believe this position of "the pastor" must indeed be one of the cardinal doctrines and most highly acclaimed offices in the New Testament! The fact is, precious friend of mine, the term "the pastor" is entirely foreign to the Word of God and non-existent in the early church! It is an extra-biblical term! There was no one single man in the whole New Testament writings who ever occupied a position called "the pastor." Not one church raised up by the first apostles had any such ministry as "the pastor." Oh, yes, there were "pastors" plural (Eph. 4:11) mentioned only once in the whole New Testament, but no single minister of God was ever elevated to the position of "the pastor" of an assembly!

There is a good reason for this! You see, the truth is that in every case in the Greek New Testament where the word for pastor (poimen) appears in the singular accompanied by the definite article (the), it is used in reference solely to our Lord Jesus Christ! Thus, He alone is THE PASTOR of the flock, THE SHEPHERD of the sheep! The sweet singer of Israel stated it so aptly in his lovely Psalm when he sang out by the spirit of inspiration, "The LORD is MY SHEPHERD!" That is the same as, "The LORD is MY PASTOR!" But tell a so-called pastor that today, and he will charge you with rebellion! Can we not see by this that any man who takes to himself this title "the pastor," thereby usurps the headship of our precious Lord! And those groups who have plural ministry, but one among them is designated "the senior pastor," "head elder," or some other such title, usurp even more blasphemously the position of the Lord Jesus, since these terms are the spiritual equivalent of "Chief Shepherd." And the Lord alone is the Chief Shepherd! (1 Pet. 5:4).

I instructed the brethren among whom I labored in years past that they should never call me "the pastor" or "their pastor" because the Lord alone is The Pastor! I may be "a pastor" but I can never be THE PASTOR! The saints were taught that if one came inquiring after "the pastor" they should be told that the pastor is the Lord. If they were asked, "Who is the pastor here?" they should reply, "The Lord is the pastor here!" Should the inquirer press the point they could then explain that brother Eby is one of the ministries in the body, but THE LORD IS THE PASTOR. God's people, even the called out elect, have been so saturated, so thoroughly brain-washed in the errors of the carnal church systems of man, until we speak by rote the ridiculous absurdities assimilated in the pews of religious Babylon. How astounded we are when once we learn the truth and discover that the cherished teaching or hallowed practice we have unwittingly assumed to be godly and spiritual is not only unfounded in the Word of God, but is an abomination in the sight of God!

My beloved, if ever you hope to reign with Christ YOU MUST BECOME SUBMITTED TO THE AUTHORITY OF GOD IN THE SPIRIT — THE SHEPHERD OF ISRAEL. And I'm not talking about coming to El Paso and submitting to my ministry, or to any other man, or group of men. It is amazing how "man" conscious even many who have received the call to sonship still are! They are looking for a man, a leader, a star, who can bring them into the fullness of Christ, into immortality and the kingdom. There is such a man, my friend — His name is Jesus! Certainly we should walk in love and humility with our brethren, "submitting ourselves one to another in the fear of God" (Eph. 5:21). But there is only ONE HEAD of the body — the man Christ Jesus! Some time

ago I was speaking at a Conference and it had been announced that I wouldn't be able to be there. At the last minute the Spirit spoke to me that I should go. When I walked in one of the brethren said, "A lot of people who didn't come because they thought you wouldn't be here are going to be disappointed." I replied, "That's good for them!" They shouldn't be following a man — they should be gathering together unto HIM!

There are men in this word of the kingdom who would lead you to believe that they alone have the words of life, they among all God's prophets have the true, deeper, spiritual, mystical revelation that will lead the sons to perfection and immortality. Not discerning the Lord's body, elevating their word and their ministry above all the Lord's brethren, they draw disciples after themselves. But I tell you the truth and I lie not when I say that no man can minister to you that which he himself does not possess. If a man tells you that he possesses the secret and the truth by which you can save your life and possess physical immortality, yet he himself has neither stopped nor reversed the aging process, only a fool would commit his life into his hands. Ah — there is ONE, my beloved, who HAS STOPPED THE AGING PROCESS, WHO HAS CONQUERED DEATH, WHO IS ALIVE FOREVERMORE, and this One holds the Key, He knows the Secret, He Himself IS the Truth, and I must tell you today HE, AND HE ALONE, HAS THE WORDS OF ETERNAL LIFE! All true ministries in the body of Christ bear one signal mark of distinction: they do not draw followers after themselves, they point all men to the Lord; they do not set themselves up as the last word, the only truth, they do not ask you to submit to them, or follow them to the exclusion of the other ministries in this present truth, but they present you unto HIM WHO IS THE HEAD OVER ALL THINGS TO THE CHURCH, WHICH IS HIS BODY.

I speak the truth when I say that the greatest need in this hour is for the called out people of God to truly KNOW THE LORD FOR THEMSELVES. Let all who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship seek God, and walk with God, and know God, and hear from God, and submit to Him in all His ways, yielding to His will, obeying His word, and God Himself will be your Father and you will sup with Him, and He with you. Ask the guidance of the Holy Spirit, thrust yourself in utter abandonment upon His love and care, and before you realize it you will find yourself digging deep in the storehouse of God's treasures of wisdom and knowledge and sitting with Him at His banqueting table. He will spread a table before you in the presence of your enemies, He will lead you through green pastures; He will reveal to you fountains of living water flowing from within; He will cause you to rest beside cool, still streams; and HE, the Great Shepherd of the sheep will abide with you and your cup will overflow with the unspeakable riches of His grace and the wonder of His glory, wisdom, and power!

Clearly, the most faithful under-shepherd is not the Great Shepherd of the sheep. Under-shepherds do not lead the flock! Every flock has only one shepherd. The under-shepherds bring up the sides and the rear to make sure that every sheep follows the shepherd! Those who are closest to the Lord, who know Him best, and are more deeply conformed to His image, can only direct the searching soul to the Lord. They can never satisfy the hunger of the heart that is going out after Him. How we praise God for all the help we have received through every chosen vessel that He has used to draw us onward toward Him, and into a deeper relation to Himself. With what gratitude to God do we remember those whom He has used to point out to us a nearer approach to the reality of God. How tenderly we look back upon every faithful servant and child of His, who brought us new light, who stirred within us a deeper hunger for God, who opened to us an understanding of His great plan and purpose in us, who provoked us to holy jealousy and emulation through their godly lives.

How we praise God for those who warned and instructed us through the exhortation and admonition that they gave in the hour of need, or in times of weakness or immaturity. How our hunger for Reality, abandonment to God's will, and desire to follow the Lamb all the way to mount Zion, have been increased as we have seen that mysterious light which radiates from the spirits of those who have soared with Him into the heavenly heights. While we thank God for every instrument He uses in our lives, how little one or all of these precious ones can be, compared with our Beloved, if in any way they take His place and draw us to themselves rather than to Himself. We must esteem every servant and instrument of God "exceeding highly in love for their work's sake," but we must never permit them to usurp the place of the Good and Great Shepherd in our lives and affections. Therefore the elect of God in this hour have no desire for an under-shepherd to lead them; and when they do not yield to them, they appear as though they were a stranger. But that is not it at all — it is that the Lord Himself is becoming ALL to us!

The following confirmatory words are from Elaine Cook. "During the summer there are always numerous 'gatherings' being held. Some have 'stars' that you simply must hear! I was praying about this and the Lord answered me. 'In those in whom I am now coming forth, there are no 'stars' so-claimed by men. It is a meek and lowly people — so hidden away and obscure that their names have never been heard in 'the spiritual market place.' They are not known for special giftings or mighty prophetic words, but they know Me. This is the standard for My 'mighties' of this day — they that know Me! It matters not at all if they are known and acclaimed of man, or even if their brethren know them not. 'The Lord knoweth them that are His.' 'And I know who is paying the price to receive the glory of My nature.

"My church does not yet realize that they must become nothing before they can have My true power working in them. The power of gifts is not from the nature of man. It is from the gift that I have given unto the man. I am preparing those who look not for outward gifts to show their spirituality, but whose nature is like Mine because they have been submissive to letting the fire do its work until the strength of the natural man has been utterly subdued. These are My Man in the earth — even that man that is as the fine gold of Ophir. Look for no other man to arise but this one. You shall know them by the nature that has been inworked into them at great cost" — end quote.

We are still speaking of the deeds and doctrine of the NICOLAITANES — those who would subvert you, rule over you, and control your walk in God. The true church is made up of people who have been quickened by the Spirit and made alive in Christ — not denominations, meetings, or programs. These people can have fellowship one with another, but their spiritual walks are individual paths, sovereignly directed by their heavenly Father. Today, the hierarchical structure of the church systems has grown into a monster that exercises a lordship over the souls of men. When one bows down to a code of limited doctrines, worldly organization, and hierarchical domination, he despises God's ever-expanding revelation, denies the leadership of the Spirit in his life, and forfeits his own spiritual inheritance.

Walking out your spiritual life under the domination of Nicolaitanism is the repudiation of one's walk in the liberty and power of the Spirit of God within. The control from the pulpit, the structured programs, orchestrated worship, and formulated creeds are the cataracts of spiritual vision. They make you blind to the on-going purposes of God and the unfolding glory of God! Yielding to their authority is the numbing of the mind of Christ within you. It is your acceptance of serfdom and your abdication of sonship. When you bow to the puppets of Babylon you can never move beyond the little patch of salvation that they control! Under the dominion of "lords" you disavow your submission to Christ the Head, relinquish your personal responsibility to the Father, cast away your spiritual birthright, and sell your soul into servitude. Still, most Christians today prefer the comfort of vassalage in the great slave camps of Babylon, rather than to walk freely with God and develop into spiritual kings and priests. This domination produces children who never grow up! As babes at the breast they are ever dependent upon a suckling church. Thirty years later they will be sitting in the same pew, believing the same things, going through the same motions, standing up when they are told to stand, sitting when they are told to sit, singing when they are told to sing, clapping when they are told to clap, and getting all their life from the actors on the platform. They never learn to feed themselves or stand tall and strong in the kingdom of God! THAT, my beloved, is why the Lord hates the deeds of the Nicolaitanes! That is why I hate the deeds of the Nicolaitanes! That is why every overcoming son of God hates, detests, abhors, and loathes the deeds of the Nicolaitanes! To the saints in Pergamos the Lord said, in regard to them that held the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, **"Repent, or I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth."** **(Rev. 2:16)** The "sword of the Lord's mouth" is His anointed, living WORD! The Lord Himself is now arising in us to fight against the deeds and doctrine of the Nicolaitanes by the word of the Lord! Through the power and might of HIS WORD, the Lord will destroy the evil influences of these "blind leaders" and will bring deliverance to His people. But, in the meantime, all true sons of God will have OVERCOME THE DEEDS AND DOCTRINE OF THE NICOLAITANES! Not one of God's sons will be found in the bondage of man's spiritual domination, for they will have overcome that bondage, as we read, **"He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH WILL I GIVE TO EAT OF THE HIDDEN MANNA..."** **(Rev. 2:17)** Indeed, God has "hidden manna" for His overcomers who are able to overcome the deeds and doctrine of the Nicolaitanes. This 'hidden manna' is new spiritual food that is reserved only for those who dwell in the Most Holy Place of His Glory! Therefore, the overcomers who overcome the deeds and doctrine of the Nicolaitanes are seen worshipping WITHIN THE HOLIEST OF ALL.

Amy Semple McPherson was a woman mightily used of God in the early part of the twentieth century. Many remarkable prophecies came from her lips and some of them are as timeless as the prophecies of the scriptures. Here I would share a few that have special significance for God's elect in these days. These prophecies cover the entire period of church history, from the days of the early church all the way to the manifestation of the sons of God.

THE SIEVE OF THE LORD. Behold, two hands — strong hands — hands of the Lord; and in His hands is a sieve. He is sifting, sifting, sifting His people. Once they were small, and but as dust — then could God use them, but when they ceased to be small and helpless, when they gathered themselves together in separated lumps, they became big and hard and unyielding, and the Lord wept over them. He could no longer mold or shape or fashion them. There were the lumps of unbelief, and the lumps of pride; those lumps of self and doubts and fears; those lumps of formality and ceremony; God could not put them into the body. He could not form them into that glorious body, for they were no longer yielded and submissive in His hands. Once they were small, but now harder and harder and wider the lumps had grown, until they were blind, deaf and dumb and slow of understanding. Then were formed the lumps of organization and Catholicism. Oh, the stiffness and hardness of those lumps! "I must break them; I must smite them with the hammer of my Word. I must have a broken, sifted people through whom I can have my way. I must separate a peculiar people unto myself."

THE GREAT SIEVE. Behold the hands of the Lord. He put the broken lumps into the great sieve He held in His hands. The sieve had large meshes, and as He did shake and begin the work of separation, many of the smaller lumps and dust went through the sieve. Many hearts were broken and contrite under His dealings; but the bigger lumps of doubts and fears and unbelief, He had to throw them away. He loved His people, but those who would not become broken, He had to throw aside. Many went through the sieve in those early days. Many of the smaller lumps passed through the coarse sieve, but they were still hard and lumpy.

THE SECOND SIEVE. So He made another sieve of smaller meshes, and put in His people, who had passed through the first sieve. He shook them and tried them, separated them and sifted them. Many rebelled and refused to go through, so He had to lay them aside. But some went through this second sieve, and precious were they in His sight. Those who went through the sieve had to go through the world. They had to let go one of another; they had to let go of themselves and of the opinions of people. Those who passed through the sieve had to let go all foolishness and pride. O, that sifting — that separating! The Lord gathered them in His hands. There were still a few little lumps. They were still His people; but those who would not believe and be broken, He had to throw aside.

THE FINE SIEVE. Those who had gone through the sieve were not sifted fine enough, nor little enough to be molded, so the Lord made for Himself a still finer sieve. Who can understand the plan of the Lord? Into the finer sieve He put His people, and He is sifting and trying people, who will let Him have His way. All doubts and fears must be eliminated. All selfishness, the old nature, all desire for earthly honor, popularity, and recognition, must be taken away. All hardness, stiffness, and stubbornness must be taken away. All flesh, even good flesh, must be left behind. All selfish ambitions, all gossip, all earthly, idle words, and foolish communication, all falseness and shallowness, and desire for earthly leadership, must be gathered together and cast out. His people He will try again! He will sift them the second, the third time. The fourth time and the fifth time shall He sift His people. Ah! He shall have a people who can go through the finest sieve — pass the finest test, whose hearts are broken, whose spirits are mellow and yielded and who are abandoned to His will. He shall gather them together; not a grain shall be lost. But He shall gather His people together from the East and from the West, from the North and from the South — from the uttermost part of the earth He shall gather them in. He shall hold and mold them in the palm of His hand as fine dust. Once the lumps were large. They were big and great, but He could not use them. His people are a peculiar, sifted, tried people, who are as the dust of His glorious feet; and with that dust He shall form a body, even as He did from Adam in the beginning, so shall He form this body. They shall be yielded in His hands; they shall be pliable under His dealings. He shall make them into members of the body and fasten them together with cords of love.

FORMING THE BODY. The Head shall be joined to the neck — the neck to the shoulders. The arms shall take their places in the sockets, and they shall not be stiff, but shall be oiled, and soft and mellow with the Spirit.

Their breasts shall be of Faith and Love, and shall be full. All the parts of the Body shall be in their places. The spine shall be formed together, and the loins shall be formed and rest in their sockets. From yielded dust shall be formed strong limbs — legs and pillars of marble, not to be removed. Of the humble members shall He form the feet; they shall be humble, and bear about the other members, yet without feet the body could not walk.

GIVING LIFE TO THE BODY. Then shall He breathe upon this body — upon His yielded, slain people. He shall breathe life into the nostrils. They shall walk not by flesh, but by the Spirit of the Lord. They shall be strong and do exploits! From the Head shall grow the long hair of separation and praise to God — not one missing.

COMING TO THE BODY. Soon He cometh! Ah, soon He cometh — this King of glory. His sifted, humble, tried people shall He take by the hand, and stand them upon their feet — many members, one Body, and catch them up to reign with Him upon His throne!

HE THAT HATH AN EAR

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches..." (Rev. 2:7)

Some years ago Harvard astronomers dialed outer space and have been listening for an answer. Their ear, eighty-five feet in diameter, is a receiving dish located near Boston. According to a column in USA Today, this endeavor is the most extensive search ever conducted for intelligent life in outer space. The project is using a sophisticated, computerized radio receiver that allows the scientists to listen and to analyze 128,000 frequencies at once, twenty-four hours a day. Whether this project is still running I don't know, but listening for intelligent messages from the heavens is an exercise that EVERY SON OF GOD IS ENGAGED IN EVERY DAY! Jesus said, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith." So what was the Lord saying? Each person has two ears — one on each side of his head. But He wasn't talking about a natural ear! He was talking about a spiritual ear! He was talking about an individual who has the ability to hear what the Spirit is saying from the heavens of God's Spirit! We can all hear what man is saying, but only one with a spiritual ear can hear what the Spirit is saying! How important it is that we HEAR ARIGHT!

I am reminded of the story of the man who found himself one day in total, abject poverty. Having nothing to eat and no place to spend the night, he knocked on the door of a very big house, in the rich suburb, confident that here he could get a free meal. When the man answered the door he said, "Sir, I'm hungry. Can you give me a meal?" The man said, "No, I will not do that. What I will do is give you an opportunity to earn it. Wait here." A few moments later the rich man came back with a can of paint and a brush and said, "Here you are. You go around the back of the house. You'll see a porch there. I want you to paint it. When it's finished you come back here, ring the bell, give me the paint and the brush and I'll give you a meal." Only a very short time elapsed. The front doorbell rang. The rich man answered it. There was the poor man saying, "I finished the job, now can I have my meal?" The man said, "You have painted the whole porch already?" "Yes, the only thing is, sir, it wasn't a Porche — it was a Mercedes!"

How often have heard the Lord like that! Because of our dullness of hearing, our lack of spiritual understanding, we misinterpreted the will of God and went down a path not of His bidding. Many of the Lord's people are like the story I read about Jack Harris. Jack became convinced he was losing his hearing. He went to a specialist, who gave him a thorough checkup. The doctor pulled out a gold watch and asked, "Can you hear this ticking?" Harris said, "Of course." The doctor walked to the door and held up the watch again. "Now can you hear it?" Harris concentrated and said, "Yes, I can hear it clearly." The doctor then walked out the door and into the next room and said, "Can you hear it now?" Harris said, "Yes." The doctor said, "Mr. Harris, there's nothing wrong with your hearing. You just don't listen."

It is true — at times we just don't listen to the Spirit because we are tuned in to our soul, to our own desires, to the voices of strangers, to the world, or to our own natural understanding. The carnal mind is exceedingly dull and spiritually retarded so that truth cannot penetrate! The carnal mind is exactly like the man in a story I read once which told of an Englishman who long ago went on horseback to a certain village to collect a sum of money. As he was returning with his gold tied to his saddle, he stopped at the roadside at noon to eat his

lunch. With him was his faithful dog who was his constant companion. He untied the sack of gold and set it beside him that it might not be out of his reach at any time. After he had eaten, he fell asleep for a few moments. Then he mounted his horse and continued his journey. But he forgot his gold. The dog began to run in front of the horse and bark and turn back, but the man went on his way. Then the dog began frantically to snap at the horse's heels and turn back. But still his master did not understand. At last he decided that his dog had gone mad. With great reluctance he turned in his saddle and shot the dog through the head. The faithful beast looked at him with questioning eyes; then he dropped in his tracks, and the man went on his way.

Oh, yes! That is just the spirit of religion and the carnal mind! It views the voice of the Spirit and the revelation of Truth as some kind of "madness" and often through history the church systems chose to "shoot the messenger" rather than get off their horse, get down on their knees, and search out what the Spirit was saying, and regain their inheritance!

The Lord is speaking to His called out, yet not everyone is hearing it. So the admonition comes, "He that hath an ear, let him hear!" Yes, let him know that to overcome in this area of hearing is to receive all the promises, to gain the inheritance. As Ray Prinzing has often said, you cannot live on a borrowed revelation. The Spirit must personally quicken it to you, that it becomes life in your own heart, and light upon your pathway, if you are to walk it out and receive within yourself the promise it contains. May we continually be able to say with Samuel, "**Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth.**" (1 Sam. 3:9) Then we will be established in the new purposes of God! When the Lord says, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches," in the minds of most people this is interpreted as saying, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Bible says." You are not going to hear what the Spirit says as long as you are only Bible-oriented. We thank God for the scriptures, for they testify of Him and of His great plan and purpose, but we will never hear what the Spirit is saying until we become SPIRIT-ORIENTED!

You can hear with the natural ears, you can hear words, you can hear the sounds, and it all makes sense and seems right. But there is another ear, an inner ear, a spiritual ear, a hearing in the Spirit, and he that hears with this ear will truly hear what the Spirit is saying! You must have this spiritual ear quickened, and I'll tell you why. Sound is vibration. The air around us is a gas. The sound that we hear is waves that make the air move and strike our ears. Sound waves are caused by the vibration, or shaking of something. It is the vibration that strikes our ear, is transmitted to the brain, and then interpreted as sound. That's how you hear with the natural ear.

I'm sure you've heard the old hypothetical question, "If no man is in the forest and a tree falls, does it make a sound?" In other words, is the vibration itself sound, or is it the interpretation of the vibration by the brain that makes it sound? We were visiting some friends in Arkansas a while back. There was a little plaque on the wall in the bedroom where we stayed, which said, "If a man speaks in the forest, and there is no woman to hear it, is he still wrong?" And you know, the funny thing was that all the ladies in the house were laughing about that, they thought it was so cute; somehow they perceived it as a "put down" to the man. I read it and said, "How can that be a put down of the man? Because with some women, men are always wrong; and if it's asking if a man speaks and there is no woman to hear it, is he still wrong, it seems to me that it should be a put down to the women!" You see, it's a matter of perception! So we had a little fun with that! What I'm saying is that sound as vibration reaches the ear and is then interpreted as sound. That's how it works. You see, things that fall upon our natural senses, upon the ear, for instance, are understood and interpreted by the brain. But in the spiritual world, when we hear the living word of God, we don't hear it with the outer, natural ear at all, for if you hear it with the natural ear it will go to the brain and be interpreted by the carnal mind, by our natural, human understanding. It will be just a dead letter of the word. The living word of God is received only by the inner, spiritual ear, and then the spirit transmits it to the mind in purity, because the word of God is pure. When the vibration is natural and is transmitted to the brain by the nerves from the outer ear, we receive a carnal understanding of what is transmitted. But when the vibration is spiritual and is transmitted to the mind by the spirit, then the word becomes life and light! "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." Hallelujah!

Tony Salmon, in one of his sermon tapes, shared a beautiful illustration of this truth. He said, "I wanted to bring my dog whistle to the meeting tonight to illustrate a point. When you have a dog whistle and blow upon it

there's a sound produced on a frequency that the human ear cannot hear. Now, a person who doesn't understand this would open that whistle and blow it and say, 'Aha! I can hear it!' You see, when you blow the dog whistle there is a superficial sound made which you can hear. Air is rushing in and there is sort of a whistle. Some people think, 'Ah, I can hear that. I can hear it as good as the dog can!' No, you can't. You haven't heard the high frequency — you've heard a lower frequency. There is a sound that humans can hear, but if there is a dog here and I'm blowing the whistle, we're hearing one sound and the dog is hearing another sound.

"This is a little scary, but this is reality. The sound we hear is reverberating on a lower wave at a lower vibration, and the limited ability of our ears can hear that; but what the dog hears is something completely different because the dog's ears are tuned to a higher frequency or vibration. Now, hear me — what we do in this gathering is blow a trumpet. I find in many meetings that the people who are getting the most excited and are saying, 'Yes, I hear, I hear, I hear that word,' are merely hearing the wind that's rushing through the whistle — they really haven't tuned their ears to hear the higher tone of the Spirit! My desire is that when we speak and blow the trumpet that you will go home saying, 'I have heard the voice of my Beloved.' Don't you know that when the voice came to Jesus saying, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,' there were some who were tuned in to hear the voice of the Father and they said, 'God is speaking.' But others said, 'No — it just thundered,' because they were further away or lower down in the spirit and could only hear the wind rushing through the whistle, as it were. When Moses was up on the top of the mountain He saw God face to face and God spoke to him there; but at the bottom of the mountain the people heard only the longer sound waves coming down and all they heard was thunder!" — end quote.

I speak the truth with all soberness when I say that the Spirit is saying something in this hour! What the Spirit is saying cannot be heard with the outer ear of the fleshly mind of human understanding. When the word of God comes to you, my brother, my sister, can you hear what the Spirit is saying, or do you hear only the words of the vessel it may flow through? Vast multitudes of believers, even those who have received the word of reconciliation, sonship, and the kingdom, attend meetings and go away saying, "Oh, that was a good message, I really enjoyed that." But did they hear what the Spirit was saying? Did the Spirit say something to them? Was there a word beyond the spoken words that penetrated to the spiritual ear and spoke as the oracle of God to the inner man? When this happens, this is the revelation of Jesus Christ!

The church in scripture is always feminine. The church is called a bride, it's called a wife, it is espoused to Christ, and is the body of Christ in the same way that Eve was flesh of Adam's flesh and bone of Adam's bones (Eph. 5:21-33). The church is the soul of God. The church is the woman, the womb-man where the seed is planted to bring forth new life. Reverently now I would draw your attention to the word selected by the Holy Spirit in speaking of those who have the inner ear, who truly hear what the Spirit is saying. "HE that hath an ear..." Notice it is HE, the term used is masculine. Now the Spirit is speaking of sonship! He is speaking about growing up unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. This truth is made crystal clear where the Lord speaks to the overcomer, saying, "**HE that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and HE shall be my son.**" (Rev. 21:7)

There is as much difference between the church and the overcomer as there is between the bride of Christ and the manifest sons of God! The church of chapters two and three of the Revelation is the woman, the womb-man where the seed is planted to bring forth the manchild of chapter twelve. It is the woman of chapter twelve who, in fact, bears the manchild. The woman is glorious beyond description, clothed with the sun of Christ's glory, with a crown of twelve stars of divine government on her head, and the moon of the cold reflective light of outward laws, rituals, ceremonies, and ordinances under her feet. This woman is typified by the two churches of Smyrna and Philadelphia against whom the Lord spoke not a word. What a beautiful and splendid woman she is!

However, sonship is the hope of all creation! It is the hope dearest to the heart of God. He has irrevocably purposed to rule the world by sons upon whose shoulders will rest the government of the world. The nations of them that are saved will walk in the light of the bride-city, the New Jerusalem, but they will be governed by the throne in the midst of the city, which is the sons of God. "**To HIM that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne.**" (Rev. 3:21) In the ages to come the whole universe will be ruled by sons of God who will deliver

the creation from the bondage of corruption. No promise of world rule was ever given to the church in the whole book of Revelation! The promise is reiterated again and again to the overcomers who are the sons of God (Rev. 21:7).

The church, the bride of Christ, and the overcomers, the sons of God, make up the vast family of God, and at the head of that vast family stands Jesus Christ, the firstborn of the new creation, the firstborn from the dead, the firstborn of every creature, the firstborn among many brethren. The mother and her sons, with Jesus Christ the Head, are but one family, the cherished wife of the Lamb, beloved of Christ as His own soul, and the sons of God who shall rule the creation of God in a harmony surpassing the sweetest symphony the earth has ever known.

Moses served as a wonderful example and pattern of hearing the voice of God. When Moses was gone into the tabernacle, then he heard the voice. It is not said that the voice began to speak; rather the contrary is implied. The voice would seem to have been speaking all along, but it was only now that Moses heard it. Why did he hear it now? It was because now for the first time he had put himself in the attitude of hearing. It was when he entered into the tabernacle, it was when he consciously and deliberately and purposefully entered into the presence of God, that there woke within him the conviction that God had all the time been speaking with him.

It must be the same with us! Often we are crying in the silence of the night that no divine voice has visited us. Ah, but have we only listened for it with the ear of sense? If so, it is no marvel that we have missed its music! The voice of God cannot be heard by the ear of sense; its tones make no impression, set up no vibration, on the surrounding air, they stir not the waves of the earthly atmosphere. Its accents are too still and small to be caught by the natural ear; they are speaking incessantly, but they are drowned by the thunder, the earthquake, and the fire. If we would hear them we must enter the inner tabernacle, we must open the inner ear!

Have you not read the words of Jesus wherein He taught that miracles are only wrought by faith? Why are miracles only wrought through faith? Not because God is narrow or limited, but because truth is broad and unlimited. The eye cannot see music, the ear cannot hear colors; neither can the natural receive the spiritual! The Holy of holies is the domain of the spirit, the audience-chamber of the soul. Within its holy temple there is heard the voice of God, the voice of the Spirit. Here the mystery of life is unveiled. When we enter into the secret of God's pavilion to speak with Him, there breaks upon our hearts the wondrous revelation of all that God doth speak!

When Jesus taught the people He emphasized the need to hear His word. To John on Patmos He said, "He that hath an ear, let him hear." The great mystery is that not one of us can create within ourselves the hearing ear! The wise man wrote these words of truth and understanding: "**The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made even both of them!**" (Prov. 20:12). That is why the Lord said, "He that hath an ear, let him hear." If you have a spiritual ear, then the Lord Himself gave it to you! You can no more create your own spiritual ear than you save yourself, heal yourself, or manifest yourself as a son of God. This is the calling and the work of God! I trust you are as blessed by this truth as I am. It is thrilling to realize that if we, as God's elect, have a hearing ear, it is only because HE called us, chose us, ordained us, predestinated us, quickened us, and gave us the hearing ear!

Perhaps the most important truth you should know at this time is that you have an ear to hear. It is doubtful that you would be reading this writing if you didn't have an ear to hear! Not only that, but we have within us all the divine faculties necessary to attain to the fullness of Christ. His divine power has given unto us all things that pertain to life and god-like-ness! There is nothing lacking of the divine resources in our lives. We have that inner, spiritual ear to hear. Now listen and hear what the Spirit is saying to His elect in this new Day! We do this by renouncing the self life of the Adamic mind and nature, by turning a deaf ear to the world and the things of it, and tuning our spiritual ear to hear His voice, declaring the pure word of the Lord. J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 35

THE CHURCH IN EPHESUS [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART THIRTY-FIVE

GOD'S SCHOOL FOR OVERCOMERS

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." (Rev. 2:7)

The closing verse of the message to the church in Ephesus includes the admonition common to the message to each of the seven churches, to hear what the Spirit says! Then it gives a promise to "him that overcometh." The implication is that those who overcome would be few in number because it says, "To him that overcomes..." It is on a singular and individual basis! No church as a whole would overcome all the conditions typified by those things the Lord condemned in each church. Only a few individuals scattered throughout the churches would truly overcome all things!

One of the most important truths God's elect can understand in this hour is that there are no "groups" entering into the fullness of God. If you are part of a church, prayer group, Bible study group, or any kind of corporate expression with the vision of sonship and the kingdom of God, not one of you will enter in as a group. All groups or congregations of saints are typified by the seven churches, not by the overcomer! Only "him" that overcometh will receive the promise! All groups are composed of people on different levels of understanding, growth, righteousness, obedience, and faith. The overcomer is that person or persons in the group who pays the price to apprehend the life, kingdom, and glory of God!

"Overcome" — that is a fighting word; it subdues, conquers, vanquishes, prevails, and comes off the victor! "Overcome" means victory. Now "victory" is a word that thrills! Everybody longs to win. If we play even the most trifling game, we prefer to come out victors. This is all the more true when the conflict is a matter of life and death. We are interested in those who win the battle rather than in those who lose. If you do not believe this, go out tomorrow and tell your friends how you struck out and lost the game. You will not be half through your story before those friends turn from you to listen to some man with a sparkle of joy in his eye to tell how he won. We all wish to win! And the glory of this message is that it points the path of victory for every one of us!

Though there are seven churches in the book of Revelation, there is in fact an eighth church, though not designated as such. This church will be the overcomer's manifestation! Throughout scripture and the book of Revelation there are references made to many groups. At times they are called overcomers, or firstfruits, or 144,000, or manchild, or witnesses, or woman, or bride, or city, or great multitude, or harlot, or Mystery Babylon, or beast, or false prophet, or something else. Groups are made up of any number of individuals sharing the same interests, values, experience, purpose, hope or attainment. One may suppose that he has come out of all groups and is walking with the Father alone, but if there are others who share his revelation and experience he is part of a group! Yet, membership in the company of the overcoming sons of God is an individual matter! "To him that overcometh..."

To each overcomer there is an "I will give..." each promise to the overcomer is a spiritual reality of the kingdom of God! Those who will hear this word to overcome and then overcome will attain to a new and higher reality of the kingdom in their lives. The promises are not to those who hear about overcoming, or those who believe in overcoming, or those who talk about overcoming, or those who try to overcome, but the promises are to HIM THAT OVERCOMETH! Many have heard and have thrilled at the concept of overcoming and its promises, but the promises are obtained as we overcome.

Have you read Hugh Price Hughes' story called "The City of Everywhere?" He arrived in that city one cold morning. As he got off the train, the station was like any other station with the crowds and redcaps, except that everybody was barefooted. They wore no shoes. He noticed the cab driver was barefooted. "Pardon me," he asked the driver, "I was just wondering why you don't wear shoes. Don't you believe in shoes?" "Sure we do," said the driver. "Why don't you wear them?" asked the man. The driver replied, "Ah, that's the question. Why don't we wear shoes? Why don't we?" At the hotel it was the same. The clerk, bell boys, everybody was barefooted. In the coffee shop he noticed a nice-looking fellow at a table opposite him who also was barefooted. He said, "I notice you aren't wearing shoes. I wonder why? Don't you know about shoes?" The man replied, "Of course I know about shoes." "Then why don't you wear them?" "Ah, that's the question," said the man. "Why don't we? Why don't we?"

After breakfast he walked out on the street in the snow but every person he saw was barefooted. He asked another man about it and pointed out how the shoes protect the feet from cold. The man said, "We know about shoes. See that building yonder? That is a shoe manufacturing plant. We are proud of that plant and every week we gather there to hear the man in charge tell about shoes and how wonderful they are." "Then why don't you wear shoes?" The man replied, "Ah, that's the question!"

Let me ask you today, Don't we believe in overcoming? Do we not know the wonderful promises made to him that overcometh? Of course we do! We know about overcoming. We believe in overcoming. We talk about overcoming. We read about overcoming. In fact, we gather together weekly or from time to time and listen to great teachings and sermons about overcoming. Yet many seem to be plagued year after year with the same problems, weakness, fears, confusions, lack, limitations, and failures. Many never seem to overcome. Why don't we overcome? Ah, that's the question! Why don't we overcome? Why don't we?

"Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world," said Jesus in the hour of His passion. "Overcoming" is a big word! It means there is something to come over, and getting over it is a divine thing. Even the Lord Jesus was made perfect through the things that He suffered, through blessed obstacles and divine agonies. Sometimes we are asked why God permits so much evil. "Permits?" Why, He sends it! The old mystic was right who said, "There is no doer but God." Not one of the ills of life could ever touch you if He did not open the door. No matter how malignant your assailant might be, when anything has come to you which your soul pronounces unwelcome, praise God and go on — and then you have overcome! The evils, as we call them, of life are often not evils at all. We mix up evil with wickedness or some other negative and talk as if the two were the same. They are not! Evil is a larger term, and pain may be included in it. When we understand the ways of the Lord, we would not have suffering, trial, trouble, tribulation and pain expelled from life for all the glory that imagination can conjure up!

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing had happened unto you." (I Pet. 4:12) "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried...be thou faithful...and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. 2:10) "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen the brethren." (Lk. 22:31-32) If we can realize that God ordains trouble, trials, and tribulations to bring forth the gold of His divine nature from these earthen vessels, we can rejoice, as David, in our afflictions and trials and exclaim with him, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy Statutes." (Ps. 119:7)

One of the fundamental laws of creation is that an opposing force is necessary for growth and to produce strength, stamina, and endurance. Any living thing that grows up without any opposition is weak and powerless. God's sons must be strong and powerful, and anything that desires to be strong, or anyone, must wrestle with a force that is contrary to them. A plant that grows in a greenhouse sheltered from the winds and rains, pampered and protected day after day, may grow large and beautiful, but it is inherently weak, and if suddenly exposed to the elements will quickly wither and die. Any man who wants to build muscular power to be strong to overcome an opponent, must spend weeks and months and years in vigorous training doing heavy exercises, lifting heavy weights, using the opposing force of gravity to develop his strength. There is a great and magnificent future ahead for the sons of God, and a great work our Father has for us to do in the age and the ages to come, and He is now preparing us and making us ready for the high and holy place He has for

us. Can we not see that ALL THE OPPOSING FORCES WE NOW ENCOUNTER, and OUR RESPONSE TO THEM are working together for our good — to develop the strength, character, understanding, compassion, wisdom, faith and power we must acquire?

Sometimes it would seem as though life had no meaning at all; it is only a chaos, and the best that you can do is not to think about it or try to figure it out. Precious friend of mine, do you know what your life means? It means that this present time and experience is a school, and God has put us here to learn lessons for eternity, and all that has befallen you is fitting you to fulfill your place in the kingdom of God. God has something to do in His wonderful universe and He is preparing His sons and daughters to do it! We are put here to live something out for God, to walk something out with God.

Paul Mueller has written, "The principle purpose which is uppermost in the mind of the Father at this time is the growth and coming to maturity of His chosen remnant. Every other purpose under heaven is secondary to this greater purpose during this exceptional time. Therefore, it is essential that all who are members of this Christ body, the sons of God, should concentrate on their own spiritual maturity. Strive not to do the religious works of man, but seek rather for the fullness of Christ in your own heart and life. There is no other purpose under heaven that can equal this grand and holy purpose of the Father! Put away all the desires and appetites of the world and of the flesh, and seek only to please the Lord.

"If you really care for the masses of the world who know not God and His wonderful grace and mercy, then you will seek for His fullness in your life. If you have really heard the groans of a creation that is suffering under the burden of sin and shame, you will cease all your religious activity, which is really only the works of the flesh, and will follow hard after the Lord. Let us seek to please God as Enoch did, and we will witness a glorious manifestation of His life that will set every captive free. God, in His great wisdom, has linked all of creation's needs and travails with the glorious transformation of the bodies of the sons of God into bodies like unto Christ's body. And it is possible that when this glorious transformation does occur, the stones, the trees, shrubs, and grass of the field, as well as all animal life, will lift their voices in praise to Him who has fulfilled His word and satisfied the inherent hope within every created thing" — end quote.

Our wonderful heavenly Father is working out a great purpose in His sonship company in this hour. When God first called us into the move of His Spirit in the days of the Latter Rain outpouring, we were used by the power of the Spirit to see miracles wrought. We saw tumors disappear before our eyes, ruptured discs instantly healed so that people who were bed-ridden rose up and went back to work. Multitudes of people received miracles and the baptism in the Spirit by the laying on of our hands. Angels appeared in the meetings, and mighty signs and wonders took place. Then — just as suddenly as the miracles began, they ended — the river stopped flowing and we saw that it was not working like it did.

Nothing had changed in our life, we had not lost our faith, we had not disobeyed the Lord, we had not gone into error, we had not backslidden or fallen into sin. I went to the Lord and I said, "Father, how is it that it is not like it used to be? What is happening?" After some time of searching the mind of the Spirit about this, the Lord clearly answered, saying, "Son, I have shown you my power that you might know me in that measure. But many have misused my power, and disgraced my name. Now I am doing a new thing. I will withdraw my power for a season that I may call my chosen ones aside and speak to them in the deepest part of their being. I must put my hand of dealing upon them as I did upon Moses, David, and my Son Jesus. I will call them into the wilderness of testing and I will deal with them there. I will purge, purify, instruct, mature, and perfect my sons for the day of unveiling.

"When they are prepared for it I will move again in a power a thousand times greater than you have ever witnessed! I will fill them with my glory and they will not go haywire. They will not get exalted. They will not use the power to their own ends. Neither will they use and abuse my people and fleece the flock. They will not build a kingdom around themselves. They will not drag my name down into the mire of carnality, flesh, sin, and shame. They will not touch success and then forget about me. They will obey me in all things for they shall be my sons in whom I am well pleased. They will be a people that has been cleansed and qualified BEFORE I commit the omnipotent power and authority of my kingdom into their hands. They will be my very own sons made perfect in me. They are going to do wonders, but such as you have never seen before! All nations will be

moved by their word, and all things upon earth will be transformed by their touch. Through them my kingdom will come in power and demonstration and creation shall be set free." And I cried, "Oh God, let it be so!" The Lord has been faithful to His word. Today I see a vast company of sons in preparation throughout the extremities of the earth! His work in us is deep, powerful, and effective! The hour of manifestation draweth near!

There is a difference between learning about and learning. I can learn about football or baseball. I can learn why the referee whistles offside or penalizes a player for clipping. I can learn all about curve balls, strikes, stealing bases, home runs, and outs. I can enjoy watching it. I've learned about it. But when players learn a sport, that's very different. They do more than memorize rules and understand strategies. They learn it with mind and body through grueling practice and experience. Reflexes are tuned, muscles trained, body coordinated. Their learning goes on. No player becomes master of a sport in one or two practice sessions. The elect must learn Christ! "But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard Him, and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus." (Eph. 4:20-21) Such learning goes beyond rules, doctrines, or revelations! It's a process of putting off the old nature and putting on the new. It's a process of being transformed by the renewing of our mind. It's a process of learning obedience through the things we suffer. It's a transformation into God's likeness! It's more than learning about Christ. It's becoming like Him!

The overcomer is one who STANDS TALL IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD. No weight on earth, however heavy, shall be able to hold down or bend earthward those who "come up over" all things. Though the weight of influence and earthly love should cling to these sons of God; though the pressures and problems and perplexities of life should crowd in upon these; though the fear of man and the desire to please man should strive to impede their way; though adversity, calamity, sorrow, tragedy, reversal, and trouble should howl at their heels, none of these weights shall be able to hold down, overcome, discourage, intimidate, upset, frustrate, perplex, or in any way affect those who dwell in union with the Christ who has overcome the world! Though all hell should strive to turn these downward, it shall not prevail; though every foe and earthly friend should conspire together, it shall make the sons of God keep their faces more prayerfully and constantly looking unto Him, their forerunner, as they follow on to know, experience, and appropriate His glorious triumph as their very own!

If you would know the fullness of the spirit of HIS MIGHT within you, if you would have His mighty power at work in and through you, then bow very low in reverence before the holy presence that dwells within you, that asks for your surrender to His guidance and will in even the least of things. Live as one given up to a power that has the complete mastery over you, that has complete possession of your inmost being, of your will, mind, emotions, and desires. Seek not, dear one, to use the spirit of His Might within you; let the spirit of might have possession of you and you shall surely stand in your lot among the overcoming sons of God! This Spirit is given to them that obey Him (Acts 5:32). "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Rom. 8:14)

In the Belgian Congo, the weather was hot and dank. No breath of air stirred; leaves hung from the trees as though they were weighted. In the garden not far from the missionary home a small boy played under a tree. Suddenly, the father called to him: "Philip, obey me instantly — get down on your stomach!" The boy reacted at once, and his father continued, "Now crawl toward me fast." The boy again obeyed. After he had come about half way, the father said, "Now stand up and run to me." The boy reached his father and turned to look back — hanging from the branch under which he had been playing was a fifteen-foot serpent. In like manner, my beloved, OBEDIENCE TO THE FATHER is the route to victory over that ancient serpent, which is the devil and satan, who lurks and slithers about in our own carnal mind. If you have received the call to sonship, the voice of the Father is speaking in your land! He is speaking from deep within you, out of the holy sanctuary of your spirit, and you hear His voice every day.

They err who want the fullness of the Spirit and power of God before they obey. Obedience! It is a tender listening to the voice of the indwelling Spirit and faithfulness to obey every word that He is speaking from within our inner temple that prepares the hearts of God's sons for the fullness of God! When God commanded Israel to build Him a holy place, that He might dwell among them and be their God, He said to Moses, "According to all I show thee, the pattern of the dwelling, even so shall ye make it." And so we find in the last two chapters of

Exodus, eighteen times the expression that all had been made "as the Lord commanded." It was in a house thus built, to His mind, the perfect expression of His will, that GOD CAME TO DWELL. And when the greater house, the true temple of God, came and stood in the earth His declaration was, "Lo, I come to DO THY WILL, O God! In the volume of the book it is written of me." God comes down to dwell in fullness in THE SONS OF OBEDIENCE!

I recall reading, years ago, about a man who had been traveling across America. He came to a wide river and could see on the other side the lights of a city. In order to get there to spend the night, he had to cross this strange and frozen river which was several hundred yards across. He began to walk carefully, one step at a time, until he got ten, twenty, thirty yards out over the river. At that point, being filled with fear he got down on his knees, feeling his way with his hands, afraid that at any moment the ice would give way, plunging him into the black and icy waters beneath.

Finally, his fear so overcame him that he laid himself out flat upon the ice and began to inch along, his heart pounding within. As he reached the middle of the river he heard singing coming from behind him and from one side. Hearing the crunching hooves, he saw a large wagon filled with logs pulled by four horses coming from behind him and about fifty feet to one side, galloping along across the river while the driver sang loudly. As they passed by, he, of course, got up and walked confidently the rest of the way! Ah, just as the wagon load of logs was the proof the traveler could safely cross the river, so the firstborn Son of God, who overcame all things, who was perfected, who pleased the Father, who manifested the glory of God, who conquered sin, death and the grave, and is set down with the Father in His throne, is Himself the living proof that EVERY SON OF GOD CAN OVERCOME ALL THINGS AND MAKE IT IN TO THE FULLNESS OF GOD! Jesus victoriously strode across the sea of sin, sorrow, limitation, and death and with a shout of triumph stepped onto the other side. Be encouraged, my brother, my sister, for He is the forerunner for all who stand tall in His faith and arise to "go over to the other side."

GOD'S SCHOOL FOR OVERCOMERS

So many Christians today are satisfied with merely an entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour. Their eyes are blinded to eternal values, and any efforts to lead them on to higher ground are rebuffed and resisted by a human reasoning, which asks why one should waste time on them since they are saved. But our initial salvation, while it is the most astounding miracle of the ages, yet is the birth of a mere spiritual infant. There are many further steps which must follow this birth if one is to come into all the glories and the full heritage which is prepared for those who follow on to know the Lord. And not one of us has come all the way up to our full privileges in Christ! There is great glory and heavenly wealth awaiting those who become fully equipped unto God's ultimate purpose. Salvation is nothing more than an awakening to a never-ending heavenly God-kind of life. Then the recipient may become a heavenly billionaire, or remain a heavenly pauper. Our initial quickening (salvation) is a free gift through unmerited mercy and favor. But heavenly attainments of wealth and glory and power are given to those who have salvation, and then go on and grow up "unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

The first three chapters of the book of Revelation, which are devoted to the overcomer, reveal through the seven overcoming promises the seven steps through which an overcomer grows in his walk of sonship to God. Each step represents a new level of spiritual maturity available to each member of the elect in his own lifetime. Each of the seven churches represents areas of short comings or testings which must be dealt with in our lives. It is only as we overcome in each area that we will apprehend within our lives the reality promised to those who overcome. The promise simply speaks of an attainment of the life and glory of God in our experience till we find ourselves seated with Him on His throne (Rev. 3:21). Once the seven promises are fulfilled within us, the victorious believer is then complete, mature, and has attained the first resurrection.

You have watched a violinist playing an exquisite sonata, seemingly without any effort at all, drawing his bow gently across the strings and bringing out of the instrument a depth and poignancy of tone that makes your soul tremble. You pick up the same bow and draw it across the same strings, and it will sound exactly like the hair of one animal being scraped over the entrails of another. It simply means that musical skill does not come

naturally. You have to work and struggle for years in order to play a violin effortlessly and beautifully. Nor does perfection in the image of Christ come naturally!

According to the laws of nature, it is necessary to grow gradually by stages in order to attain perfection. In this way alone can we make ourselves ready and fit for the destiny for which we have been created! Sudden or hurried progress leaves us weak and imperfect. The oats, which grow in a few weeks in Texas, do not yield the same nourishment as the wheat, which takes six months to ripen. The bamboo grows three feet daily in tropical climates and shoots up as high as one hundred and eighty-five feet, but it remains empty and hollow within. It cannot compare in strength and durability to the tree which grows over hundreds of years. Slow and gradual progress, therefore, is necessary for perfection. God has given us a life-time to be conformed into the image of His Son and that is how long it usually takes! Time is one of God's agents. He knows how to use it! He won't put authority upon a life that hasn't been subjected to time. Jesus was thirty years old before He started His ministry. Moses was eighty.

As someone has pointed out, wouldn't it be a sad thing to tell a child in the first grade, "Today we're going to study trigonometry?" The teacher must begin instead by saying, "If you had one apple and I had one apple, and we put those apples together, how many apples would we have?" God reveals to us only that with which He can trust us, and He reveals to us what we need to know in and for our day of manifestation. Jesus said that ALL THINGS are possible by faith. Now, do not go out and expect to flap your ears and fly to the moon! There is an order of things. God has a law of development. He does not create a great Sequoia tree overnight. The giant Redwoods of California were not made in a day. God causes them to grow slowly. And so God would cause us to develop and grow in grace, faith, love, wisdom, understanding, and power!

Psalms 120 to 134 are called Psalms or "Song of Degrees." Each Psalm represents a degree or step up the ascending pathway to Jerusalem and the house and throne of the Lord. The people of Israel sang these songs as the caravans of pilgrims made their way up the mountains to attend the feasts of the Lord in Jerusalem. On what we know as Palm Sunday Jesus began the ascent to Jerusalem. It was there that as He drew near and saw the city He wept over it, saying, "Would that thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!" (Lk. 19:41) One still "ascends" to Jerusalem, because Jerusalem is a city set on a hill, and from all points of the compass you have to climb to get there. To the spiritual Holy City and the true House and Throne of the Lord one ascends also in a spiritual sense! This spiritual ascent from the lowlands of the flesh, the natural mind, and the human consciousness is being fulfilled in the lives of the Lord's people today. In this wonderful hour at the junction of the ages, a company of chosen ones is ascending in the Spirit up to the realm of perfection and glory and life.

Seven churches speak to us of different dimensions of growth which all the Lord's elect must pass through. The Greek word for church (ekklesia) means "the out-called" and speaks of people coming out of one realm to come into another realm; a people coming out of one world to enter another world; a people coming out of one mind to possess another mind. Seven churches are seven stages of moving out of one realm into another, out of one state of being into another state of being. The reason the Lord selected those seven churches is because He worked out in them the mystery of the overcoming life, giving us seven promises whereby we can be more than conquerors through Him. You will see in these churches the unveiling of Jesus Christ! You will also see the veil that hides Him in these churches! And you will see the process by which the veil is removed that HE might be revealed in all of His splendor! This is what is being dealt with all through the book of Revelation — the book of the Unveiling. God is dealing with the veil and un-veiling of Jesus Christ! Here you see seven stages of the rending of the veil in the hearts of the saints in order to reveal Jesus Christ in His body. Seven is the symbolic number of completion — representing all it takes to complete the process!

The seven promises to the overcomer represent seven steps of ascent to the throne of God! **The first promise is, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." (Rev. 2:7) The final promise is, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne." (Rev. 3:21)** Thus the ascent is from the tree of life to the throne of God! Our first need, we learn from the promises, is Life. All subsequent promises of transformation and attainment mark the upward path to glory. None of them are attainable until we have Life.

And we cannot reach the throne until we have passed through them all in succession. Each reward is greater than the preceding one!

Each step in the process of overcoming brings us closer to the authority and power of Christ's throne. We now see a new generation of Israel's pilgrims walking these steps to glory! They are the firstfruits, the pilgrims of the new order of the kingdom of God. They are nearing the highest step of the seven, and will soon make their grand entrance into the full glory of God's Christ. Each promise to the overcomer reveals a definite and powerful step in the realization of Christ in our lives. All who are apprehended of the Father unto the fullness of God are diligently walking up that ascending pathway. They are daily applying themselves to this walk! By the strength and power of the Christ within, they are walking upward one step at a time. As we walk up the ascending pathway to the throne, we experience within ourselves all that each promise to the overcomer embodies. When we have arrived at the last step, we will then have experienced within ourselves the authority, power, and dominion of God's omnipotent and universal throne! We will be able by the Spirit of God to rule over all things as sons of God!

Ray Prinzing has aptly expressed this truth thus: "The overcomer's path is one of progressive development that there might be adequate preparation for the next step, and sufficiency for the situation. If we are now yielded to the Spirit of the Lord, and God is having His way in us day by day, at the appointed hour He always has His people fully prepared for what unfolds. This is why we have the pressures of today that they might be instruments in His hands, to develop and train us, so that when the greater battles arise, we're conditioned and ready for them. He instills the inner call and longing, urging us to go on to perfection. It becomes a paradox, for while He is our peace, and rest, etc., yet in another sense He will not let us rest, but steadily motivates us to go on into His fullness. He builds up an internal pressure that demands we respond, for He causes the vision to be so compelling that we must give heed and follow Him. What force, what pressure is urging us onward today! How unique that HE sets us on a quest to come into more of Him, even while all the time HE IS WORKING IN US to make it become a reality.

"He says, 'You will seek me, inquire for and require me (as a vital necessity) and find me; when you search for me with all your heart.' (Jer. 29:13) (Amplified) Yet we say, He has never been lost, we are not seeking to find a lost God. He is only prompting us to search Him out because of what this works within us as we seek Him. And all the time He is RIGHT THERE, and states, 'I will be found of you, says the Lord.' (Jer. 29:14) Bless His wonderful name! Thus, preventive GRACE takes from man every vestige of credit for the act of coming — it all originates with God! 'DRAW ME, we will run after Thee.' (S.of S. 1:4) Run is a response to His drawing! He makes us so thirsty that we become desperate for Him. 'As the hart panteth after the water brooks so pants my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God' (Ps. 42:1-2). How well the Psalmist knew this INNER URGING. It was not yet in all of his brethren, hence they could not understand him. Why must he be so insistent about seeking after God? Why can't he be satisfied with the usual religious fare? BECAUSE GOD FIRST — God first put this desire deep within his being, and God will not let him be satisfied with anything less than His divine fullness and reality" — end quote.

God's highest purpose is for every son of God to come to the full stature of Christ during the years of this life here on earth in the flesh! The term of our life in this present mortal condition is given: "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." (Ps. 90:10) Thus our years in this corruptible form is set by God at seventy years. But what is the purpose of our seventy years of earth-life? Paul attempted to answer this question when he wrote, "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." (II Cor. 4:16) Seventy years are determined as the average life-span of man in the flesh for the purpose of bringing the carnal man of sin and lack and limitation to an end, and of raising up the spiritual man to the maturity and perfection of Christ.

This is a day of instant things. In this fast-paced, fast-food society, we are used to having things as we want them, when we want them. Everything is instant. We can walk into a room and get instant light, heat, or air conditioning by flipping a switch. We get up in the morning and drink instant coffee, eat instant oatmeal, instant soup, instant mashed potatoes, and instant other things too numerous to name. If it isn't instant, then we turn on the microwave. All too often we expect instant results in our spiritual life — instant perfection, instant power,

instant maturity, instant sonship! But, dear one, God doesn't believe in shortcuts! Haste in the high and holy things of the kingdom of God is freighted with grave danger. As George Hawtin once pointed out, when the almighty Creator plants a redwood tree in the womb of mother earth, He is looking forward in infinite wisdom and patience perhaps five thousand years to a day when it is a towering monarch in the forest. Think it not strange, then, that He would spend the entire span of a man's brief life-time in bringing to perfection a saint who is to rule the world as a son of God, bringing life and order out of the dreadful death and chaos that everywhere reigns upon earth. The wonder is that it does not take much longer. Let us, therefore, not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.

This is the only God-ordained method by which all creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption! Seventy years are determined for the fulfillment of this purpose in each one of us and it is ample time for the process to be completed! I do not see that one must be re-cycled again and again, as the pagan doctrine of reincarnation asserts. Certainly God deals with humanity beyond this life, but SEVENTY YEARS IS MORE THAN ENOUGH TO COMPLETE THE WORK IF WE YIELD TO THE DEALING HAND OF GOD. Of the firstborn Son it is written, "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him. And he went down with them (Mary and Joseph), and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." (Lk. 2:40,51-52) It took Jesus only thirty years to attain to the full stature of sonship to God! In thirty-three and a half years He had not only demonstrated the sonship life and ministry, but had overcome all sin, every device of satan, and the power of corruption and death itself, and ascended to the universal throne of His heavenly Father!

Although we see the seventy year span of this life-time as being provided to bring forth a matured and perfected son of God, nevertheless, we know that our God is omnipotent and not bound by time or any of the other restraints that man would place upon Him. If our mighty, omnipotent Father chooses to bring a person to the maturity and perfection of sonship in a few years or a few days, that is His prerogative to do so. Since we are living in the days when the Holy Spirit has sovereignly and supernaturally sent forth the call to sonship, and is accelerating His dealings and purpose, it is altogether possible that the Lord will set apart individuals for this sonship calling who will be brought to maturity at a much faster rate, just as He did with His firstborn Son. The Lord is well able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we may ask or even think without consulting us or conforming to ideas and doctrines we may have. On the other hand, God can reach out beyond the grave and bring back by resurrection those who have walked with Him as sons in this life, but who went by way of the grave because the hour of manifestation had not yet arrived. We cannot put God in a box! But regardless of the time involved in our perfection and transformation, it is a process, and not performed apart from Father's dealings in our lives and our growth and development into Him!

How gracious and wise is our God in all of His ways! The Bible is literally packed full of mysteries, parables, types, shadows, and allegories, which are only unfolded by the Holy Spirit to THOSE WHO FOLLOW ON TO KNOW THE LORD. Jesus once spake a parable, which holds a revelation of unspeakable glory for all who would be conformed to the image of God's Son. The parable occupies just two short verses, but its message is a thing of tremendous importance to those who yearn to grow up into Christ. Jesus said, "And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." (Mat. 6:28-29)

Consider the lilies! What gives exceptional meaning to this object lesson from the lips of Jesus is, that He was not only the author of the parable, but the creator of the lilies. It is like an inventor describing his own machine. He made the lilies and He made man and He makes the New Creation — all on the same broad principle. All together, lilies, men, and sons of God, He gives life and causes to grow and develop into beauty and maturity. So Jesus points to the miracle of nature in the plant kingdom to teach us how to live a free and natural life in Christ, a life which God will unfold for us, without anxiety or effort, just as He UNFOLDS THE FLOWER.

These wonderful words of Jesus were not uttered to inspire us to become horticulturists; we are not to consider the lilies simply to admire their beauty, to wonder at the delicate strength of stem and petal. The thing we are urged to consider is — HOW THEY GROW! Without anxiety or effort the flower blooms into loveliness; without weaving or press the leaves are formed; without artist's paint or brush the flower is tinted with exotic hues;

without toiling these complex tissues spun themselves; without any effort or struggle they slowly came created from the loom of God in their "greater than Solomon" glory. Oh, the wonder of it! The lily has only to remain where it has been planted, drink deeply of the rain the Father sends upon it, and the sun He shines profusely day by day. Trusting and resting in the Father's care the lilies grow. Consider this, O child of God, concerned that you might not be able to attain the beautiful stature of God's Christ. Consider the lilies — HOW THEY GROW!

Everything grows without trying, and, on the other hand, nothing can grow by trying! No man by taking thought has ever added a cubit to his stature, nor has any son or daughter of God ever approached nearer to the stature of the Lord Jesus by working at it! Jesus did not become the Son of God by working — He became the Son of God by growing! Any who thinks to reach this blessed height by anxious effort is really departing from it. Christ's life unfolded itself from a divine seed, planted centrally in His nature, which grew as naturally as a flower from a bud. Only life can do that! For a seed to germinate, sprout, grow, change, develop into a plant of beauty and grace requires the power of an indwelling life. Therefore the man who has within himself this great power — the life of Christ — contains within himself all that is needful to become a son of God! The man who does not have this life active in him cannot be transformed, but the man who has it must be. The life must develop out according to its type; and being a seed of the Christ life, it must unfold into A CHRIST. The end of the growth process is perfection, the mind of Christ, the character of Christ, the power of Christ!

Do not worry, dear ones, as to whether you seem to be making progress or not. There is nothing in the world that grows so fast that you can see it grow! Let God be the judge of how much or how little you have grown. Your duty and mine is to abide in Him, resting in faith, pressing patiently toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ. Rising spontaneously from the dust of earth, shaped into beauty by secret and invisible fingers, the lilies develop we know not how. But we do not doubt it. Every day it is done; it is nature, it is GOD. We are spiritual enough at least to understand that! But when the Christ-life within us rises slowly above the thoughts of the carnal mind, pushing up its pure nature in the teeth of the desires of the self-life, bursting forth into manifestation through the hard clods of the flesh, shaping itself mysteriously into the image of Christ, we often imagine that our own efforts and zeal have contributed substantially to the process! A strong will, we think; hours of prayer, days of fasting, faithfulness to the Lord's work, Bible reading, study, and sheer determination — these account for our growth. Not so! Spiritual stature is not the product of anxious work, self-command, self-denial, or self-control. We confess that the growth of the little lily IS A MIRACLE, spontaneous, instinctive, uncompelled, but somehow we must fret and toil and spin. Ah, Christ in us is not formed by great effort, but by a great POWER! It is the power of His indwelling Life!

Yes, there is a realm of "doing," where, like Christ, we must be about our Father's business, working the works of Him that sent us. But these are works, which are the RESULT OF HIS LIFE IN US, not a means to His life. Christ is the cause, works are the effect. It is when men try to make works the cause of their becoming spiritual that they have missed the mark. There is no work on earth that can make you spiritual! But His life in us will surely manifest itself in righteousness, love, mercy, compassion, giving, blessing, touching creation. Become still, my beloved, before the God of all grace and glory and you will soon learn that you do not need to go out in search of the conditions and elements of your growth in Christ; they, rather, WILL COME IN SEARCH OF YOU!

A dear friend of ours in the city of Detroit shared this meaningful experience with us some years ago following a message I brought along this line. She said, "I will never forget my first day in school in a rural community in the South. I arrived alone, but refused to go inside. I didn't think that I would enjoy school, and was quite certain that I didn't need an education. In my childish mind I made a firm decision not to go to school at all. Quickly I passed by and went straight to my grandmother's home. Grandmother, surprised at seeing me, asked, 'Why, Veta, what are you doing here? Didn't school start today?' I actually felt that I was in command and could carry out my plans, so I replied with finality, 'I have decided not to go to school!'

"Grandmother was a wise old woman, and appeared to respect my decision. She didn't scold, but sadly said, 'I'm so sorry to hear that, Veta. I'm really disappointed that you aren't going to school. You see, grandmother needs someone to write letters for her, and I had hoped that you would go to school and learn to write. I thought you would be the one to write the letters for me.' I loved my grandmother very much, and her words

impacted my childish mind. I changed my mind, deciding to go to school just long enough to learn how to write. I left grandmother's, made my way back down the road to school, arriving late, of course, and walked in with my hat and coat on for I was certain that I would be there for only a short time.

"The teacher was very understanding and quite gentle with me. Later, I found myself at the blackboard, chalk in hand, the teacher's hand upon mine, showing me how to make the number 2 along with the letters of the alphabet. After some minutes I asked the teacher when would we get on with the writing. Suddenly the whole prospect loomed menacingly before my mind and irritatedly I inwardly shouted, 'If we don't go faster than this, I'm going to be here ALL DAY!' And I was, of course. I went back to school the next day, and the next, and the next for many years to come! I became a star student, and a joy to my grandmother."

So, God omnipotent and omniscient, has established here upon earth a School for the training of those destined to be the future rulers of the universe. This school is known as "the church." None shall ever rule upon the throne of the Father who has not graduated from this School! And what a great Teacher we have! One begins in God's School of Kingship and Priesthood in the very first grade. We start with the ABC's. God opens the class and says, "Now children, we are going to learn how to rule. To rule means to govern, to control, to be master over that which is ruled. You can never rule anything until first you overcome it within yourself. To overcome means to 'come up over' that which is over you! When, within yourself, you rise above the circumstance, the problem, the fear, the habit, the limitation, so that it no longer dominates you, you are then ready to control it, to no longer be the victim of circumstances, but the master of them." So, the nitty-gritty of everyday life is the classroom where God teaches us by experience how to overcome, how to reign, how to bless, how to love, how to redeem and restore, how to have compassion, how to use power with understanding and wisdom — how to be a King and Priest in His kingdom!

Every child of God called to sonship is now in school! We may feel that we have graduated from school long ago, but that is a mistake; we hadn't even started to school at that time. When you received the call to sonship and departed from the comfort of the religious norm, and went out in the world on your own, you really then, started to school. When God drew you out of the religious systems of man and separated you unto Himself you may have felt you "graduated" into a new realm — and you certainly did! You graduated from kindergarten! And immediately you were enrolled in the first grade of God's SCHOOL OF SONSHIP. In this school there are several courses taught, but every student must major in overcoming, which is the hardest course to master and finish known in any curriculum in the world today. This matter of disciplining one's thoughts, desires, emotions, habits; of training one's soul and body to function on the level of the mind, wisdom, nature, and power of Christ is of the greatest importance and spells the difference between success and failure in the Kingdom of God. To finish this course marks the difference between being in the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus, or remaining a babe in Christ, a nominal citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven.

God will never give up on us! He is investing in us with every intention of receiving a harvest and expanding His kingdom. Our all-wise Father sees our potential. He knows our capacity to grow and develop. He is keener at discerning it than we are! He is also well aware of our weaknesses, and is ready to help. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me," said Paul. The children of God make a lot of mistakes, for children are children, both naturally and spiritually. Our ability to learn from our mistakes is part of what God uses to build character in us. In the book of Revelation we read that it is the overcomers — those who don't leave God's school or resign from His purposes — who ultimately are given power in His kingdom. Have you made costly mistakes? Have you been stumbling and seemingly wasting God's time? Don't resign! Don't leave God's school! His investment in you is too great! He will see you through! Regardless of how difficult the lessons, graduation day is coming! The positions in His authority and glory are waiting! Learn the lessons that will help you to better serve in the kingdom of God. As you do, great heavenly wealth and power and opportunity to bless and restore all things lie ahead for you. Through you creation will be lifted, redeemed, restored to life and liberty and glory — and that's just the beginning!

Let us learn our lessons well — and let us never presume that we have attained to something in God that we have not yet qualified for. And never let us grasp after a place or position the Father has not conferred upon us. There is no need to DECLARE OUR SONSHIP — the Father Himself declares His sons! "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased...hear ye Him" the voice from heaven said and will say again. Some

have grown weary of waiting for the manifestation God has promised, so they have decided that what they term "classical sonship" was mistaken, and have "watered-down" the hope and settled for a lesser reality, and are calling themselves sons on a lower plane than God has called us to. Some are trying to tell us that if we get out and do all the religious things we used to do, moving in Passover and Pentecostal power, saving souls, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, blessing lives, touching humanity — that is manifest sonship. NO IT ISN'T! That is all good, there is nothing wrong with saving souls and blessing mankind! But we have been doing that for two thousand years and it has not brought the kingdom into all the earth, saved the nations, or delivered creation from the bondage of corruption. It has not eradicated sin, sorrow, and death from the planet! THAT IS NOT SONSHIP! These anxious souls just cannot wait for the Father's appointed time. The place that God has called us to will be in His time, not ours. "The heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father" (Gal. 4:1-2).

Some of us have been in school for a long, long time and have moved through many levels of God's teaching. We have been passing from grade to grade, from realm to realm, from experience to experience, from discipline to discipline, from dimension to dimension in God. We have moved through the tabernacle with all of its furnishings and compartments, and we have now come to the Holiest of all. We have partaken of the Lord's feasts one after another, and He has now brought us to the feast of tabernacles. We have arrived at the threshold of the third day. God still has plenty of time to finish His work, for His plan is a plan of the ages. We have passed through ages within ourselves. God has brought us from Abraham to the Manchild in our brief lifetime, for the ages are within us.

It is vital and necessary for us to grow spiritually from faith to faith, from one dimension of faith to another, for the salvation we seek is revealed in that manner. "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed FROM FAITH TO FAITH: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17). There are steps of spiritual progress in our walk unto the fullness of salvation. With each step of spiritual progress we take, the salvation we have been promised is revealed to us "precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little, there a little" (Isa. 28:10) until we shall stand complete in Him and as He is.

GREAT CHANGES ARE TAKING PLACE NOW IN THE LIVES OF GOD'S ELECT. We are being changed "from glory to glory" by the Spirit of the Lord! We are not of those who come to a certain understanding of God and His purposes and then settle down in that spiritual "place," to await a change that will come some day. Our change will certainly be consummated at a time yet to come, but the changes must take place progressively within us NOW! Each step that we have taken in God has made us the more mature and victorious believer that we are now in the kingdom of our Father. We cannot hope to be transformed in that "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" appearing of Christ if we fail to take any of the revealed steps of spiritual growth, which are revealed to us by the Spirit in the glorious promises to the overcomers out of the seven churches, and are necessary for our complete and total transformation. Each step of spiritual growth in God is an indispensable and essential part of our full salvation!

The promises of God are vast and varied. Some of them are free and can be obtained very easily. That is why so many people receive them! But if you would be a king and priest in the kingdom of God and receive the power to bless and deliver creation; if you would learn the life and authority of the government of God in preparation to take the kingdom and reign with Christ, then that is a different thing altogether. You must become a follower of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. It takes patience to attain any worthy goal. It takes endurance too! No man having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of heaven. We do not attain sonship by a single bound. Neither do we qualify to reign with Christ in a moment of time. It is not something you receive one night at the altar. We have need of patience. We must through faith and patience grow up to the spiritual age of thirty. We are becoming mature ones through experience. Only such can serve as the king-priests of the Most High! J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 36

THE CHURCH IN EPHESUS [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART THIRTY-SIX

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." (Rev. 2:7)

Of all the dreams the heart of man has ever entertained, none has been more desirable, precious, and worthy of attainment, regardless of the cost, than the dream of immortality. Let's be honest; if there was an elixir that was invented guaranteed to give immortality to our physical bodies, we would all buy it and drink it! Kings and emperors who have conquered the world would gladly have exchanged all they had gained for immortality. But all the wealth of all the nations that lay prostrate before their victorious swords, even combined with all the riches amassed in their vast treasure houses, could not buy them so much as one single second's extension of time.

There is a tree of Life! This tree of life is in the paradise of God! Our English word "paradise" comes to us from ancient Persian by way of the Greek language. Paradise is the transliteration of the Greek word *paradeisos* which, in turn transliterates the old Persian term *paridaeza*. This *paridaeza* denoted an enclosed park, beautifully landscaped with floral and fruit trees planted along a spring-fed stream, belonging to the king and his nobles. It is described in some of the ancient historical writings which tell of the idyllic beauty of the orchards of the king's forests, grazed by sheep, and guarded at the entrance by two soldiers whose task it was to see that intruders and spoilers were kept out. Only those who were friends of the monarch were given the pleasant privilege of passing peacefully through its gates to enjoy the sweet waters of the stream and the delicious fruit of the trees.

It is generally supposed by most professed Christians that the words "paradise" and "heaven" are essentially synonymous and that in the Bible they are both used to describe a literal park-like place on a far-away planet which is the "eternal home" of the "saved." There is an old tradition, moreover, one of the many "doctrines of the Pharisees" taught by the Rabbis in the time of Christ, that there was a realm of the world of the dead, called Sheol in Hebrew and Hades in Greek, located deep in the heart of the earth. Out of the discussions and theories of the Rabbis, there grew a popular belief that Sheol or Hades was divided into two compartments, the lower and the upper, Gehenna comprising the lower, the region of the damned with its flames and torments; the upper being Paradise, the intermediate place of bliss and rest into which, at the time of death, the spirits of the righteous entered to await the resurrection day at "the end of the world."

The earnest prayer within my heart is that God's apprehended ones may turn away from all such carnal-minded traditions, myths, folklore, and fables! Jesus warned His disciples, "Take heed and beware of the leaven (teaching) of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees...then understood they how He bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and the Sadducees." (Mat. 16:6,12) Paul also admonished, "Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth." (Tit. 1:14) There is only ONE PARADISE to be found in all the pages of God's blessed Book, and that is the glorious Paradise in Eden from which Adam was banished — now opened once more to every son of Adam's race by the redemption of Jesus Christ. And the Lord's promise to His elect is: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." This paradise is not, nor has it ever been, in the heart of the earth! Such ideas are mere inventions of carnal-minded men!

All the important revelations of the book of Revelation are taught by symbols. The symbols used in the Revelation, and, in fact, throughout the entire Bible, are things and circumstances concerning which we, as humans, have at least some knowledge; otherwise the symbolic language of the Bible would have no meaning to us. There are things we know about the sun, the moon, the stars, about sheep and goats, wheat and tares,

rivers and trees, storms and earthquakes. So when the Bible uses these as symbols, certain spiritual lessons are conveyed to us.

In chapters two and three of the Revelation, seven wonderful promises are made to the Lord's called out people, the overcomers of this present age. All these promises are illustrated by things with which we have at least some acquaintance. Thus we read, **"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."** (Rev. 2:10) No child of God possessing a spiritual mind supposes that he will be wearing a literal crown in some far-off heaven someday! A crown signifies rulership, and the overcomers are destined to share in the highest form of life in the universe, the divine and incorruptible life of God. To receive a "crown of life" means to rule and reign in the power and nature of the divine life!

And then we find, **"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."** (Rev. 2:17) The expression "hidden manna" takes us back to the tabernacle in the wilderness. In the Most Holy Place of this tabernacle was the Ark of the Covenant. In this was placed a golden bowl of manna. While the manna collected daily by the Israelites corrupted, bred worms, and stank, that which they placed in this golden bowl was preserved by the power of divine life. This, then, reveals the wonderful truth of incorruptibility — the inward nature or state of being beyond the possibility of being debased, perverted, adulterated, polluted, warped, contaminated or prostituted. No spiritually enlightened person supposes that the overcomers will one day go to heaven and eat literal manna from a literal golden bowl! But all who are apprehended to the high calling of God in Christ Jesus are given to eat and eat and eat of the incorruptible bread of HIS INCORRUPTIBLE LIFE until all the death of the carnal mind and the corruption of the flesh in them has been swallowed up of His life and the day comes when in the totality of being, spirit, soul, and body, there is nothing that can be corrupted! How much more glorious this is!

As we overcome the doctrines of men and the traditions of men, we are then able to begin to eat of the hidden manna. The tree of life gives us life within, our spirit quickened by His Spirit, but the hidden manna brings us to an incorruptible state of being. Religious systems, dead doctrines, static creeds, empty rituals, powerless ceremonies, vain traditions, and soulish worship have all ministered death to the Lord's people and kept them in a corruptible condition. Only as we have turned from all these have we even really begun to eat of the hidden manna of truth and reality. There is a place of attainment in life where we no longer experience the ups and downs of success followed by defeat in our walk. As we are being processed, tried, and tested, we are subject to "falls" along the way. We catch a vision of high and holy realms in God and, in moments of exceptional anointing, enter for a little while into those blessed experiences, only to have the anointing lift and the vision fade. We walk in victory over the flesh and the carnal mind in certain problem areas of our lives, only to succumb to some other weakness in an unguarded moment. Ah, there is a promise, bright and blessed, that in due time the processing will be completed, the testing will be finished, the secret inworkings consummated, the victory secured once and for all, and those who overcome will live by the hidden manna of His unchangeable and incorruptible life. And there is also a place of attainment in life where we don't have to die, leave our body, and have our corpse buried in a grave. Oh, my beloved! There is the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God! There is hidden manna in the transforming presence of God in the Holiest of all!

The promise is also given, **"To him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out."** (Rev. 3:12) No overcomer will be transformed into a literal pillar in a literal temple in heaven. This is a symbol of a sure and fixed position in which God's elect become not only victorious in their own lives, but put on the strength and might necessary to become a support to the whole economy of God! Pillars are for support. They hold up the whole structure. After experiencing His overcoming power in our own lives we then become a buttress to bear up, hold up, and maintain the kingdom purpose of God through His holy temple which will be the meeting place between God and men in the ages yet to come!

Beloved, so should we understand the blessed promise given of eating of the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God. This does not mean that the overcoming sons of God will live in an earthly paradise, any more than the other promises mean that they will wear literal crowns, eat manna from a golden bowl, or be turned into marble columns in a temple in the sky. This paradise is something far more than a piece of real estate in the Middle East! No such place has ever been found, neither the cherubim with the flaming sword to

keep men out. The paradise of God is not a physical place located on this or any other planet. It is a realm in the heavens of God's Spirit! It is a state of being! It is a higher existence for man than this cursed state we find ourselves in by physical birth. It is the realm and the state of being man was in when first he was brought forth from the creative hand of God and placed in splendor here upon earth. It is man in the Garden of Eden, man living in the presence of God, man eating of the incorruptible life of God, man living above sin, sickness, fear, limitation, pain and death, man as master and lord over all things! Blessed realities one and all! In one sense man was the Garden. And yet, man was in the Garden. It was a garden within a garden, man both in a state of being and in an environment — the two corresponding. It is in THIS PARADISE that the overcomer eats of the tree of Life!

The following testimony by Sharon Dibenedetto is a remarkable witness to this beautiful truth. She writes, "On July 28th, 2002, I was in bed and was talking to the Lord. I had been praying that He would teach me how I could walk in the Paradisical realm and how I could walk in a higher realm all the time. The, I fell asleep. Around 3 a.m. I woke up and began to pray that the Lord would release me from all the bondages of the flesh so that I could walk with Him.

"The first thing that happened was that I saw this beautiful golden light. It was so powerful! I knew I couldn't look directly into the light because it was so bright, but I could surely feel it. I cannot describe in words this glorious light! Then the light came very close to me and I heard a voice say, 'Come up higher.' I felt as though my spirit was being lifted up in the light and now I could see Jesus. The light had carried me over to where Jesus was standing. I felt so overwhelmed at seeing my Lord that, at first, I couldn't even talk to Him. I just stood there for some time. I know I was praising and singing and could also hear and see a heavenly host, singing in perfect harmony, 'Holy, holy, most holy, Hosannah.'

"The light was becoming brighter and brighter. Then I saw Jesus standing on the bank of this beautiful river. It was crystal clear, clean and pure. I exclaimed, 'Lord, I have never seen a river like this on earth!' He answered, 'There is none like this on earth. It is the same substance that is within my people. Put thy hand in the water.' I did so and was amazed to see that this river flowed in four directions. After dipping my hand in the river, I could feel something very different. Jesus asked me, 'What does it feel like?' I said, 'The water feels like pure energy and power.' I had never felt anything like this before! Then the Lord said, 'Go deeper into the water.' As I could feel the power going from my feet up my body, He said, 'Now, go down and cover thy head and come back up again.' As I came up out of the water I felt a sudden change and asked the Lord, 'What is happening?' Jesus answered, 'You are being transformed. Whatever touches this water shall be made alive. This is your new body.' Then the golden light became brighter. 'This is your celestial body. You are in the paradisical realm and I will teach you to walk here.'

"I cried, 'O Lord, I want more! I want all of my full inheritance.' He spoke to me again, 'One step at a time, daughter. As you grow higher I will bring you higher — one step at a time.' I was praising the Lord while I was still standing in the river. I felt wave after wave of energy going through every fiber of my being. Then I felt the Holy Spirit upon me and I knew I was being baptized with fire. The light was all around me and Jesus said, 'Walk in this light. All must come to me and each will experience what you just had. You are full of light and soon it will shine forth for the whole world to see. And I will teach you how to speak life to the world! I am training my sons and my daughters in this day, as well as my warriors.'

"The light became brighter. At this time I awoke. I could still feel this golden light all around me. Even though I was awake, I was hardly aware of anything but this glorious light. It was about 4 a.m. I asked the Lord, 'Was I really in Paradise with you?' He said, 'Yes.' I went back to sleep. Again this golden light came closer and closer to me. I was so full of joy that I was just praising the Lord. I heard a voice say, 'You can now walk in Paradise at will. Practise walking here day and night without ceasing, and you will walk victoriously.' I asked the Lord, 'May I ask you to teach me how to walk in this Garden?' Standing in the light He spoke to me again, 'For you to walk in my Garden you must go deep within.'

"I said, 'Lord, how?' As the light shone brighter, I found myself at the edge of a beautiful Garden. In this Garden was the River of Life and the Tree of Life. Jesus said, 'Take off thy shoes and follow me. You are now walking on holy ground.' I cried, 'O Lord, I never want to leave this Garden!' He reassured me, 'You can be

here in this Garden and work from this realm while your feet are still upon the earth. There is much work to be done and there are so few willing to do my work.' I could feel myself going in and out of the Garden many times. Then this voice spoke to me, 'Now you can go from this realm and into the other realm at will. You can be in Paradise and still have your feet walking and doing my will upon the earth.'

"Again, I was awake with tears of joy running down my face. I felt so different! I know I'll never be the same again. By now it was 4:15 a.m. and the sun was just beginning to rise. I knew I had been with the Lord and felt so blessed. I knew that all I had to do was to look within and walk. My spirit was in Paradise while my flesh was still here on earth. I also had heard the Lord call out the names: Abraham, Noah, Jacob, Isaiah, and Joseph — like a roll-call. I was there too and felt like they all were a part of me" — end quote.

We must remember that this is not merely a tale that leaves us more or less uninvolved. Adam is mankind. Adam is humanity. Adam is you and me and every other man who has ever lived or shall live. What happened to him in that long ago, happened to us. As he was when banished from paradise, so we are as we come into this world. His origin is our origin. His beginning is our beginning. His experience is our experience. His destiny is our destiny. May the gracious spirit of wisdom and revelation from God give enlightenment to the spiritual eyes of all who read these lines that all may see and know of a truth that what was happening to Adam in the Garden speaks of spiritual realities even in the beginning of history, before history, beyond history, and yet in history; it is we ourselves of whom the Garden speaks; it is we ourselves who are intended, addressed, confronted, accused, expelled, redeemed, and restored. It is our history, truly our own! It is the beginning, destiny, guilt, redemption, restoration and perfection of every son of God! What happened to Adam there is what is happening to us here — but in reverse!

The tree of life — we are here at once taken back to the garden in Eden. There we behold the tree of life in the midst of that first paradise. Man, because of his sin, was banished from that lovely paradise and shut away from the blessings accruing from that tree. We have not seen or heard of it since the third chapter of the Bible. But here in the book of Revelation is the promise of it! In the last chapter we see mankind actually participating in this blessed reality. But it is remarkable that after reading of the tree of life in the third of the 1,189 chapters of the Bible we do not hear of it again until here. It is mentioned three times in Genesis and three times in the Revelation. So you see the Bible ends as it began — with a perfect, Edenic condition and state of being. The book of Revelation is the only book that could, logically, close the canon of the Bible. All the tangled threads of prophecy, prose, poetry, history, type, shadow, and promise find their fulfillment and consummation in the last book of the Bible — "The Revelation."

Let us understand the paradise of God with the tree of life in its midst! The tree of life is mentioned very simply in the opening chapters of Genesis. It was IN THE MIDDLE — that is all that is said about it! The life that comes forth from God is in the middle. This means that God, the source of life, is in the middle. In the middle of the realm in which Adam lived and the world over which he was given dominion was not Adam himself, but the wonderful tree of God's very own eternal and incorruptible life. Adam's life was to come from the middle which was not Adam himself, but God in him. This means, simply, that with God as his center man would have Life! Man was created with the capacity of living in the Spirit or of walking after the flesh. He was free to eat of the tree of life, or to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. One of man's inherent potentials was to know God in the Spirit as the center and source of his life!

But — like the tree of life — the other tree also STANDS IN THE MIDDLE! In the middle. Death! Within! In man's very nature. One of man's inherent potentials was to know Self as the center and source of his life. But Self would not bring life, it would mean death. Man could make the world, the outer physical realm, his bodily senses and appetites, his center. Death dwelt in that center! How do we know that sin is "in the middle" just as life is "in the middle"? Jesus understood it! He explained it! **"There is nothing from without a man that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evils come from within, and defile the man."** (Mk. 7:15,21-23) These inspired words carry us right back to the Garden of Eden! There were two trees in the middle. Life and death were in the middle! Two trees in the midst of the garden of man's experience and being. **"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are**

after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life..."
(Rom. 8:5-6) Two minds — in the middle!

In the two trees of life and death in man's middle the Holy Spirit points out man's LIMIT. In these two trees is contained the BOUNDARY set by God upon man from the beginning. This LIMIT declared how low a man could fall and how high a man could rise. Man could fall as low as the tree of death, the carnal mind, the realm of the flesh could carry him — unto the whole dreadful realm of darkness and death in which is contained every sorrow, tragedy, pain, trouble, sickness, hatred, strife, heartache, ignorance, fear, and torment known to man; or, he could rise as high as the spiritual mind, the realm of the spirit could carry him — unto the eternal and incorruptible life of God in which is contained all the joy, peace, righteousness, love, faith, wisdom, glory, and power of GOD HIMSELF!

What fathomless bounds are contained in this LIMIT! Man, by walking in the Spirit, can rise as high as God in the realm of His life, or, by walking in the flesh can sink as low as the devil in the world of darkness and death. What a LIMIT! And man was destined to fall as low as he could fall and rise as high as he could rise. The totality of man's experience is to be found within this limit established by God for man. All that both death and life are would ultimately be experienced, known, and demonstrated by man. This is his limit. This is his territory. This is his destiny. Both realities are in the middle! Within man. One or the other is every man's center, the sphere of his existence. But mark it well — both cannot be the center of any man's life! He who eats of the tree of life will find that the death realm has no more dominion over him. And he who eats of the tree of death will discover that he becomes alienated from the tree of life. Thus, both trees, both realities are in the center of man's life, but both cannot be the center of his life! **"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Rom. 8:13** **"This I say then, Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." (Gal. 5:16)**

The tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God was truly "in the world" but not "of the world." The life of this tree was right within man, the life of God in his spirit, and man's spirit was not of this world, not formed of the dust of the ground, but breathed into his nostrils by the Father of spirits. "God breathed into his nostrils the spirit (Heb.) of life." The glorious life of Christ on earth is the essence and reality of the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God. This tree of life within man had absolutely nothing to do with the realm of earthiness of man's soul and body, for it was heaven's own divine life breathed into man. In the tree of life God invited man to find Him as the source and center of life.

As George Hawtin once pointed out, by the tree of life man would be full of light, abounding in heavenly wisdom and knowledge, fearful in power and dominion, ethereal as a spirit and shining in the image of God. The fruit of this wonderful tree would indeed make man radiant with the resplendent glory of God as was Jesus, the second man and the last Adam, at the transfiguration, whose face shone as the sun and his raiment was as the light. In this tree of life the effulgent perfumes of the heavenly realm would be fragrance and life to man's nostrils. He would taste spiritual realities and touch heavenly things. The wisdom and power of God Himself would be wide open to him and he would walk in the presence and glory of celestial realms. The gates of that realm would never be shut by day or by night. Man would need to eat of no other tree nor drink of any of the waters of earth. Man would have "meat to eat" that no other creature in heaven or earth knew of and "water to drink" that none other had ever tasted. The heavens would be opened over his head and he would walk in the glory of the presence of God the Almighty.

This was the glory of the tree of life in Eden! And what was that glorious tree? "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...in HIM WAS LIFE; and THE LIFE was the light of men" (Jn. 1:1,4). This life-giving tree, the living word of God, even Christ, was from the beginning the life and the light of man. When Eden's gates clanged shut behind our banished foreparents, man was shut up in the realm of the flesh and that blessed tree of divine life was never again seen by the wondering eyes of mortal men until the day in which Jesus stood in the earth and declared, **"I am the LIVING BREAD which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the LIFE OF THE WORLD."** (Jn. 6:51) The reason Jesus came forth as the visible expression (His flesh) of the Father, the tree of life re-planted, was that there might be a focusing, a manifestation which would become a meeting place for us to come to know God, and become one with Him, as it was in the beginning. It

is in Christ Jesus that God and creation meet, come together, and are made one! Christ who is our life has come and been planted in the garden of the kingdom of heaven on earth, that all may come and eat and drink and have Life!

There is an even deeper mystery to this tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They appear as two trees; yet in reality there was only one tree, with two sides, two aspects, or two dimensions. It is stated so simply in these words, "The tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." (Gen. 2:9) There was one tree, and yet two trees. The tree of life is Christ — the living word of God. The profound truth is that in Eden there were two words — a living word, and a word of death! Christ is the living word! But there is another word, and this word is also from God, but it is a word of death. Who planted the tree of death in Eden? Why, bless your heart, God did! "And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight...the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." (Gen. 2:9)

Paul makes these two trees, these two words, very plain when he writes, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance...how shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory." (II Cor. 3:6-9) Here we have two ministrations, two testaments, two words — the one is "the letter that killeth" and the other is "the spirit that quickeneth." But both of these words are the word of the Lord! It was GOD who gave the law to Moses, and it was GOD who gave us the living word in Christ! There are two words, and yet they are but two sides of the same word — the WORD OF GOD!

I firmly believe that the Bible is the word of God; however, when we know it only as the letter, it kills. Laws, rules, regulations, doctrines, creeds, outward ordinances, forms, ceremonies, facts, literalistic interpretations of man, natural concepts, carnal understanding of the written word — there is no life in any of these! There is only death. The dead letter of the word produces dead sermons, dead churches, dead meetings, and spiritually dead believers. The "letter of the word" is still the word of God! And yet there's no life. Moses preached the law, the law was from God, the law was the ministration of death written and engraven in stones, and everybody that received the law died. It was the ministration of condemnation. It had the power to condemn men, to judge them, to punish them, to tell them what they ought to do — but it possessed no power to give them life! It was a word of God, but it was the letter of the word. It was a word without life. It was a word void of reality. It was merely a type, a shadow, a symbol of reality.

THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL IS THE LAW! By the law, Paul says, we know sin. The knowledge of good and evil is by the letter of the word! All the preachers who are out there telling men what great sinners they are, and how they need to stop sinning, are feeding their hearers from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This letter of the word killeth, but it's still a word of the Lord! It's the word of the Lord on a lower level, stripped of its life and power. But the other side of this tree, this word, is the Word of Life! "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...in Him was life, and the life was the light of men." (Jn. 1:1,4) THE TREE OF LIFE IS CHRIST, THE LIVING WORD! There are two words, yet they are the very same word on different levels. There are two trees, yet they are but two sides of the same tree! Adam's sin and fall consisted in his choosing to live a carnal life on the earthy plane, subject to the restraint and regulation of the external law of a carnal commandment, instead of living the spiritual life on the heavenly plane by the Living Word of God!

No words could be more solemn or arresting than the statement of Jesus wherein He said, "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me...as the Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me" (Jn. 6:56-57). As the natural man must have sustenance from his physical environment to live, so the spiritual man must have sustenance from his spiritual environment to live. After he has gotten life you must give him food. What food shall you give him? Shall you feed him with knowledge, or with beauty, or with prosperity, or with blessings, or with religious exercises, or with creeds, or with commandments, or with gifts, or with power, or with programs, or with experiences? No! There is a rarer luxury than all these — so rare, in fact, that few have ever more than tasted it; so rich, that they who have will

never live on any other fare again. It is this: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Mat. 4:4)

Nothing can satisfy the appetite of a son of God but this — he hungers for the bread that cometh down from heaven! Nothing else will fill him. Nothing else will satisfy him. Everyone knows the world is hungry. But the hungry world is starving. They are eating of the wrong tree! The world has many meats and many drinks, but there is no nourishment in them. They are but sugar-water. It has pleasures, and amusements, and excitement, and works; but there is no nutrition there for the immortal craving of the spirit. It has worldly society, and worldly books, and worldly events, and worldly knowledge, and worldly lusts. But these things merely intoxicate!

The church world is hungry, too. Starving, in fact. Oh, it has many meats and many drinks, but there is no nourishment for the spirit in them. It has impressive rituals, and stirring programs, and moving ceremonies, and splendid ordinances, and pomp, and show, and candles, and incense, and temples, and cathedrals, and priests, and preachers, and creeds, and organization, and out-reaches, and abundance of activity. Its people get all involved "in the work," and committed "to the work," and are faithful in "giving to the work." They do and do but in all this something other than CHRIST has become the center. The center becomes the movement, or the message, or the organization, or the program, or the ministry, or the experience, or the method, or the personality, or some other thing. But I declare to you that all these religious things and activities merely intoxicate and millions of Christians are drunk with them and in their inebriated hilarity think they know the living Christ.

There is no substance in them! The divine ingredients of the celestial atmosphere of the kingdom of heaven are missing. Sons of God cannot live on that depleted food. So our spirit turns its eye from them all with unutterable loathing. "Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God which is proceeding from the mouth of God." No possibility of suffering malnutrition or starving on this fare! It is eternal food for the sons of God to live upon. And notice — sons live on every word that is proceeding out of the mouth of God. That is how the Greek expresses it.

Is it not dreadfully true that the vast majority of Christians are living on words that have proceeded out of the mouth of God? They live on a by-gone revelation, a word sent to another people at another time, a historical creed that which God spoke through St. Augustine, through Luther, through Calvin, through Spurgeon, through Whitfield, through Finney, through the Pentecostal pioneers, or through the Latter Rain prophets! It is stale bread, spoiled meat, stagnant water, and a dead word. It is a word that God spoke, but not the word the Spirit is speaking. It is a word that in some ancient day proceeded out of the mouth of God, but not the word that now is proceeding out of His mouth. It is yesterday's manna, and it has bred worms and stinks. It is truth, but not present truth. But the word which is proceeding out of the mouth of God is His Living Word! "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying unto the churches." The living bread of the living Christ in His living revelation to His elect sons in this day is meat that the world knows not of, meat that endures unto the life of the ages. In spring-time it is not sown, and in summer drought it cannot fail. In harvest it is not reaped, yet the storehouse is ever full. Oh, what possibilities of life it opens up!

How can we eat of the tree of Life that is in the midst of the paradise of God? Listen! I can tell you because I know! I know! There are many things I do not know. The things that I do know would make a very small library, I am prepared to admit, but a very precious one to me. The things that I do not know — well, there aren't enough books in the world to contain them. But I know how to get to that Tree, I know how to get the fruit of that tree which is life abundant and everlasting, I know how to get the leaves of the tree, and I know how to get the healing that comes from the leaves of the tree, which are for the healing of the nations. That is something worth knowing. Now, I know! I do not say that I think. I am not guessing. It is by coming to the living Christ and eating of Christ in the Spirit!

The words came to me some time ago — the startling and remarkable words Jesus spoke when He stood in the earth and said, "I am the bread that is come down from heaven, that if a man eat of it he shall never die. I am the living bread. I am the bread that is come down. I am the bread that is become personified in a body of

flesh upon this earth. I am the bread that is from heaven." Immediately the question presented itself to me — Why was Jesus the bread that came from heaven? Why did He specify from heaven? Why did He not simply say, "I am the bread of life, I am the bread that God has provided on earth," or some other characterization? At once I was reminded of the manna that fell in the wilderness — the manna that came from heaven, the typical bread that God sent from heaven to feed the children of Israel. Why was it bread from heaven? Why did not God simply create it there on the ground?

Immediately the Spirit began to articulate within me the wonder of this thing! It came to me so clearly and powerfully as an illustration. Come with me for a moment and let us think of a number of astronauts who are soaring away from earth to a strange planet in some distant galaxy. Along their journey through the universe a problem develops with their spaceship. Eventually they are forced to land on an unknown planet in another galaxy. They make a successful landing, but are stranded there on the planet Timur. They don't know this world into which they have descended. As they step from their ship and begin exploration of the planet, it is discovered to have a very hostile environment. In fact, everything there is hostile to them! All the vegetation on Timur is toxic to the human body. They cannot eat or drink anything. They cannot breathe its atmosphere, nor can they partake of anything there, for everything in that environment is death to them.

The supplies they have with them from earth are finite, and will soon be depleted. So they contact earth, and immediately a rescue expedition is dispatched. As they are staring death in the face the second spacecraft from earth arrives and lands on Timur. The second group of astronauts exit from their craft and say to those who are stranded there, "We are the men who have come from earth. We have the bread that is from earth! We have that bread which is not adverse to you. We have that which is compatible with who you are, and what you are. We have the food that is biologically adapted to your earthly, human constitution. We have come from earth, we have the bread that is your bread, it is from your world, it is from the place of your origin, it is that which pertains to you, and if you eat this bread you will live! This bread will sustain you, energize you, nourish you, and give you expression of who you are. We are the bread that is come from earth!"

Now you see, the bread from earth was the bread from home! Once we understand our origin, where our "home" is in the world of spirit, and how we became trapped in this realm of flesh, which is made death to us, we will grasp the eternal significance of why Jesus came down from heaven into our darkness, into our ignorance, into our limitation, into our sin, into our false identity, into our distorted perceptions. He came down to this world of our natural life, of our carnal minds, of our physical and mortal sense of being; and He says to us as He steps, as it were, from His celestial spacecraft, "I am the bread that is come down from heaven! If a man eats of this bread, he will live and not die! I am the bread that is come from the realm that you came from! I am from your true world, the world of the spirit, the world of the Father, the world of divinity, the world of God, the world of eternity. I am from that world and I have come to speak a word into you. The words that I speak to you are spirit and they are life. The word that I speak is spiritually adapted to your heavenly, spiritual constitution. It is compatible with who you are, and what you are. I am the bread that is come from the heavens of God's Spirit! When you eat of this bread, of this word, you will live and not die!"

Christ Himself is the tree of Life! It is not only to taste of its fruit, but to eat and be filled with all the fruit that grows upon this divine tree; it is to feed upon Him continually until we are filled with all the fullness of Christ, and Christ in our spirit becomes the only reality. It is to turn from the flesh and the carnal mind and feed upon Christ until we are strong in Him and in the power of His might. Oh, wonderful Tree that dwelt in the bosom of the Father from eternity! Oh, marvelous Tree planted of old in Eden's fragrant garden! Oh, precious Tree planted among men as the Son of the Father, planted by the power of the eternal Spirit, and whose fruit is ours as we partake of it through faith! Oh, eternal Tree planted in the garden of our hearts, by which He brings many sons to glory and brings them home to the Father's house! How sweet is the fruit to our taste, how satisfying and life-giving every morsel of which we partake! And we can feed to the full for the fruit is ever growing in the middle of our garden, ever revealed to us, always perfect, and never passes away.

How we rejoice that we have proven there is fruit upon Him; and by feeding upon Him and Him alone, we too bear fruit to His glory. He is our Storehouse, He is the only fruitful Tree, and we can get nothing outside of Him, but we can get everything in Him. The more we feed upon Him, the more we abide in Him. The more He feeds

and nourishes us, the more He becomes manifested in our lives to the glory of God. There is none other like Him among the sons of men, neither among the angels in heaven!

The closer we come to the kingdom, the more do those destined sons of God know what it is to be lifted beyond the pale of natural things to behold the glory of the realm where God lives in the Spirit. The mixture is even now being removed from the hearts of a firstfruit company and many are being enabled to SEE HIM in a new and living way! It is beholding Him that changes us from glory to glory, from corruption to incorruption. The new spirit and the new heart are THE TREE OF LIFE, for they are naught but Christ living within. It is the glory of His presence and the power of His life that transforms the ragged garments of our mortality to raiment which is white and glistening.

Fantastic changes lie ahead for all who separate themselves unto God. Tremendous changes will transpire as soul and body come under the dominion of Christ in our spirit, for mortality shall be swallowed up of life. This corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality. Oh glorious victory! The sons of God shall arise into that blessed realm beyond time, and space, and matter, and the carnal mind, and realize and walk in the fullness of God's glory forevermore. Oh glorious and wonderful realm! It is the realm beyond the veil where we may enter and tread the highways and fields of our heavenly citizenship. It is the realm of the Son of God! It is the inheritance of the sons of God! It is the REALM OF THE TREE OF LIFE IN THE PARADISE OF GOD! The sons of God are the "tree of life" kind of men, and these are they who shall become healing for the nations, a government of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and might, of knowledge and fear of the Lord. From the life of those who enter that realm shall flow forth such glory and blessing that the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea and nothing shall hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain!

In the New Jerusalem city of God there is the florescent river of life. Along this river grows the tree of life. The tree of life in Eden, on the one hand, signifies the partaking of divine life by man, the dispensing of God into man. The river of life, on the other hand, signifies the outflowing of life from man who has received life, the pouring forth of life out of the kingdom of heaven unto the barrenness of the earth realm. All life was to be found in Eden, just as it is in the New Jerusalem — the kingdom of heaven on earth. Eden was constituted debtor to the whole earth to send forth the life-giving streams. To the overcomer is given to enter into the paradise of God and partake of the tree of life; but the river of life out of Eden is the profound expression of God's purpose to not only enter into the lives of His elect, transforming them into the tree of life kind of people, but to then cause them to become a RIVER OF LIFE COMPANY, a people out of whom the life would flow! "Out of your innermost being shall flow rivers of living water." Ah, beloved, God is bringing forth His elect who live by the tree of life but shall then be a river of life, for the spirit of life within them is an ever-flowing wellspring of life and glory! Wherever God flows out by the Spirit, there He is found as life and eternal reality!

What a picture of the life of the Holy City do we find in these words — "In the midst of its street, and of the river, on this side and on that side, the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, in each month yielding its fruit!" The street of the city speaks of its movement and activity; the river speaks of the Spirit of God as the blessed current of its life, pure in crystal brightness; but in the midst of both the street and the river is the tree of life! Every movement in that city centers in Christ; He gives impulse to everything there. And He is in the midst of the river too; the very power of all that quickens, of all the Spirit's flow. And He is not only "in the midst," but "on this side and on that side." Whichever way you look you see the tree of life there, and it yields its fruit perennially. Each month — twelve kinds of fruit! Twelve is the number of divine government. It means that His life within us is the power in which we rule and reign in the kingdom! As it is written, "**They which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.**" (Rom. 5:17) Oh, the mystery of it!

The scripture declares with absolute certainty that the tree of life is accessible only to the overcomer. The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations, but the fruit of the tree is "to him that overcometh." Victory is the condition on which depends the fulfillment of that promise! "Whosoever will" may take of the water of life freely (Rev. 22:17). But only He that "overcometh" may eat of the tree! And now, all of a sudden we feel as Tantalus must have felt in his beautiful garden, when each time he stretched forth his hand to reach the luscious fruit with which the trees of that garden were laden, a blast of wind blew the branch of the tree away,

and Tantalus was left desolate — hungry as before. In a similar way we sometimes feel that the power of the incorruptible life has been withdrawn from our sight. But, the vision is not for everyone. It is not to all that the tree of life offers its fruit, but only to the overcomer. Only a specific class of people are able to put forth claims on the life symbolized by the fruit of that tree. Don't give up, saints of God! Press on, for great is your reward!

God is moving in our hearts and preparing us for a great change in which we shall move completely out of the tripartite nature of spirit, soul, and body to live only and forever in THE REALM OF THE SPIRIT. There, beyond limitation and imperfection, we shall see Him as He is and know Him even as we are known of Him. Our vision of heavenly things has been so distorted due to our looking through physical and soulical eyes. You have sometimes seen a window made of fluted glass, and you know that if you look at the street through this window everything will be distorted. The passers-by and the automobiles will appear to be warped and distorted in absurd and ugly ways. Nevertheless, you know that these things are quite all right in themselves, and that the distortion arises from your seeing them wrongly.

The pure eyes of our spirit has had to filter through the fluted shell of our carnal minds and the marvelous things of the realm of God's Spirit have been distorted into myriads of carnal doctrines, traditions, natural interpretations, childish imaginations, and religious applications of all kinds. This distorted vision of heavenly things is really what we know as "the church." It is a seeing, but a false seeing. It is a knowing, but a false knowing. The sons of God are arising to pass through the veil, to abide in the Holiest of all, to see all things as they really are in the blazing light of God's glory. Our Leader and Forerunner opened up this path to God, in which He first walked Himself, and then draws us to follow Him. The veil is the flesh! The veil that has separated man from God is the flesh! Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh, and dwelt with us here outside the veil. Then within Himself He rent the veil! Through the rent veil of His flesh, His will, His senses, His earthly faculties, His human consciousness, yielded up to God in death, He entered beyond the veil into the Holiest. Through the rent veil He rose to the throne of God! And this is the way He has dedicated for us! He is our way. Let us arise and follow HIM!

Elect of the Lord! Seek to know Christ in the power of His resurrection. Let this be the crown of your life in sonship to God. Do not seek immortality for your body first, or only, apart from the knowledge of Christ in all His other aspects. But seek it truly as that unto which they are meant to lead you. Nothing will fit you for immortality but faithfulness in every step of putting on the MIND OF CHRIST. Seek Him as your wisdom and the wisdom will lead you into the mysteries of complete redemption. Seek Him as your righteousness and dwell clothed with Him in that inner sanctuary of the Father's favor and presence. Seek Him as your sanctification and experience His power to make you holy. Seek Him as your redemption, and live, even now, in the light of that glory. Seek Him as your joy until no earthly sorrow has any more power in you. Seek Him as your peace until you love every enemy and pray for all who despitefully use you and persecute you, and you are disturbed, upset, and frustrated by nothing and no one. And as you seek to experience within yourself to the full, the power of His resurrection life, your heart will be enlarged to see the position man has been destined to occupy in the universe, as having all things made subject to him, and you shall for your part be fitted to live worthy of that high and heavenly calling!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 37

THE CHURCH IN EPHEBUS [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART THIRTY-SEVEN

HE THAT LIVETH AND WAS DEAD THOU ART RICH

"And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write..." (Rev. 2:8)

Smyrna was located about thirty miles north of Ephesus. It still exists today with a population of some 250,000 people. The name of the city has been changed and it is now called Izmir. I have been there and it is a very beautiful city. Smyrna was a wealthy city that rivaled Ephesus in beauty and commerce. It had well-planned harbors with fine avenues, the sea in front and an acropolis behind. It was surrounded by seven hills and today rivals San Francisco for beauty. It was filled with pagan temples of Apollo, Asclepia, Cybelle, Emperor Tiberius, and Zeus. It was famous for its superb school of medicine.

Of the seven churches, two of them received no indictment from the Lord, nor were they told to repent. The church in Smyrna was known as the "suffering church" because of their severe persecutions, and they were not told to repent. The Lord saw their trouble and tribulation, their poverty and imprisonment, their unswerving steadfastness and great faithfulness, and they did not need to be told to repent. It was in their hearts to repent when the need arose, for the work of God ran deep in their lives. Considering all they would suffer, the Lord said to them, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. 2:10) Another church against which the Lord laid no charge, nor did He tell them to repent, was the church in Philadelphia. The Lord saw that they kept His word and had not denied His name, or nature. Because they kept the word of His patience, by which the kingdom of God is inherited, He gave them wonderful promises.

It is my conviction that these two churches, the church in Smyrna and the church in Philadelphia, represent the Lord's elect and chosen remnant in the earth throughout the church age. They also correspond to the two witnesses of chapter eleven of the Revelation. We know that a candlestick represents a church. There are two churches out of the seven that received no condemnation or reproof from the Lord, and were given only great and precious promises. Of the two witnesses it is testified, "And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth." (Rev. 11:3-4) Two candlesticks! Two churches! Two given a special standing before God! Ah, Smyrna and Philadelphia, what a calling you have!

On the personal and individual level the two witnesses are the spirit and the word. The two witnesses speak of the awesome power and word of authority given to the Lord's elect on the pathway to sonship. The two witness company is not the manifest sons of God, for the manchild of chapter twelve of the Revelation represents the manifest sons who are "caught up unto God, and to His throne." (Rev. 12:5) Upon the throne of the Father the manchild, the manifest sons of God, "rules all nations with a rod of iron." (Rev. 12:5) Furthermore, the manchild, the manifest sons of God, receives his authority and dominion under the seventh trumpet, where the mystery of God is finished. The two witnesses, however, receive their ministry of power and authority under the sixth trumpet and they "ascended up to heaven in a cloud." They are caught up to a heavenly place of power and authority, but not to the omnipotence and dominion of the throne! There is a glorious prophetic realm, prefigured by the two witnesses that God's called and chosen elect enter prior to the manifestation of the sons. Since the great move of God that came in 1948 and the years following, I have been, with many who read these lines, a glad partaker of the glory of that prophetic realm of ministry. It was indeed a heavenly realm of signs, wonders, and miracles! I have tasted of the power and glory of that realm by the prophetic anointing of the Spirit! But that prophetic and revival realm ends, and it has already ended! And after the two witnesses or

two candlesticks realm the next thing on God's prophetic agenda is THE BIRTH OF THE MANCHILD! That's where we really are in God's program of the ages.

Smyrna means "sweet smelling" and comes from the root word for myrrh. The myrrh plant is found throughout the Middle East and was used in the manufacture of an aromatic ointment. When bruised and crushed, the myrrh gives forth a lovely fragrance. Myrrh was used to embalm the bodies of the dead. Carefully the linens were prepared, and wound around the bodies of the loved ones, while myrrh was packed between the folds of the cloth. Thus was the body of our Lord embalmed! After the death of Jesus, the women, who had loved and followed Him on earth, brought one hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes to the tomb. With what grief did they take that precious body and wind about it the linen cloths! With what untold tenderness did they lay it away in the bed of fragrant spices! Thus myrrh is a type of suffering and death, and some in the church at Smyrna were to pass through bitter persecution, severe trials, and intense testings, as a picture of that which all of God's called and chosen elect must also pass through. Their sufferings, however, instead of destroying them, would give forth the rich perfume of heaven, the life of the spirit!

In the Song of Solomon the Shulamite's Beloved, beautiful type of God's corporate Son, Head and body, exclaims, "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me up to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense." (S. of S. 4:6) The "Mountain of Myrrh" is a figure of the death of the Son of God, while the "Hill of Frankincense" bespeaks of His resurrection life, for frankincense was uniquely the fragrance of the Most Holy Place, the incorruptible realm of God in the spirit. Beloved, THE CROSS IS THE MOUNTAIN OF MYRRH! The cross includes all the trials, testings, tribulations, and processings the elect pass through in this earthly life on their journey into sonship to God. Do you desire to walk before God and men as an anointed king-priest after the order of Melchizedek? Then you must go up to the mountain of myrrh, the cross, and offer your body as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, and take up your cross and so partake of the sufferings and death of Christ, that your whole life shall be filled with His manifested attributes.

It is not enough to make an occasional trip up to the cross, for death must become a mountain to us, we must go there and stay until the day breaks and the shadows all flee away! It bespeaks of a STATE OF BEING. To be dead is a state of being! We must abide in the condition of the Lord's death. Today, many zealous Christians have the wrong concept. They believe they must fast, weep, pray, wait on the Lord, confess, and struggle in order to die. That is all good, but it is not death! To tarry at an altar is easy; to pray all night is easy; even to fast for a week or a month is easy; to confess with our mouth is easy; but to stay at the mountain of myrrh for a lifetime is not easy. We could all fast and pray for a long time without any sleep, but to stay in the Lord's death means to so identify with His death that we renounce all the works of the flesh, we repudiate all the emotions of the soul, we abandon all the imaginings, reasonings, and inventions of the carnal mind, we disclaim all the hopes, dreams and aspirations of our own will and way, and forsake all the traditions, forms, methods, and foolishness of religion, so that we simply are dead.

It is only then that the day breaks eternal and the shadows of this earth realm forever flee away! Let us open ourselves before the Lord. I do believe that we all have the sense that our Day has not yet fully broken. There has been a dawning within, but there is still so much life, light, and glory that must arise upon those called to sonship! We all realize that there are still some haunting shadows of limitation, sickness, fear, corruption, lack of understanding, and fleshliness about us. No matter how much we say that we are the elect sons of God, sons of Light, sons of the Day, kings and priests of the Most High, and all the rest, there is still the sense that we are not clearly in the Day. As long as we have such a realization we will spontaneously say, "UNTIL the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me up to the Mountain of Myrrh, and to the Hill of Frankincense!"

The more one abides in the light, the more one recognizes darkness. The more perfect one is, the more conscious one becomes of imperfections. So likewise, the more mature a saint becomes, the more he will sense his immaturity! The more alive unto God a believer becomes, the more aware he will be of death that remains. The further one walks onward in God, the greater seems to be the need for cleansing, purging, and purifying. The more one receives praise of the Lord, the more he feels the sky of spiritual life has not yet come into fullest glow. Many who have come forth from the dank tombs of religion to follow on to know the Lord, feel as if they are wandering in somewhat of a wilderness.

What then are these to do? Before the perfect light of the fullness of sonship to God can break and all shadows flee away, we must go to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense and THERE ABIDE UNTIL the day breaks and the shadows flee away. In spite of those who say it is all NOW, we already have the fullness of Christ within, therefore we can manifest and walk in the fullness right now — their life gives the lie to their claims. Yet, it is true, one is always reluctant to leave the present ground of attainment and reach out further for still higher things! But we must hasten to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense and literally steep ourselves in these rich odors. Every member of God's elect is abiding there until all the old life, the old ways, the old self-hood, the old religiousness has been so renounced and so completely yielded to Him that He will find nothing of the old creation nor of the old church order in us. Then! The day will break, there will spring up within His resurrection life, a transcendent overcoming power, a perfected spiritual perception, vital union between soul and spirit, the change of our vile body, and the abundant and unlimited outflowing of His life as rivers of living water! Until the day break! We all have such a longing deep within. There is a turn, and this is the Lord's moving and working within us!

HE THAT LIVETH AND WAS DEAD

"I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen! And I have the keys of hell and of death." (Rev. 1:18) "These things saith He which was dead, and is alive." (Rev. 2:8)

The Lord announces Himself to each of the seven churches in a unique aspect of His nature and glory. To the church in Smyrna He presents Himself as the one who was dead, but is alive and that forevermore. The Head of this glorious company of the overcomers has already overcome! He overcame the last enemy when in the garden He said, "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine be done." He passed through His darkest hour of battle, stared death in the face, and arose on the other side victorious over death, hell, and the grave! Every manifest son of God must obtain this same victory. The apostle Paul desired "that ye may know (experience)...the mighty power which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named...and hath put all things under His feet." (Eph. 1:18-21)

Christ is victor! He has already overcome every enemy! He has conquered them. They are already under His feet. They have no more power over Him! He is above them all. He doesn't get sick, because He overcame all sickness. He can't die anymore, for He arose victor over death. He cannot sin, for He was tempted in all points like we are, and yet without sin. Satan has no power over Him, for Jesus has already had His "bout" with Satan and now holds the Universal Title over him! He overcame the world. He overcame the flesh. Yes, friends, Jesus doesn't have any more battles to fight, any more enemies to subject, for the last enemy that anyone, anywhere, ever has to destroy is death and He has already conquered His last enemy!

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." (Heb. 2:14) It is an exciting and unforgettable thing to see an army routed and fleeing in tumultuous retreat. Who can forget the vivid accounts of Napoleon as he retreated from Moscow and dotted the snows of Russia with ninety thousand bodies of the imperial army of France. Or the armies of Hitler as they retreated across France and back through Germany to Berlin? Or the five kings of the Old Testament who fled across rock and hill as they were pursued by Joshua. Indeed, it is an unforgettable thing!

But the word — "that He through death might destroy him that had the power of death" — announces an even worse discomfiture of another army. For it seems that a grim and ghastly giant proposed to conquer the earth. He was, indeed, the conqueror of all conquerors, for all men from the beginning of time had fallen before him. Beside him Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander, Caesar, Hannibal, Napoleon, and Hitler all paled by comparison. In fact, each of them met him and was himself defeated. His name is DEATH! He carried a black flag and took no prisoners. He dug a trench across the continents and contemptuously filled it with the carcasses of every generation. He gathered together his hosts, an army of all the weaknesses, sorrows, fears, sins, aches, pains, maladies, and infirmities which have ever plagued the human race. It was, indeed, an awesome force to behold! There were legions of cancer and columns of heart disease; squadrons of viruses and battalions of

infection. There were cohorts of malnutrition and armies of accidents. There were horsemen of fear and platoons of sin. There were squadrons of war and regiments of pestilence and plague. It was, indeed, the most fearful, the most formidable army which had ever been arrayed!

He drilled them in the snows of the north and in the jungles of the south. He pitched the tents of the morgue, and threw up the embankments of the cemetery. Most he slew with a single blow of the sword; others were taken by long sieges of evil habits. He knocked with his bony hands at the doors of hospital rooms, and at the doors of bedrooms. Presidents and prime ministers, kings and sultans, czars and dictators fell alike beneath the wheels of his war chariot. He was the victor in all battles!

None could stay his hand or stop his advance, until...until that day when there appeared in Jerusalem one whose countenance was like the morning, one who strode forward unafraid and entered into the very camp of this giant himself. Death confidently reaches out its bony hands and takes this Jesus, of Nazareth, and lifts Him up from the earth and impales Him upon a cross. He then takes the mortal spear and plunges it into His heart. Jesus, with a loud cry, gives up the ghost and dies. Blackness and death cover the land and hope dies! There is none who can stay our foe, or so it seemed that dark day when the very earth trembled and shook under the power of death!

Then — at the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, when there was but the slightest shimmering of dawn on the horizon, a token of that which was to come, suddenly out of the blackness of the tomb emerged a figure clothed in white. Out of the tomb He came, His garments glistening with light. In the midst of that darkness the Prince of Life and the King of Death had been locked in mortal combat, the like of which the world had never seen. Christ came out, not to the roar of hundreds of thousands, but He came out alone, having conquered death within Himself. Like Sampson in Gaza He tore up the gates of death and carried away the bars of the grave. Coming forth from that darksome battle in the grave, He held in His left hand the broken seal of the sepulcher, and in His right hand the key to all the cemeteries of the world! And now the whole world is standing on tiptoe, waiting with bated breath, to behold the glorious sight of the **FIRSTFRUITS OF HIS REDEMPTION** coming forth — the many brethren of our Lord, who are destined by God's plan and purpose to be the next company to fully partake of HIS VICTORY!

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own rank and order: Christ, the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His parousia. Then cometh the end (of the making alive), when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father...for He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. And the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." (**I Cor. 15:22-26**) Because of Christ's victory death shall be abolished for and in all men! Yet there is an order, a progressive unfolding of this wonderful work of God. The scripture quoted above clearly reveals that precise order. Jesus Himself was the first to fully and completely conquer death so that He lives, spirit, soul, and body, never to die anymore! Then by His parousia, which is His presence, His life shall so be raised up in a firstfruits company that these, His many brethren, the manifest sons of God, shall experience the full power of His resurrection and be so changed until their mortal and physical bodies are transformed and fashioned like unto His glorious body. Then, progressively, through God's great plan of the ages, this glorious salvation shall be ministered to all men everywhere by resurrection, restoration, and salvation. What a salvation! What a God! What a plan!

In the light of such truth as this I draw your attention to the deeply meaningful words of the apostle Peter, spoken on the day of Pentecost to the amazed multitude that gathered to witness the wonder of the mighty works wrought at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit by the risen and ascended Christ. Standing up with the eleven he said to the assembled crowd, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: **BECAUSE IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE THAT HE SHOULD BE HOLDEN OF IT.**" (**Acts 2:22-24**)

The thrust of Peter's message was that God raised up Christ from the dead. He loosed the pains of death. And there was a remarkable qualification, a glorious reason behind this event! The reason is stated in these significant words: "Because it was not possible that He should be holden of it." In plain language that means

that it was an utter, total, absolute IMPOSSIBILITY for the grave to hold Jesus Christ! Why? It is my deep conviction that it was impossible for death to hold the firstborn Son of God because NOTHING ELSE COULD HOLD HIM! Nothing could influence, motivate, or control Him except the will of the Father. He had absolutely no correspondence to the desires and lusts and passions and demands of the fleshly realm of this world's bestial system!

That, precious friend of mine, is why death could not hold Jesus — NOTHING ELSE COULD HOLD HIM! Nothing in the whole world could hold Him. Sin could not hold Him, for He was "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." (**Heb. 4:15**) His mother could not hold Him, for He said, when He was told that His mother was standing outside looking for Him, "Who is my mother?" And He stretched forth His hands toward His disciples, and said, "Behold my mother!" His friends could not hold Him. His disciples could not hold Him, for He upbraided and rebuked them for their lack of understanding. "Get thou behind me, Satan!" He said to Peter when he would have dissuaded Jesus from the predestinated will of the Father. The Pharisees could not hold Him. The traditions of the elders could not hold Him. Religion could not hold Him. The hatred of His enemies, the plaudits of His friends could not hold Him. His own desires and will could not hold Him. "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will but Thine be done." So it was but a natural thing that DEATH COULD NOT HOLD THE CHRIST, because nothing else could hold Him!

Therein lies the secret to life and immortality for every son of God! Paul said it this way, and it means the same thing: "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the spirit the things of the spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." (**Rom. 8:5-6,13**) THAT IS WHY DEATH COULD NOT HOLD THE CHRIST! HE LIVED ENTIRELY AND WHOLLY AFTER THE SPIRIT!

What hope we have today as the called out elect of God! The fact of Christ's resurrection is historic. The man who disputes it disputes the best established fact in history. He was seen by those who had despaired of His existence. He ate with them. He drank with them. He walked with them in a bloodless body. He talked with the despondent and broken-hearted disciples for nearly forty days. It was impossible to be deceived. He spoke, and was seen and heard on one occasion by five hundred, the most of whom were living at the time when Paul made the declaration that they knew Christ and had seen Him after His resurrection. They were eyewitnesses of His majesty! He proved His resurrection by telling them that if they would go to Jerusalem and enter into an upper room, and wait for the promise of the Father, the Spirit's power would come. The promised outpouring took place. Tongues of fire danced over their heads, and filled with the Holy Ghost they spoke in tongues they had never learned. Mighty signs and wonders were wrought!

The Spirit's power roared like a mighty wind and swept through, shaking the place where they were sitting. It shook Jerusalem. It shook Israel. It shook the Roman Empire until it fell, to rise no more. It shook the world. The Christ returned in mighty spirit-power! He came as an indwelling Life. Men who were weak became strong. Men who were wicked murderers and devils were transformed into men of virtue and power with God. Men who were illogical became great and mighty reasoners. Men who were feeble stood up, and in their spiritual majesty tower today over all the men of their time. They are better known and have more influence today than all the Caesars put together! All history substantiates their claim. Every philosopher and potentate of their time had to recognize them so that Peter, Paul, James, John and in their degree all of these men, and many of their immediate successors, became the mightiest Powers even in a heathen empire.

Some teach that the great mark of the resurrection was the empty tomb. People travel thousands of miles and spend, annually, untold millions of dollars to get to see that empty tomb in Jerusalem. But the disciples NEVER REFERRED TO IT! They did not need an empty tomb, for they themselves were the witnesses and the proof! Christ was alive in them! The very same power and authority which He had manifested for three and a half years before His crucifixion was now manifested mightily through these men upon whom had come HIS RESURRECTION LIFE! After healing the lame man at the gate of the temple, Peter was called before the Sanhedren and the record states, "And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this." Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, "Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, if we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he

is made whole; be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, WHOM GOD RAISED FROM THE DEAD, EVEN BY HIM doth this man stand before you whole!" (Acts 4:7-10)

The proof of the resurrection of Jesus Christ was in the very fact that HIS POWER had made this man whole! God wants a people today who have the evidence of the resurrection in their lives. The resurrection of Jesus is not a historical fact to be commemorated, but a present and eternal reality to be demonstrated! The church system did not begin to celebrate Easter until they first had lost the dynamic of the Christ in them. When the resurrection is the power of our lives we need no day, no sunrise service, no egg hunts, hats, or Easter bunnies to remind of it! Those are all the dead works of lifeless religion provided for those people who have no life within themselves. Every son of God has repented of such carnal-minded religious observances! Miracles are not the only, or major, proof of the Christ-life within us. The spirit of Christ, the nature of Christ, the mind of Christ, the love of Christ, the wisdom of Christ, the righteousness of Christ, the will of Christ, the faith of Christ — all these and much more are the infallible proof of HIS RESURRECTION LIFE!

When Jesus appeared to Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus road, the record states, "And when we were all fallen to the earth, I (Saul) heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art Thou, Lord? And He said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. But arise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee." (Acts 26:14-16) Years after this Paul wrote to the Galatians and said, "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, TO REVEAL HIS SON IN ME, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." (Gal. 1:15-16) The preaching of the Son of God was not merely through the words Paul spoke stating that he had seen the Lord, but the preaching or proclaiming of the Son was through the REVELATION OF THE SON in Paul's life! "To REVEAL HIS SON IN ME that I might preach Him..." Paul had the evidence of the resurrection in his life and this evidence transcended anything he could tell about what happened to him one day on the Damascus road.

This is RESURRECTION MANIFESTED! This is RESURRECTION DEMONSTRATED! Little wonder that Paul could say, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God." (Gal. 2:20) Ah, no, the empty tomb is no proof of Christ's resurrection! The Jews claimed that His disciples had stolen Jesus' body and hidden it. Even sweet Mary, when she arrived at the tomb, was unconvinced by the rolled away stone. To the one she supposed to be the gardener she said, "Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away." (Jn. 20:15) Nobody paid any attention to the empty tomb for more than three hundred years after the resurrection! You could take all the billions of people who live today on this planet, and the billions who have lived and died in all the generations past, march them past the empty tomb and it would mean nothing at all to them. There is no credible evidence or power in that empty tomb! Creation is not standing on tiptoe waiting to view the empty tomb, my friend; creation is waiting, groaning, travailing to see CHRIST MANIFESTED IN ALL HIS GLORY, NATURE, AND POWER IN THE SONS OF THE RESURRECTION!

The second man, the last Adam, has been made a QUICKENING SPIRIT. Not a quickened spirit, but a quickening spirit. "And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places IN CHRIST JESUS: that in the ages to come He might show (exhibit, put on display) the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." (Eph. 2:1,6-7)

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; sexual vice, impurity, sensual appetites, unholy desires, and all greed and covetousness, for that is idolatry. But now ye also put off all of these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him." (Col. 3:1-2,5,8-10) Truly it is "CHRIST IN YOU, the hope of glory!"

God is raising up a people in this new kingdom Day who shall be so filled with the resurrection life of Christ that they shall be changed even in the atomical structure of their bodies. The promise is sure — "But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell (dwell in union, as in a marriage) in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead SHALL ALSO QUICKEN YOUR MORTAL BODIES by His Spirit that dwelleth (in union, as in a marriage) in you!" (Rom. 8:11) If merely having the Spirit of God in us would quicken our mortal bodies, millions of saints throughout the church age would not have gone by way of the grave, and many who read these lines would already have incorruptible bodies. But there is a truth and a reality beyond receiving the Spirit! The firstborn Son of God not only was filled with the Spirit without measure, He also dwelt in union with the Spirit, as in a marriage. The Spirit was LORD in Him, fully and completely LORD! When nothing else could hold Him but the life of the Spirit of His Father — THEN IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR DEATH TO HOLD HIM! Oh, the mystery of it! Oh, the wonder of it!

Christ is ALIVE! Hallelujah! But don't talk about resurrection unless you have been raised up with Him. Don't talk about being glorified unless the glory is shining through your life! YOU are the only witness God desires to the resurrection of His Son. And with the resurrection life of God's Christ manifested through many sons brought to glory — who in the world needs EASTER? Thank God, the keys of death are in the right hands now, in the hands of the one the Father sent to set creation free. He is now turning those keys in the locks of the lives of His called and chosen elect. He is even now bringing a mighty release within each called one, that death might be swallowed up of victory, and mortality be swallowed up of life! There is a way of victory over every enemy provided for every man and woman who has received the call to sonship. The key is in His mighty hand, and HE IS WITHIN US UNLOCKING THE MYSTERY OF LIFE AND THE TREASURE HOUSE OF IMMORTALITY! It is not by might nor by power, my beloved, but by the Spirit of the Lord!

THOU ART RICH!

"I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, but thou art rich..." (Rev. 2:9)

The saints in Smyrna were exceedingly poor in this world's goods, for their possessions had been seized and confiscated from them under the severe persecutions of the Romans and the Jews. They were an oppressed and poverty-stricken people, yet the Lord says to them, "But thou art rich!" Great heavenly wealth and glory are reserved for those who attain to the fullness of God. Let none who reads these words imagine that heavenly wealth means a "mansion in glory-land" beside a gold street! Indeed not! Bill Britton once gave a beautiful illustration of what true heavenly or spiritual riches are. Bill wrote:

"The crucial verse in this message is found in II Corinthians 8:9. 'For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich.' What a word! He was rich! What was it that made Him rich, before He became poor? Was it because He owned the cattle on a thousand hills? Of course not! He was rich before there were any cattle, or any hills to put them on. Was it because He was the owner of the Bank of Heaven?

"We so often have a perverted sense of what makes a man rich. Take for instance Mr. King. He owns a large business, and makes millions every year. He has so much wealth, he doesn't really know how much he is worth. He has an ulcer that is eating him up inside. He can't eat a decent meal. His wife is an alcoholic, has had a nervous breakdown, hates him with a passion, and would divorce him in a minute if she only had the courage. His son is in prison for manslaughter, having killed a child while driving drunk. His daughter is a heroin addict, living somewhere in a large city with drug pushers. Is he a rich man? Does all his money make him rich? He is, indeed, a very poor man!

"Let us take another example. Brother Green works as a janitor in Mr. King's business. His salary is small, and he has a difficult time paying the rent on the small five-room house where his family lives. He is Spirit-filled, his wife adores him, and their five children are all saved and filled with the Spirit. Three of his sons are already in the ministry. Is he poor? He is one of the richest men in town!

"What made Jesus rich? It was the very substance of what He was! Philippians 2:6 (Amplified) tells us that He was 'essentially one with God and in the form of God, possessing the fullness of the attributes which make God, **God**.' Yes, He was rich! But it goes on to say in the next verse that He stripped Himself of all this, and came to earth to be like one of us. He became poor. At the close of His earthly ministry, Jesus is praying to the Father in heaven. He says, 'I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.' (Jn. 17:4-5) Wow! He says here that He had a glory with the Father before the world existed, which He does not now have. He was rich. But when He stripped Himself. (Phil. 2:7-8) He gave up that glory. Now He has something He did not have back then. A body, given to Him by His mother, Mary. Now He is asking for that glory again. It is to be glorified with the Father's own self, nothing less. Did He receive the answer to this prayer? Absolutely! God has highly exalted Him, every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess Him as Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

"Everyone will agree that Jesus was rich, one with the Father in glory. There is no question about Him becoming poor when He stripped Himself and came to earth in human flesh. But the scripture doesn't stop there! It goes on to say that He had a purpose in becoming poor. Why did He do it? Why did He leave His riches in glory, and become poor? 'That you through His poverty might be rich.' He did it to make us rich! How do you spell that second 'rich'? It's spelled the same as the first 'rich' in that verse. R-I-C-H. And what does it mean? It means the same as the first 'rich', not just to give us a lot of money. Jesus was rich — He makes us rich! What made Him rich? BEING GLORIFIED WITH THE FATHER'S OWN GLORY! What makes us rich? Exactly the same thing! Ephesians 3:19 tells us that we are to be filled with ALL THE FULLNESS OF GOD!

"The plan of God is that we shall inherit all things. (Rev. 21:7) We are to be joint heirs with Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:17). One of the things Jesus has inherited by being the Father's Son is the Father's name (Heb. 1:4). And the verse that says we are joint heirs, also says that we are to be glorified together with Christ. But I must share Romans 8:18 with you from the Amplified Bible: 'For I consider the sufferings of this present life are not worth being compared with the glory that is about to be revealed TO us, and IN us, and FOR us, and CONFERRED ON us!' The next verse says that all creation waits expectantly for God's sons to be made known. That must mean that they are not yet known, as long as creation groans and waits. In John 17 He tells us that He gives us His glory, the very same glory He had with the Father before the world was! At this time He has us covered, as it were, in obscurity.

"This is our destiny, planned for us by One who is well able to bring it about. He never promised us that we would not have suffering, pain, or grief. But He did promise that every suffering would bring us an incomparable amount of His glory! (Rom. 8:17-18; II Cor. 4:17) So don't complain about your situation or your circumstances, just look at His glory! To get a picture of the heights to which Christ is taking us, consider this divine principle: The lower Jesus sinks in His poverty, the higher He takes us in the riches of our inheritance! You are His chosen, His beloved, and He will see you through in victory, I promise. Just cast your care upon Him, for He cares for you. He loves you, more than you will ever know. He came to make you RICH!" — end quote.

I will close this message by sharing from a word received from brother Paul Mueller.

"If we ever might have wondered who the great men of the world are, the following prophetic word of the Lord surely settles it! 'Surely these are poor; they are foolish: for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God. I will get me TO THE GREAT MEN, and will speak unto them; for they have known the way of the Lord, and the judgment of their God.' (Jer. 5:4-5)

"The great men of the world are not the wealthy, the prosperous, the leaders of business and industry, or the politicians and governmental leaders of this world; they are the saints of God who know the way of the Lord and who faithfully and obediently keep it! They shall be exalted in the heavenly courts of the Spirit by their omnipotent and sovereign Father, and eventually shall be heard and received by the multitudes of this world. They shall be given rulership positions in that great and mighty, all-encompassing kingdom of their Father, a spiritual position that they gained through much tribulation.

"During the reign of king David, after the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies, David expressed a desire to build a house for the Lord. The Lord then spoke to Nathan the prophet and gave him His word regarding David's desire to build a house for the Lord. The Lord questioned David's desire and reminded him that God had not dwelt in any house since He brought Israel out of Egypt, but had dwelt in tents or tabernacles. The Lord also informed David that it was God who took him from following the sheep, and who made him to be the ruler over His people, Israel. The Lord said He also was with David in battles, to cut off his enemies, 'and have made thee a great name, like unto the great men that are in the earth.' (II Sam. 7:1-9)

"The kings and priests of God are the great men of this world! Our Father has made them to be that by the authority and power of His kingdom reign and dominion. We may be mere sons of God now, but it does not yet appear what greatness we shall have when our Father has exalted us and made us to sit with Him on His heavenly, spiritual throne, with the masses of the nations at our feet worshipping the Christ of God, of whom we are a part. Other great men are listed in the eleventh chapter of the book of Hebrews! They, along with other God-appointed kings and priests, are the great men of this world. But I hasten to add that they are not just 'men' after the flesh; they are men and women of God who have kept the way of the Lord and who have become spiritually mature 'men' in the Spirit. They have become a part of that masculine man-child, the SON OF MAN company, whether male or female according to the flesh. They have been gloriously changed and wondrously transformed into the image and likeness of Christ, their blessed Savior, Head, Lord, and King" — end quote.

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 38

THE CHURCH IN SMYRNA (continued)

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART THIRTY-EIGHT

THE SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN

"I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." (Rev. 2:9)

"Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." (Phil. 3:2-3) This passage is taken from Paul's epistle to the Philippians. In the course of Paul's inspired admonition to the saints in Philippi he states, "Beware of the concision." The word "concision" is an ironical expression which means mere "mutilation," that is, to cut off an essential part of; to render imperfect; to maim; to cut up; to destroy. It refers to the ritual of circumcision.

Through the entire period of Paul's ministry, he constantly waged warfare against a class of believers known as Judaizers. These Judaizers were actually Jews who made it their business to follow around in the places where Paul had ministered, creep into the midst of the believers who were both Jews and Gentiles after the flesh, whom Paul had founded on the truth, and defile these believers by proclaiming error and persuading them that in order to truly please God they must be circumcised and keep the laws given to Israel. By so doing, the law became the rule by which they measured their righteousness! They were placing their confidence of righteousness in the works of the flesh, in external observances, the things that they could or could not do, rather than in the power of CHRIST'S INDWELLING LIFE.

We find the description of these Judaizers in the fifteenth chapter of Acts. They were from Judea (Acts 15:1). They were "Pharisees which believed." (Acts 15:5) They had belonged to the church at Jerusalem (Acts 15:24). They were, or had been, in fellowship with the twelve apostles. We learn these facts in Acts 15:1-2: "And certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved...therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them." "But!" one may exclaim, "what possible harm could be done simply by being circumcised and keeping some tenets of the law?" In answer we hear the words of the apostle Paul, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that IF YE BE CIRCUMCISED, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are FALLEN FROM GRACE! For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." (Gal. 5:1-6)

Those Judaizers who taught legalism, law, and works, were those of whom Paul spoke when he cried out, "Beware of the concision." Beware of the concision! Beware of the mutilators! Watch out for those who would mutilate your body by cutting off the foreskin of your flesh, while in actuality they are mutilating, cutting off, and making maim your standing in Christ by grace, making your faith void and of no effect through trust in the righteousness of the law. For says the apostle, "Thy circumcision is made uncircumcision," and again, "circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter (law); whose praise is not of men but of God." (Rom. 2:25,29) How clear that our circumcision is spiritual, in the heart and spirit of the inner man; but if we put confidence in the flesh we then cancel out that which is spiritual, life, and reality!

The Philippian church most certainly consisted of both Jews and Gentiles. The first convert was Lydia, who was a Jewess. (Acts 16:14) Then followed the case of the girl possessed with a spirit of divination. Paul cast out the spirit, and undoubtedly the girl was saved. In Acts 16:19-21 we learn that her masters were Romans,

which means in all probability that the girl was also Roman. Then followed the conversion of the Philippian jailer, who most certainly was a Gentile. It is only reasonable to conclude that the greater part of the Philippian church was Gentile proselytes to Judaism or pagans, as were the other churches founded by Paul who was the apostle to the nations.

Now note carefully what Paul says to these believers, most of whom were Gentile converts. "WE are the circumcision!" And oh, that the Lord's people today might learn this simple, yet immensely important truth! "WE (both Israelite and Gentile) are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have NO CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH!" (Phil. 3:3) It is high time for us to understand that natural birth has nothing at all to do with being of the circumcision, the called and chosen elect of God! Circumcision marks those who are His! And the only circumcision God recognizes is of the heart, in the spirit! "Except a man be born again he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Natural lineage from the house of Judah, the house of Israel, or any other race or people has nothing whatever to do with making us the called and chosen elect of God! WE are the circumcision who have no confidence in the flesh! But we, Jew, Israelite, Gentile, rich, poor, free, bond, male, female, worship God in the spirit through the circumcision of our hearts by faith!

We might write for the next fifty years concerning the glorious truths of sonship and the kingdom of God, but no factor of this truth is more solemn or of greater import than the words of our Lord wherein He stated, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." (Jn. 6:63) Notice that Jesus did not say that the flesh profits a little, or is the first prerequisite, or has a small advantage, or that the flesh gives you a head start towards sonship. Oh, no! He said plainly, "The flesh profiteth N-O-T-H-I-N-G!" It is vain and foolish to trust in the flesh, and John the Baptist put it rather succinctly, "And begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father..." (Lk. 3:8) So you have Abraham for your father! That fact isn't worth a hill of beans! That fact will not make you a son of God, it will not get you into the kingdom, nor will it enable you to inherit the promises! In order to qualify as the Israel of God we must be quickened by the Spirit of God, worship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, have a circumcision of our heart by the operation of God, and have no confidence at all in the flesh!

John went on to say, "for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham!" Now let me ask you, precious friend of mine, if God is able of stones to raise up children unto Abraham, should it be thought a thing incredible or impossible or even implausible that He should of the Gentiles raise up seed to Abraham? Because men walk in the natural and are thus incapable of grasping spiritual realities, even though they may profess to be spiritual, we have on every hand those who think of Israel almost wholly on the natural plane. They think with carnal minds about Jews or the ten-tribed House of Israel. There are those even in this message of the kingdom who entertain the crude notion that unless you are a fleshly member of the so-called lost tribes of the House of Israel, you cannot be a manifest son! I verily believe that there is sufficient evidence that the peoples of Northwestern Europe and their descendants pertain to the ten-tribed House of Israel, which migrated across Europe from Assyria in ancient times. It's an interesting study!

I have, however, no hesitation whatever in saying to all who read these lines, the precious black brethren in Africa, the brethren in Latin America, Indonesia, India, the Philippines, and all the other nations, ethnic groups, and diverse cultures who cherish the beautiful hope of sonship — WE, ALL of us — whatever the color of our skin or our national identity — WE are the Israel of God! WE are the circumcision, who worship God in the spirit, and have no confidence in the flesh! WE are the kingdom of God, who have been born from above! WE are the kings and priests of His kingdom! WE are the elect! WE are the saviours coming up on mount Zion! WE are the many-membered Christ! WE are God's chosen people! WE are the sons of God! And it is not because of our national or blood lines, but altogether by grace through faith. "They which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." Do you believe it?

The Jews may certainly be of the people of the Old Covenant. That covenant has been abolished because the people broke that covenant! The Old Covenant is no covenant at all, for it has forever been done away. It has been nullified since Christ came and brought into the earth the new order of the Spirit! The only way anyone, Jew, Israelite, or Gentile can be in a covenant relationship with God is through the New Covenant. All other covenants have been voided! There is no other covenant but CHRIST!

All who partake of this circumcision of which Jesus is the minister, are the true Israel of God. And so, contrary to popular belief, the natural Jew is, in reality, no Jew at all! That is, if the word of God means anything at all! And it does. Hear ye! "He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly (in the flesh); neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter." (Rom. 2:28-29) The testimony is sure: He is NOT a Jew, which is one outwardly in the flesh! But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly, in the heart and spirit, REGARDLESS OF WHAT HE IS IN THE FLESH. That is the gospel truth. That is the New Covenant! The inner man of the new creation is unaffected by what a man is outwardly, in the flesh. He has no confidence in the flesh, but worships God in his spirit. And, I might add, he is NOT an Anglo-Saxon-Celtic Israelite, who is one outwardly, in the flesh! But he is an Israelite indeed, which is one inwardly, in the spirit. Do you believe it? (For an in-depth study of this subject you may request our booklet titled ABRAHAM'S BOSOM).

Those who say they are, and without doubt are, the natural descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; who call themselves Jews and Israelites are nothing more than counterfeits and frauds. The real Jew and the real Israelite is one who is truly of the seed of Abraham through faith. Not by natural blood, but by the transfusion of the blood (life) of the Christ, who Himself is the seed (singular) of Abraham! It is all by faith, the faith of Abraham. Therefore, all who call themselves the seed of Abraham, or the circumcision, or Jews, or Israelites, without being born of the Spirit, are bastards, or as our Lord said, "Ye are of your father the devil." Therefore the Lord says to His called out elect, the church in Smyrna, "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." Ah, now we UNDERSTAND! And again He says, "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." (Rev. 3:9)

In this present hour we hear much of the Jews who are outward in the flesh. A remnant of these outward Jews has returned to the land of Palestine over the past century and has carved out there the modern state of Israel. Many Christians speak ecstatically about the prophecies that are being fulfilled in relation to the Jewish nation. Many live in excited expectation of the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem and the reinstatement of the temple worship with its sacrificial offerings and ceremonial rituals of the law. Then follow the dire predictions of the rise of the antichrist who is supposed to make a covenant with the Jews, have the whole world at his feet, and sit AS GOD in that wonderful temple. Many people are feverishly working day and night for the salvation of the Jews. But I must tell you, my beloved, the return of the outward Jews, the formation of the state of Israel, the seizure of Jerusalem, the fervent prayers at the wailing wall notwithstanding, the counsel of God standeth sure, the truth is as absolute and incontrovertible as it was the day heaven breathed the revelation into the illumined mind of the apostle of Jesus Christ — HE IS N-O-T A JEW WHO IS ONE O-U-T-W-A-R-D-L-Y; BUT HE I-S A JEW WHO IS ONE I-N-W-A-R-D-L-Y!

Let us not have our understanding distorted. Many are loudly proclaiming that the ending of the church age heralds the beginning of THE SUPREMACY OF THE JEWISH STATE OF ISRAEL as the instrument of God's kingdom on earth for the next one thousand years. I tell you today by the Spirit of the Lord — it won't happen! Thank God that He shall, indeed, save the Jews! Thank God that He shall also save all nations as He pours out His Spirit upon all flesh! And so shall be fulfilled that which is written: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, ALL THE ENDS OF THE EARTH: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW, EVERY TONGUE SHALL SWEAR (ALLEGIANCE)." (Isa. 45:22-23) And again, "ALL NATIONS which Thou hast made shall come and WORSHIP BEFORE THEE, O Lord; and shall glorify Thy name." (Ps. 86:9)

I do not doubt for one moment that the Lord is regathering the house of Judah to the land of Israel for a day of national salvation. That does not mean, however, that they shall then occupy some favored position in the kingdom of God! Truly I say to you, it is not given to the outward Jews, who say they are Jews, but are not, to rule the world in righteousness, administer the affairs of God's kingdom on earth, and to bless all nations. They cannot circumvent the word of the Lord Jesus to them two millenniums ago! "Behold, your house (kingdom) is left unto you desolate. Therefore I say unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." (Mat. 23:38; 21:43) There will be a day for the Jews as a whole to know Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. What a day that will be! It will come through the ministry of the sons of

God in glorious manifestation. It should be clear, however, to every spiritual mind that there is a world of difference between being saved and ruling as a son of God in the kingdom! Salvation is a gift of free grace; but the high calling of God in Christ Jesus is a prize to be won!

There are qualifications involved in winning the prize! "To him that overcometh will I give power over the nations." "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne." "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him." The Jewish people through two thousand years of God's dealing with His called and chosen elect have never suffered with Him nor have they overcome. They have suffered, rather, shame and disgrace and indignities of all kinds because of their rejection of Him! They reject Him still. They despise Him still. They hate Him, even today. They will not have "that man" to rule over them! They have flunked every test and missed every opportunity to qualify for world rule! Therefore they won't reign with Him. In the age and the ages to come they will not reign over anything. The fig tree is cursed. The Old Covenant is abolished. They were indeed called and chosen. But they were not faithful! **"The Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful." (Rev. 17:14)**

All that be Jews in spirit, inwardly, are breaking down the imaginations of their hearts, and the evil of their carnal mind, and their earthly wisdom, and their knowledge, and their understanding, and all the images and idols of their hearts, and all the foolishness of the religious church systems, by the spirit of sonship which God has given them, that they may offer to the Lord a sacrifice and an offering in His temple, which temple ye are. The Jews in the spirit are beyond and higher than all the outward Jews in the flesh and their outward offerings in their outward temple, and the offerings of the Jews in spirit render base and worthless all the outward Jews' offerings that be outward and carnal, to do that which is inward and spiritual.

The outward Jews ate of their natural offerings in the outward temple; and so the Jews in the spirit do eat of their offering, Christ, in their temple within, and of their sacrifices, and then they praise God in their temple. The outward Jews' lamp always did burn in their temple, and never went out; and they were to trim their lamps in their temple; so likewise the Jews in the spirit — their lamps of divine illumination and spiritual revelation, the living word of God, are never to go out, but always to burn in their temple; and they are to trim and dress them so that they become a royal priesthood unto God, always attending in the service of the Lord in the temple, morning and evening, offering in the spirit the nature of the Lamb without blemish in the temple: and so the Jews in the spirit are morning and evening offering in the Lamb's spirit, in their temple, which is their bodies, the life, glory, and victory of the Lamb of God! They shall eat of their Lamb in their temple until His incorruptible life is raised up in them fully and there is no more death!

There were priests to eat of the showbread in the outward temple, and the showbread was always to be in the temple on the table; and so the Jews in the spirit always have their fresh bread, the present truth and reality of God's word, in their temple, to eat of it; and they are a spiritual household, and a royal priesthood unto God. And the incense and the sweet odors were to burn in the outward temple; and so the Jews in spirit always have the odors of the fragrance of His presence and the incense of their worship, praise, and prayers in the spirit and by the spirit to burn in their temple. And the Jews in the flesh were not to touch anything, nor eat anything that was unclean; no more do the Jews in the spirit touch or handle anything of the flesh, the world, the devil, or the abominations of man's religion, but they handle Christ in the spirit, and feed upon Him in the spirit, who is pure, and holy, and clean, and eternal, who is the bread of life.

Under the covenant of the law they were not to touch the dead, if they did they were unclean; which is a figure to God's called and chosen elect that walk in the Spirit, they are not to touch the dead ways of the world, nor the death of the carnal mind, nor the dead body of the flesh, nor yet the dead doctrines, methods, programs and outward observance of the carnal church systems wherein is no life; but to touch CHRIST WITH THEIR SPIRIT and HIS LIVING FLESH which He has given for our life. Therefore those called to sonship do not touch any unclean thing, only the living and the clean, that which is spirit and that which is life; for the earth is corrupted with the dead carcasses of former moves of God from which His Spirit has fled, and His life departed, which have now become lifeless ministries; and the flesh thereof makes it stink, and the people smell thereof and are contaminated thereby. **"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my**

sons and my daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (II Cor. 6:17) "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." (Rev. 18:4)

The Jews outward were not to follow and feed upon any offering but their own; and so the Jews in the spirit are to follow no offering but Christ, and feed upon Him who is their own. Christ is the altar that all offer upon that offer up to God spiritual sacrifices: which altar is in the temple of the body. And all who quench the spirit of Christ within themselves, or substitute some external thing for the inward anointing, and suffer not the life of the indwelling Christ to arise and live through them, are such as watch the sepulcher of Christ, and are afraid that Christ should arise! I firmly believe that it is time to leave the shadowy imperfect outward observances and ordinances of the old order church systems which are borrowed and brought over from the outward observances of the Old Covenant, and begin to lay hold upon those spiritual and eternal realities which belong to the kingdom of God within us. Truly I say unto you that all who live by anything other than the Christ within are indeed those of whom the Lord spake, those who say they are Jews, but are not!

THE SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN

"I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." (Rev. 2:9)

Christians generally associate Satan with all the evil in the world and the gross sins of the flesh. This, however, is an error of significant proportions! Every time — as far as I have seen it written in the scriptures — Satan, the devil, that ancient serpent has to do with religion — with spiritual and heavenly things! At every turn this infamous creature is seen busily engaged in steering people away from the Spirit of God; hindering the Lord's people in their fulfilling the will of God; persecuting them because of their testimony; accusing them before God; deceiving them by transforming himself into an angel of light; and sifting, trying, testing them that they may be strengthened, purified, and perfected.

Satan works through the carnal mind, but the spiritual realm is his arena and heavenly things are his concern! Satan is not some hideous creature impishly stoking coals in the depths of the underworld. Oh, no! Satan is religious! Satan has a synagogue! Satan has a pulpit! Satan has a church! The church of Satan is not the one we hear so much about with weird rituals and midnight sacrifices under the full moon. This may seem strange to some who read these lines, but as we examine the scriptures in the light that the Spirit brings we see clearly the truth of it. We do not meet Satan anywhere in the scriptures in the blood and brutality of war, in desolating famine, in the drunken stupor of the barroom, in the sensuality of the harlot's house, at the scene of some dastardly crime, or in the midst of any other of the dark evils of mankind. Oh, no!

We meet Satan first in the lovely Garden of Eden; the garden of the Lord's planting. (**Gen. 3:1**) The next time we see him he is standing up against Israel, provoking David to disobey the Lord by numbering Israel (**I Chron. 21:1-2**). That was a religious act, the carnal mind seeking comfort in numbers, rather than total reliance upon the Lord! The third time we find Satan he is in the presence of all God's sons, presenting himself before the Lord, reporting for duty (**Job 1:6-7**)! Then he became the instrument of testing for righteous Job, which testing was initiated by the Lord, not Satan! In the Psalms Satan is an agent of God for judgment. (**Ps. 109:6-7**) The last time we find Satan in the Old Testament he is standing next to Joshua (Jesus) the high priest, resisting Him in His intercession for Israel. (**Zech. 3:1-2**) And that is all we read about Satan in the Old Testament! Interesting, isn't it? In the New Testament he first appears with Christ in the wilderness, quoting scripture, preaching his doctrine, just as he did with Eve in the garden. (**Mat. 4:1-11**) Later, he is the instrument of God for the destroying of the flesh and carnality of believers who walk after the flesh. (**I Cor. 5:5; II Cor. 12:7**) He transforms himself into an angel of light (spiritual illumination) (II Cor. 11:14). Finally, he appears with an army of strong and mighty angels in heaven as the accuser of the Lord's brethren. (**Rev. 12:3-9**)

You see, my friend, Satan is nowhere in scripture associated with pornography, sexual deviation, promiscuity, or any other dark sin of the flesh — Satan is always RELIGIOUS! Oh, yes, he is a murderer and a liar — but these activities are in a realm of spirit, not in the works of the flesh. Cain, the scripture says, was of that wicked one when he slew his brother Abel. But you see, that first murder was not committed as the result of an argument in a bar over a woman — it was about God's acceptance or rejection of a sacrifice! It was a religious

murder! And Satan's first lie was not that he was "working late at the office" when in fact he was out with another woman — his lie was just this, "Hath God said? God doth know...you shall not surely die!" It is a religious lie, a spiritual deception! Satan lies about God! He lies about truth! He lies about God's purpose! He lies about you! He lies to you about heavenly things! He murders righteousness, He destroys faith, he kills love, he ravages hope, he disputes truth, he crushes obedience and tears down all that is godly and true in Christ Jesus!

The book of Genesis is probably the most important book ever written. The word "genesis" of course means origin or beginning, and the book of Genesis gives the only true and reliable account of the basic entities and conditions of the universe and of life. Genesis yields vital information concerning the origin of ALL THINGS — and therefore the meaning of ALL THINGS! Let every man know that in the whole of the universe there is no greater truth than this one sublime truth that THE FUTURE IS BOUND UP IN THE PAST. A man's belief concerning his origin will inevitably determine his belief about his purpose on earth and his eternal destiny.

The drama of Adam and Eve in the Garden is of supreme importance because it explains the real nature of our life here on earth. It is the portrait of ourselves, our state of being, and how we fashion the environment in which we live. It is the Creator's instruction manual on spiritual and psychological anatomy. When you thoroughly understand the teaching of the Garden of Eden you will understand the nature of God, the nature of man, and the nature of Satan! This parable is placed at the outset of human history and in the opening scenes of God's divine record because it is the foundation of all understanding, the blueprint of man's experience on earth and his destiny in God.

Adam and Eve in the Garden represent the whole of humanity in the first Adam. They represent you and me and every man and woman who has ever lived or shall live. What happened to them happens to us. What they were we are. Their experience is our experience. Their destiny is our destiny. May the mighty spirit of wisdom and revelation from God give enlightenment to the eyes of your understanding that you may see and know of a truth that what was happening to Adam in the Garden speaks of spiritual realities even in the beginning of history, before history, beyond history, and yet in history; it is we ourselves of whom the Garden speaks, it is we ourselves that are confronted, intended, addressed, accused, expelled, instructed, and redeemed. God Himself is the one who blesses and curses! It is our pre-history, truly our own. It is the beginning, innocence, testing, guilt, redemption, and perfection of every one of us. What happened to Adam there is what is happening to us here! Adam and Eve stand for what man is, how man is, why man is.

You would have thought Adam would have had to leave the Garden and go out into outer darkness in order to find Satan. But no! Satan was in the garden of God! What was the serpent doing when Eve met him that fateful day so long ago? Eve did not meet the serpent in a bar — enticing her to get drunk. She did not meet the serpent at a strip-joint — inviting her to become a nude dancer. It was not in the form of a handsome, smooth talking hunk that Satan appeared — tempting her to lust and seducing her to commit adultery. He did not come out of a criminal world to enlist her in a gang of bank robbers, swindlers, or drug runners. Eve wasn't tempted that day to cuss, smoke, carouse, lie, cheat, or steal. Oh, no! The gross sins of the flesh were in no way involved in Satan's activity, man's sin, or his fall! What, then, was Satan doing? Why, bless your heart, he was preaching! The very first appearance of that ancient serpent was at a religious meeting! The discussion was not wine, women, and song — the discussion was about THE WORD OF GOD! It was about SPIRITUAL THINGS! The subject, in fact, was SONSHIP! "Hath God said?" the serpent hissed. "God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods!" "Ye shall be as ELOHIM!"

Later we meet Satan in the book of Job. It isn't in the smoky atmosphere of the underworld that we encounter a fiendish, mocking Satan gleefully stoking the fires of hell while sending forth his imps to incite Job to lust, cheat, kill, lie, and steal. Rather, we read, "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them." (Job 1:6) Satan was among the sons of God in the presence of the Lord! No Al Capone or Charles Manson here! Satan appeared, not in the lowlands of the flesh, but in a high realm of the spirit!

What Satan wrought against Job was instigated and ordained by the Lord who carefully marked the bounds of the adversary's activity. Job was no baby saint, for no one less than God Himself had given testimony that Job

was a perfect and upright man, one that feared God and eschewed evil! God had blessed this man with great wealth and a large family. He had seven sons and three daughters. He owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she-asses. His household was very great with many hired servants so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east. The thing we want to note is that although Job was wealthy in temporal things, rich in spiritual things, and proclaimed perfect by the Lord Himself, he had not been "tried by fire" as sons of God must be — he was as yet UNTRIED, UNTESTED, and UNPROVEN. He was just like Adam and Eve in the Garden! He walked with God in the spirit, but was yet innocent.

In the midst of Job's ordeal of affliction and suffering the spirit of prophecy came upon him and he opened his mouth and spake concerning the purpose of God in it all, declaring, "**But He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.**" (**Job 23:10**) Never do I cease to be amazed at how the preachers and teachers, apparently without exception, join their voices in unison with those of Job's contemptible comforters, indicting and blaming poor old Job, charging that God brought all these calamities upon him because he had sin in his life, or because he was self-righteous, or because of some other appalling fault in Job. The only reliable testimony we have of Job's true state of being is that spoken by the Lord Himself, and HE declared that Job was a PERFECT MAN! Perfect, yes; but untried! His perfection remained to be tested, proven, and demonstrated.

Now, what does God do but deliberately hand this perfect and upright man into the hands of Satan to do his worst upon him, only that he should not touch his life. It was because that God desired to test Job that He brought forth "the smith to blow upon the fire." Please note that it was not Satan's idea to persecute poor old Job! It was God Himself who brought up the subject! There Satan was, presenting himself before the Lord, appearing for duty, if you please, and God asked, "Where have you been?" Satan replied, "Walking up and down in the earth." "Well, Satan," the Lord asked, "have you considered my servant Job? Have you noticed that he fears God and eschews evil? Have you noticed that, Satan?" You can be assured, dear ones that Satan had noticed Job, but he wasn't doing anything to him.

"Doth Job fear God for naught?" Satan retorted. "Hast Thou not made a hedge around him and about his house and about all that he hath on every side?" Praise the Lord! Yes, truly there is a hedge around the elect of God, and that hedge is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The Psalmist recognized and rejoiced in this fact when he said, "**He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, HE IS MY REFUGE and my fortress: my God, in Him will I trust.**" (**Ps. 91:1-2**) "You've put a hedge around him," Satan said, "and I can't get to him!" Then he went on to say, "You must put forth Thine hand and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face." But the Lord, who searcheth the reins and the heart, who knoweth them that are His, knows who can be trusted with affliction, and will not allow any to be tested beyond what they are able to bear. He therefore said to Satan, "Behold, all that he hath is in thy power — in thy hand — only upon himself put not forth thine hand." Later the Lord expanded the area of Satan's activity and permitted him to touch Job himself, only he must spare his life. With lightning swiftness the misfortunes fell as tribulation and affliction smote this man of God. All hell broke loose upon him! His possessions were gone. His servants were gone. His cattle, his family, and his dwelling place were as though they had never been. And now he was desperately ill, tormented with pain, and without even a bed to sleep on he lies down in the ashes of what was once his beautiful home to listen to the relentless arguments of his friends, monotonously attempting by lengthy speeches to make a fool of him and prove that his present despair was the result of his own sin and disfavor with God.

In one tragic day all Job's earthly wealth and glory had vanished as a mist before the rising sun. But did Job curse God for all this calamity? Did he even blame the devil? Was he a fair weather saint without spiritual understanding? No, indeed! He rent his mantle, shaved his head, and falling upon the ground, he WORSHIPPED GOD with the unmistakable words of reverence, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: THE LORD GAVE, AND THE LORD HATH TAKEN AWAY; BLESSED BE THE NAME OF THE LORD!" Ah, Job knew God! He therefore knew that in spite of all the external evidence, in spite of how terrible and hopeless things appeared, God had not forsaken him, God did love him, God did see him, God was concerned about what happened to him, God was in control of everything, God had purpose in it all, and God was just. Being a perfect man Job understood the nature of God, the ways of God, he knew what God

is like — how He is. Armed with this knowledge he was unshakable and unmovable as the hand of Satan moved against him. God won the contest! Job came out the victor! And Satan was defeated!

The great and wonderful truth is just this. Satan was not a wild, mischievous, uncontrollable, psychotic thug running loose around the earth wrecking violence, pestilence, destruction and death on whomsoever he would. The issue here was not a mad, malicious, hateful devil indiscriminately doing horrible things to anyone he decided to attack. That's not it at all! Satan was on a spiritual mission — he was the instrument of testing, on behalf of God, of a Son of God! This was a spiritual battle! This had nothing to do with the gross sins of the flesh. The whole scene is set in a high realm of the spirit! Oh, yes, Satan is — religious!

When Jesus came in the flesh, He came into a world steeped in religion. He came into a condition brought about by centuries of teaching the law and the rites and sacrifices of the temple worship. Into this had been woven the traditions of the elders, an accumulation of those same centuries. It had come to include also the washing of pots and cups, together with ceremonies of washing of hands before eating and a multitude of other practices imposed upon the people by their leaders. The temple in the city of Jerusalem was the symbol of all this to the people. Their whole life revolved around that building and the rites and sacrifices the priests offered in it. It was the sacred spot of the nation and of all Jews wherever they were in the world. Every Jew had that one desire to go to Jerusalem and worship.

This system of religion was imbedded in the lives of the people, and had been for long centuries. It had become a part of their life and they endured it all with the hope perennial within their hearts that some day the Messiah would come and lift not only this yoke, but that of the Roman empire as well. But when the Messiah came, they did not recognize Him. For here was all this great mass of law, ritual, and Pharisaical teaching and tradition, while the Messiah was but an unknown man, of almost unknown origin. Jesus brought a new and revolutionary way of life! It was a way of believing, and not a way of doing. It was faith in the Christ and right relationship with God in the spirit and did not consist in the doing of anything, or the keeping of external observances. It was simplicity in the highest degree, set up against organized worship of the highest degree. The revolutionary way of life, which Jesus brought to the people, was in exact and complete opposition to the bondage under which the people now found themselves.

The people were constantly taught and instructed that they must observe all the things the priests and Pharisees told them, or they would perish. Jesus came into their midst and said that all those things would do them absolutely no good whatever, but if they wanted life they should come unto Him and drink — merely by believing into Him! He was placing the Christ and faith in the Christ against all the accumulated traditions of the nation. He was assuring them that they would NOT LOSE A SINGLE THING by coming unto Him, and casting all else away from them. And they would gain life! But who could hear such a thing in the day of Christ! In fact, Jesus Himself said that no man could come unto Him, except the Father who had sent Him, would draw that man. It is just as true today! Ah, beloved, should you go into any church on any Sunday and say to the people, "If you will cast aside all your forms, all your traditions, all your rituals, all your ordinances, all your programs, all your cherished and time-honored creeds, all your solemn assemblies, all your myriad activities, all your committees, and SIMPLY COME UNTO THE CHRIST AND BELIEVE INTO HIM AND DRINK OF HIM, YOU WILL LOSE NOTHING, but you will gain the glorious and eternal reality of God forevermore," what kind of reception would you receive? You would actually be asking the people to give up everything they are doing and all the things they have been given by their ministers and church orders with which to serve and worship God — exchanging it all for GOD ALONE! What an unbearable burden it would be for the people to be REDUCED TO GOD! What an unspeakable loss it would be to possess nothing but GOD HIMSELF! You would find this an almost impossible thing to accomplish. Truly, Christ has been usurped by — RELIGION!

But go with me now into that long ago when Jesus walked the dusty roads with His disciples. He had asked the twelve who they thought He was. Peter promptly answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!" And Jesus said to him, "Peter, flesh and blood did not reveal this unto you, but my Father which is in heaven." In other words, "This understanding didn't come from your fleshly mind. You didn't think this up by yourself. This is not the result of your own reasoning. This came into your spirit from my Father." So remarkable was this revelation to Peter that the Lord said to him, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona!" So here we have an instance of the Father working in Peter, imparting His thoughts and understanding to him.

Only minutes later Jesus began to introduce to Peter the subject of His coming suffering and death. The possibility of the death of their beloved Lord was a prospect so foreign to the thinking of the disciples that they were not prepared to comprehend His presentation of this unspeakable fate. Was He not the Messiah? Was He not the Son of God? Did He not come to establish a great kingdom? Were not they, His disciples, to reign with Him in that kingdom? With these questions in mind this talk of death was unthinkable and unacceptable!

Then Peter, who had just been pronounced blessed, took Him, and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Be it far from Thee, Lord: for this shall not be unto Thee!" Ah, when Jesus mentioned the cross and dying, Peter began to rebuke Him. Where did he find the senseless courage that would dare to rebuke the Lord? The answer was disturbingly evident — far, far too clear to be a comfort to any of us! The Lord Himself gives us the answer, for, He turned and said to Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan! Thou art an offense unto me; for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." What a shocking way to talk to the great apostle Peter, the one possessing the revelation of Christ's identity, the one called blessed, the one to whom the Lord had just given the keys to the kingdom of heaven! Atrocious to say to this man of deep revelation and keen spiritual perception, "Thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men!" Indeed, "Get thee behind me, S-A-T-A-N!" How unthinkable!

Hearing Peter's entreaty to the Lord, which of us would not have said that this was the language of genuine affection, tender solicitude, and loving concern? No doubt we would have chimed in with some hearty "Amen's"! But Jesus replies, "Get behind me — SATAN!" And our Lord was not on a name-calling spree when He uttered these words. He never uttered words in vain, without a definite meaning. Jesus did not speak merely to Satan in Peter. Furthermore, He did not tell Peter that his words sounded like the words of Satan. He simply addressed Peter AS SATAN. Peter as Satan — on what basis? That he was demented, insane? That he was a medium, calling up spirits out of the nether-world? No — merely that he SPOKE AS A MAN! Is this not also what James was saying when he described the wisdom of man in these words, "If ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. THIS WISDOM descendeth not from above, but is EARTHLY, SENSUAL and D-E-V-I-L-I-S-H!" (James 3:14-15) Can we not see by this that the wisdom of man put to spiritual things is DEVILISH!

Speaking as a man about spiritual things! Speaking with carnal wisdom about heavenly realities! On the surface there doesn't seem to be anything wrong with what Peter said. It was a good, kindly thought. What was wrong with it was that it was the product of Self, it emanated from human sympathy and not from the heart of God. You see, my beloved, Self hates the cross! Satan despises the cross! Satan is religious, but in a perverted wisdom that refuses the will of the Father, substitutes for the reality of God, mimics the power of God, twists and distorts the truth of God, and supplants the life of God.

We blame war, drunkenness, murders, pornography, greed, crime, immorality, drugs, and a thousand other evils on Satan — yet the clear testimony of scripture is that these are all the "lusts of the flesh." They are flesh! On the other hand, Satan's activity is in a religious realm, in a spiritual dimension!

What a cunning deception has been foisted upon mankind as Satan has concealed his true identity in the dark shroud of religion! Jesus never once told the drunk in the gutter, the gluttonous feasters and reveling wine-bibbers with whom He ate and drank, the woman taken in adultery, the prostitutes, the greedy tax collectors, or the man full of demons, that they were of their father the devil. Not one sinner did He ever accuse of being a child of the devil! He reserved that dishonorable distinction for the religious leaders!

In the twenty-third chapter of Matthew we read the sternest words that ever fell from those blessed lips. He calls those to whom He speaks — the men of the most rigid religious correctness, men of the highest social respectability, of the greatest formal piety and religious pretension; not merely "church members" as we should now call them, but the officers, deacons, elders, clergymen, superintendents, priests, bishops, archbishops, cardinals, popes of that day, "fools and blind," "blind guides," "hypocrites," until, in the climax of His holy indignation, He says, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell!" It is, then, the testimony of scripture, whether we are prepared to accept it or not, that it is the proud, religious

character that is a truer expression of the Devil's work amongst men than the openly profane and morally debased.

Oh, yes, Satan is religious! He loves to enter into the arena of men's souls and control and manipulate men's thinking, understanding, and activity. Truly spiritual aims are geared toward unleashing the power of the new man, the inner son, and the man of the spirit. Satanic aims are geared toward development of the soul. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil (the earliest doctrine of Satan) is a compendium of rules, doctrines, religious exercises tailored for the soulical man and utilized by the carnal mind that wants only to be told what to think and what to do, and to do it with great external flourish and pomp. All of this becomes the core of a religious experience and practice built on fantasy, myth, folklore, tradition, program, pageantry, ceremonies, rituals, works — everything except the power and life of the spirit! This is religion — and religion is the synagogue of Satan!

Satan in tempting, baits his hook with religion. He can hang out Christ's flag and tempt to sin under pretenses of piety. Sometimes he is the white devil of the so-called "white witches," or the "Great White Brotherhood," or the "Masters of the Far East," or of the popular church systems of man as he transforms himself into an angel of light. Celsus wrote a book full of error, and he entitled it, *Liber Veritatus*, The Book of Truth. So Satan writes the title of religion upon his worst temptation. He comes to the firstborn Son of God with scripture in his mouth! "It is written!" he thunders. That is the same as saying, "The Bible says!" But just because the Bible says something doesn't make it truth if what you are saying from the Bible is slanted, distorted, mis-applied, or merely the letter of the word. Thus Satan wraps his poisonous pills in sugar. Who would suspect him when he comes as a divine and quotes scripture!

In the temptation of Jesus we discover this wily adversary coming upon the firstborn Son of God with Bible in hand. Just as in Eden, he is still preaching! He preached to the first Adam, and now he is preaching to the last Adam. And in all those thousands of years the subject hasn't changed! Satan is still preaching SONSHIP! "It is written!" — this was the glittering weapon, the fiery dart, the master-stroke, just as when he said to Eve, "Hath God said? God doth know..." "If Thou be the Son of God, command these stones to be made bread." "It is written!" He thundered as he offered the kingdoms of earth to Jesus if he would bow to the shrewd worldly wisdom of the adversary outlined in His mind by which He could have conquered even the might of the Roman empire. An easy way to popularity was pointed out — it was suggested that He cast Himself from the pinnacle of the temple. That would prove His sonship! No harm would come to Him for God had promised to send His angels to care for Him. A son is invincible! And the multitude, amazed, would follow Him. What gave immeasurable force to the adversary's suggestions was his appeal to the awful authority of God's word. He cast about the things he offered the glow of divine approval. He enforced his ideas with the sacred sanction of the scriptures. It was with the Bible in hand that he approached the Son of man. It cast about him such a holy air! He is no stranger to the scriptures, for he is the oldest, most accomplished preacher, from the dawn of history! When Satan deals with God's called out and chosen elect, obviously, he must meet such a one upon the high plane on which he lives. He could get nowhere by suggesting the gross sins of the flesh to one separated unto God. It must be through the Word! It must be through a twisted, distorted, perverted word!

It is time to stop, look, and listen. What testings and provings, what strippings and purgings, those called to sonship have been passing through! The ultimate test for God's sons will not be in the bar or in the bed. The ultimate test for God's sons will not be in the church systems of man! The Lord has wonderfully purged us from these! They hold nothing for us anymore. I can testify to you that the religious systems hold nothing for me! I am not tempted in that realm. My spirit loathes them all with intensity. But there is a realm, a realm high in the spirit, a realm reserved for the sons of God — and before any of us step out of our wilderness to appear as a manifest son of God in the earth, we will meet Satan there in that high realm of the spirit. We will encounter the dragon in the heights of God's heaven! There in your own wilderness Satan will draw you into his synagogue. He will be preaching from his pulpit in his synagogue, the synagogue of Satan. He will be preaching to YOU! The subject will be SONSHIP! "If thou be the son of God..." "Hath God said? Why, God doth know..."

Satan will bring a word to you that sounds so plausible, so deep, so spiritual, so divine, that apart from the discernment of the spirit it would seem that it just must be the word of the Lord! It has to be the very highest Truth! We hear a great deal today about many wonderful things, but I tell you, my beloved, there is but a very

fine line between the highest truth and the darkest error — between sonship to God and our own Self-godhood — a godhood outside of true blood-bought redemption and the quickening of our spirit by the the Holy Spirit. How closely the angel of light resembles the "glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ!" That is where the ultimate test lies, beloved, in the highest realm of the spirit, embedded in the sublimest of all truth and the depths of the knowledge of God. This final test is a dimension so awesome, so terrible, to transcendent in the counsels of God that no one but a son indeed can perceive the truth of the matter, and respond as Jesus did, out of the heart of the Father, "It is written!" Don't think you will escape that one, my friend. Adam didn't. Jesus didn't. And neither will we.

A lifetime of walking with God has taught me that my greatest safety is in my relationship with the Father, in knowing the heart of God. It was in knowing the Father that Jesus gained the victory over His greatest, supreme, and final test. Satan knew the scriptures, but Jesus knew the Father! To know Him is to be like HIM! The Father's name, the Father's nature is being written upon all those holy sons of God who are partaking of the mind of Christ. His word is spirit, His word is life, and His life is the power to cast the dragon out of our heavens! The sons of God shall prevail!

"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found anymore in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan...and I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ!"

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 39

THE CHURCH IN SMYRNA (continued)

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART THIRTY-NINE

"I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." (Rev. 2:9)

There is a sharp contrast between the "synagogue of Satan" and the "church of God." Just what is this "synagogue of Satan"? Those of the synagogue of Satan were not the true church, but of the false church. Now the word for synagogue is not the same word we use for church. In the scriptures, church means the "called out ones" or the "summoned ones." The Psalmist said about these elect people, **"Blessed is the man whom THOU CHOOSEST, and CAUSEST to approach unto Thee, that he may dwell in Thy courts." (Ps. 65:4)** But the meaning of synagogue is "assembly" or "gathering." This can be good or bad, but in this case it is bad, for these are they whose assembling is not of God but of their own selves. Isaiah said of them, **"Behold, they shall surely gather together, but NOT BY ME: whosoever shall gather against thee shall fall for thy sake." (Isa. 54:15)** The two names, "Satan" and "Devil" are employed in the book of Revelation with correctness and precision. "Satan" means adversary, that which is against or opposed to. "Devil," on the other hand, means slanderer or accuser. To the people of God, that ancient serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, is both!

Now let us look at the typical setting and background of this term "synagogue of Satan." In the days of ancient Israel, the priesthood at Jerusalem was the accepted spiritual authority. Then in 586 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem, demolished the great temple of Solomon, and carried the Jews into exile in Babylon. With their temple and their priesthood gone, the Jews found themselves in strange new communities where they formed voluntary assemblages for common worship and study of the law. These congregations were called synagogues or assemblies. This institution proved so valuable that it has been continued to this day. It also provided the basic pattern for the churches which, after Paul, the Christians set up and developed along more organized lines. Among the Jews, however, the synagogue has survived in its pristine form. Any ten adult male Jews today can establish a congregation. The congregation's rabbi is a teacher, not a priest. He has no ecclesiastical authority except as an expounder of the law. In fact, he is not even necessary to the functioning of the synagogue. Any male Jew with sufficient knowledge of the prayers and the laws can conduct a religious service.

Thus, the synagogue is an "assembly" of Jewish people, just as the church is thought of today as an "assembly" of believers in Jesus Christ (although that is not the real meaning of church!). The synagogue of Satan is, therefore, the assembly of the adversaries, opponents, slanderers, and accusers! Those of the synagogue of Satan are the opponents of the Truth and the slanderers of the spirit of Christ! Everyone and everything, especially every religious thing that stands in opposition or resistance to the spiritual life of your inner son is truly of the synagogue of Satan!

Remember, my beloved, the term "synagogue of Satan" is a type, a symbol in the book of Revelation! The type is found in the persecutors of the early believers — preeminently the Jews. Among all the stormy, fiery declarations of condemnation and judgment found in the letters to the seven churches, none is more striking than the Holy Spirit's identification of the "synagogue of Satan." The synagogue of the Adversary! He doesn't call the temple of Bacchus the synagogue of Satan. He doesn't call the temple of Diana the synagogue of Satan. He doesn't call the temple of Zeus the synagogue of Satan. Only the Jews had a synagogue! Religion that opposes the Spirit of God, the purpose of God, the truth of God, and the kingdom of God is the adversary of God, and the system, temple, synagogue, or assembly of those adversaries is simply the "synagogue of Satan."

Permit me to point out the apostle Paul's incredible indictment of his own former activities in the religion of Judaism. **"For ye have heard of my manner of life in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I**

persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers." (Gal. 1:13-14) "Though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might have confidence in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." (Phil. 3:4-6)

That was the same spirit of Judaism that operated in Smyrna! The church in Smyrna was bitterly opposed by the Jews of the city, who prided themselves on being God's chosen people. Actually, they were the tools of Satan, the organized religious opposers, persecutors, and condemners of those who were the Lord's people after the spirit! The synagogue, which had once served as the springboard for the preaching of the gospel, fast became the bitter enemy of the new church. Throughout the world in the days of the early church the Jews moved against the believers with lies and malice. When Paul was preaching in the synagogue in Antioch we read, "And the next Sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming." (Acts 13:44-45)

The accusations against the believers were so devilish, and the smears so insidious, that the believers were styled as the dregs of society and blamed for every tragedy and disaster that struck. "But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people." (Acts 17:5) The Jews worked with cunning, even inciting the normally tolerant Roman government to attack the new religion. The Jewish-Roman cartel instigated the wholesale slaughter of those who followed Jesus.

The Roman Empire made politics a religion. The Emperor was proclaimed to be a god to whom homage was to be given. Throughout the Roman Empire people were free to worship any god or as many gods as they desired. There was freedom of religion. But all subjects of the Roman Empire were required to recognize Caesar as Lord and God over the Empire. In essence what they did was once a year all the people would come with a small pinch of incense and all that was required was that they cast it into a fire and say, "Caesar is Lord!" The cities recognized this merely as a political exercise, you were simply saying that Caesar is Lord, and that means that he is Lord or Ruler over the Empire. When one fulfilled his annual obligation in the worship of Caesar, he was given a treaty, which granted him the right for the next year to worship any god or gods in any religion he chose.

For the believers in Jesus this was a problem! They could not acknowledge anyone as LORD other than Jesus Christ! For them Jesus had been raised up and given all power in heaven and in earth, principalities and powers being made subject to HIM. He is King of kings and Lord of lords, the Prince (ruler) of the kings of the earth! The Christians were renegades. They were rebels. All they needed to do was throw some incense into the fire and repeat the words, "Caesar is Lord," and a bill or decree was given to them releasing their family. For the year they could go back home and worship Jesus all they wanted to!

What did it mean to be an enemy of Rome? It meant that if anybody turned you in, all your property and possessions could be confiscated — Rome got 90% of what you owned and the person that turned you in got 10%. So the city was filled with informants and bounty hunters. Let me tell you who the informants were. The informants were the Jews! The Jews went looking for Christians. They would often infiltrate church services. They would sit there during the praise and worship and ministry of the word, all the while making a note of the best, dressed and most prosperous looking people. They would spot those who had possessions; after the meeting they would get their names and go report them to the government as rebels against the Empire. Soon government officials would appear at their home or business; if they could not produce their treaty they would then confiscate their property in the name of the Empire, and the informant was paid his ten percent.

The above is the historical background behind the Lord's words to the church at Smyrna, "I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." Great poverty was in the church at Smyrna. For a person to confess Jesus Christ as Lord meant not only that they committed their life to Him, but they could lose all of their property, business, and possessions. One of the ministers in

the church at Smyrna was one of the most famous of the church in those early years, a man by the name of Polycarp, who had been a disciple of John who wrote the book of Revelation. His story has come down to us because of his unswerving faithfulness to the name of Jesus — even unto death. He refused to burn incense to Caesar or to confess him as Lord.

Because of his gentle and kindly spirit the Roman officials entreated him, “What harm can it do you to sacrifice to the emperor? Have pity on your great age.” Upon his repeated refusal Polycarp was taken to the coliseum, where an official said, “Swear, curse Christ, and I will set you free.” The serene Polycarp replied as he was led to the stake to be burned, “Eighty and six years have I served Christ, and He has never done me wrong: how, then, can I curse Him, my King and Saviour?” Having resisted every promise and threat, which they hoped would cause him to recant, it was announced, “Polycarp confessed himself a Christian.” This was the signal for death! And renegade Jews from “the synagogue of Satan” with pagan Gentiles, rushed in fury to gather the firewood for his cremation. Taking his place in the midst of the fuel, Polycarp assured them that it was unnecessary to chain him, and the fire was kindled. His suffering was prolonged by a high wind that blew the flames aside, and he was at length executed by the executioner’s sword.

Incredible as these facts are, the truth is that the Jews, persecuting the early believers, are not the synagogue of Satan! They are merely the type, the symbol! Never forget, dear ones, the book of Revelation is a book of symbols! Spiritually, the Jews in Smyrna were not the synagogue of Satan. What they represent is the synagogue of Satan! They remind us of people today, as well as thoughts, ideas, and spirits right within ourselves, which oppose God’s spirit, God’s message, God’s will, God’s work, and God’s people in the name of religion. The synagogue of Satan has always existed and is active in this day, although it changes form from generation to generation. It is the congregation of the adversaries, the congregation of the opposers, the congregation of the slanderers, the congregation of the accusers — both within and without! The opposition of religion against God’s truth, God’s Spirit, and God’s elect is a synagogue of Satan — an adversary! That doesn’t mean they are sinister or evil, for many of the people in the church systems today truly love God and think they are doing His will. They are just God’s ordained “opposition party” to test and try His elect! Like the Jews of old, they just don’t realize that GOD HAS MOVED ON! They have no idea that this is a new Day and God is doing a new and greater and more wonderful thing!

Satan is the adversary, the Devil is the accuser! When the great dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, is cast out of the spiritual heavens of our minds and consciousness and understanding, the scripture states, “**And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony.**” (Rev. 12:10-11)

There is only one accuser, only one — Satan. Of course he accuses us within ourselves as well as through religion. God is not bringing up your sins, your weakness, or your failures, no matter who you are: you, me, Judas, or Hitler. If Jesus paid the penalty of your sins, He doesn’t deal with your sins anymore, they are paid for and gone, taken away, and the account is closed. “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” What does that mean? It means that because of Jesus all men are free! And I have to accept that. I must now view all men in that light! I must bear the GOOD NEWS to them! If I then turn around and bring up somebody else’s sins because I don’t like them, or they did something against me, then I become their opposer from the synagogue of Satan. You see, the synagogue of Satan is not so much an institution as it is an attitude!

After a person is forgiven we cannot lay any charge against him. Nearly all Christians know **John 3:16**, but very few know, let alone live as if they believe, **John 3:17**: “**God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world, through Him, might be saved.**” It’s shocking! It’s shameful! It’s surprising how many of us think God would condemn us. Why? Where do we pick up these notions? GOD does not condemn people! If God was in the condemning business, He could have done that quite easily through Jesus when He sent Him to earth. With one omnipotent breath from His mouth He could have slain all the sinners

and rebels! But He didn't. He spoke not a word against any sinner! God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world.

We find it difficult to understand such a loving reaction from a Holy God. We are often quick to find faults and shortcomings when we find someone falling short of our standards or expectations. When someone says they forgive you your trespasses, but they continue to remind you of them, they are preaching from the pulpit of the synagogue of Satan! Ah, God will not condemn any soul! I believe that with all of my heart! God has a great and unconditional and unfathomable love for every man! His only desire is to help, to bless, to deliver, to transform and make beautiful every life! He seeks to save everyone! He sees every person through those eyes of love and intense and yearning desire for them. He plans better and greater things for every man, woman, and child in the world. Does that mean that nobody is punished? Not at all! Every man still reaps what he sows — in this world and in the world to come. But every man reaps what HE sows — not the condemnation and vindictive wrath of God preached by the churches! God does not condemn. He does not condemn us who are His children. He corrects us, purges and purifies us in love and everlasting faithfulness. But He does not condemn! Furthermore, He doesn't condemn the world! God is not a charter member of the synagogue of Satan — the Opposer!

The synagogue of Satan has many different denominations, divisions, departments, and operations. Some are without while others are deep on the inside of us. You know as well as I do that the church systems have always taught that the God of exacting justice and undiminished wrath must be appeased, soothed, turned aside from His furious vengeance, and that this feat can only be accomplished by the bold and insistent intercession of the compassionate SON, our wonderful Lord and elder brother, standing opposite Satan, before the judgment-throne of the Father, as our Advocate, our Lawyer, pleading our cause, beseeching God to be kind to us for His sake, to commute our sentence, and begging for our lives on the ground that He paid the price for the forgiveness of our sins. According to this crude hypothesis the anger of God can only be appeased by looking upon the bloody sweat and cruel, ugly death of His Son, as He stands there interceding for us.

I do not hesitate to tell you that such a teaching is utter rubbish and the brashest sort of nonsense! It springs from the Romish tradition that likens God the Father to a fearful and offended despot, spoiling for the blood of the offenders, and it makes Christ to be the one who pleads with God on behalf of the victim until the Father is consoled and placated. And if it weren't for our Advocate, Jesus, God would listen to the Devil's accusations and really lay it on to us. We could even lose our salvation because of the Devil's accusations, if it weren't that the merciful Jesus is there to prevent God from casting us into hell, by presenting His blood on our behalf. Such is a gross caricature of the truth! More than that, it is a stupid absurdity and a horrible blasphemy! It was GOD HIMSELF who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that men might not perish! It was GOD HIMSELF that was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them! It is GOD HIMSELF who is love! **“Behold, what manner of love THE FATHER hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God” (I Jn. 3:1).** Praise God, the Spirit is unfolding Truth in ever-increasing dimensions of glory which magnifies God's glorious nature of love and mercy, His wisdom and power, His goodness and the prudence of all His plans and purposes — completely and forever delivering us from the pews of the synagogue of Satan!

It is my conviction that not even Satan is senseless enough to believe that He could approach OUR FATHER and convince Him to condemn us because of our weaknesses and failures. Nowhere does the scripture state that Satan accuses the saints to God. What it does say is **that “the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them BEFORE our God day and night.” (Rev. 12:10)** It is one thing to be accused before, that is, in the presence of, or in front of another person, and another thing altogether for the accuser to accuse us TO the other one. It should be abundantly evident that Satan does not accuse us to God, He merely accuses us before God. It is not the almighty and omniscient God, my brother, my sister, whom Satan wishes to convince of your unworthiness — it is YOU! Satan has no misconceptions about his ability to persuade God of your weakness and worthlessness, but if he can influence YOU to believe that you are unworthy of God's love and calling, that you cannot overcome to reign with Christ, that you are a failure, that you are hopeless, that it is impossible for you to attain to the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus, that it is beyond the realm of

possibility for you to lay hold upon life and immortality — he is thereby able to rob you of your hope, faith, confidence, joy, peace, and victory!

We have been taught in the past to flee from the great red dragon that lumbers through the heavens of our minds, causing us to err and to stumble day and night. It is this dragon that has been accusing us day and night before God in the temple of God, which we are! You see, Satan never comes as some hideous fire-breathing monster with horns, a forked tail, and a pitchfork. He doesn't blare at you through a loudspeaker. He speaks in your own thoughts, understanding, perceptions, intuitions, feelings, emotions, and desires! The battle rages in the MIND — concepts, temptations, accusations shout at you from within!

The Self-life, the human consciousness, the carnal mind, the flesh — all these are a synagogue of Satan! It is there he comes and worships, it is there he comes and preaches; it is there he comes and counsels; it is there he comes and persuades. You may go to church meetings three times on Sunday and every night of the week, but if you are not dead to the Self-life, if you have not ascended into the mind of Christ above your human consciousness, if you have not silenced the carnal mind, if you have not mortified your members which are upon the earth, Satan has a little synagogue in you, a place where he has the right to come and set up his service, teach his ideas and doctrines, appear as an angel of light — illumination and revelation — express his desires and emotions, and perform some of his works.

The called out elect of God are casting Satan out of the heavens — the high places — of their minds by the swift and powerful sword of the Spirit! The sword of the Spirit used in this heavenly warfare is the word of God, the living word of God, and the present truth and reality raised up within our lives by the Holy Spirit! There are millions of people in the religious systems of man today who are synagogues of Satan. There is only a small called and chosen remnant who are becoming temples of the Holy Ghost. God is mightily moving in our lives in this Day to smash that synagogue of Satan within us by the hammer of Truth, raze it to the ground, and upon it erect within ourselves a temple of the Holy Ghost that God may be glorified in His sons. We are being brought to the place where we say with Jesus, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" — nothing in me that responds or corresponds to him in any way or measure!

I want to tell you where everything is — everything is right where you are — WITHIN YOU! Everything! On the positive side — God is in you, Christ is in you your hope of glory, the word of Christ dwells in your heart by faith, your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, the wonderful mind of Christ is in your mind by the renewing of your mind, and the kingdom of God is within you. On the negative side — the spirit of antichrist is in you; the man of sin sits in the temple of God which is your body; the beast rages in the sea of humanity, in the ravenous emotions of the body; the image of the beast is seen in you by your outer actions of fleshly life; the nature of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters (peoples) is in you, the woman of your own soulish life; and the serpent is within you, enthroned in the carnal mind which is enmity against God.

Men dream of a devil — a hideous and obscene monster in human form; a short, skinny elf in a red body suit, with impish face, horns, pointed ears, a spade beard, thin mustache, having a long forked tale and a pitchfork in his hand. If you ask one thousand church-going Christians to describe for you the Devil, would not all of them describe him in the fashion portrayed above? Or would they describe him to you as a snake? Millions of Christians suppose they would recognize the Devil instantly! But would they, really? I have no hesitation whatever in telling you that the Devil of Christianity is a myth!

Jesus, on many occasions, drew the analogy of men as serpents — devils. In my mind, when Jesus uttered the following parabolic phrase, He was revealing one of the most important and foundational truths of all time. "Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Mat. 23:25,33) John the Baptist used the same terminology, "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee the wrath to come?" (Mat. 3:7)

As in Christ's day, so today, the churches are full of devils! Well does this enemy of God, enthroned in the human heart, this adversary of redemption and all righteousness, know that, in the blessed hour when the "I" is crucified, all his power and all his authority and sway in that life is broken forever. His appetite is denied, his desires rejected, his plans thwarted, his suggestions repudiated, his power ignored, his base of operation is

destroyed, and his work is abolished in the life of every son of God who has become identified with Christ in the cross. Once a man has embraced fully the cross of Christ and Self has become forever dead with Him, then it is with him even as the firstborn Son in triumph declared, **“I will not talk with you much more, for the prince of the world is coming. And he has no claim on me, there is nothing in me that belongs to him, he has no power over me.” (Jn. 14:30) (Amplified)**

Satan has no power at all when SELF is gone! His synagogue is destroyed! His pews are broken down, his pulpit demolished, his service ended! There is no platform to preach upon! There are no congregants to listen! Then he has no more power in your life or mine than he had in the life of our Lord Jesus the Christ. How unspeakably wonderful the hour for any man when Satan shall find nothing in him upon which he can feed or lay hold, nothing that responds or corresponds to him. When Self is crucified with Christ the lust of the flesh is mortified, the lust of the eyes is slain, the pride of life is put to death, all cunning, deception, and error is silenced, and the synagogue of Satan closed in that life.

The synagogue of Satan is both individual and corporate. John the Revelator sees the Adversary, the Accuser, embodied in a people, an assembly, a congregation, a system, a synagogue, to oppose, slander, and intimidate the called and chosen elect of the Lord! One dimension of the synagogue of Satan that the elect of God have experienced are those they run into today who say they serve Jesus, but who persecute those who are pressing on into deeper realms in God. As one brother shared with us, “The Jews have never persecuted me, the world has never persecuted me, but the Christians of the church systems have persecuted me. There have been many Christians who have never persecuted me, for the spirit of Christ ruled in their lives. But those who did persecute me were of the synagogue of Satan — they were adversaries to me!”

There is nothing more challenging than going into some denominational church and begin to share with them. If you are very careful you might get to visit them three or four times, because you seem to be agreeing with what they see in God. But then as you perceive the bondage of tradition and the spiritual darkness they are in, your heart of compassion goes out to them. So you begin to open the truth of God just a step beyond the realm where they dwell, that you might begin to lead them out of their darkness. As you share the treasures of truth from the storehouse of your spirit, a cloud soon passes over their countenances and they become agitated and fearful. Should you continue they then rise up against you and commence to retaliate, and should you dare to speak any further words of revelation they will eventually cast you out. Ere many days have passed the whole religious realm in your city will be warned against you and your name will become anathema to all the Lord’s people in all the church systems!

You shared out of love, but soon discovered who they were, because what upset them was the light. But if you were on the right mission, led by the Spirit, you will discover by and by that a little of the light penetrated their darkness and some precious soul was illumined thereby and began to awaken out of the deep sleep of tradition. Let me admonish you, my beloved — if we in turn abuse and persecute even the Lord’s people in Babylon, instead of loving them, praying for them, and seeking only to help them, then we place ourselves in the synagogue of Satan, becoming an adversary to them.

A brother wrote to me some time ago quite concerned because I continually warn people about the harlot church systems of man. He said, “Brother Eby, how could you ever reach any of the people in the church systems when all the time you are criticizing and condemning them? Don’t you think it would be better to present the truth to them without all the negativity?” Now, that sounds logical — on the surface! I could not agree more — should the Father send me to the church systems I would certainly go in humility, compassion, mercy, and love. But you see, dear ones, my writings are not intended for them! We do not mail our messages to either the preachers or the members of First Baptist Church, St. Mary’s Catholic Church, Calvary Bible Church, First Pentecostal Church, or any other denomination! We are not criticizing them to them! Our message is sent to God’s called out elect, to those are being called out of the religious systems by the Spirit of God! It is those God is calling out of the systems of man to know Him in deeper measures that we are commissioned to admonish, counsel, exhort, and warn to separate themselves from the blinding errors and fleshly bondage of religion. The elect of the Lord are being thoroughly purged and purified from all the doctrines, programs, methods, and spirit of Mystery Babylon! Those who profess to be called to sonship while continuing a promiscuous relationship with the lewd religious harlot, are certainly bastards, and not sons.

YET — we are not called to become adversaries to any man, but to be saviours on mount Zion, the priesthood of the Lord to bless and reconcile and lead all men into the kingdom of Life, Light, and Love! I tell you the truth, I know by experience that these things are so! Well do I know the heartache of trying to awaken sleeping brethren only to have them turn on me, despise me, hate me, and fall asleep again. Well do I know what it is to be attacked by the congregation of the adversaries, the synagogue of Satan. But I know as well the judgment of God in my own spirit, teaching me not to despise or strike out against any man held in the fetters of ignorance, sin, hell, or Babylon. We are called to be gentle, kind, gracious, tender-hearted, compassionate, and loving even with our enemies! We are ordained to bless them that curse us and pray for those who despitefully use us, and persecute us, that we may be the sons of our Father who is in heaven! He sends His rain upon the just and the unjust! It is here, and here alone, that we begin to tread the ground of true sonship, for the sons of God are the priests of the Most High God after the order of Melchizedek!

Concerning those of the synagogue of Satan the Lord tells the church at Philadelphia, which, together with Smyrna, is a type of God's called out elect, "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." (Rev. 3:9) We should note that this promise is not given in a jeering or vindictive spirit! It rather means that the day will come when those who now misunderstand, condemn, denounce, persecute, and cast out and despise God's elect who walk in the Spirit and in the Truth will themselves come to the knowledge of the truth, of the love of the Lord for those who follow on to know Him, and God's great plan and purpose for His people on the earth and throughout all the unbounded heavens! Thank God — ALL shall know Him, from the least to the greatest; and ALL shall see and be blessed by His wise and wonderful purpose. Then even the synagogue of Satan will at last — UNDERSTAND! That is what happened to Saul of Tarsus in that long ago on the Damascus road; and that is what will happen to all the adversaries. Blessed be the name of the Lord!

Let your heart consider what I now say, for there is another synagogue of Satan that plagues many of the Lord's people. This to which I refer is the assembly of carnal-minded, self-righteous, law keepers who burden the Lord's people with external commandments, rules, and regulations. It is legalism! Legalism is so bad because it places a person under heavy bondage, which is hard to get rid of. The law is the instrument of sin-consciousness! "By the law is the knowledge of sin." "Do this, do that," is the constant theme of the preachers while the next time they tell us, "Don't do this, don't do that." Legalism forces everything into a pattern of works, external observances, and performance. The ultimate fate of those who break these traditions of the elders and commandments of men is, "God will get you if you don't do what we say!" Legalism is a mark of spiritual immaturity and carnal-minded religiosity. It is an adversary to the inner spiritual life, indeed, a synagogue of Satan!

When Jesus came to redeem us, He came to redeem us not only from sin and death, but to redeem us from the law which gave us the consciousness of sin and is itself the very strength and power of sin. (Rom. 3:20; 7:7; I Cor. 15:56; Gal. 4:4-5) Paul tells us that when Jesus came into the world He came subject to the law. "But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal. 4:4-5) We have to realize that for thirty years Jesus lived on this earth without ever manifesting His sonship to God! He was sent into the world as the Son of God, but He did not manifest His sonship until after He was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan river. He was "made of a woman" — born of a woman, speaking of His true humanity.

The Father sent the Son in the likeness of sinful flesh by giving Him a human body. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. In this likeness of sinful flesh He looked like everybody else! He didn't look like a superman — six feet tall with a rugged, handsome face, piercing blue eyes, flaxen hair, bronze complexion, bulging muscles, and a Mr. America physique. Oh, no! He looked so much like any other Jew that He never stood out in a crowd. No one in Nazareth thought He would amount to anything beyond the norm, and when men sought for Him, He had to be pointed out to them. Nothing credible is written of Him, from the time He was twelve years old, until the day He came to John to be baptized. He operated within the limitations of the flesh. He didn't use any special powers or, except on one brief occasion, display any unusual wisdom. He worked, ate, slept, and bathed like every man. He hungered, grew weary, knew weakness, and experienced doubts, frustrations, perplexities, pain, and sorrow, for, "He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

Notice further that when Jesus came He was “made under the law” — and therefore was in subjection under the law. God sent forth His Son from His throne on high, from the estate of His heavenly glory, to be made under the law with all its restrictions, requirements, and demands. He was not merely born under the law as a Jew, but “made” by His Father’s appointment, and His own will, subject to the law to keep it all, ceremonial and moral; to perfectly fulfill it for all who were under it! Although He was the Lord of the law and its divine Author, He took His place under the law, that He might accomplish an important purpose for those who were under it. He made Himself subject to it that He might become one of them, and secure their release! And, praise God, He established a perfect record in that He kept the law fully. We know very little of His life while He was under the law. Only one incident when He was twelve years old is recorded. When Jesus walked under the law He was circumcised; He sacrificed; He paid tithes; He observed the Sabbath; He kept the feast days; He attended synagogue; and in all His dealings He kept every tenet and precept of the law!

Jesus was sent into the bondage of legalism and required to wear that legalistic yoke in order that He might shatter it to pieces with His full and free redemption! I am absolutely certain that includes all the religious folk today who are held captive under the legalistic demands of church systems with their myriad man-made commandments of “do’s” and “don’ts” laid upon people in order to make them pleasing to God. Matters not whether it is an Old Testament law about not muzzling the ox that treadeth out the corn, sowing mixed seed in one’s field, stoning an adulteress, washing hands before eating, kosher food laws, holy day laws, or more modern day prohibitions against women wearing make-up and jewelry, dress codes, meats and drinks, amusements, coverings, or a thousand other laws, old and new, that the religious Pharisees impose upon the Lord’s people.

The law is very insidious! I hear preachers, even preachers in this kingdom message, quoting **Malachi 3:7-10** and laying the law of tithing upon God’s people. Oh! How they love to use verse nine, **“Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.”** But that is a lie! Someone says, “Now, wait just a minute, brother Eby, are you calling the word of God a lie?” I do not hesitate to tell you that it is a lie to lay that curse of the law upon God’s redeemed people because the Holy Spirit testifies that **“As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. The law is not of faith: but, the man that doeth them shall live in them. CHRIST HATH REDEEMED US FROM THE CURSE OF THE LAW, BEING MADE A CURSE FOR US: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree.” (Gal. 3:10, 12-13)**

God’s redeemed people are NOT under any CURSE of the law! The law of tithing was for the nation of Israel under the Old Covenant! Only certain commodities were tithed — not money! Only Levites could receive tithes. It was used for administering their office and to help the poor, widows, and orphans. There is no Levitical priesthood today! There was a first tithe that was required. **(Lev. 27:30)** Then there was a second tithe for the feast days. **(Deut. 14:22)** At the end of every three years there was a third tithe for the fatherless, widows, etc. But the requirements of the law, the Old Covenant, have been abolished! The laws of Moses are now — illegal! Paul and the other apostles NEVER taught the Gentiles to tithe! I do not live under some divine curse for not tithing!

The New Covenant is not a covenant of blessing and cursing as was the Old Covenant. The New Covenant is only a covenant of blessing! Jesus says, “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.” The New Covenant is a covenant of blessing and not cursing! Under the New Covenant great blessing is promised to those who give liberally! If I am not being blessed, if I can’t pay my bills, if I am living in poverty and want, if I am struggling to make ends meet, if my needs are not being met, it is not because I am under a curse from the law! It may be only because I have not availed myself of God’s WONDERFUL PROVISION of the BLESSING that comes with GIVING!

You see, beloved, there is a difference between these two concepts — law and grace. Now, it may not make much difference to me whether I suffer lack because I’m not getting the blessing, or whether it’s because I’m under a curse. But it does make a big difference to GOD! God is not in the cursing business! He only seeks to bless us! That is the New Covenant! We cannot charge God with cursing us! It is wicked to do so! If we are not being blessed it is not God’s curse; it is our fault, not His! It is divinely true — you can’t outgive God! Where does the scripture say, “God loveth a cheerful tithe-payer”? Paul never said that. What Paul said was,

“But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man as he hath purposed in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work” (II Cor. 9:6-8). That is the same thing Jesus said, but in different words! God has promised to bless us abundantly and meet all our needs bountifully when we are liberal, cheerful givers!

While we are not under the law of tithing, we are under the awesome and unbounded provision of grace — we will be incredibly, munificently, richly, lavishly, luxuriantly, profusely, plentifully, and super-abundantly blessed for GIVING! We are exhorted to give liberally in a number of New Testament scriptures — not to put us under law, but for our good, for our blessing, to unlock the treasure houses of God’s blessings!

God has made a glorious provision for our blessing in all things — yet we must not give to get, for that motive is selfish and wrong too, but give out of a heart of love, out of the giving nature of Christ. I testify to you that the sons of God are the most giving people in the world! And they give not out of constraint, nor as under law, nor yet in response to impassioned appeals from the ministries, nor merely to receive in return, but they truly give out of the heart of the Christ within! That is the very spirit of sonship! Those who receive from our ministry know that we have never sent out a letter or notice of any kind stating a need or asking for a dime from anyone. The expenses are enormous each and every month, yet no bill has gone unpaid and we have never failed to have food on our table. I tell you, only the sons of God truly give by the Spirit! Many Christians give vast sums to various ministries, but usually it is in response to a steady drum-beat of appeals, sob stories, promotions, and gimmicks of all kinds. The sons of God give without being asked! Aren’t you glad! Isn’t it wonderful! You can’t beat God’s way!

My beloved brethren, never preach tithing out of the book of Malachi. That is law, and not grace! It is Old Covenant, not New Covenant! It is an abomination to lay curses upon God’s people, to threaten them with God’s judgment if they don’t tithe. THAT IS THE SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN! I try to give far more than a tithe, and I am convinced that most of God’s called and chosen elect do the same. Teach the Lord’s people the wonderful opportunity for blessing through giving as Jesus taught! That, dear ones, is sonship! Multitudes of preachers and churches still want to lay the law on you. They demand tithes under the law. They enforce either Saturday or Sunday as the “Sabbath.” They forbid you to eat pork or other meats that were unclean under the law. When men proclaim law they are preaching from the pulpit of the synagogue of Satan!

Paul makes this very clear when he says, “And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body (substance, reality) is of Christ.” (Col. 2:13-17) You see, beloved, if we keep one law we are bound to keep the whole law, for to break one law makes one just as guilty and condemned as the man who breaks them all. That is why Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law! The law is a curse! I tell you, it is a CURSE! Paul says that the law was contrary to us — an ADVERSARY! It is the doctrine of the synagogue of Satan!

If I am under the law of the Sabbath, the law of tithing, the law of not eating pork, then I am under the whole law. I should burn a bull on the altar of sacrifice so it will be a pleasing odor for the Lord. (Lev. 1:9) I would be able to sell my daughter into slavery, as sanctioned in Exodus 21:7 — I would only need to determine what would be a fair price for her! If my neighbor works on the Sabbath, Exodus 35:2 clearly states that he should be put to death. We have lots of stones out here in West Texas, so it would be an easy thing to stone him! Most of my male friends get their hair trimmed around their temples, even though this is expressly forbidden by Leviticus 19:27. We would need to search the scriptures to see how they should die! I know from Leviticus 11:6-8 that touching the skin of a dead pig makes me unclean, so I would have a real problem passing a football to my grandkids! Everyone who wears a garment made of different kinds of thread (cotton/polyester blend) is under the curse of the law — I would be required to get all my neighbors together and stone them to death! Does this sound ridiculous? PAUL SAYS THAT IF YOU KEEP ONE LAW YOU ARE BOUND TO KEEP THEM ALL!

Christ has “redeemed us from the curse of the law!” The Greek word for “redeem” is an especially beautiful term. The concept is of one going into the slave market and purchasing the slave and then taking him out of the market, setting him free. Redeemed from the law! Redeemed to be no longer a slave, serving under rules, regulations, and commandments that govern the flesh. Redeemed that we might “receive the adoption of sons!” “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” (Rom. 8:14) Hallelujah! We have received placement as sons of God who fulfill the nature of the Father by the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus!

Jesus does not drive people with the lash of the law, but He draws them with the cords of love! I never like to see God’s children whipped with rods gathered from the thorny sides of Sinai. We have not come to mount Sinai, but to mount Zion! When a man tries to pummel me to my duty by the demands of the law, I kick at the goad like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke; and rightly so, for we are not under the law, but under grace. The motive which propels a free-born heir of the kingdom is born of grace, not from the law; from Jesus, not from Moses. The law is bondage and therefore stands in opposition to our walk in the spirit and by the spirit! Law keeping is one of the cardinal doctrines of the synagogue of Satan!

All who minister condemnation are preaching from the pulpit of the synagogue of Satan. I was raised on this doctrine of the synagogue of Satan! As a child I was told in church that God so hated sin, that God could not look upon sin, could not excuse sin; so if I fell, if I slipped into sin, if I made a mistake, if I disobeyed the Lord, if I cussed or lusted or cheated or told a lie, and didn’t confess my sin to God and get it “under the blood” before I went to bed, should I die in my sleep before the sun rose I would certainly burst hell wide open! According to the doctrine of condemnation living holy keeps you saved, whereas sin in your life causes you to lose your salvation. Thus, you are not saved by grace through faith — you are saved by holy living! Some preach what is called “eternal security,” but the so-called gospel in the church I was raised in was the doctrine of NO SECURITY. And that was no “gospel” at all because it certainly was not GOOD NEWS!

If I “got saved” once as a child I suppose I got saved a thousand times! Because every time I got mad, said a bad word, slipped off to a movie, told a lie, or failed in any way to measure up to the church’s standard of “holiness” I was lost again. I had to “get saved” all over! Oh, they didn’t put it that way, but it was true anyhow, because if God cannot excuse sin, if sin separates us from God, if sin sends us to hell, then when you sin you are lost! I tell you today — there is no hell anywhere worse than that one! To live under condemnation is hell! The doctrine of condemnation is from the pit of hell itself, it is preached from the pulpit of the synagogue of Satan. It is preached from the same Bible the Devil quoted from when he quoted scripture to Jesus in the wilderness — the letter of the word! The doctrine of condemnation opposes the truth of God’s unconditional love and forgiveness, it is an adversary to the fact of our reconciliation, it contradicts the word of our reconciliation which declares that God does not impute our trespasses unto us, and denies that we are justified by grace through faith alone, not of works, lest any man should boast!

Now, someone may think that this gospel of grace is going to give you the liberty to sin, for your flesh to go wild. Let me tell you something. People say that God cannot excuse sin. Well, maybe He can’t, but the scripture is clear that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them! God has forgiven us all our trespasses! But He has also quickened us and made us alive in Christ. I will not come to perfection, maturity, the image of Christ, and sonship by trying to make my Adamic life live more godly. Adam can’t do it! But there is a Life, even Christ, flowing from the very essence of my being that has absolutely nothing to do with my natural character, the Adamic life. It is a power greater than all! It is Christ who must be raised up in me, to be my life, my righteousness, my reality. Christ isn’t formed in us in one day, one month, or one year. But Christ is growing up in all the elect who have received the call to sonship! Our Father does not condemn us while we are going from victory to victory, but still fall short of His holiness. All our sins are covered until we have FULLY OVERCOME! No license to sin here, just grace, mercy, love, and great faithfulness UNTIL WE REACH PERFECTION. Aren’t you glad!

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 40

THE CHURCH IN SMYRNA (continued)

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART FORTY

TRIBULATION TEN DAYS

"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days." (Rev. 2:10)

I know a place where the sun shines everyday! Perhaps you are interested in finding it, too. It is a narrow area in the deserts of northern Chile, between the high Andes and the Pacific Ocean. Rain so seldom falls that one can truly say, "It never rains here; the sun always shines." Morning after morning the sun rises brilliantly over the towering peaks to the east; each noon it shines brightly down from overhead; evening brings a picturesque sunset. Although storms are often seen raging high in the mountains, and heavy fog banks are observed far out over the sea, the sun continues to shine down on this favored and protected strip of land. One would imagine this area to be an earthly paradise; but it is not. Instead, it is a sterile and desolate desert! There are no streams of water, and nothing grows there.

Too often the Lord's people long for total sunshine and joy and victory in this journey into the kingdom of God. We have wished to be rid of the troubles, pressures, tribulations, and infirmities ordained for our processing. But like the sunny, infertile part of Chile, our spiritual life without the trials and testings would not be creative, productive, or transforming! We must have sunshine and storms for the development of wisdom, strength, and maturity!

We need the clouds, the dark days, the storms, the rain, the winds, just as much as we need the sunshine, and God who is molding our lives, making us into the image of our Lord Jesus the Christ, is the One who knows what is best for us if we would be a part of HIS PURPOSE in the earth. In this connection we hear Job saying, "He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." (Job 23:10) Notice that Job does not say, "I know the way that HE takes," but rather, "He knoweth the way that I take."

We would like to know what God is doing! We would like to pull aside the veil and see the end from the beginning! We would like to know the way that He is taking us, but if we did, and if we could see, we would not need faith to believe and accept GOD'S WAY. So Job, in the midst of all his deep afflictions, found comfort, not in the fact that he knew the reason and the answer for all of God's dealings with him, but he took encouragement in the truth that GOD KNEW WHAT HE WAS DOING! "He knoweth the way that I take," he said confidently, and then his faith leaped over every barrier, and as he looked into the distant future, he cried, "When He hath tried — tested and proved — me, I shall come forth as gold!" What a testimony, and truly it is ours too!

Let me share with you a favorite story of mine. It clearly illustrates the sentiment of Job when he said, "He knoweth the way that I take." The story is centered around a Chinese man. This man had everything going for him. He had all the material things he needed. He had a beloved son, and prized horse. But one day his horse broke out of the corral and ran to the mountains. Since all his assets were tied up in this valuable horse, he lost in one brief, fleeting moment, all of his life's savings. All his neighbors, hearing that his horse was gone to the hills forever, came to offer their sympathy. They all said to him, "Your horse is gone. Oh, what bad luck." Then they cried and they tried to console and comfort him. But he said, "How do you know it's bad luck?"

Sure enough, a few days later, the horse, being well-domesticated, came back to where he could be sure there

would be water and food. In the process he brought back twelve wild stallions with him. They were all quickly captured and ushered into the corral. Now when all the town heard the news, they came and they applauded and said, "Oh, thirteen horses, what good luck!" And the wise, old Chinese man said, "How do you know it's good luck?" The townspeople remembered his words the next day when his son, his only child, tried to break one of the wild stallions. In the process, he was thrown off, he broke his leg and was left with a limp forever. When the neighbors heard about that, they came to him again and said, "Your son, forever a cripple. What bad luck." But the wise, old man said, "How do you know that's bad luck?"

Sure enough, about a year later, a Chinese warlord came through town, conscripted every able-bodied young man, and took them off to battle. They lost the battle. In fact, every young warrior was killed. The only young man left in the village was the maimed son of the wise Chinese man, for he had never been conscripted, thanks to his limp. The moral of this story is that we do not know the way that God is taking us, or the "why" of the happenings in our lives, seemingly good or bad, but **OUR FATHER KNOWS THE WAY THAT WE TAKE AND THERE IS DIVINE PURPOSE IN ALL THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL IN OUR LIVES!**

Don't be afraid of suffering! For "I will be with you," saith the Lord. One of the amazing knowledges of God appearing in the scriptures is, "I will be with you — through water, through fire, through everything!" The Lord told the church at Smyrna that the devil would be permitted to cast some of them "into prison" that they might be tried, and they would be afflicted "ten days." In the spirit, prison represents a state of bondage, restriction, and limitation in which the afflicted one has lost his liberty. He is no longer in control of what is happening to him, nor is he free to decide for himself about the things that touch his life. Again and again Paul classified himself as a "prisoner of the Lord."

The condition that builds character in the life of a son, that matures us, perfects us, and makes us strong is that God surrounds us, hedges us in, and shuts us up to His dealings and His will. We love to be free and blessed, but on the pathway to sonship we lose our freedom! God will let you run free if all you want to do is be blessed and go to heaven when you die. But like Joseph of old, if you are destined for the throne, you will be thrown into a pit and cast into prison! Perfection demands suffering, trial, testing, tribulation, and proving. Sonship requires the dealings of God by which we are conformed to the image and likeness of Christ who was, Himself perfected through the things He suffered. Character is formed through discipline and hardship! Growth, development, and maturity in God come through the chastenings of the Father!

There have been those precious folk who have said to me, "Brother Eby, I don't understand. Since I came into this walk of sonship things have gotten worse — all hell has broken loose!" That is just what you need — **IF YOU WOULD BE A KING-PRIEST AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK!** Have you not known some beautiful saints to whom you naturally betake yourself in time of trial and trouble? They always seem to speak the right word, to give the wise counsel you are longing for; you do not realize, however, the cost which they had to pay ere they became so skillful in perceiving the true nature of things and giving the word of wisdom! If you were to investigate their past history, I doubt not that you would find that they have suffered more than most. They have been caught up in the vortex of cruel crisis, they have gone through experiences in which the golden bowl of joy was dashed at their feet, and the contents spilt. They have stood by ebbing tides, and drooping gourds, and noon sunsets; but all this has been necessary to mature them in wisdom and understanding, in discernment and judgment, and fill them with mercy, compassion, and the love of God.

To every son the Father says, "I am going to limit you here, put you through pressure there, subject you to suffering, teach you obedience, hedge you in and compass you about with infirmity, break your fleshly will and subdue your carnal mind, make you humble and pure, not because you have no sonship rights, but that it will work compassion, grace, understanding, tenderness, love, faithfulness, goodness, strength — work divine nature and character in you so that out of you will flow a river of love, forgiveness, reconciliation, redemption; and then a flow of power, enabling, and divine ability.

Oh! May God's consuming fire consume all the self-pity, which may be left in some of us. Some could have made better progress, but just at the time God was perfecting them in the sonship nature they began to feel sorry for themselves. Like children in school they think they have a hard time, till they become teachers themselves and find that it is harder on the teacher. Many young people, instead of getting their school-work

done, complain, and then they fail and wonder what is wrong. When God's consuming fire begins to work in us and the trials and pressures overtake us, if we then feel sorry for ourselves and drown in a pool of self-pity, we are disqualified.

Oh, my brother, my sister, how often we desire omnipotent power to change the world apart from the grace, wisdom, compassion and understanding by which the power must work! If God were to deliver us from all our troubles we would never help anybody, never understand the other fellow's dilemma; and that is why God keeps us the way we are and plagues us and puts us under pressure, not because we are not sons, not that we will despair or faint, but that we say, "Lord, let it work in us that divine grace and longsuffering and compassion that will then flow out and minister to creation." When the suffering is completed, the lessons learnt, and we are perfected in the nature of the Christ, then we can walk in the fullness of our inheritance and His glory shall be revealed through us to set creation free! Sonship is more than power — it is a nature!

There are no arm-chair kings in the kingdom of God! There are no country-club-elite sons! There are no honorary priests! There are no theoretical, self-appointed rulers on Christ's throne! Oh, yes! The devil shall cast some of you into the prison of confinement, limitation, breaking, purging, suffering, patience, and endurance that you may be tried; and you shall have tribulation "ten days." Then the Lord says, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life." "Faithful unto death" means more than just "toughing it out" until your heart stops beating! Be thou faithful unto death — He doesn't say be faithful until death, but unto death — unto the death of your carnal mind, unto the death of your human consciousness, unto the death of your natural reasoning, unto the death of your own will and way, unto the death of your fleshly aims, dreams, hopes, plans, and purposes, unto the death of every one of your religious traditions, activities, exercises, and entanglements — and God the almighty will then CROWN YOU WITH LIFE, even the incorruptible life of God's glorious Christ!

TRIBULATION TEN DAYS

**"The devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days."
(Rev. 2:10)**

Those "ten days!" Let me explain to you what those ten days mean. Ten is the number in scripture that refers to personal testing. The number ten, the last of the scale of numbers, each of which has a mystic meaning of its own, is naturally, in the symbolism of numbers, the representative of completeness, and here, therefore, of trial and testing carried to its full extent, and lacking nothing that could make it thorough and perfect, as a test. It comes as the climax of the whole picture of the sufferings to which the typical church of Smyrna was to be exposed. It is, furthermore, a full number, denoting that which is complete, yet of limited duration.

Let us explore this meaning a little further. Ten is a number, which is very frequently employed in scripture, and it often occurs in the book of Revelation. The antediluvian world was comprised of the lifetime of ten patriarchs. Before the heart of the Pharaoh of Egypt was inclined to let the children of Israel go to serve their God, ten plagues were sent upon the land. The whole of the law of God was summed up in Ten Commandments. The Lord Jesus in His parables spoke of ten virgins having ten lamps, and of servants entrusted with ten pounds whom He will place over ten cities. In the book of Revelation we read of the ten horns of the great red dragon, of the ten horns of the beast, of his ten royal diadems, and of the ten kings who shall hate the whore with whom they have committed fornication. Now if we consider all these applications of the number ten, and more besides, there can be no question of the fact that it is a round number, that whatever other number is multiplied by it, must also be a round number. As such it beautifully serves as a symbol of completeness and fullness!

When we consider the passages in which the number ten is used we find that the idea that lies at the basis of its employment seems to be that of a fullness, completion, and totality of the measure of whatever it is connected to. Ten horns are the fullness of power. Ten plagues are the fullness of judgment. Ten commandments are the fullness of divine law. Ten virgins are the fullness of a realm of purity. Ten cities are the fullness of divine government in the kingdom of God. Ten kings are the fullness of power that smites and judges the religious harlot. And therefore, in our text it denotes the fullness of tribulation! It does not indicate

that the time will be either long or short, but it indicates that a certain definite period is allotted to the devil to test and try and prove the called and chosen elect of God! This period is not determined by the devil, for the devil possesses no power of himself, but by the will and counsel of the Lord. The time is both limited and meted out to him by God. We see a beautiful picture of this in the life of Job!

It is the Lord saying to each of His sons, "You are not in a position to know how long your trials will last, but I know, and I can assure you that they will not last a day longer than is necessary for you. If the very hairs of your head are all numbered, and I take note of every sparrow that falls to the ground, you may rest assured that the minutest details of those trials and testings are being carefully weighed in my loving and omnipotent hands, and you will not be tempted above that you are able to bear. And even if the length of your tribulation and trouble were to cover the whole of your lifetime, that will be but ten short days in the unfolding of my magnificent plan for you in the age and the ages to come!"

**Look up, dear one; no storm can last
Beyond the limits God hath set.
When its appointed work is past,
In joy thou shalt thy grief forget.**

**Where sorrow's plowshare hath swept through,
Thy fairest flowers of life shall spring,
For God shall grant thee life anew,
And all thy wastes shall laugh and sing.**

**Hope thou in Him, His plan for thee
Shall end in triumph and release.
Fear not, for thou shalt fully see
His afterward of peace.**

"Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried." The plot of most melodramas involves a complication in which the hero, or protagonist, is opposed by a second character, the villain, or antagonist. The antagonist is a creature of contrast, a character necessary to define the hero. Often the protagonist, or hero, goes through a reversal, a period in which he loses power to the villain, or antagonist. If the hero regains power, the story is known as a triumph. If the hero doesn't regain power, the story is a tragedy. The Greatest Drama of the Ages is not a tragedy!

The protagonist and antagonist in the drama of the kingdom of God are clearly defined in the words of Jesus: "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (Jn. 10:10) Out of God's own mouth proceeds the assertion, "I have created the waster to destroy." (Isa. 54:16) We gather from this passage the principle that teaches us that the devil is a created entity with a definite purpose. The purpose is revealed in the opening statement of the above quoted verse, "I have created the smith (the devil) that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work." The "smith" that "bloweth upon the fire" is also the one who heats the furnace seven times hotter! "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing had happened unto you." (I Pet. 4:12)

Our trials and testings are associated in the scriptures with the ministry of Satan. You never thought of Satan having a ministry? "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted (tested) of the Devil. And when the Tempter came to Him, he said, If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." (Mat. 4:1-3) "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." (Lk. 22:31-32)

One has written, "God is constructing a temple, made of living stones, through which to manifest Himself throughout the ages to come, and Satan was created as a chisel and hammer to be used in the construction of this building. The living stones that are even now being placed in this temple have been chosen, says the

Lord, in the furnace of affliction. **(Isa. 48:10)** God, however, is mercy; God is love; God is compassion. He is a healer, not a destroyer. It was, nonetheless, necessary that an oven be heated in which to purify the gold — a furnace in which the wood, hay, and stubble were to be burned. But God, in His nature of love, could not perform the necessary affliction! It was for this reason that He created an instrument that was capable of performing this essential action in the lives of men, for in Satan God literally created a chastening rod. If we can realize that behind the acts of Satan is the mighty hand of God working to bring forth gold from these earthen vessels, we can rejoice, as David, in our afflictions and trials and exclaim with him, ‘It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes.’ **(Ps. 119:7)** Praise God! When we begin to see the good that comes from the assaults of Satan on our lives, we are able to appreciate all the more the greatness of our God and the depth of the wisdom of His great mind. He is truly a God of might and power, and all things are in His hand — even this adversary whom we call Satan!” — end quote.

One of the fundamental laws of creation is that an OPPOSING FORCE is necessary for growth, and to produce strength, stamina, and endurance. Any living thing that grows up without any opposition is weak and powerless. God’s NEW CREATION MAN must be strong and powerful, and anything that desires to be strong, or anyone, must wrestle with a force that is contrary to him! Any man who wants to develop muscular power to be strong, must spend weeks and months and years in vigorous training doing strenuous exercises, lifting heavy weights, using the opposing force of gravity to develop his strength. A man who wants to be a wrestler, doesn’t just wrestle when he is in the ring. At his training center he has his wrestling partners with whom he wrestles by the hour. If he didn’t do this he would be weak and powerless in the ring! A boxer has his punching bags and sparring partners, with whom he spends hours every day.

Those opposing forces are indispensable to develop strength and technique. A plant that grows in a greenhouse sheltered from the winds and rains, pampered day after day, may grow large, but is inherently weak, and if suddenly exposed to the elements will wither and die. But a plant that is constantly exposed to the fierce winds and pounding rains, burning heat and chilling cold, is strong and not easily destroyed. What purpose, then, is revealed in God’s wonderful provision for us as explained by the apostle Peter: “Be sober, be vigilant; for your adversary (opposing force) the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist (as a sparring partner) steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren.” **(I Pet. 5:8-9)**

I heard a story the other day of a king. This king was so insecure he built a high fortress on an island, which he surrounded with a moat, filled with fierce crocodiles. He thought he was safe, but he didn’t know if he could trust the strength or the loyalty of the chief of the guards. He decided to hire the most loyal, strongest, young man to be the chief of the guards. He announced that there would be a contest and all who wanted to compete could do so. They would meet on the edge of his palace. They would have to swim the moat, through the foaming crocodiles. The young man who won would be offered the position of chief of the guards, a purse filled with golden coins, as well as the hand of the king’s most beautiful daughter.

The day arrived. A host of these strong young men gathered on the edge of the moat, waiting for the bugle call to announce the commencement. Hardly had the bugle call sounded when one young man plunged into the water ahead of everybody else. He managed to escape the crocodiles and reached the other side in record time. The king came and said, “You were wonderful! Do you have anything you wish to say to the people?” The young warrior said, “Yes! I want to know who pushed me!”

This is a humorous little story, but it illustrates the wonderful truth that sometimes God pushes us! I really believe that the testings of God’s sons come in that manner. It takes guts to leave the lowlands of Adamic life and the ruts of man-made religion and scale the dizzy heights of God and search His awesome depths. Sometimes we all need a divine shove!

**Things don’t just happen to the children of God,
They’re part of a wonderful plan;
The troubles, reverses, the sorrows, the rod,
Are strokes of the Great Sculptor’s hand.**

**When some dread accident strikes you a blow,
And you worry and fret and demand;
Why try so hard the mystery to know?
It's not just an accident; it's planned!**

**Have you been dropped from a place of power?
Do you wonder and reprimand?
Don't rebel, look to Him in that hour;
This didn't just happen; it's planned!**

**Persecution, tribulation come down like a storm;
Friends disappoint and withstand;
At last, all alone, bewildered, forlorn,
You look, and He smiles: "This is planned."
Do you wonder why God to affliction should call,
And why you must suffer and moan?
"No man should be moved by affliction" says Paul,
"For you know it is part of the plan."**

**Things don't just happen to children of God,
The blue-print was made by His hand;
He designed all details to conform to His Son,
So all things that happen are planned.**

**No matter what happens to those called "His own",
Events that are awful or grand;
Every trial of your life He sends from His Throne;
Things don't just happen; they're planned!**

— Chuck Tober

This corresponds with what we know about all of life. Testing is a necessity of living! We test wood, steel, and stone in order to find out what they are capable of supporting. We test our ability to read, to run, and to think, but no one therefore calls them evil. We find out something about ourselves, even if that something is not always complimentary. Everything in life is tested in some manner! In this way "temptation" has a good sense as well as a bad; for example, God is said to have tempted, that is, proved Abraham in the matter of offering up Isaac. So Jesus is said to have tempted, that is, proved Philip in the miraculous feeding of the five thousand. "Jesus therefore lifting up His eyes, and seeing that a great multitude cometh unto Him, saith unto Philip, Whence are we to buy bread that these may eat? And He said this to tempt (prove) Philip, for He Himself knew what He would do." To prove Philip, to test him, see what he would answer and what was in his mind — but the word is tempt!

Every parent understands that the very worst thing that could happen to any child would be to escape all the pain of discipline, all the irksomeness of education, all the difficulty of work and experience, and be allowed in all things to please himself without any restraint. Such treatment would infallibly produce an ignorant, selfish, rebellious, irresponsible and wicked son or daughter. Just as feeding a child on cakes and sweets alone would ensure the ruin of its health. Now and again some father who has himself known hard sledding decides to make easy for his children the way of life. "I don't want them to suffer the way I had to suffer," he says. So they are not required, as he was, to get up early in the morning. They are not made, as he was, to get a job and earn their way at an early age. They are not deprived, as he was, of all the things young people want. They are placed in conditions that are wholly favorable and that make no difficult demands.

And now and then some human father who has made easy for his children the way of life finds himself wondering why they have made so little of themselves! He has given them every opportunity, and it fails him to understand why they are lacking in most of the qualities of ambition, discipline, dependability, thriftiness, and

vision he had hoped to find in them. But has he given them every possible opportunity? Not at all! He has denied them the supreme opportunity that a rough road affords for the development of strength and character! And this is what happens spiritually in the lives of all those starry-eyed faith and positive thinking people who want only blessings and instant deliverance out of all their troubles!

There are no evils lurking in the carnal mind and fleshly nature of us all for which there is no deliverance except through the crucible of suffering and pain and discipline; even as the dross found mixed with pure gold in the ore can only be separated and eradicated through the fiery furnace. The more we are exposed to adverse circumstances, the more we have to wrestle with our environment, the more we are challenged by the world around us, the stronger we become! Saints, IF WE WOULD BE SONS OF THE MOST HIGH, WE MUST BE STRONG IN THE LORD AND IN THE POWER OF HIS MIGHT!

Our Father wants us to be strong! The Father of spirits did not look forward to a distant day, at the time of His begetting, expecting that a multitude of babies in diapers or grown up ninnies and dummies would stand before Him. Oh, no! How many of those who read these lines want their children to grow up one hundred percent innocent, ignorant, and privileged, never having experienced the slightest temptation, struggle, or adversity in any form? This is precisely why God placed the serpent in Eden with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil — that man through the experience of the opposites might in the experience be led to OVERCOME all things and to stand before the Son of man in the strength of character, perception of mind, and quality of life of God Himself. It is all part of our Father's wise and magnificent plan!

As someone has written, "Man shrinks from tests for they call for the best that is within one. A school teacher does not give her pupils a test so that she may have the satisfaction of failing them, but rather that she may be delighted by their display of knowledge. Automobile manufacturers do not put test cars through rugged workouts to wreck them, but rather to improve their product and find how to strengthen their points of weakness. Even so it is when the Lord sends temptation into our spiritual lives. It is not intended to wreck us, though at times that may appear to be the result, but it is intended for our good! They are to make us strong! They are to do for us what the sculptor does for the rude block of marble. They are to do for us what the lathe does for the rough and coarse cylinder of steel. Thus it was that Job said, 'When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold!'"

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (I Pet. 4:12-13).

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation (testing): for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." (James 1:12)

"When all kinds of trials and temptations crowd into your lives, my brothers, don't resent them as intruders, but welcome them as friends! Realize that they come to test your faith, and to produce in you the quality of endurance. But let the process go on until that endurance is fully developed, and you will find you have become men of mature character, men of integrity with no weak spots." (James 1:2-4) (Phillips)

When the Father through His matchless grace reveals to the child of God that it is His Master Plan for the ages to come to effect a universal reconciliation, restitution, and restoration through the agency of a royal race of kings and priests who through trial, suffering, and fierce tribulation have come to the image of Jesus Christ, to reign and work with Him in the plenitude of His wisdom, the fullness of His understanding, the perfection of His holiness, the infiniteness of His love, the beauty of His justice, and the omnipotence of His power, every son having the mind of God, discerning all things, knowing all things and having the perfect nature, character, and ability to carry out the intricate and infinite will of God — then all our tribulation is freighted with vital significance!

Among that perfect, omnipotent order of kings and priests there will be no carnal minds, no fleshly actions, no selfish desires, no self-serving, no weakness, no limitation, no character flaws, no mistakes, no dissensions, no disobedience; but with justice and wisdom and righteousness and compassion and love and power shall they

rule the nations, and ultimately the vastnesses of the unbounded heavens until all things everywhere are subdued unto Christ, and Christ shall present a perfect kingdom to the Father. Aren't you glad!

Now since such glories are in store for the sons of God, can any man longer question why our all-wise heavenly Father should take such pains to bring His sons to perfection? None knows better than He exactly what is needed to transform His sons from corrupt and carnal creatures of the dust to beings of divine understanding and heavenly glory. I have often said that I have strong confidence in the ability of my heavenly Father to bring me to perfection and maturity as a son of God. My Father is a great son-raiser! What a colossal success He was with His firstborn! Anyone who can raise a son like Jesus knows exactly what He is doing and can surely handle you and me, my precious brother and sister.

“We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect THROUGH SUFFERINGS...wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.” (Heb. 2:9-10; Phil. 2:9-10)

Beholding the glory of Jesus Christ we can understand why the Father takes such infinite care to bring all His sons to perfection! Would you dare to imagine that any of the presidents, prime ministers, kings, or dictators of this present world system would be found fit candidates to straighten out the mess this world is in? Do you think for one moment that any of the world's past or present rulers possess either the wisdom or ability to bring an end to war, terrorism, strife, bigotry, crime, poverty, ignorance, fear, deceit, greed, broken homes and hearts, sickness, pain, sorrow, and death, restoring all into perfection again? Ah — apart from many sons brought to glory there is no hope for mankind! The ages to come will be given into the hands of God's choicest sons — saints fully developed, perfected through suffering, matured through trial, proven through testing, far beyond the reach of corruption and decay, far above the realm of greed, selfishness, deception, or any such thing. Isn't it wonderful!

I am reminded of the boy who wanted to help the butterfly out of its pupa. He saw that it struggled hard to get loose. Only a few strands held it back. So the boy clipped these off. The butterfly was free! And the boy was very happy, both about the butterfly and about the little operation he had performed. But so much greater did his sorrow become when he discovered what a well-intended but destructive labor of love he had performed. The butterfly could not fly and could not learn to fly. The exertions by which it was to have worked itself out of the pupa were what would have strengthened it and enabled it to fly!

I mentioned earlier the words of David wherein he said, **“It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes.” (Ps. 119:71)** You may wonder as I have — what kind of theology is this? How could my present distresses work in me the qualifications necessary to be a king-priest! The Hebrew word for affliction here means, “browbeaten, troubled, abased, chastened, defiled, hurt, humbled, weakened, depressed.” When you put this meaning into the verse, suddenly it reads, “It is good for me to have been browbeaten, troubled, abased, chastened, defiled, hurt, humbled, weakened, and depressed. And it all has been for one purpose — so that I could learn the Lord's statutes!” The word statutes in this verse means “engraved law.” The Psalmist is saying, “It's good that I went through all these troubles — because in the process God was engraving His laws, ways, and nature in my heart!”

**We've prayed to reign with Jesus
But we've not known what we asked.
Our eyes have been unlightened
As disciples in the past**

**Who came with this same prayer
(Although phrased a different way)
“Lord, let us sit beside you
In the coming kingdom Day.**

One upon the left, dear Lord,
And one upon the right.”
And then He said to them, as us,
“Can you endure the night?

Can you endure the anguish
Of a death upon the cross?
And are you able,” asks the Lord,
“To suffer that great loss

Of a horror of such darkness
That God’s face is hid from view?
And can you bear exposure
Before men and angels, too?

The cup I drink is better;
Its wine is mixed with gall.
The crown I wear is made of thorns;
My royal robe’s a pall.

The throne you ask to share with me
Is raised ‘twixt earth and sky
And the glory of the reign from there
Is hid from human eye.

Are you able now to drink
The cup my Father gives,
And can you see that he who dies
Is one who truly lives?

That he who rules is he who stoops
To wash another’s feet;
And that the cross is God’s own throne
Where He and sinners meet?”

These are the questions put to me
As I bowed down in prayer;
And still the questions that He asks
Of all those who would share

The glory of His kingdom,
The greatness of His power,
The resurrection life He brings
In this world’s final hour.

For there’s no life until there’s death,
No glory without shame,
And we must truly learn to die
If we would wear the name

That’s given those who overcome
And share His glorious throne
When Christ descends and brings reward
To those He calls His own!

— Author unknown

When the hour arrives for God to move us toward overcoming, spiritual maturity, perfection, and sonship He brings undeserved trials into our life. When these experiences arrive, we don't like them at all! Our first thought is disbelief; our first inclination is to ask what we have done to deserve this! Then we question God's goodness, faithfulness, and sovereignty. If I am a son of God, why does God allow this to happen? But each crisis is actually a precisely orchestrated opportunity to bring about our spiritual perfection! The afflictions of life are God's ingenious instrument to crucify our carnal mind, and mature our spirit.

Elwin Roach expressed it this way: "Very often people's problems come when they find themselves in hardships of refinement. Straightway they reject it! They ask, 'Why would God let me go through something so terrible when He could prevent it?' The answer is simple — He is not 'letting' you go through it — He is 'making' you go through it! He is driving you through it as surely as an unbroken horse is driven into a corral and broken by its owner. If the horse learns obedience, forsaking its own will, it can then be used throughout the man's kingdom. If not, it will be sold for dog food and soap. If your will is not broken during this time, and you insist on maintaining your self-expression, I doubt that you will wind up as dog food and soap; but you will be of little value in the kingdom of God. Think about it!"

It is the elect of the Lord who have been specifically selected by the Father to partake of the sufferings of Christ through the trials and tribulations, which He brings into our lives. It was the plan and purpose of God that each son of God should be tested and tried to prepare us for the glory of His kingdom we are destined to receive. Don't think that you have to suffer great things like martyrdom or twenty years in a rat-infested prison in order for God to accomplish His work. Oh, no! There is a vast variety of events in our everyday lives uniquely designed to test every area the Lord would put His hand on. Each of us has had a unique set of tests and trials to go through to build the character of Christ in our life. Your trials have not been harder than mine, just different. We are distinct members of the Christ body, and the Lord's processings for each one varies according to His purpose in us and the place we shall fill.

Though we shall all ultimately be joined in union with Christ as one complete corporate man, each of us will be a unique expression of the fullness of Himself, in a way that only we can express Him. The Lord has a sovereign purpose to fulfill in each of our tests and trials, and He watches over it. To know that the Father has a sovereign purpose in all that we experience and endure may not make the trials any easier to go through. But it gives us understanding, purpose, and hope of the glory that shall be revealed in us when it is finished.

God does not lead all His chosen in the same path or deal with them in the same way. He is not pouring every son into the same mold. He does not want assembly-line believers. He is not making Fords, He is transforming people! And so the experience will be different for each one. Not even two fingerprints are alike. God made us that way, for we are different. We are all human, but each of us is a unique expression of that humanity. All of us physically are from that first man, Adam; yet none of us is alike. It is amazing what God can do with two ears, two eyes, one nose, and one mouth. He sure comes up with some funny designs! If you don't believe it, look around you. All are human, but no two are alike. One is a plumber, another a race-car driver, another a teacher. One is tall, another short, with every shade between black and white, fat and thin, beautiful and ugly, and no two in any category look alike! How different! And yet — how alike! God makes everyone different. Do not expect Him to deal with you as He dealt with someone else, even though you both be sons. He is conforming all His elect to the image and likeness of Christ, but every member of the Christ body is a unique expression of His nature and glory!

The Scripture states that Jesus was "led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil." It is abundantly evident, since Christ is the Pattern Son, the firstborn among many brethren, that all who follow Him unto sonship shall also be led of the Spirit into their own wilderness experience to be tested by the devil. Sonship is not a doctrine to be received with the assumption that because we believe it and embrace its truths, we are therefore qualified to be the manifest sons of God. Not at all! The process by which we must all qualify for sonship has already been demonstrated in the life of Jesus. As He was LED OF THE SPIRIT into the wilderness to be tested by the devil, even so must we also be LED OF THE SPIRIT into our own personal

wilderness, to be tested by the devil. Not every child of God is tested in this way! Is that not why the church in Smyrna was told, "Behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried." SOME of you! Not ALL of you! Not all will be overcomers! Others are content to live in lesser realms. They will not be chastised as sons! Unless we are tried and proven in the wilderness, we have no claim to sonship. The Holy Spirit is most explicit in this regard, for we read, "But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." (Heb. 12:8) We should therefore welcome the tests that come our way, for the Father is testing and proving us to determine the qualities of His life within us. We should submit to these tests and allow the Lord to work His righteousness within us. Then we shall be released from those tests and trials and will be declared righteous.

The apostle Peter tells us that we should not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try us, as though some strange thing had happened unto us. (I Pet. 4:12-13) The fiery trial itself is difficult enough to endure, but when there is added to the suffering an uncertainty as to why it is necessary, or what the cause might be, then it becomes more difficult to bear. This frequently is the case with the people of God; when visited by afflictions of one sort or another they wonder why this is happening to them! It is this that Peter is explaining to us! "Think it not strange," he says, "as though some strange thing happened unto you."

The King James translation does not give us the full depth of thought expressed by Peter. Basically, the Greek word here translated "strange" is one that suggests the relationship between a host and a guest; that is, those who are not members of the same family. What does it mean to be a host? A host or hostess entertains those who come to the home, makes them feel comfortable, and ministers to their every need and want. So what Peter is saying is, when this fiery trial comes to your door and knocks, then you are to be a host to that trial. Bring it in and entertain it! Do not act as though it were a stranger that has come whom you would like to get rid of if you could. This is, indeed, a strange word to the natural man! But that is really what Peter is saying. "Be a host to this trial, bring it in and let it have its full work in you." It is a similar word used by Paul in his reference to the experience of Abraham when visited by three angels. Paul wrote, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." (Heb. 13:1)

Confirming this viewpoint of our trials is the Greek word used in this passage, and translated "happened," in the expression, "as though some strange thing happened unto you." Its literal meaning is "to walk together." The thought is that when trials visit us, and even walk together with us, we are not to think of them as strangers, or aliens, but to accept such experiences as though they were our friends, or even members of our family! Peter explains that the reason we should not think of our trials as being strange, or alien to us, is that in experiencing them we are partakers of Christ's sufferings, or, as the Greek text indicates, we are "partners" in Christ's sufferings. HE WAS PERFECTED THROUGH THE THINGS HE SUFFERED! In other words, in our trials we are sharing the common experience of all whom our heavenly Father has called to sonship to share in the glory and power of His kingdom!

Since trials and testings are so closely related to our hope of glory, we should not consider them as strange, but should welcome them into our lives just as we would welcome a beloved member of our family, get acquainted with them, and learn well the lessons which they alone are able to teach us. Just think of the blessing Abraham derived from being host to the three strangers who visited him! Instead of resenting the fact that they had called, he treated them as members of his family, and became involved thereby in the salvation of Lot from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Most Christians today do not particularly care for this sort of scripture. That is the proof that they are not the called out elect of the Lord! Most feel that when they have believed in the Lord, and have obeyed the Lord, they should be BLESSED! They should not suffer. They should have the very best of everything, financial, material, and physical blessings galore. Can you envision Paul in the Philippian jail expressing those sentiments? Can you hear him in any way questioning his confinement because He was a man of faith and power and had preached the gospel and obeyed the Lord? Is it possible to hear Paul complain about his suffering because he had such great power with God and had done the will of God? He was not in jail because of any evil He had done! He knew the ways of God, and he gladly shared in the sufferings of Christ that he, too, might be perfected! James, too, understood this great principle when he said, "My brethren, count

it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations (testings); knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.” (James 1:2-3)

I think that in the midst of all this, if God is to be glorified, it depends on how we respond to our testings and trials. We should recall that the same sun that melts butter also bakes bricks. The sun is the same; the substances are different and in the same type of affliction some people are made better and some people are made bitter. It depends upon our faith and our calling! And that is how you can distinguish a son of God! Sons know that there is divine purpose in all their afflictions and tribulations, and as they truly overcome in them they are made better! Those who are made bitter by the trials are bastards, and not sons. Every member of God’s called out elect is made better! You will know the elect of the Lord by the intensity of their Christ-like sufferings, and their joy and confidence in them, not by vague, empty-sounding and high-sounding religious claims they may make.

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 41

THE CHURCH IN SMYRNA (continued)

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART FORTY-ONE

THE CROWN OF LIFE NOT HURT OF THE SECOND DEATH

"Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days." (Rev. 2:10)

Every man and woman who has even in the least partaken of revelation will recognize with deep appreciation the truth that it was in Eden's fragrant garden that our first parents encountered that ancient serpent, which is the devil and Satan. There in the garden of God they were tested and tried! Not outside the Garden, but inside. The first step in the preparation of the sons of God is when we are lifted out of the vineyards of the world, and planted in the Garden of God — the kingdom of heaven on earth. Then, many and varied are the ways and paths by which the Lord in faithfulness processes and develops the people He has chosen. A most important aspect of this preparation is found tucked away among the priceless gems in that treasure house of truth which is the Song of Solomon. "Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out." (S. of S. 4:16)

Some of the following thoughts are gleaned in part from the book CHRIST AND HIS BRIDE by Cora Harris MacIlravy.

"The Garden," which both in Genesis and the Song of Solomon has the significance of the kingdom of heaven on earth, has been set up by Jesus Christ through His death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and return as the Holy Spirit. In this garden God has planted precious plants, stately trees, costly spices, and aromatic herbs. This garden is not only the universal kingdom of the Lord, not only does God's called and chosen elect live and feed and work in this garden, but we are part of it. Each of our lives is a little vineyard or orchard or spice garden which is part of God's great garden. Thus we pray earnestly that the work which the Holy Spirit must do in our "gardens" may be done to the glory of God! Very often we are more inclined to ask God to bless us, supply our needs, heal, deliver, perform miracles, and flood our souls with glory, than we are to pray that He will deal, purge, prune, dig, and uncover all that is hindering His perfection in our lives. Ah, the blessings will come, the fullness will break upon us, but the north wind must blow first!

There is a mighty cry from the yearning heart of every son of God in this significant hour, "Awake, O North Wind!" We are earnestly longing for Him to blow upon our gardens in stripping and dealing and testing, however hard it may be on the flesh. We are praying most fervently that God will send His Spirit, as the north wind, to search out the pride, to search out the self-interest and self-will, to search out the soulish passions, emotions, and desires, to search out even the hidden spirit of Babylon that remains; and that He will blow upon it until it is blasted and drops off, and we are clothed in humility, righteousness, and the mind of Christ!

We are praying that the Lord of the garden will send the Holy Spirit, as the north wind, and strip away the false assurance that believes we have more than we have, and mistakes revelation for possession. How many times we assumed that we had entered into possession of the nature of Christ, the mind of Christ, and the power of Christ, the immortality of Christ, and all things that God had shown us and called us to begin to possess. Many times the Lord has let us see the blessedness of the path in which we walk alone with Him, and we thought we had laid hold upon it. But when He sent by the Spirit the testings and trials to blow upon our lives, we found that He was not yet our all in all; that we were still depending upon someone else, or something else, be it our feelings, our works, our faith, our gifts, our ministries, our gatherings, rather than upon the LORD HIMSELF WITHIN.

How little we recognize our own plans, desires, schemes, and efforts, which are as suckers in our spiritual lives! How little we appreciate the place we give the flesh and our own interests, our likes and dislikes, our experiences and self-absorption, our religious activities and multiplied works, which eat the strength and life out of our relationship with God. When God sends the Holy Spirit as the north wind, He comes and uncovers the flesh and carnality within us, exposing our own thoughts, acts, and position. With a blast of conviction, He blows upon those suckers, and like a mighty wind He sweeps down upon them to try them! As they fall off, we are left apparently stripped and bare; but, in reality, we are in a better condition to bring forth blossoms and fruit to His glory than ever before!

Therefore do we with faith and confidence say, "Awake, O north wind, and blow upon my garden! Lord, send the testings and processings that you know I need; send the hard things that are needed to try every blossom. Blow upon the blossoms in my life that are so beautiful and look as if they would bear the luscious fruit of sonship; blow upon my gifts, my ministry, my doctrines, my works, my hopes, my plans, and doings, and prove them whether they will abide, or whether they have no beginning of kingdom fruit in them." There are dealings and revelations in each of our lives which we have gladly embraced, there are callings to higher realms in God that have made much show before our eyes, we have reveled in the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, anticipating our sonship and our place with Christ upon His throne; we have rejoiced in the glory that is to be revealed in us, and the great and powerful ministry to come with His fullness. Yet the question follows — to what degree have we yielded that God might make these things FRUITFUL so that they remain no longer merely dealings and revelations, head-knowledge and dreams, never becoming possessions in some measure for our todays!

God also sends the Spirit, as the north wind, to blow upon every relationship in our lives; upon those relationships we deem harmless, but which are not of the Spirit nor of God's will, and come between the reality and us, sapping the life of sonship out of us, and robbing the inheritance of God. Upon every relationship that is not of His choosing and to His glory, He sends the strong north wind! He separates us from everyone and everything that is hindering the maturity of HIS LIFE; He blows upon our human affections, and before His north wind our soulish attachments wither and die. Not one thing of eternal value that has been inworked in our lives can be harmed by the north wind of God's testing and proving, which only blasts and withers the superficial and unfruitful; and the sooner they fall off the better. The sooner we see ourselves stripped of our self-confidence and blindness, our false hopes and delusion that we are far beyond the place to which we have really attained in God, the better!

He blows upon our involvement with religious systems, our feverish religious activities, our running hither and thither doing the so-called work of the Lord, our trotting from meeting to meeting, from preacher to preacher, from revival to revival, and before His north wind the anointing upon these avenues of service lifts and we are left with a bare branch from which the superficial beauty and fragrance has been stripped. It is the strong blasts of the north wind that drive our roots down deeper and deeper into the soil of HIS LIFE, until that which has gone down and out of sight, is greater and stronger than that which appears on the surface. We are astonished to behold some of the most beautiful blossoms of our lives drop off; those in which we had placed much confidence! But the blasts of God's wind which destroy the fruitless blossoms, also cause the roots of true spiritual life to go down deeper INTO CHRIST; and they become firmly rooted and grounded IN HIM. Thus stripped and with our roots going deeper and deeper into the Christ within, we learn to take the time to wait on God long enough for HIS LIFE TO ARISE WITHIN US, long enough to hear HIM SPEAK, and have Him divulge HIS WILL to our seeking heart!

To every apprehended son of God who has purposed in his heart to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, God will send the searching north wind of the Spirit that his garden may be stripped and prepared for fruitfulness in the kingdom of God. When He has dealt with everything, He will send the south wind of the Spirit in wooing and encouragement, in warm showers of faith and glory and victory, which will refresh and entice the fruitful buds to come out and develop into the fruit of the Christ-life. The more testings the Lord sends, the stronger the searching north wind blows upon our garden, the more spices and fruit are perfected, and the more fragrance and glory flow forth from our lives!

Come smell the spices that abound in the garden of the Lord! Spices of love, spices of grace, spices of compassion, spices of mercy, spices of goodness, spices of righteousness, spices of joy, spices of peace, spices of faith, spices of the mind of Christ, spices of wisdom, spices of understanding, spices of power and victory! It is not the gentle, soothing south wind that wafts abroad these costly spices of the divine nature. It is the north wind that whips and beats it fine, that proves whether it is divine spice, or merely an imitation of man's soul.

As the spices are bruised, the perfume comes forth, for it is the hard things that make the spices give out their odor. Let God send the north wind upon our lives until He sees that it is enough; and then let the south wind blow that the spices may flow out! Thus the heart of the Lord is made to rejoice as He walks through His garden and smells the fragrance of our spices; as He beholds the fruit that is being perfected in our lives by the working of His Spirit! It is His garden, not ours! They are His precious fruits and spices, not ours! Though they are perfected in our lives and borne upon our branches and are sometimes spoken of as ours, they are really HIS; for CHRIST WHO IS OUR LIFE IS APPEARING WITHIN US! Come, O north wind; come, O south wind; and blow upon our garden!

THE CROWN OF LIFE

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. 2:10)

From the dawn of time the crown has been the symbol of RULE, whether by secular monarch or by sacred priest. There are two different words in the Greek New Testament which are translated "crown" in English. One of them is *stephanos*, which denotes a "wreath," or "chaplet." The other is *diadema*, meaning a "diadem." The most common term rendered "crown" is *stephanos*. This crown is usually a laurel wreath woven of fragrant branches. It was granted to winners in the Olympic Games and also as a token of public honor for distinguished service — especially military leaders who had been victorious over their enemies on the battlefield. It was also given at marriage feasts, especially in royal families, to celebrate the joy of the bridegroom in having "won" the maiden as his bride. This crown always denotes the VICTOR'S CROWN — the crown of an OVERCOMER — one who has fought and WON! This is the crown that is promised to the overcomers out of the church in Smyrna — the ones who are faithful unto death!

Paul reminds us that the athlete trained and ran to obtain a corruptible crown. Those green leaves of the laurel wreath would soon dry up, turn into a faded brown and crumble into oblivion. The branches soon became dead and brittle. Have you won trophies in your lifetime? If you have lived a little while and have had a chance to look back on some of them, you have seen them begin to turn and you wonder why in the world they could have seemed so important at the time. I wonder about what Olympic stars, who spend years of grueling training working to win a gold medal, must think thirty years later when they look at their medal. What does it really amount to then? Athletes will give themselves to incredible amounts of self-sacrifice to win some perishable crown. In contrast to this, oh ye saints of God, OUR STEPHANOI are INCORRUPTIBLE CROWNS, which will never fade away in death — for our crown is the Crown of Life — LIFE ITSELF!

The Victor's Crown is granted as a reward for faithfulness — it is the trophy earned by steadfastness, perseverance, and carrying the battle onward to victory. There was once a king who had a heavy stone placed in the middle of a busy road. He hid himself and watched to see who would stop and remove the cumbersome obstacle. Men of various walks of life approached it and went around it. As the king watched, some men openly cursed the king for allowing the road to be so cluttered. One by one they dodged the task of removing the heavy stone. At last, a poor peasant, on his way to town, approached the place. His back was laden with a load of vegetables, which he was going to sell. He stopped and contemplated the stone. The king watched eagerly. The peasant laid his load on the ground. Taking a deep breath, he huffed and puffed as he rolled the heavy stone off the road. Turning around, he spied a money bag which had been laying beneath the stone. With trembling hands, he opened the bag. It was filled with a fortune in gold pieces. There was a note folded among the pieces of gold. It stated that the person who removed the stone could have the gold. It was signed by the king!

Beneath every task that the Lord puts in the pathway of our spiritual journey, is a hidden blessing. We, like the people in the story, have a choice. We can dodge the obstacle if we wish! But we do it to our own hurt. Our King will reward us if we faithfully overcome in each test! There are crowns He has prepared for the overcomer. We will receive them if we press on to victory! **"Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." (Gal. 6:9)** Faint (quit) in your fulfilling of the Lord's will and you will reap no reward. That is the law of sowing and reaping! **"Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward." (II Jn. 8)** The word translated "wrought" is also translated "gained." Either way, the message is clear: it is possible to lose rewards which we have gained! We must be faithful to the end of the journey, to the completion of the process, to receive a full reward.

"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." (Rev. 3:11) If, by faithfulness, we hold fast to the ground we have already gained, we will receive our crown. If we do not stay faithful all the way to the end, we will lose that crown which we have already gained! "The end" is not when your heart stops beating, the end is the laying hold upon the promise, the receiving of the inheritance! If we are not faithful to the end, and lose our crown, somebody is going to receive it! The Greek word for "take" here is lambano. It is also translated "receive." It is not that some other person is going to snatch your crown from you...but God WILL HAVE A PEOPLE, a firstfruits, to display the fullness of His life to creation. Should we fail to follow on to become that people, God will raise up another generation, just as He did with the children of Israel who refused to believe Him and enter into the Promised Land. That is the law of the kingdom!

May God help all who read these lines to realize that if we would be overcomers we cannot be sluggards or quitters! Nothing can defeat us except our own unbelief! I think of a young man whose goal (in the natural world) was to become a member of the state legislature. Now that is a high goal for a man to try to reach! He strove with all his might and was defeated. So he decided that he should go into business. The result was that he went bankrupt and spent seventeen years paying off the bad debts of his crooked partner. He fell in love with a beautiful woman and death snatched her out of his arms. He then decided to go into national politics. He ran for congress and lost. Then he sought for an appointment to a government office (the U.S. Land Office) but was rejected. Then he became a candidate for the vice-presidency, and he was defeated. If any man had reason to quit, this man did! He had a young son who was the darling of his life. And the boy died! Did he give up? No, though many a lesser man would have. Today in Washington, D.C. you can look up into his face, filled with sorrow and compassion, and yet with a certain determination as he sits there in his great white chair in the Lincoln Monument and looks down upon the Union that he saved and the slaves that he freed. He didn't quit! He became an overcomer! He prevailed! And he being dead, yet speaketh. And, beloved, you may feel today that you have failed every test and opportunity that God has set before you on the journey to the Throne — but arise and shake the dust from your feet, be strong and of a good courage — the race has not ended yet! Oh, yes, IT IS THE OVERCOMER WHO RECEIVES THE CROWN OF LIFE!

And how true it is that we are only able to fully overcome by virtue of being made partakers of the divine nature! To be "crowned" means to be given kingly authority. As the kingly authority and dominion of the divine nature is raised up in our lives, ascending the throne of our hearts to reign within us, we are crowned — both ruled by the spirit and made rulers — not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of a divine life! THE CROWN IS LIFE! Crowned with Life! Oh, the wonder of it!

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." It is my deep conviction that He speaks not of the death that takes this old body to the cemetery, but the death that comes by the INWORKING OF HIS CROSS until all that pertains to the realm of carnality has been completely and forever dealt with. Then, and only then, are we CROWNED WITH LIFE, His life reigning within without interference or possibility of defeat.

It is hard to understand the full implications of life until one sees clearly that there is a dimension of His life, which is a free gift and another dimension of His life which is given as a result of overcoming. This is what most Christians miss! Let us consider a few scriptures that speak of the life, which is a free gift by faith. **"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (Jn. 3:16)** **"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 6:23)** **"Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to**

condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."
(Rom. 5:18)

Now we shall examine other passages that reveal a realm of life which is not a free gift at all! **"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation (testing); for when he is tried, He shall receive the VICTOR'S CROWN OF LIFE."** **(James 1:12)** This "crown of life" is reserved only for the Victors — the Overcomers! Consider how great is the exhortation of Paul wherein he says, "Know ye not that they which run a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run." **(I Cor. 9:24-25)** **"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the paradise of God."** **(Rev. 2:7)**

That the great apostle himself had not yet (in his opinion) qualified for this "crown of life" he states plainly in his epistle to the Philippians. Harken to his words! **"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him."** **(Phil. 3:7-9)** Surely Paul did not have to go through all that sacrifice, humiliation, stripping, and death in order to have Christ in his life — to be saved! Paul himself had explained to the Philippian jailer the simple requirement for salvation: **"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house"** **(Acts 16:31)**. But in chapter three of Philippians Paul continues, **"That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; IF BY ANY MEANS I MIGHT ATTAIN UNTO THE RESURRECTION OF (OUT FROM AMONG) THE DEAD. NOT as though I had ALREADY ATTAINED, either were ALREADY PERFECT: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I also am apprehended of Christ Jesus."** **(Phil. 3:10-12)**

Fortunately, Paul gives us some very vital information concerning this resurrection "out from" or "from among" the dead, without which we would be very much in the dark. He tells us just how he was planning to be included in it! He also tells us how others came to be included in the same class with him, and he states that the revelation concerning this great attainment and the way into it, is the sign of spiritual perfection. **(Phil. 3:11-15)** Yet the popular teachers of this day have totally missed these great truths! Let us consider them very carefully. They are of the utmost importance to all who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship to God! Paul informs us that he had given up the world, he had given up his former religion among the Jews, he had given up everything that he might suffer with Christ, with his nature transformed to die even as Christ died. **"IF BY ANY MEANS I might attain unto the resurrection out from amongst the dead."**

A moment's reflection will suffice to convince the reader that the apostle is not speaking here of the broad truth of "the resurrection of the dead," inasmuch as everyone must rise again! **"There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both the just and the unjust."** **(Acts 24:15)** In the Greek language the resurrection "of the dead" is nekron or ton nekron and is applied to all classes of people because all will be raised. But the term ek nekron — "out of the dead" — is not once applied to the unjust or the ungodly, or in any general sense. The resurrection of which Paul spoke was not even the general resurrection of all saints! Paul knew that he was a saved man, and as such knew there was positively no way he could escape the resurrection of the just. Now, if there were but one resurrection of the saved, as the church systems teach, then all of his strivings were altogether uncalled for and useless!

But no! Paul was not striving for something that needed not to be striven for, nor was he striving in vain. And thus he wrote to the saints at Philippi, **"But whatever former things I had that might have been gains to me, I have come to consider as one combined loss for Christ's sake. Yea, furthermore I count everything as loss compared to the possession of the priceless privilege — the overwhelming preciousness, the surpassing worth and the supreme advantage — of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, and of progressively becoming more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, of perceiving and recognizing and understanding Him more clearly and fully. For His sake I have lost everything and consider it all to be mere rubbish in order that I may win Christ...that I may in that same way come to know the power outflowing from HIS RESURRECTION; and that I may so share His sufferings as to be continually transformed in spirit into the likeness of His death, in the hope that IF POSSIBLE I MAY ATTAIN TO THE RESURRECTION THAT LIFTS ME OUT FROM AMONG THE**

DEAD EVEN WHILE IN THE BODY. Not that I have attained this ideal or am already made perfect, but I press on to lay hold of and make my own, that for which Christ Jesus has laid hold of me." (Phil 3:7-12) (Amplified)

Ah, my beloved, the resurrection "of" the dead is one thing, but the resurrection "out from among" the dead is a mightily different thing! If all the people in a building leave it at the same time, it is the coming out "of" the company; but if only some of the people present leave, theirs is a coming out "from" the rest of the company. It was for this resurrection "out from" the dead that Paul longed continually! This was the bright and blessed hope that shone upon his soul and cheered him among the sorrows and trials, the toils and the difficulties, the buffetings and the conflicts. Every soul who dies, both saint and sinner, must be in the resurrection "of" the dead, for, as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive! There is no possible way of avoiding it! Christ has bought it and paid for it!

To be a partaker, however, of the resurrection "from among" the dead, and, as the Amplified Bible so beautifully brings it out, to attain to that resurrection that lifts us out from among the dead even while in the body — that, Paul tells us, is a special blessing and distinction for those who FOLLOW ON TO KNOW THE LORD! He says that "perfection" or "completeness" in the full stature of Christ is the prerequisite! These not only are clothed with everlasting life in the spirit, they are invested with such incorruption and immortality in spirit, soul, and body, as to be forever and completely beyond the capacity to sin or the capability of death! This happens while we are walking around on two feet! This is not merely never-ending spiritual life, but a CROWN OF LIFE — God's own divine and eternal life in the fullness of HIMSELF!

This, my beloved, is that resurrection "out from among" the dead, even the "crown of life" which is that full salvation that includes the plentiousness of His incorruptible life, nature, and power. It is the full salvation of spirit, soul, and body in the here and now, a victory so complete, so powerful, so divine and eternal, that there is no possibility of ever sinning or dying again. And while I have called it a "salvation," it is more than salvation, it is something beyond salvation, an attainment, the PRIZE of a quality and dimension of life the first Adam has never known! Not even in Eden! For in Eden Adam could sin and Adam could die. But these overcomers possess the very fullness of the divine nature! They are not merely "saved by grace," but have totally laid down their own lives and completely taken up HIS. They are an incorruptible and immortal people spiritually, soulically, and bodily.

This is the TRUE ETERNAL SECURITY of which men teach. Why is this resurrection such a prize? Why is it worth giving up everything to run the race? Because it speaks of a realm of life and honor and glory and dominion in the fullness of Christ which none others shall receive! It is reserved for overcomers alone — not for the general run of Christians who have hob-nobbed with the world, fornicated with the harlot religious systems of man, and counted other things more precious than the prize!

The vast majority of believers are of the persuasion that by faith in Jesus they have received the full measure of eternal life — a never-ending life with God in the spirit. Multitudes of believers are unaware that there are more than one level, degree, plane, or dimension of life in the world of the spirit. But do not angels have a different level of spiritual life than sons? Oh, yes, there are various planes of life in the spirit, both in realms of light and of darkness. All men are not created equal! The scriptures are clear that God's overcoming elect shall have not only a never-ending life, but a quality of life, a maturity of life, a power of life, a character of life, a fullness of life, a dominion of life, that makes them KINGS! CROWNED with life! REIGNING in life! Every little child has human life. With that human life they can play with dolls, toy trucks, and do other childish things. Yet, there is a development of that human life that makes some men great! They become the men of accomplishment, the heroes, men of recognition and power whose names fill our history books. In like manner, any child of God with God's life can go to heaven and play a harp! But only overcomers are CROWNED WITH LIFE — Life to reign with Christ upon His throne!

The Lord is bringing His overcoming remnant into THE POWER OF AN ENDLESS LIFE. It is greater than Pentecostal power! Pentecostal people die, but our Lord Jesus the Christ is a priest forever after the power of an endless life and He lives to die no more! This power is greater than the power to speak in tongues, prophesy, heal the sick, cast out devils, and do signs and wonders. It is greater than witnessing power, and even greater than power to raise the dead. Those raised from the dead by Pentecostal power die again!

Pentecostal power lies within the "in part" realm of first Corinthians 13:8-10). When that which is perfect, complete, and full is come, that which is in part shall be done away!

Soon, very soon, those powers will no longer be needed because the manifest sons of God shall arise in the power of the MELKISEDEKIAN PRIESTHOOD, AFTER THE POWER OF AN ENDLESS LIFE, to deliver creation from THE BONDAGE OF CORRUPTION. A ministry is coming where there is no limited measure of the Spirit, no "in part" manifestation of the "gift" realm. There will be no need to heal the sick, cast out devils, multiply bread and fish, or raise the dead — it will be a ministry from the IMMORTAL REALM where everlasting life will flow fully and freely to all creation, swallowing up mortality in life! Death is not the grave or the coffin. DEATH IS THAT WHOLE DREADFUL REALM IN WHICH MAN HAS EXISTED EVER SINCE THE TRANSGRESSION IN EDEN. Mankind groans to be delivered, not just forgiven, not merely saved from sin and sickness and trouble and the grave, but out of death, out of the DEATH REALM altogether!

We can only speculate what it will be like to be in the full power and glory of immortal life! God is moving to bring His holy remnant into the power of an indissoluble life, even now. There will be a full and complete severing from the earth realm, from the carnal mind, from the death realm and all its claims. God wants a free, heavenly, celestial people, a body of sons totally detached from all that is earthly, limited, and temporal! It is possible to move into a resurrection realm in our consciousness that places us beyond time, beyond the thinking and power of the world, beyond the bondage of health, security, and death itself. Is that not the greatest power that God can give mankind — to make him an eternal spiritual being in the eternal glory of God? Not a disembodied spirit, but a spiritual being with a spiritual body! Ah, what a PRIZE! What a CROWN! "So let us run..."

Note, precious friend of mine, I did not say that God would make us spirits — but spiritual beings. What God is making is a NEW CREATION — something that has never been before! It is God (spirit), but not just God. It is man (form, image), but not just man. It is God and man brought together in a union producing a race of beings that are not God or man — yet GOD and MAN! It is the NEW CREATION! In the vast storehouse of truth embraced by the holy scriptures no part nor phase thereof is in any way more outstanding or clear than the truth that man was designed by his Creator to possess a body. Man is not designed to have his spirit flit about through eternity without a body. Jesus Christ is the first of this new creation and the firstborn among many brethren, and He is a spiritual being having a glorified human body! He is the GOD-MAN! That, my friend, is sonship!

The apostle Paul echoes the sense of revulsion found in the heart of every man at the thought of being found "naked" or "disembodied." Speaking of the earthly tabernacle of flesh, he writes, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle (body) were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house, which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, not for that we would be unclothed (put off our body), but clothed upon (our house from heaven put over top of this tabernacle), that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now He that hath wrought us FOR THIS SELFSAME THING IS GOD." (II Cor. 5:1-5)

There is another body, thank God! Formed of the incorruptible life of the resurrected and glorified Christ of God, the second man, the last Adam, the God-man, the spiritual man with a spiritual body, the firstborn of the new creation species. This marvelous body is from heaven, just as my present body is from earth. It is the offspring of the last Adam, just as my flesh body is the offspring of the first Adam. I do not hesitate to declare to you that as a man PUTS ON CHRIST he puts on not only the spirit of Christ, but also the resurrection body of Christ, and this body is OUR HOUSE FROM HEAVEN! As the pure and holy life of the Son of God is formed within us God shall also give us bodies worthy of such divine life, bodies capable of expressing all the wisdom and nature and power of that blessed realm beyond sin and death, yea, beyond time and space and matter! What a PRIZE! What a CROWN! This is the CROWN OF LIFE — the crown which IS LIFE ITSELF! Aren't you glad!

God is even now bringing forth an incorruptible people. Overcomers! Those who shall overcome all things. And of them, finally, it shall be said, "They fought many, many bouts, and were crowned every time!" No more

weakness and failure. No more flunking two tests and passing one. Kings and priests! Reigning in God's own nature. Reconciling the world. Subduing the kingdoms. Restoring all things. As kings to reign, as priests to redeem and reconcile. Ah, beloved saints of God, let us press on to obtain this glorious and eternal CROWN OF LIFE!

NOT HURT OF THE SECOND DEATH

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit sayeth unto the churches; he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." (Rev. 2:11)

This is a strange yet wonderful statement! I would draw your attention to the fact that it does not say that the overcomer experiences nothing of the second death, that he does not pass through it, or that its work is not wrought in his life; but the thought is that he will not be "hurt" by it. It is possible to pass through the most terrible experience and not be hurt by it. Listen! "And these three men Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counselors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they HAVE NO HURT; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." (Dan. 3:23-25)

Oh, to know that we can pass through the darkest night or the hottest fire or the deepest death and not be hurt by it if Jesus goes with us! How heartening and assuring to read such promises as these: "When thou passeth through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: and when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." (Isa. 43:2)

The word "hurt" is from the Greek *adikeo* meaning to be unjust, do wrong, injure, or offend. Armed with this understanding we may paraphrase (Revelation 2:11) thus: "He that overcometh shall not be done an injustice, wronged, injured, or offended by the second death." The great difference between the carnal man and the child of God is that the carnal man is taken hand and foot and "cast" into the lake of fire, fighting, kicking, screaming, cursing, and resisting all the way, while the child of God willingly and obediently walks into the fiery processings of God hand in hand with his blessed Redeemer. And, one way or the other, ALL MEN MUST DIE UNTO SIN!

When the natural man becomes the spiritual man, the great change is described by the Holy Spirit as a passing from death unto life. Before the transition occurred, the practical difficulty was this: How to get into harmony with the new environment of the kingdom of God. No sooner do we enter into the kingdom of God than the problem is reversed. The question now is: How to get out of harmony with the world, the flesh, and the devil! The moment the new CHRIST LIFE is quickened within there comes a great anxiety to break with the old, for the regenerated spirit has nothing in common with the old. The former way of life now becomes embarrassing! Because of "sin in our members" it refuses to be dismissed from our consciousness. It competes doggedly with the new nature of the Christ! And in a hundred ways the former traditions, the memories and passions of the past, the fixed associations and habits of the earlier life, now press in to draw us to walk after the flesh, complicating the new walk. The complex and bewildered soul, in fact, finds itself confronted by two contrasting faculties — the flesh and the spirit — each with urgent but incompatible claims. It is a dual consciousness of a double world, a world whose inhabitants are deadly enemies, and engaged in perpetual civil war! The position is perplexing. It is clear that no man can attempt to live both lives! No man can walk both after the flesh and after the spirit anymore than one can walk down two roads at the same time.

His testimony will agree with the apostle who wrote: "For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot perform it. I have the intention and urge to do what is right, but no power to carry it out; for I fail to practice the good deeds I desire to do, but the evil deeds I do not desire to do are what I am ever doing. Now if I do what I do not desire to do, it is no longer I doing it — it is not myself that acts — but the sin (principle) which dwells within me. So I find it to be a law of my being that when I want to do what is right and good, evil is ever present with me and I am subject to its insistent demands. For I endorse and delight in the Law of God in my inmost self — with my new nature. But I discern in my bodily members —

in the sensitive appetites and will of the flesh — a different law at war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner to the law of sin that dwells in my bodily organs — in the sensitive appetites and will of the flesh. O unhappy and pitiable and wretched man that I am! Who will release and deliver me from the shackles of this body of death?" (Rom. 7:18-24) (Amplified)

To walk both after the flesh and after the spirit is morally impossible! "No man," as Christ so often emphasized, "can serve two masters." And yet, as a matter of fact, here is the quickened child of God being in relation to both worlds — flesh and spirit! Is it not because we are in our constitution both flesh and spirit? Who can deny it! Someone says, "But my old man is dead!" Yes, my friend, your old man is dead, but your flesh isn't! If you are still living in a body that has fleshly desires, your flesh is not dead. People get such distorted ideas about such simple things! Because of the spirit within and the flesh without we are brought into relation with two realms — sin and righteousness, light and darkness, truth and error. Therein lies the warfare! What is to be done in such an emergency? How can the inner son deliver himself from the ever-persistent call of the flesh?

The ready solution of the difficulty is — TO DIE! Not for our "old man" to die, for he is already crucified with Christ, but for us to DIE TO SIN, or to KILL THE EVIL DESIRE LURKING IN OUR BODILY MEMBERS. We must recognize as dead what God says is dead and we must put to death what God says is still alive and must be put to death. If people who are harping only on the fact that their "old man is crucified" would read the scriptures in this light, find out what God says is dead and what God says we are to mortify or put to death, it would be quite a revelation to them! "So kill the evil desire lurking in your members — those animal impulses and all that is earthly in you, that is employed in sin: sexual vice, impurity, sensual appetites, unholy desires, and all greed and covetousness, for that is idolatry." (Col. 3:5) (Amplified)

To die to any reality is to withdraw correspondence with it, to cut ourselves off from all communication with it. The solution of the problem will simply be this: for the spiritual life to reverse continually the processes of the fleshly life. The spirit man having passed from death unto life — the fleshly man must next proceed to pass from life unto death. Regeneration of the spirit in short must be followed by the degeneration of the flesh, the carnal mind. And this DEATH PROCESS is the SECOND DEATH — the DEATH OF DEATH! Now it is no surprise to find that this is the process everywhere described and recommended by the Holy Spirit! Paul asked the burning question, "Who will deliver me from this body of death?" and swift came the answer, "O thank God! — HE WILL! Through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Rom. 7:24-25)

Listen to the words of the apostle as he presses this beautiful truth home to the hearts of the understanding saints in Colosse: "If then you have been raised with Christ to a new life, thus sharing His resurrection from the dead, aim at and seek the rich, eternal treasures that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. And set your minds and keep them set of what is above — the higher things — not on the things that are on the earth. For as far as this world is concerned you have died, and your new real life is hid with Christ in God. So KILL the evil desire lurking in your members...PUT AWAY AND RID YOURSELVES OF ALL THESE THINGS: anger, rage, bad feeling toward others, curses and slander and foul-mouthed abuse and shameful utterances from your lips! Do not lie to one another, for you have stripped off the old unregenerate self with all its evil practices, and have clothed yourself with the new spiritual self, which is ever in the process of being renewed and remolded into fuller and more perfect knowledge upon knowledge, after the image of Him who created it." (Col. 3:1-10, Amplified)

Let me repeat — all men shall die to sin! Some lovingly submit to God's dealings that the dreadful death of the carnal mind in their members may be "mortified" or "put to death," while others must be subdued and broken under the severe heat of refining fire. The former pass through the death to self — but are not "hurt" by it. By dying in a living and active faith to everything of the flesh, and living by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, a perfect work is wrought in which everything that is in any way opposed to God is brought to death. These become what God seeks in order to satisfy His heart! In the measure that we are identified with the cross of Christ, and made conformable to His death, in which it is no longer our will but HIS, in that measure we are "dying out" to the first death, via the process of the second death, the death of death, our whole being coming up in the likeness of His resurrection.

The second death — the destruction of the carnal mind and its hostility and enmity against God — is not to be feared by the called out overcoming elect of God — it is God's arrangement where all the effects of the first death shall be disannulled, and all carnal-mindedness shall cease. For us who willingly submit to this process "no man taketh our life from us, we lay it down." But for those who will not lay it down, I do not hesitate to say that IT WILL BE TAKEN FROM THEM!

Let me quote the timely words of Ray Prinzing: "Now — while we see the victory of the ultimate, a complete triumph over death, first death, second death, ALL DEATH to ultimately be brought to an end, there is a present tense application which is before us. God has apprehended in this hour, as in all preceding generations, a remnant in whom HIS SPIRIT is working, and they are becoming daily experiential partakers of His death, overcoming all the desires and lusts of the carnal mind. To those who now OVERCOME, the same shall not be 'hurt' of the 'second death,' when it is manifested in its more severe forms, as portrayed in the term of being 'a lake of fire.' Praise God, with the inworking of the Holy Spirit, enabling us to overcome all the evil of this present age, and all the carnal mind, we shall not be done an injustice by the second death. THE WHOLE PROCESS IS UNTO VICTORY. There may be suffering involved, for indeed, it means death to all our pre-conceived ideas, death to all the rebellion of our self-will, but it also means that we shall be loosed, set free from the shackles that bind, and with the inflow of His life we shall walk in the glorious liberty of the sons of God" — end quote.

Make no mistake about it! There are multitudes who shall resist God until the extreme measures He must use to subdue them are beyond our comprehension. For them the second death shall hold terror, and will prove a most painful experience. Let us die now! Let us die to sin now! Let us die to our stubborn wills now! Let us die to our fleshly ways now! Let us take the cup of suffering and submit to the refining fires now! Let us arise in the newness of His life now, to be conformed to His image. He that overcometh NOW shall not be HURT by the second death! Aren't you glad!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 42 THE CHURCH IN PERGAMOS

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART FORTY-TWO

THE TWO-EDGED SWORD SATAN'S THRONE

"And by the angel of the church in Pergamos write..." (Rev. 2:12)

The third church was the church in Pergamos. Pergamos means "elevated," such as a citadel, tower, or an earthly elevation. This is a description of the situation of the city of Pergamos, high upon a mountain. Spiritually it stands for pride, worldliness, love of worldly things, power, pomp, fashion, money, organization, and control. These are the things the overcomers in THE PERGAMOS CONDITION must overcome!

Pergamos was one of the most beautiful cities of the ancient world. It was famous for its almost perfect weather, and was called the city of eternal spring. All who came there loved the weather because it was so consistent all year-round. It seems that almost everywhere you go where there is the combination of scenic beauty and perfect weather you find a lot of cults situated there, just as today you find them in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Sedona, and many other of the most picturesque cities of the world. That is exactly what you had in Pergamos! Pergamos was the seat of more different religions than any other city of the ancient world.

Mark Anthony came to visit Pergamos quite often because of its great natural beauty, and another frequent visitor was Cleopatra. Because of the perfect weather she would come there at certain times of the year and remain for a season. She was an avid lover of books, and with access to the vast library of Pergamos she devoted much of her time to reading. She remarked to Mark Anthony once how much she loved the library that was there in the city of Pergamos, so he sent a troop of soldiers and shut the whole place down, took the entire library of more than 200,000 volumes, loaded it onto a ship, and shipped it to Alexandria, Egypt as a gift for her. Alexandria already had one of the most famous libraries of the ancient world, and now it was a double library! What a man will do for the love of a woman — I suppose we will never understand!

The city was noted for its pagan religions and many heathen temples. Famous shrines of the gods dominated the skyline of this great religious center. The great altar dedicated to the chief Greek saviour-god, Zeus, was located in front of the temple of Athena which stood one thousand feet up on the conical hill where Pergamos was situated. The altar was 123 feet long, 113 feet wide, forty feet high, and covered with elaborate carvings. It stood on a projecting ledge of rock and looked exactly like a great throne on the side of the hill with a dominating view of the valley for at least twenty miles each way. Lorain and I visited Pergamos a number of years ago and walked over the ruins of that once great and beautiful altar of Zeus.

There was also an altar to Athena, patron goddess of Athens. Emperor worship was practiced in Pergamos, its first temple being erected in 29 B.C. Citizens were required to burn a pinch of incense at the foot of Caesar's statue, honoring him as a god. Those who refused to do so were immediately arrested and imprisoned. They also worshipped Dionysus, the god of vegetation, and Aesculapius, the god of healing. Should my reader wonder why I am sharing all this history with you, it will become clear later on in this study of the church at Pergamos.

THE TWO-EDGED SWORD

"And by the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith He which hath the sharp sword with two edges." (Rev. 2:12)

We must turn our faces to the Lord of all the called out elect and see Him standing in the midst with the sharp sword with two edges — not to destroy us, but to circumcise our hearts and minds. Too often the sword we attempt to use has only one edge, and it is so dull that it does not penetrate the heart and soul, for it is the sword of the letter of the word. I have heard many preachers talk about "getting out their swords" and they used them from the pulpit to cut people to pieces. But our Lord is arising in His chosen ones in this hour as the living word, and that sword is living and powerful, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. **(Heb. 4:12)**

The sword of the Lord is not a blade of steel, dripping with the blood of His hapless victims, but the two-edged sword of His living word of truth, which proceedeth out of His mouth. Therefore, the new and greater ministry of the sons of God in the kingdom of our Father is a totally spiritual ministry, which functions on the level of the creative word of God. And to participate in that new and greater kingdom ministry, we will have to become more spiritual, we will have to be anointed of God to hear, be quickened by, and speak in the authority of, the anointed word of our Father for this new kingdom Day! The kingdom of God will subdue all things by a living word of power and authority!

The two-edged sword of the Spirit cuts in both directions. The word for sword here in the Greek speaks of the Roman sword of the day. It was a new and great invention! The Roman sword was short, it had two edges both of which were sharp, and it had a sharp point. It was light weight, anyone could carry it. When it first came out it was one of the biggest jokes of the ancient world. All of the pirates and all of the barbarians carried big swords, heavy swords, ornate swords, swords that often had to be carried over their shoulders. The handle was so large you could put both hands on it because you needed it to swash powerfully enough to take off five or six heads with one swing. Of course, by the time you swung around to cut off five or six heads any thinking man could duck and you'd miss them all. You would then have to reposition your hands to grab it again and regain control of it in order to swing in the opposite direction.

The simple thought was: the bigger and heavier the sword, the more powerful it is. But the truth is, the most effective sword is one that you can handle! The lighter the weight, the shorter it is, the smaller it is, the easier it is to manage and the swifter you can move it. Someone was very brilliant who designed the Roman sword! The Roman sword was short; it was only about eighteen inches long. It had two sharp sides instead of one, and it had a sharp point at the end. There were other swords that had a sharp point, but they were thin for stabbing. Still others were heavier, but had only one sharp side, necessitating an adjustment after every swing in order to swing again in the opposite direction. But the Roman sword was so simple you could stab with it, cut in both directions, and its weight never threw you off balance.

THIS IS THE DEEP SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SHARP SWORD WITH TWO EDGES — this is the kind of sword the word of God is! The word of God doesn't have just one good point. Some people think it does — that's all they preach, just one good point! You will hear that one good point — the same message — every Sunday morning. Many churches preach a "salvation" message every Sunday. The saints are starving for bread and meat to grow on, but all they get, week after week, is milk. That's all they know. Some only preach against sin. Others only preach water baptism. Still others preach only the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Some preach healing and miracles. Others preach revival. Still others preach prophecy and end-time events. Some people think the sword of the Lord cuts in only one direction, so they only cut in one direction. There is no balance in their word! Either it's all love and no judgment, or it's all judgment and no love. But the sword of the Spirit cuts both ways! This is the sword of the One who walks between the candlesticks! This is now becoming the sword of every son of God!

The two-edged sword has a side of blessing, encouragement, life, and glory; but it also has the side of correction, judgment, purging, processing, and refining. It divides between soul and spirit, it brings the sharp discernment of the mind of Christ to separate between what is of the soul — our own mind, will, emotion, and desire — and what is of the mind and will of the spirit. The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, is not the sword of the dead letter of the word, not a mere doctrine, but it is the living revelation of Christ within! God is delivering every son in this hour from the heavy, cumbersome sword of man-made creeds and doctrines, and is raising up within us the two-edged sword of His living word for this great day of the Lord! This is being accomplished by the living instruction of the Holy Spirit! Aren't you glad!

SATAN'S THRONE

"I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is..." (Rev. 2:13)

The typical and symbolic church at Pergamos was dwelling where Satan's throne was located. The Greek word is clearly "throne," but the translators of the King James Bible softened it down to "seat." Let us not be afraid of the phrase. It is Satan's throne! A throne in the book of Revelation occurs frequently as the symbol of dominion, as the center whence the authority of the king emanates throughout his entire kingdom.

It is my conviction that our thoughts and comments about Satan should always be tempered with the wonderful truth that he has absolutely no power over a saint of God who dwells in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus! Therefore, as we discuss Satan, we recognize this truth above any other regarding Satan. Further, although we use the pronouns "him" or "he" when referring to Satan, we know "he" is not a singular person, but is the evil spirit that works in and through the carnal minds of the children of disobedience. It is not our purpose to magnify Satan or to give him undue recognition. Yet, we who are in Christ should know that we are engaged in spiritual warfare! It is our Father's purpose, through the mighty, conquering power of Christ in His body, to defeat every enemy, entity, and power in all realms of man, the earth, and all the unbounded heavens. Christ is bruising Satan under our feet! (Rom. 16:20). Satan is one of the enemies, along with sin and death that is being defeated, first in the lives of God's elect, and ultimately in all of creation. With this purpose in mind, we present the following thoughts.

The Holy Spirit declared that "Satan's throne" was located in the place where the church in Pergamos dwelt. Let us understand this mystery! First, let me give you the location of Pergamos. The modern city of Izmir, which was ancient Smyrna, is the great city where tourists go because the airport and the hotels are there. You go about sixty-five miles south to reach Ephesus and about seventy miles north to reach Pergamos. These three were, in New Testament times, the royal cities, and they vied with one another. Smyrna (Izmir) was the great commercial center, Ephesus was the great political center, and Pergamos was the great religious center. Satan's throne was established in Pergamos, that is, the center of cultic worship. This religious system had been started in Babylon, but was captured by the Persians in 539 B.C., who put a stop to this religious system. Soon its priesthood moved out of Babylon, making their way to Pergamos, and the religion found a new home in Pergamos. Pergamos became the headquarters, as it were, for this pagan system. Through the worship of Caesar, Zeus, Dionysus, Aesculapius, and other pseudo gods, Satan had firmly established his throne in Pergamos! He set up his operation in the center of learning and the healing arts, along with idolatry, controlling peoples' souls, bodies, and spirits. This was Satan's throne in the typical city of Pergamos!

"Even where Satan's throne is" reveals that religion was big business in Pergamos and that Satan's headquarters were there! Not that Satan's headquarters were actually in Pergamos, per se, but the ruling power of Satan is in religion. This ought to settle the question for those who think that Satan is in hell at the present time! He has never yet been in the hell men talk about. But he does have headquarters, and we may think his headquarters are in the drug world, in the sex and pornography industry, in the military establishment, in the harlot's house, in terrorist organizations, in the bar-room, in Hollywood, in gangs, murderers, and child molesters. Not so! These all represent the works of the flesh, not the power of Satan! In John's day the Holy Spirit used the symbol of Pergamos, the center of religion, to identify the location of Satan's throne! The great fact is just this: wherever the centers of religious systems are, there you will find Satan's throne!

Without doubt the most powerful god of Pergamos was Aesculapius, the Greek god of healing. Aesculapius was known as the god of Pergamos. His chief symbol was a serpent. This licentious and debased worship included a huge serpent in the temple and a serpent image on many of the coins of the city. Aesculapius was to Pergamos what Artemis was to Ephesus, or Apollo to Delphi. Aesculapius was the god of healing. There was a great temple-hospital which could be compared at that time to our modern hospitals of today. People flocked from all over the then known world to seek cures for their ailments and diseases. Pergamos has been called "the Lourdes of the ancient world." Galen, the Greek physician, was born in Pergamos. He was second only to Hypocrites in the medical history of the ancient world. The most famous title of Aesculapius in the Greek tongue was "Aesculapius Soter" or "Aesculapius the Saviour."

When we visited Pergamos we walked amid the ruins of the vast temple-hospital with its great columns lining the broad avenue. It was here that the well-known symbol of the medical profession — a serpent twined around a staff — was the dominant symbol of the god Aesculapius. It was the Mayo Clinic of that day. It was, first of all, a temple to Aesculapius. People were healed there by having a "sleeping encounter" with serpents! Terrence Kelshaw has chronicled for us the history of how the pagan cult worship worked and especially that at the temple-hospital of Aesculapius in Pergamos. He writes:

"A sacred road, common in Hellenistic times, connected the city of Pergamos with Aesculapian (the temple-hospital area), and this road has now been excavated. As you walk along it, the tall columns indicate where the shops used to be on either side of the road. This colonnade leads to a large square, which used to be the temple of Aesculapius. It was 120 feet high, and around the walls were paintings depicting the god of healing at work. Right in the center of the room, beneath a domed roof, stood one piece of furniture. It was a short, round, stone pillar standing four feet high and carved on the side with two intertwined snakes. The top of the stone was slightly concave and a small fire burned there continuously. This was the altar to the god Aesculapius.

"Visitors were met here by a priest and obliged to buy a measure of incense, which was to be deposited upon the flames as a votive offering of trust in Aesculapius. A slave then led the patient through huge brass doors into a large park skirted about with colonnaded walks on all sides. Across the far side of this villa was the sacred pool, with priests in attendance, and the patient was taken there and invited to step down into ankle deep water. The priest ascertained the nature of the illness and then began to determine the 'votive offering' for healing. This meant bartering with the patient to find out what price was willing to be paid to appease Aesculapius and secure the healing. If it was enough, then water would flood into the pool. If it was not, only a trickle would appear.

"Effective healing was possible (but not guaranteed) only if the water rose to waist level. The first sum discussed was never enough! Bargaining would continue until a price was reached that was satisfactory for the god to send enough water into the pool. Unknown to the patient, a priest, hiding on the other side of the pool and listening to the process, was lifting or dropping a subterranean slab of stone that allowed a spring to feed water into the pool. The higher the price, the sooner Aesculapius sent water!

"Treatment began with sessions of psychotherapy suggesting that healing was an already established fact. Once a positive-thinking attitude was established, the patient was given a sacred mud bath and then transferred to the herbal bath where a strong drug vapor was inhaled. When sufficiently sleepy from the drug effects, a long walk along the whispering corridor would lead to the temple of Telesphor, a round building with six large alcoves in which were already a number of sleeping patients. Some would have been there for days, heavily drugged, and the new patient would collapse into an alcove and join them, his head fuzzily aware of heavenly voices singing and pronouncing healing in the name of Aesculapius. He had been aware of those voices since he entered the underground corridor.

"But what was not known was that the voices came from priests who were whispering softly down long shafts at ground level. It was a semiconscious, not unpleasant, floating experience of well-being, in which the 'heavenly voices' were welcome partners. In this temple there were snakes. In the night the semi-conscious sufferer might be touched by one or more of these snakes as it glided over the ground on which he lay. The touch of the snake was held to be the touch of the god himself, and the touch was held to bring the healing. Once the drug wore off, the patients made their way back to the villa, where more positive-thinking psychotherapy took place, which might be followed by a further sacred mud treatment or convalescence at the villa. There were gardens in which to walk, a library, or one could simply relax on the covered terraces" — end quote.

It will dismay some for me to say it, but the ancient serpent religion of Aesculapius has reappeared in our day, not in the same form, but out of the same demonic realm of deception. Let me explain to you the mystery. In the summer of 1965 an atheist psychologist (remember the psychotherapy at Aesculapian?) in New York City by the name of Helen Schucman began to hear an "inner voice." As the voice persisted Helen began to take a

sort of cosmic dictation from "the voice" and this voice gave her distinct and clear direction on things she was to write. By this process of "channeling" over a period of seven years the well-known book, A Course in Miracles, was born. With more than 1,200 pages, a royal blue cover and gold-stamped lettering, the book looks like a Bible, even laid out in chapters and verses. This resemblance is intentional. After all, the Course claims as its author the central person of the Bible, none other than Jesus Christ Himself!

Before Helen Schucman began writing A Course in Miracles she began to have what she refers to as "higher visual imagery" or dream sequences. She began to experience this with considerable clarity. One of these sequences involved being in a boat. Helen herself relates the incident. "The boat was moving slowly, but easily, along a straight little canal. There was just enough breeze to help the boat along. I wonder if there is buried treasure here, I thought to myself dreamily; I shouldn't be surprised if there were. Then I noticed a long pole with a large hook on the end lying on the bottom of the boat. Just the very thing, I thought, dropping the hook into the water and reaching the pole down as far as I could. The hook caught something heavy, and I raised it with difficulty. It was an ancient treasure chest, well worn from the water and the bottom covered with seaweed. There was nothing in the chest but a large black book like the spring binders used to hold manuscripts or papers together. On the spine one word was written in gold — AESCULAPIUS. The word was familiar but I couldn't remember what it meant. I found that it was the name of the Greek god of healing. I saw the same book once more a few nights later, this time there was a string of pearls around it." The black book stood for the revelation given in A Course in Miracles!

Can we not see by this that A Course in Miracles is inspired by the same spirit of darkness that birthed the ancient healing cult of the pagan god Aesculapius! I have the book in my library. While it does contain many thoughts that appear to correspond closely to kingdom and sonship truths, it is actually a New Age book and it is my conviction that it is the "voice of a stranger." I have also a video tape which is a promotional introduction to A Course in Miracles. At the time this video was made Dr. Kenneth Wapnick was the president of The Foundation for A Course in Miracles. In an interview on the video Dr. Wapnick gave an enlightening overview of the book. In this interview he explained about A Course in Miracles: "It is given in a Christian context, but it's a Christianity that has nothing to do with the Jesus of the Bible."

Note, precious friend of mine, he does not say that the Jesus who spoke in Helen Schucman and dictated A Course in Miracles is not the Jesus of tradition, or the Jesus of religion, or the Jesus of the church systems, or the Jesus of Mystery Babylon. Oh, no! He states plainly and unabashedly that the Jesus of A Course in Miracles is NOT THE JESUS OF THE BIBLE! The question follows — if this Jesus who dictated A Course in Miracles is not the Jesus of the Bible, then which Jesus is He? I do not doubt for one moment that he is the Jesus the apostle Paul spoke of when he said, "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted...such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel: for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." (II Cor. 11:3-4, 13-15)

Another clue to the origin of this book is found in the fact that the Jesus of A Course in Miracles speaks through an unconverted atheist — not through holy apostles and prophets! Helen Schucman did not meet the Jesus Paul met on the Damascus road, she did not meet this Jesus in a saving, redeeming, regenerating experience by the Holy Ghost! She makes no confession of being washed from her sins in the precious blood of Jesus! She received no baptism in the Holy Spirit! She does not testify to any New Testament experience of salvation, justification, redemption, sanctification, or regeneration! She discovers only her own "inner voice" of the god already incarnate in her unregenerated spirit — revealed by a Jesus who is NOT THE JESUS OF THE BIBLE!

Now, her experience did not begin with the preaching of the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It began with dreams while she was still an atheist! In her first remarkable dream she retrieved from the canal a book, the name of which was AESCULAPIUS — the Greek god of healing! Not the book of Yahweh, not the testimony of Jesus Christ, not the word of God, but the book of the pagan deity of healing whose symbol was

— guess what? The serpent! This book stood for the revelation she was about to receive, which revelation, obviously, was inspired by the very same personage who taught mother Eve her wonderful revelation in the Garden of Eden!

Though the Course talks about Christ, the Holy Spirit, the atonement, and prayer, it comes to dramatically different conclusions than the Bible. In several places the book even offers commentary on biblical scriptures, or as the Course states, "the upside-down thinking of the New Testament." Some of this "upside-down thinking" regards the crucifixion, and how, according to the Course, "the apostles often misunderstood it." Again and again the Course disputes the gospel preached by the apostles, elevating its own revelation above the Bible. As one teacher of the Course put it, "Jesus did not suffer and die for our sins." This idea flagrantly contradicts the word of God: "For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God." (1 Pet. 3:18) Thus, A Course in Miracles is a perversion of the central message of the gospel! For those who have never met Jesus in a saving experience this book is one thing. They do not know the gospel! But for those who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship to God to believe it, is another matter!

I am going to tell you plainly, accurately, and precisely what A Course in Miracles is all about. You see, beloved, all the gods of the pagans were overcome by the gospel of Jesus Christ! That is why the temple of Aesculapius is lying in ruins today, as are nearly all the pagan temples of the ancient world! I have seen them in Rome, in Greece, in Turkey, and in other nations of the world. The Lamb overcame them, for He is King of kings, and Lord of lords! They could not withstand the power and authority of the name of Jesus! Their myths, their lying signs and wonders, their deceiving oracles, their perverse and licentious rituals, their corrupt priesthoods were no match for the power and demonstration of the Holy Spirit that was poured out upon the world through the ministries of the apostles of Jesus the Christ. Oh yes, God poured out the Spirit from the very throne of the heavens and a power and authority smote the false, demonic gods of the heathen that swept their abominations from the earth!

And now, in this hour, the greatest hour since the early church, when the Lord is preparing the firstfruits of His redemption, the manchild birthed from the womb of the true church, the manifest sons of God to set creation free — that wily serpent of old, in order to get back at the holy seed, has manifested himself again as he did to Eve in the garden, appearing as an angel of light, the demon spirit of Aesculapius, impersonating the very person of Jesus the Christ, in his subtle effort to prevent the birth of the manchild, to deceive, if it were possible, the very elect! I have known many who received the call to sonship with joyful hope and expectation who have since been turned aside by this insidious delusion. That is why it arose in the earth at this specific time of our generation! It is part of the ancient serpent's effort to destroy the promised seed! And now, my beloved, as Paul Harvey says, YOU KNOW THE REST OF THE STORY!

AESCULAPIUS was the god of Pergamos — Satan's throne! And Satan's throne, ever since the serpent started his religion with Eve when he hissed, "Hath God said? God doth know!" is still in all the false forms of carnal, man-made religion, even so-called Christian religion! Adam and Eve died because the religious realm to which they subscribed through the tree of the knowledge of good and evil sounds like a deeper revelation but in reality HAS NO LIFE!

In the typical and symbolic church of Pergamos, Satan's throne was situated in the city of Pergamos, which means "strongly united, elevated, height, citadel." Spiritually, Satan's throne is in the high places of the carnal mind — even the religious mind! "I know where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is." I know where you dwell, where you are comfortable in your religious system, where you are satisfied to settle down and comfortably remain. I know that you love the pageantry, the beauty, the forms, the sacraments, the rituals, the programs, and activities. But that place where you dwell is Satan's throne!

The firstborn Son of God understood this very clearly by the mind of the Father. He never condemned the prostitute, the fornicator, the tax-gatherer, the thieves or murderers. He never demonstrated holy anger against the Romans, the world, or the wicked. It was the religious leaders that He denounced! His anger was focused on the hypocrisy of the so-called carriers of God's word! He condemned those who appeared clean on the outside, but inside were full of greed and wickedness! Those who gave tithes and fasted and prayed and loved the best seats in the synagogue to be seen of men, He rebuked! Those who distorted the word of God, who

turned the truth of God into a lie, who misrepresented the nature of His Father, and loaded people down with religious burdens and obligations, He called a generation of vipers — a brood of snakes!

Let us UNDERSTAND! We blame war, drunkenness, pornography, greed, crime, immorality, drugs, and a thousand other evils on Satan — yet the clear testimony of scripture is that these are all the "lusts of the flesh" and the "works of the flesh." They are flesh! On the other hand, Satan's activity is in a religious realm, in a spiritual dimension! What a cunning deception has been foisted upon mankind as Satan has concealed his true identity in the dark shroud of religion! Oh, yes, Satan is religious! The ultimate test for God's sons will be right there! There is a realm, a realm high in the spirit, a realm reserved for the sons of God — and before any of us step from our wilderness of testing to appear as a manifest son of God in the earth, we will meet Satan there in that high realm of the spirit. It is in the heavens of God's Spirit that the manchild encounters the great dragon! That is what the temptation of Jesus was all about in His wilderness experience. He wasn't being tempted to lie, cheat, steal, cuss, or commit adultery. Oh, no! "If thou be the Son of God" do thus and thus. To Eve he said, "Hath God said? Why, God doth know...your eyes will be opened, and you will be as God!" A high revelation in a high realm of the spirit. That is what Adam's fall was all about! Adam did not fall from grace, he fell from SONSHIP! And it was a supposed HIGH REVELATION IN A HIGH REALM OF THE SPIRIT that caused the fall. Eve was deceived! There is a very fine line between the highest truth and the darkest error, between divine sonship to God and our own self-godhood as taught by all the streams of what is today called "New Age."

We see this principle clearly in the story of Job. "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them." (**Job 1:6**) May I reverently add that every time the sons of God present themselves before the Lord — Satan comes also among them! Can you not see the mystery? It bespeaks of a condition within these sons — our mind vs. His mind, our will vs. His will, our ways vs. His ways. It is a heavenly place within the sons of God wherein we must be tested to show whether we be sons indeed. Until every son has been completely perfected and thoroughly tested in all realms of flesh and spirit, it is not possible for the sons of God to come and present themselves before the Lord without Satan coming also among them! Does he not walk in the carnal understanding of every man?

It is written, "And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence cometh thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." (**Job 1:7**) Now the Lord's questions are never for His own enlightenment. He knew well whence Satan came! Oh, yes, Satan had been "walking to and fro throughout the earth" — God knew this — for he walks in our earth, even that earth which we are, from the east to the west, from the north to the south, from sea to sea and from pole to pole he walks in the earthly places, in the fleshly motions of our bodies, in the high thoughts of our minds, in the secret places of our hearts; he travels up and down in us from the heights of our heavens to the depths of our hells, for the dust is his habitation. The firstborn Son of God met Satan, not the Satan wearing a red suit, with horns and a pitchfork, but the Satan that spoke out of His innermost thoughts and aspirations concerning His sonship, "If I am the Son of God why don't I just command these stones to be turned to bread! I can do anything I want, any time I want! Why don't I cast myself down from the pinnacle of the temple — that will show everyone who I really am!" Jesus overcame that wily devil in that high realm of the spirit within Himself and when He came to the cross He was able to say, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." In that blessed day a Son of God was at last able to present Himself before the Lord, and Satan did not also come with Him!

All the way to glorification this inner antagonist is present. This is why every revival that God has sent through the ages ended in apostasy. Satan — not the devil with horns and a pitchfork — but that inward devil of fleshly wisdom, carnal understanding, sense-knowledge, soulish zeal, and spiritual pride has a subtle way of identifying himself with every move of the Spirit of God, so as to corrupt it from within. Many years ago F. J. Huegel wrote: "Students of the great Welsh revival (1900 — 1903) say that the wonderful stream of divine life little by little lost its saving efficacy, as another stream from a very different source, naturally very filthy, began to mingle with the river of the water of life proceeding from the throne and from the Lamb. 'Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.' Beware of false fire. Beware of counterfeit glow. When the soulish takes the place of the pure working of the Holy Spirit, you have a 'revival' whose fires, though they purport to be from heaven, are more likely to be from hell."

From the mists of the long ago Eden we read, "Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (**Gen. 3:1**) The word "serpent" in our language comes from the Latin serpo meaning "to creep," but the Hebrew term has no relation to the form or motion of any external attribute of a serpent. The word used here for serpent is the Hebrew word nachash, which is a primitive root meaning "to hiss or whisper." It, furthermore, means "to search or scrutinize closely, to find out by experiment, to practice divination, augury, incantation, or enchantment." According to Webster incantation means "the chanting of special words or a formula in magic spells or rites." Incantation may speak in addition of hypnotism. The serpent, then, is a HISSER, a WHISPERER, a DIVINER, an EXPERIMENTER, an ENCHANTER, a MAGICIAN, and a HYPNOTIST! And all this activity takes place from within! Now we understand how it was so easy for mother Eve to be deceived! The "inner voice," as with Helen Schucman, sounded so plausible, so reasonable, so spiritual, so divine — it just had to be the word of the Lord! It had to be the very highest truth! She was enchanted, hypnotized, mesmerized — by this high revelation!

We do well to consider also the word translated "subtil" in this passage. "Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field." The Hebrew word for "naked" in Genesis 2:25 is aram. The English word that describes the serpent's nature is "subtil," and the Hebrew word for this aram. Both aram (naked) and arum (subtil) are derived from aram which means "to be bare, to be cunning." Hebrew scholars say that originally these three words were the same word. Now, why should the expression "naked" and the term "cunning" be the same word? What is the connection? We can answer with only one word: SEDUCTIVE. By way of illustration, a naked woman may be a seductive woman! There is a close connection between the two. The ideas of naked and cunning come together in the word SEDUCTIVE or SEDUCE. Can we not see by this that the serpent was actually more seductive than anything in the bestial realm! Ah, when Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, he is the most seductive thing in the world!

There was a wonderful tree set in the midst of the fragrant garden in Eden called the Tree of Life. God had given man the right to eat of that tree and in eating of it, man would possess eternal life. The simple truth is, however, that man did indeed eat of that tree! When one reads carefully, it becomes evident that the Tree of Knowledge of which man ate was also in the midst of the garden! Two trees in the middle! Thus, the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge are ONE AND THE SELFSAME TREE! They are two sides of the same tree! They are two dimensions of the word of God! The Tree of Life is "the spirit that giveth life." This is the word of God on the level Jesus spoke of when He said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." Then we have also "the letter that killeth." BOTH are the word of God! The Tree of Knowledge, the letter of the word, is God's word — but it kills! "In the day that ye eat thereof, ye shall surely die!" The Tree of Life, the spirit of the word, is the word of God which quickeneth — makes alive! Oh, the mystery of it!

The Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life is just the difference between law and grace, between ritual and reality, between facts and truth, between doctrine and revelation, between shadow and substance! Every son of God walks in the garden of God and is called to confront this tree. It is there that we must understand the difference between the voice of the Lord God walking in the midst of the garden, and the enchanting, beguiling, hypnotizing, deceiving hiss of the serpent!

It is there, in the Tree of Knowledge that Satan has his throne! It is the kingdom of religion, it is the voice of the stranger. It is there that the sons of God are called to overcome! It is not just the flesh and sin that must be overcome, it is all the negative spiritual realm found in the seven churches that must be put under our feet! And, blessed be God! To God's called and chosen elect He says, "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name (nature), and hast not denied my faith." What a testimony! I believe that is the word of the Lord to many who read these lines. Press on, dear ones, the spiritual perfection that wins the prize incomparable at the end of the race lies just before us!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 43

THE CHURCH IN PERGAMOS [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART FORTY-THREE

DYING TO SELF THE PADDED CROSS

"Thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth." (Rev. 2:13)

In this Study we come to Antipas, the Lord's faithful martyr. Is Antipas a symbol, or was Antipas an actual individual in the church in Pergamos? There is no historical evidence for a person named Antipas who was martyred in Pergamos. So let's analyze the word. Antipas is a compound word made up of the prefix "anti" meaning "opposed to" or "instead of," and in this sense is similar to the word "anti-Christ," denoting that which is opposed to, or takes the place of, Christ. Now the name becomes very strange! The second half of the name is "pas" which most scholars agree is a Greek abbreviation for "pater" which means "father." So — just as "anti-christ" signifies that which is against or instead of Christ, so "anti-pas" bespeaks of that which is opposed to, or takes the place of, Father! It is a description of something that takes place in the lives of God's chosen elect! It is my conviction that we find here a double meaning — a meaning within a meaning.

The question follows — if Antipas is one who stands in opposition to, or usurps the place of, THE FATHER, how could he then be called "My faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth." This is indeed a mystery! Yet — is it not true that before any man can become a martyr of the Lord, all that is opposed to the Father, and all that usurps the place of the Father, must be slain in him? Antipas was martyred where Satan's throne is! He is, typically, slain in the realm of religion — right where practically all of the Lord's martyrs have been slain! You see, my beloved, Antipas is a type of the sons of God. What is contrary in most believers is the carnal mind and the religious spirit that usurps the place of CHRIST. That is the spirit of anti-Christ! But what is contrary in this Antipas class of people is not merely contrary to Christ, but stands in opposition to, and usurps the place of, THE FATHER. It is anti-Father! This should help us to see that this identifies them as sons.

What is slain in the sons of God is all that hinders their sonship to God, separating between them and the Father. The great purpose of Christ in our lives is to bring us to the Father! "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Anything that frustrates our pure relationship with the Father must be purged out of everyone called to sonship! All that interrupts our fellowship with the Father, all that prevents the knowledge of the Father, all that diminishes the glory of the Father, all that hinders our walk with the Father, all that thwarts our doing the will of the Father, all that short-circuits our obedience to the Father, all that prevents us from hearing the voice of the Father — all this must go to the cross!

The name Antipas identifies, not those becoming Christians, but those becoming mature sons! First, all that is contrary to the way of the Father must be slain in us, before we are able to present ourselves as a spiritual martyr for the kingdom of God. Those in whom everything that is antagonistic to the mind, nature, purpose, and will of the Father has been brought to HIS CROSS, are then able to take up THEIR CROSS and follow Him! Can you not see the mystery? The divine implication is that Antipas is the symbol for THE WORK OF THE CROSS IN THE LIVES OF GOD'S SONS!

Antipas is characterized as "my faithful martyr." I used to think that the physical martyrs who laid down their human lives were certainly greater in the kingdom and more qualified to reign with Christ than I could ever be. I did not understand in those days that scripturally and spiritually a martyr is one who is faithful in life, as much as in death — he may never be killed and still be a martyr! Most Christians mistakenly hold to the notion that all saved people will, by the grace of God, rule and reign with Christ in His kingdom. One great cause of this error

among almost all classes of believers is the failure to understand the words of the Spirit in **Revelation 20:4**. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

Many try to make this include all saints! Others think it means just all martyrs! Unfortunately, the Greek word here rendered "beheaded" in our King James Bible, is not fully understood. It appears nowhere else in scripture, except this one passage. But one fact stands out clearly. It cannot allude only to those who died as martyrs, for the scriptures are clear that some who die natural deaths will reign with Christ upon His throne! Furthermore, there were multitudes of believers who were violently tortured and abused in the early days of the church, as well as throughout church history. In the first three centuries alone, three million martyrs gave their lives for Christ! They were sewn into sacks with vipers. They were plunged into boiling oil. They were covered with pitch and placed on sticks and lighted to illuminate the gardens of Nero for His debaucheries. They were turned out to the lions and devoured. They were crucified upside down. They were placed on red hot beds of iron. Read the history of the church!

Are all these to be excluded from this company that comes to life and reigns with Christ in His kingdom just because they were not "beheaded?" Only a few have been beheaded! Is this few the only ones that are granted to reign with Christ? Do you see the mystery? Ah, those who reign with Christ upon His throne are the sons of God! It is the manchild who is caught up unto God and to His throne (Rev. 12:5). In our Lord's messages to the seven churches, He says that the overcomers are granted to sit with Him on His throne (Rev. 3:21). Are the overcomers only those who are literally and physically "beheaded" for the testimony of Jesus, and the word of God? Only one of the first apostles is believed to have been beheaded! The others, with the exception of John, all died violent deaths of martyrdom, but were not beheaded. Must all of us put our heads on a literal chopping block to be beheaded in order to rule and reign with Christ? No, a thousand times no! The very suggestion is absurd. That is not the testimony of scripture. Like everything else in the book of Revelation, the "beheading" is a symbol! Antipas is a symbol! His martyrdom is a symbol!

In the book of Revelation a martyr is not necessarily a physical martyr any more than a beast is a literal beast, a dragon is a literal dragon, a horn is a literal horn, or the Lamb is a four-footed barnyard animal. The interpretation of this verse is clearly a spiritual one! That is the mystery. And when the blessed spirit of wisdom and revelation from God opens our eyes to comprehend the great truth of our spiritual beheading, we will have found the key to the very life of Christ. It refers to those who live as martyrs! A martyr's grave was very often but a release from persecution, an easy way out. Martyrdom in the spiritual sense does not necessarily mean an untimely death. The way into glory is through death: death to self, death to the flesh, death to the world, death to the carnal mind, death to the Adamic consciousness, death to the ego, death to our own way and will, death to the religious spirit — living the crucified life! It is the death process within us that removes from us all that is not of God. Isn't it wonderful!

This beautiful truth has often been missed because we have not understood that the New Testament word "witness" is from the Greek *martus* which is translated "martyr" in Revelation 2:13 and 17:6. When we think of "witnesses" we do not think of people who are being killed! But neither can we think of them according to the old religious idea of someone who goes door to door passing out tracts or one who makes it a point to speak about the Lord to everyone he meets. Such are often guided more by religious zeal than by the leading and wisdom of the Holy Spirit. Scripturally and spiritually a witness is one who gives his life for the testimony he bears! And I dare say it requires an endowment of the Holy Spirit to enable us to so lay down our life for the message we declare that **WE BECOME THE MESSAGE, OUR WHOLE LIFE SWALLOWED UP IN THE MANIFESTATION OF THAT MESSAGE**. A state of being that proclaims the truth regardless of whether we speak it or explain it or not. To witness to the truth is to give your life to that truth, to become the truth!

The sons of God are becoming kings, priests, and judges by the authority of the Spirit of the Lord and by being beheaded, or losing their heads. The King James Bible says beheaded, those who have their heads cut off. In some of the newer translations, one says they were executed for their testimony, another says they were cut with the ax. As I looked to the Lord about this I was reminded of the words of Jesus when He told His chosen

disciples, "Whosoever shall lose His life for my sake...shall save it." The head of every man, to begin with, is the old self, the ego, the carnal mind, the Adamic consciousness, the flesh. When I went to school we were taught that self preservation is the first law of nature. And how we do try to take care of this natural, flesh man! We live for him, for his needs, his desires, his perceptions, his wants, his demands. These are the things the carnal mind is most concerned about, what self wants, what the flesh desires. As we progress in God to become sons of God, this old head must be chopped off, and a new head take his place!

This old self must be put to death, with his wills and desires, and Jesus have complete Lordship over our beings. Merely believing on Him does not produce this, and just claiming by faith the "finished work" does not bring an end to the Adamic mind. How very simple it would be if that worked! Paul would never have needed to say, "Mortify (put to death) therefore your members which are upon earth," if the finished work did it all. It requires complete and absolute surrender to the Christ within, the "putting off" of the old man and the "putting on" of the new! Christ Himself must become the new head. This is what it means to be beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and the word of God. Christ can only testify out of our life as the living word of God when His Headship is established in our life!

Through the intense preparations of the Spirit, we are being delivered from the carnal nature and mind, delivered from the rule of self, and are receiving the mind of Christ! Truly, we are being "beheaded" for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God! This means we are "losing our head," delivered of the carnal mind, released from the headship of the natural man, and are now under the true headship of Christ. All who are truly called to sonship have abandoned the wisdom and judgment of our own mind, our earthly and mortal perceptions, our opinion, our own will, and that of any fleshly or religious thing that has influenced, motivated, or controlled us, and we are now receiving His mind, His truth, His Headship, to do only His perfect will. We have indeed been beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God! Isn't it wonderful!

We no longer worship the beast of man's carnality and ego, or the pomp and pride of the fleshly religious realm, nor do we have that "mark" on our foreheads. We have been beheaded — decapitated! We have given up our head, lost our life, surrendered our selfhood, our carnal mind, to receive the mind of Christ. By His mind we shall do the will of the Father just as Jesus did. The words Jesus spoke and the works Jesus wrought were never His own. The Anti-pas within Him, anything that was opposed the Father, was slain within Himself. He became Himself the faithful and true witness — the faithful and true martyr! And so it is with the sons of God! We are learning to speak only when He speaks and act only when He acts. If He is healing, then we step into the stream, and we heal. If He is not healing, we keep our hands and our prayers to ourself. If He is teaching, we teach. If He is not teaching, we hold our peace. If He is doing wonders, we do wonders. If He is resting, we rest. If He is doing nothing, we are content to do absolutely nothing, just as Jesus did in Nazareth for thirty years! We are being spiritually beheaded in order to be joined to Christ, and to rule and reign with Him. We are surrendering ourselves to Christ so that He controls our lives in the absolute sense of the word. Isn't it wonderful!

A few years ago Lisa Herron shared a remarkable dream with us which is beautifully confirmatory to this present truth. I don't think it needs any interpretation for all who see and hear by the Spirit will grasp its wonderful message. Lisa wrote: "When I was a teenager, and still attending the local Assembly of God (although God was dealing deeply with me even at that time), I had a dream so real that I awoke confused. I knew it was from God, but at that young time in my life and in my walk with the Lord, I didn't fully understand it. Here's how it went:

"We were in the 'sanctuary' of the church, having a Sunday night service. One of the elders in the church (a man I thought much of, and looked up to in my youth) was walking up and down the center isle, holding a long, gleaming sword in his hand, and he was weeping. He kept walking up and down, saying, 'Who will be willing to lose his head for the Lord?' I looked around, and no one seemed to be moving. I felt overwhelmingly in my heart that I knew that I had to do this thing, so I went to the center isle, hung my head over the end of the pew, and he beheaded me. In an instant I was upon my feet (never felt any pain) and I was looking around at the people. It felt as though my head was totally full of light — like my head was transparent, and there was only light there. I was so full of joy and began to implore the people, 'Please do it. It doesn't hurt at all, and you'll see things as you never did before. It's wonderful! Don't be afraid!' But no one followed" — end quote.

As we follow on to know the Father in sonship, the Lord is taking greater control of our lives. He who shall rule and reign over the earth and all the universe, must first rule and reign in the lives of His elect. Christ is indeed reigning in our lives, for we are aware that we are no longer in control of our lives! Another One, Christ, the inner son, now controls our lives according to His eternal purpose, and it is the Lord! You will know that Christ reigns in your life when you truly realize that you no longer control your own life. Your destiny and mine are fixed in God! Christ is now reigning in us in greater and greater measures as we grow up into the Headship of Christ.

Unless you be deceived by those who have been deceived after seeing this truth and have received error and all sorts of false ideas about how the sons of God will come forth, let me make it very clear to you that God has one means by which He is going to bring forth the manifest sons of God. That is by the working of the cross! The divine message of the cross is God saying that Jesus is our true example in all things. Just as He was crucified and died on a cross, coming forth as the resurrected Son of God, so we must be crucified in order to be manifest sons of God. Jesus died upon the cross to save us from sin and death and hell, but until we take up OUR CROSS and follow Him we cannot ascend His throne to reign with Him. He did not die for us to give us His throne, He died for us to save us. The so-called "finished work" does not secure a place upon His throne for us! Not only is He our Saviour; He is also our example, that we should follow in His steps (1 Pet. 2:21). As He died, so we must die. As He was crucified on the cross, so our flesh-nature must be crucified. We must come to complete death-to-self. Our human consciousness must die so that Christ can come forth in us in all His glory. Through this we will be the manifest sons of God!

Some today have abandoned the message of the cross, clinging instead to the idea that Jesus paid it all, and therefore they can reign with Him no matter how carnal or fleshly they are; their old man is dead with Christ, so there really is no further working of the cross for any of us. How I wish the cross had ended at Calvary! How delightful it would be if I did not need to "deny myself" or to "take up my cross" and follow Him! If only the throne was by grace! If only the finished work took care of it all and I could just breeze into sonship and ascend the throne on the merits of Jesus! But Galatians 5:24 still must be fulfilled in the life of every son of God: "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." What I crucify is upon my cross, not His. Yet, is it not wonderfully true that my cross is simply His cross brought effectually into my life!

Yes, my beloved, in spite of His cross sons of God still have to die to self! This is accomplished by the Spirit of God leading us through the refining, purifying fires of testing. As the pressures and persecutions of this world come against those who are moving on in the Spirit of God, the very test and fire will be our purifying fire. It will teach us His ways and purge out our dross making us smaller and smaller in our own eyes. As we surrender more and more to Christ, it makes our old self die daily until he is completely dead so that Christ can come forth in us. Some deny that this is a process, but I have not met the man yet in whom perfection has not been a process!

"He that loveth his life shall lose it, but he that hateth his life shall keep it." Did I quote that aright? "He that hateth his life." Did our Lord indeed say that? Did John understand his Master aright when he so reported Him? Ah, our Lord is here speaking plainly, putting the right word, and only the right word, upon the thing. There is no doubt about it! Jesus certainly said, "He that hateth his life." Now, do not be offended at this noble doctrine of deep hatred preached by Christ! It is not our neighbor we are to hate; it is not our enemy: is not even our more talented, successful, and blessed friend: it is OUR SELF! Our very own carnal life! We have no hatred left for anyone else; it is all poured out upon our self. Until we are brought to the urgency of this we cannot "take up our cross" and follow Him! I have heard it said that we must love ourself, and unless and until we learn to love ourselves we cannot apprehend our sonship. Not so! It is true that we do love ourselves! Oh, how we do! "Love your neighbor as yourself." That is not a command to love yourself. It is a command to love your neighbor! It is simply a statement of fact that all men do indeed love their self! That is why Jesus emphasized that we must hate our own life and deny ourself, taking up our cross, in order to enter into life!

All death is not the same death. Many think that when the scriptures speak of death they always refer to the death of the body. The truth is, in the New Testament, death only occasionally speaks of the death of the physical body. When Jesus says that we must take up our cross and follow Him, He does not mean that we all

must be martyrs, laying down our bodies upon a wooden cross, to fly away to heaven. Jesus died physically upon the cross, the figure and the pattern of the death of old Adam. But Adam in us is not crucified by hanging on an outward, wooden cross. Paul says, "Mortify (put to death) therefore your members which are upon the earth..." (Col. 3:5) He also said, "I die daily." And again he said, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." In each of these passages he speaks of a death that still must be experienced within each of us, in addition to Christ's death upon the cross. And in none of these passages is he talking about leaving this body and going to some far-off heaven somewhere; he's talking about dying to that outward, external, physical, human, carnal realm of appearances of old Adam's life here and now as we walk upon this earth! That's why he's saying, "To die is gain." There is no gain in going to the cemetery, but to die to the carnal mind is to gain the mind of Christ. To die to the flesh nature is to gain the divine nature. God gives us the opportunity every day to die! Are we taking up our cross daily and following Him?

The death of the cross was the death reserved for criminals and for the vilest of men. What would you think of a person who had a gold chain about his neck with a pendant of an electric chair on it? Or a hangman's gallows? Or a guillotine? Or a gas chamber? Or a hypodermic needle? "How gross, how repugnant, how macabre, how gruesome, how insensitive," you say. "How terrible to think that anyone's mind is that death oriented!" Let me tell you something, my beloved — in the day of Christ a cross was an instrument of execution, no different than the gas chamber or the electric chair today! It was the place where criminals and the scum of the earth were put to death. It was not a pretty or inspiring symbol! And Jesus said we are to deny ourselves and take up our cross — our gas chamber, our electric chair, our hangman's noose — and follow Him! It's a place of execution. It's the place where you are brought to your extremity, where the natural mind, the human consciousness, the carnal life reaches its final catastrophe!

So Jesus came to reveal the cross. And it is there at the cross that Paul says of this outer, carnal, fleshly ego man, "I AM CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST." You must see that by the Spirit! If the apostle was speaking by natural understanding he would have put it in the past tense — "I was crucified with Christ" because it is a great historical fact that Jesus the Christ was ignominiously crucified on a hill outside Jerusalem two thousand years ago. If he was speaking of an historical event where twenty centuries ago Jesus hung suspended between heaven and earth — and if in some mystical sense we were there with Him on that cross, crucified on that cross, and died with Him then on that cross — he would say, "I was crucified with Christ." But in the Greek text the verb is in the present perfect tense. And while the present perfect tense denotes an action that is completed — I have been crucified with Christ — it may also, according to the rules of grammar, indicate an action that is continuing unto the present. What the present perfect tense clearly is not is the PAST TENSE — I was crucified. This is why the King James translators chose the wording, "I AM crucified with Christ." Thus, the cross is not merely an historical event — it is an eternal reality! The work of the cross continues! I hang on that cross with Christ, not on Golgotha's hill two thousand years ago, but in that blessed moment when by the Spirit of God I am called to embrace it! Christ was crucified. I am crucified. And I am crucified with Him because the cross is an eternal reality! Oh, the mystery of it!

In spite of the awful fact of Calvary's dreadful scene I would be remiss if I failed to tell you that the cross of Christ is not a cross of wood. The cross on Golgotha's hill was undoubtedly a wooden cross, but the cross of Christ that the apostles preached, and that they gloried in, and by which the world is reconciled to God, and which does its powerful work in us, is something more than a wooden beam! When in wisdom and holy expectation our Lord exhorted His disciples, saying, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up HIS CROSS, and follow me," He was not making reference to a cross of wood, but to a cross that would bring death to one's own identity, will, and ways, and identify his life henceforth with the life of Christ. If He had meant a literal, wooden cross, then only those who are literally, physically crucified could ever follow Him! And can we not see by this that if our cross is not a wooden cross, then truly His cross was not a wooden cross! People think such shallow thoughts about these things. But we are dealing with deep, eternal, spiritual realities!

The DEATH OF THE CROSS is in some mysterious and divine way the gateway to the LIFE OF THE CROSS. The wooden Roman cross upon which Jesus was crucified was not actually HIS CROSS, for the cross of Christ IS the power of God unto salvation to all who believe, and that wooden cross no longer exists, having decayed back into the dust long centuries ago; yet should you find a piece of it there would be no magical,

saving power emanating from it! All the handwriting of the ordinances of the law were nailed to HIS CROSS, the scripture says, but should you have been there on mount Calvary that day when Jesus hung between heaven and earth you would not have seen the first five books of the Bible nailed to the cross! By HIS CROSS the world is crucified to us, and us to the world, but the whole world is not hanging somewhere today upon that cross, being crucified to us. Such literal thoughts are absurdities. The whole world is reconciled by the blood of that cross, yet not one of us has seen any physical blood by which we were brought into fellowship with God. That is the mystery. Ah, the cross of Christ is something deeper, higher, grander, more transcendental than the pieces of wood upon which Jesus hung!

It is my deep conviction, and I say it with all reverence and respect to my blessed Lord and Saviour, but the truth is that Jesus in the natural suffered no more on the cross than thousands of others who were nailed to a tree, or thousands of others who died on the rack during the Roman inquisition, or thousands of others who were burned at the stake, fed to the lions, or made blazing human torches at the Circus in Rome. The physical suffering was no greater. The cross of Christ refers to a greater spiritual cross and a greater spiritual death, of which the "old rugged cross" was merely the symbol. The cross of Christ first had its manifestation that day in heaven, when the Word of God, "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Fierce as was His suffering at Calvary, that fearful hour of agony and blood was but the final act of a life of the cross as step by step He descended from the majesty and glory of equality with God to the fearsome moment when in anguish He cried, "My God! My God! Why hast Thou forsaken me?" Truly, as the scripture testifies, He was the Lamb "slain from the foundation of the world." (Rev. 13:8) No wooden cross there! The cross did not begin at Calvary!

When God brings the cross into our lives, He doesn't bring it to us out of two millenniums ago — He brings it out of the living reality of the dimension of spirit right now! When by the quickening of the Spirit you saw Christ dying, you did not see Him dying twenty centuries ago, but in spirit you beheld Him. God brought Him out of that long ago into your NOW. God brought Him into your present. And you saw Him bleeding and dying, not two thousand years ago, but right now in this moment you beheld Him by spirit. And in spirit Paul exults with unspeakable joy, "I AM crucified with Christ!" Not then — NOW! Not I was — I AM! It is neither history nor a future event. The cross did not begin at Calvary, nor did it end at Calvary! It's an accomplished fact in the eternal NOW.

The eternal cross in the heart of God, the eternal cross of Christ, now becomes your cross and you are crucified with Him, a participator in that same eternal death to all that is unlike God, to all that falls short of what God has chosen to be. I am crucified, nevertheless I do live, yet it's not "I" that lives, but the Christ who lives in me! That is the power of the cross! The outer sense realm, the carnal, the vain, the fleshly, the passing, is placed upon that cross and crucified in order that the inner life of the spirit might find release. We only become holy as He is holy, and pure as He is pure, when the cross becomes an eternal reality in our lives. When the cross is no longer an historical event to be claimed, or a doctrine, or a truth to be believed, but the cross is forever established in our heart, effectually working in the crucible of our experience, the cross in our heart will produce His nature within, the nature that willingly surrenders and cancels all that is not of Life, Light, and Love.

It is a great and glorious fact that your spirit has not been crucified. If your spirit were crucified you could not say, "I AM crucified, and I LIVE." When we speak of death and resurrection we speak of two corresponding, parallel principles in the present. I AM crucified, and I AM alive. Those are dual, present, and continuous realities. I am and I am! I AM crucified, and I AM living. But what is crucified? Not my inward man — but my outward man! Paul put it this way: "Though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day." (II Cor. 6:16) The outer man, the sensual man, the soulical man, the carnal mind, the flesh — is perishing. He is not perishing because he is getting old and ready to go to the cemetery. Oh, no! He is perishing because of the work of the cross in us! This is a spiritual work!

The inward man, however, is not perishing, he is not experiencing the cross; HE IS BEING RENEWED! "He that is joined to the Lord is ONE SPIRIT." The spirit, the inward man, the real you, is not conformed to the

image of God by death, but by union! Its condition is changed by adding an ingredient. His Spirit is added to our spirit. When our spirit is quickened by His Spirit we are born of the Spirit — brought alive again to God! The inner man is receiving quickening and being renewed. But the outer man is put to the cross and is dying! It was on the cross that Jesus poured out His blood (life, spirit) for the life of the world. That is the divine paradox! It is both death and life. I am crucified and I live. I am perishing and I am quickened. Something is taken away and something is added. It is divine chemistry! It is union by fusion! And an entirely NEW CREATION is the result!

"I am being crucified" is an alternate rendering of the Greek. The cross has very practical applications in our everyday lives. You see, my beloved, the Lord faithfully prepares the places, situations, circumstances, and experiences whereby our self-life is brought to the futility of itself and laid down. The cross is painful! This is no mystical, glorious experience by faith. The cross is the power of God working by actual crisis' in our lives whereby, like the prodigal son, we come to the end of our self, and we arise and go to the Father. When we forsake trust in the flesh and the way of the flesh, that the spirit might rule, death has been worked in us, releasing His life to be expressed as our life. We are crucified and we live! Aren't you glad!

We are moved to overcome self once the Holy Spirit powerfully reveals to us the nature and power of self. Self is the identity of the carnal mind. "To be carnally minded is death," the inspired apostle tells us. Self, when it is brought to its destination, then and there, self is death; but so long as self is acting, self is quite lively, and apparently deathless; but when self has been brought to its destination, then and there, when the cloak is pulled off of self, you will see plainly, self is death, and self has always been death, but has been dressed up in sheep's garments.

We overcome death by firstly overcoming self and every "self-opinionation" and establishing our consciousness in the recognition of God's presence, by denying self whole-heartedly, and living in the consciousness of God's presence. Oh, how wonderful to realize we can overcome self, and can do away with self, by subduing by the spirit our selfish tendencies, fancies, and pleasures; our selfish thoughts, ideas, concepts, and ways. When we put away these characteristics of our human, earthly, carnal mentality, we "mortify" or put to death self in our constitution. We then become a NEW CREATURE in reality by walking and living after the spirit rather than after the flesh!

Now God's called and chosen elect have come to the place in consciousness in this great process of salvation where we understand that the mystery of self is the mystery of death. The way we can rid ourselves of the last enemy, and overcome the last enemy, which is death, is by ridding ourselves of self, by denying our self, by taking up our cross unto the perishing of the outer man with his desires and demands, by gaining the victory over all our self nature. When this is accomplished completely, we will have victory over death, the last enemy! As it is written, "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life..."

Ah — "If any man will come after me," Jesus said, "let him deny himself..." We thought it meant deny the liquor store, deny the theater, deny the pool hall, deny the mini-skirt, deny communism, deny the church system and the antichrist. But ME? Sweet, precious little Me? Deny MYSELF? We would rather deny the liquor store and the antichrist than to deny OURSELF! But very little will be gained by self denial, unless we also take up our cross and follow Jesus! There is a dimension of the cross that lies beyond the mere crucifixion of our old nature. That is necessary, but there is also that aspect of the cross that involves that load, burden, pain, or sacrifice which could, if we choose, be laid aside, but which is willingly carried or endured for the sake of the Father's purposes and for creation. It is that which in the natural we would lay aside, but spurred on by the realization that there is no other way to fulfill God's plan and bring deliverance to the world, we willingly endure OUR CROSS.

Jesus didn't have to endure the cross! "Looking unto Jesus — who for the joy that was set before Him, ENDURED THE CROSS, despising the shame." (Heb. 12:2) Even on the night He was taken, He declared that He could yet, at that late hour, pray to the Father, and He would send more than twelve legions of angels to rescue Jesus from such a fate! (Mat. 26:53-54) The Father would have honored His prayer! He went to the cross because He had purposed in His heart to fulfill the scriptures, and to deliver creation from the tyranny of sin, sickness, sorrow, limitation, and death, through the cross.

Why did the love of Christ lead Him to the cross? Because nowhere in Him did SELF rise up and say, "I have had enough of it." Nowhere in Him could self say, "I should not have to suffer so much," or "I should not have to give so much." When Judas betrayed Him, there was no place in Him where self could rise up and say, "I trusted this man to be the treasurer, and now he has sold me down the river." Or when Peter denied Him, "I gave him the keys to the kingdom, and now he denies me!" He could truly say, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." (Jn. 14:30) There was no ground in Him where the carnal mind could do its work. The path of sonship is truly one of denying ourselves, submitting to the cross as the Lord applies it to our lives, and following Him all the way. The road to mount Zion passes through the hill of Golgotha. This is a WALK which requires all that we have and all that we are.

There is no place where self is a more cunning and deceitful devil than in the realm of our SPIRITUAL LIFE. Volumes have been written on the crucified life — the surrender of our will to God, of becoming nothing, that He might become everything. I am sure that some of my readers have sung the little chorus that expresses this beautifully:

**"Lord, take me and break me until I'm nothing,
And make me and mold me until I'm something;
Then take me and use me for your glory
Until all that I am is You."**

Moses partook of this spirit when he turned away from the throne of Egypt to identify himself with his brethren, a race of slaves, that he might through suffering and sacrifice bring deliverance to them all.

Paul demonstrated the same determination when he left his place in the Sanhedren to join the despised and persecuted followers of Jesus, that he might not be disobedient to the heavenly vision, and that he might bring salvation to the Gentiles. He was following hard after Jesus, BEARING HIS CROSS, when he declared, "I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might...testify the gospel of the grace of God." (Acts 20:22-24)

But taking up the cross is not enough. It must be taken up daily! That is what Jesus said. And by that we know the cross is more than the crucifixion two thousand years ago! That only lasted part of one day! The cross must be taken up willingly, and carried faithfully, without complaining. It is easy to make a consecration in a meeting, during the heat of an inspiring consecration call — but that has nothing to do with taking up our cross daily and following Jesus! Christ never took a vacation from His cross! His whole life and ministry, from the manger to the tomb, was a daily bearing of the burden of the call to sonship.

When Jesus came to earth He died to all that He was as God to become a man. But when He came to the Jordan He died again — He died to all that He was as a man to be the Son of God! When He went down into the watery grave of John's baptism to "fulfill all righteousness," He offered there all the capabilities, potentials, ambitions, desires, and talents He possessed as a man, bringing all to the cross, surrendering completely to the Father, reserving nothing for Himself, a burnt offering, a sweet smelling savor unto God! Finally, Jesus died to all that He was as a Son, that He might live again in the glory He had with the Father before the world was — the incorruptible, eternal, unlimited dimension of SPIRIT. For when Jesus was crucified, risen, and ascended, He returned to the FATHER, to the SPIRIT, where He now dwells in the life that is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. He ascended up far above all heavens THAT HE MIGHT FILL ALL THINGS! (Eph. 4:10)

Our Lord died to all that He was as God to become a man. He died to all that He was as a man to become a Son. And He died to all that He was as a Son to be revealed in the glory of the Father! His crucifixion was the continual laying down of SELF, and the outpouring of LIFE. It meant dying to everything in every realm that was anything LESS THAN GOD. For us it pioneered the way of victory over the flesh, over the ego, over the human consciousness, over the Adamic value of life, which is also victory over sin, sickness, sorrow, limitation, and death.

The cross was not an accident, which came to Jesus at the end of life. He was born, and lived, and died under the shadow of the cross. He knew it was there all the time, but never once did He shun the cross. Never once did He fail to take up His cross daily. There was never a day that He could say, "This day is my own. Today I will do my will. I will go about my Father's business again tomorrow." Never an experience came into His life of which He could say, "This is mine to enjoy. The will of the Father must wait until this is over. Then I will continue on in my calling." Even in His times of sorrow He could not say, "My own grief is so great. It is only right that now I should be comforted! Let them minister unto me, now."

To the eyes of the world it would seem that it was only on that dark night of Calvary that "He went forth, bearing His cross." But He had been bearing His cross all His life! He had been bearing His cross before ever His baby ears heard the lowing of the cattle in the stable of His birth. He had been bearing His cross in Nazareth, the place of no good thing, as there He grew in the knowledge of the Father and His plan. He had been bearing His cross as He went forth among the people, poor, despised, lonely, misunderstood, ridiculed — willingly, that He might bring many sons unto glory! He paid the price! And we are paying the price today as we follow in His steps, forsaking all that we might apprehend that for which Christ also has apprehended us. The world may not see nor understand your cross and mine. But each of us has his own cross. And God sees! And he that loses his life for the sake of Christ, the same shall save it (Mk. 8:35). This is life more abundant — the life of SONSHIP! The life of sublime purpose! The life of transcendent power! The life of eternal glory!

Many years ago brother Bill Britton sent out a couple selected items whose message is just as true and fresh today as it was then. I do not know who was the original author of these, but I share them for your edification.

DYING TO SELF

When you are forgotten, or neglected, or purposely set at naught, and you don't sting or hurt with the insult or the oversight, but your heart is happy, being counted worthy to suffer with Christ — THAT IS DYING TO SELF. When your good is evil spoken of, when your wishes are crossed, your advice disregarded, your opinions ridiculed, and you refuse to let anger rise in your heart, or even defend yourself, but take it all in patient and loving silence — THAT IS DEATH TO SELF.

When you lovingly and patiently bear any disorder, any irregularity, any impunctuality, or any annoyance; when you can stand face to face with waste, folly, extravagance, spiritual insensibility...and endure it as Jesus endured it — THAT IS DYING TO SELF.

When you are content with any food, any offering, any raiment, any climate, any society, any solitude, any interruption of the will of God — THAT IS DYING TO SELF.

When you never care to refer to yourself in conversation, or to record your own good works, or itch after commendation, when you can truly love to be unknown — THAT IS DYING TO SELF.

When you can see your brother prosper and have his needs met, and can honestly rejoice with him in spirit and feel no envy nor question God, while your own needs are far greater and in desperate circumstances — THAT IS DYING TO SELF.

When you can receive correction and reproof from one of less stature than yourself, and can humbly submit inwardly as well as outwardly, finding no rebellion or resentment rising up within your heart — THAT IS DYING TO SELF!

THE PADDED CROSS

"Well, here I am Lord. You said, 'Take up your cross,' and I'm here to do it. It's not easy, you know, this self-denial thing. I mean to go through with it though, Lord. I'll bet you wish more people were willing to be disciples like me. I've counted the cost and surrendered my life and...it is not an easy road.

"Do you mind if I look over these crosses? I'd kind of like a new one. I'm not fussy, you understand, but a disciple has to be relevant these days. I was wondering... are there any that are vinyl padded? I'm thinking of attracting others, you see. And if I could show them a comfortable cross I am sure I could win a lot more. Got to keep up with the population explosion and all. And I need something durable so I can treasure it always. Oh, is there one that's sort of flat so it would fit under my coat? One should not be too obvious.

"Funny, there doesn't seem to be much choice here. Just that coarse, rough wood. I mean, that would hurt! Don't you have something more distinctive, Lord? I can tell you right now, none of my friends are going to be impressed by this shoddy workmanship! They'll think I'm a nut or something! And my family would be mortified! "What's that? It is either one of these or forget the whole thing? But Lord, I want to be your disciple! I mean, just being with you, that is all that counts, but life has to have a balance too... But you don't understand, nobody lives that way today! Who is going to be attracted by this self-denial bit? I want to, but let's not overdo it! Start getting radical like this and they'll haul me off to the funny farm — know what I mean?"

"I mean, being a disciple is challenging and exciting and I want to do it but I have some rights, you know! Now let's see. No blood, O.K.? I just can't stand the thought of that, Lord.

"Lord? Lord!

"Now where do you suppose He went?"

One might soar high on the sweet wine of revelation and understand all the mysteries of how the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, how they shall sit on thrones, how they shall judge the world and angels in the age and the ages to come, how they shall deliver the creation from the bondage of corruption, and this is all truth, for it is a pure vision which shall be fulfilled. But I cannot be too forceful in my effort to show you, beloved ones, that long before a man ever partakes of such marvelous realities, he will have been thoroughly dealt with by the hand of God, the self-life being abased before the Lord, every rock of pride and every root of self-ascendancy purged out, so that our only desire will be to see the LORD glorified! Before we share His throne we will have learned quite well what the Spirit meant when He inspired the man of wisdom to pen these significant words: "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his own spirit than he that taketh a city." (Prov. 16:32)

Learning to rule one's own spirit is not easy, in fact it requires that our spirit be joined to His Spirit, so that we are fortified and strengthened in the inner man, and thus able to gain control over all our impulses and emotions. The varied dispositions of human nature are not easily bridled or broken; the restlessness, the defensiveness, the quick reactions to pressures, frustration, and anger; fear, worry, hurt, and self-assertion all must be overcome, conquered, rendered inactive by the overwhelming reign of HIS LIFE within. Many like to govern others, issue orders, call the shots, manipulate, control what is going on about them, in the church, etc., while they cannot bridle their own thoughts, attitudes, moods, and emotions, nor crucify the lusts and passions of their own flesh.

The Amalekites were an ancient and nomadic marauding people who lived in the southern part of the land God promised to Abraham. When Moses was leading the children of Israel through the wilderness toward their promised land, the Amalekites attacked them with a vengeance at Rephidim. The Lord took note of their unprovoked fury poured out upon His people, and there is a scripture that says, "The Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." (Ex. 17:16) When the scripture says "from generation to generation" we generally think this means it will last forever. But just because God said "from generation to generation" does not mean that there will not be a time when God will say, "It is over now; I will make an end of Amalek."

When the kingdom was ushered in and Saul was anointed king of Israel, the Lord spoke to Saul through the prophet Samuel, saying, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." (I Sam. 15:2-3) Saul gathered together a great army, attacked the Amalekites, and conquered them. God gave a great victory! Saul did not, however, obey the word of the Lord. He did indeed destroy all the people,

but he took king Agag alive. He also saved the very best of all the sheep, oxen, and lambs to offer as a thank-you offering unto the Lord! But the Lord was not pleased with this. He was angry with Saul, and Samuel said to him, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." Because of this disobedience the Lord wrested the kingdom from the house of Saul and gave it to David!

Amalek represents the flesh. We know that there must come a time in the ushering in of the kingdom in our lives when our continual warfare with Amalek, the flesh, must once and for all come to an end. The Amalek problem must be settled! It is not going to plague us forever! Yes, we have had war, the flesh wars against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. Not only have we experienced this warfare within ourselves, but in every move of the Spirit, in every fresh realm that we have moved into in our progression into God, we found that Amalek was there, there was conflict, the flesh rose up and sought to rule, and there has been war from generation to generation. But there comes a time in the ushering in of the kingdom of God when the thrones are being set up and the Lord brings forth a kingship in His people so that the Amalek problem is dealt with.

You see, my beloved, in dealing with Amalek, the flesh, it is the preserving of the good that is the snare! Yes, Saul destroyed all the bad, all the vile and corrupt, but he wanted to save king Agag and the good! May God teach us in these days that in the destruction of Amalek it is the destruction of the good as well as the bad that He is after! God is moving on in this hour! As He brings us into our sonship He is causing us to take stands and positions, not against the bad of the flesh simply, but against things that are good. Of course, if you stand against things that are good and were started by God, formed by God, ordained by God, and blessed by God, it appears as if you are an instrument of the devil out to destroy the work of God! But God said once, "That which I plant, I will pluck up." (Jer. 1:9-10; 18:6-10) I rejoiced for years because I saw that "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." (Mat. 15:13) Now we must rejoice when we see God pluck up that which He has planted!

The Lord declared, "That which I build, I will destroy." We are to rejoice when we see God destroy that which He built! Unless God has done a work in our spirits by the Holy Ghost, we cannot believe that. We think that God only destroys the corrupt harlot system of religion. But our concept is that if God built it, the only one out to destroy it is the devil! But God says, "I will destroy." May these days in which we now stand be the time when all God's called and chosen elect are prepared to lose the good as well as the bad, prepared to see God pluck up that for which we have given our life to see it planted, where we see God break down and destroy that for which we have sold ourselves out, which is LESS THAN WHAT GOD IS AFTER! When God has planted something, after a while we become idolatrous about it. Idolatry is really the self-life projecting itself into it so that it turns into an idol, because we cherish the thing God has done in us above obedience to God when He says it is now time to move on. We want to preserve it, memorialize it, make it an offering unto the Lord, because it is the very best. We don't understand sometimes that when we cling to what God has done at the expense of what He is doing, that which was started in the spirit winds up in the flesh! It may appear to be very good flesh, but it still pertains to the kingdom of Amalek.

Most of us have no problem as to our bad, we know the flesh and all that it represents must go to the cross. But all of us have areas in our lives which we think are good: a devotion, a commitment, a consecration, a faith, a knowledge of the word, a form of worship, a way of gathering, which are as much "self" as the bad temper, the wrong attitude, the sharp tongue, the worldliness, the lust, and the rest of it. God is saying that everything must go! All that falls short of His fullness and perfection, all that would be immortalized and perpetuated in our lives on a realm less than His ultimate purpose, must be brought to the cross. That which is left will only be Christ Himself being formed in us!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 44

THE CHURCH IN PERGAMOS [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART FORTY-FOUR

EATING THINGS SACRIFICED TO IDOLS SPIRITUAL FORNICATION

"I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication." (Rev. 2:14)

Across the pages of scripture there march men and women chosen of God to reveal by their lives and actions the great truths and principles of spiritual reality. The Holy Spirit has graphically painted a cameo-sharp picture of each one of them. There is a clear sketch of their characters, which provides object lessons for all who walk with God and seek to fulfill His purpose in the earth. There are some who reveal the positive, men full of faith and committed to obedience to God, who wrought exploits and laid the foundations of God's ways and will for all men. Let me mention some of them. In the Old Testament, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Jeremiah and Daniel. In the New Testament, Mary, John the Baptist, Peter, John, Paul, Barnabas, and Apollos.

Then there are those whose lives accentuate the negative, men who profess to walk with God and be His ministers, but whose character reveals the flaws and errors which disqualify men from inheriting the promises. Some of these are Cain, Esau, Balaam, Samson, Saul, Absalom, Judas, Demas, and Ananias and Sapphira.

The Old Testament prophet Balaam has long been an enigma. He appears out of the mists of antiquity somewhat like Melchizedek — unexplainable in his origins and role of his time. He lived near the Euphrates River in the land of Pethor, modern-day Iraq. His prophecies were totally accurate; his language the most eloquent of all the Old Testament prophets; his allegories the most poetic; and his deception, by the love of fame and money, the most cunning. His notoriety had spread so far abroad that it seems his name was known in all the courts of pagan kings, soothsayers, and magicians. Yet he had conversations with the true and living God almost like Moses did! You will find his name mentioned sixty times in fifty-seven verses in no less than eight of the sixty-six books of the Bible — more than any other prophet! Yet words fail to describe his final and ignoble end.

How could Balaam — who had been the greatest prophet of the Lord up to that time (second only to Moses) — end up a soothsayer, using enchantments and divinations in an attempt to destroy the people whom God had commanded him to bless. How could he, whom God no doubt would have honored and immortalized his name throughout all time — had he stayed true — end up being slain by the Israelites as a traitor of God, an adversary of righteousness, and an open advocate of uncleanness? How could one so greatly gifted end up in such disgrace — an outcast of both the people of God and the pagan peoples to whom he prostituted his prophetic calling?

The question follows — was Balaam a genuine prophet of God? Or was he a religious racketeer? It is my conviction that the scriptures clearly reveal that he was a prophet of God, and the Lord has chosen him as an example of the reward of unrighteousness and unfaithfulness in the calling of God. Even before you finish the Old Testament, Micah tells us that we are to remember him. Notice what the prophet says, "O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal, that ye may know the righteousness of the Lord." (Mic. 6:5) In other words, Micah says you can't forget him; you can't ignore him because he is a tremendous lesson for God's called and chosen people! The New Testament mentions him three times, always in connection with apostasy. The first is found

in II Peter 2:15: "Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness."

That's the first statement, a warning concerning the "way of Balaam." Then Jude, in his short epistle, says, "Woe unto them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah." (Jude 11) Jude warns of the "error of Balaam." The error of Balaam and the way of Balaam are not the same! Then finally, in the message of the Lord Jesus to the church in Pergamos, He says, "I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication." In this final passage we are told about the "doctrine of Balaam." Now the doctrine of Balaam is different from the way of Balaam, nor is it the same as the error of Balaam. Therefore, in our consideration of what the Lord would teach us from the life of this man, we need to recognize that these three statements give us a character analysis of Balaam. Let us go back into his history, back into the book of Numbers, chapters twenty-two through twenty-five, to understand these warnings.

As Israel approached the Promised Land, after forty years of wandering in the wilderness, they entered a new territory. It was the territory of certain nations, which greatly feared this multitude of people advancing into their area of the world. Israel had gained a victory as they came up against the Amorites and battled with them. Naturally, the word of that military victory spread and caused concern among all these nations. And when Israel came into the territory of Moab, Balak the king of Moab was afraid to engage them in battle. Not knowing how to handle this apparent threat to his kingdom, he called for the most famous prophet of that day and engaged him to put a curse on Israel. The one that he engaged is the one in whom we're interested, Balaam, the prophet.

Balaam was a Midianite, from the same country where Moses had lived for forty years before his call to deliver Israel from the hand of Egypt. That explains in part how he knew Yahweh, the true and living God. He was brought from Aram, out of the mountains of the east. And we should note this about this man: Balaam uttered several of the most wonderful prophecies you'll find in all the word of God! When the children of Israel arrived at the east bank of the Jordan River, preparing to cross over into the land God had promised them, naturally Balak the king of Moab, occupying an adjoining territory, did not know their intentions. He perceived them as a threat to his kingdom, should they attack him and wrest his kingdom from him. Therefore, afraid to make an attack upon them but wanting to defend his kingdom, he sent messengers to Balaam. The message they bore to the prophet was this: "Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse for me this people; for they are too mighty for me: perhaps I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land; for I know that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed."

What a reputation Balaam had! And the messengers of Balak came to this mighty prophet not only with a plea from the king of Moab, but they brought with them a very handsome price. "And the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the rewards of divination in their hand; and they came unto Balaam, and spake unto him the words of Balak." The rewards of divination was simply the money they were prepared to pay Balaam for his services in cursing the children of Israel. With this money they came to him and said, "Balak has sent us, and he wants to engage your services. He requests that you come and curse this people that has recently come up out of Egypt. They are a very dangerous people! So far, they have had victories everywhere they have met the enemy, and king Balak needs your help at this crucial hour."

Ah, the very interesting thing is that this man Balaam sounds very genuine. "And he said unto them, Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, as the Lord shall speak unto me: and the princes of Moab abode with Balaam." Have you ever heard anything more pious than that? He sounds very genuine, does he not? Balaam honestly seems to be trying to find the mind of the Lord here! And indeed Balaam did inquire of the Lord, and he received the answer from God! "And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people; for they are blessed." That is God's clear, unmistakable, and uncontroversial word to Balaam. "You're not to go, and you're not to curse these people, because I have blessed them!" That's God's answer. Now what will Balaam do in response to this word from God? The fact is, he still appears one hundred percent sincere and genuine, for "Balaam rose up in the morning and said to the princes of Balak, Get

you into your land; for the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you." He says, "I can't go. I won't go. Go home to your master and tell him that!"

"And the princes of Moab rose up, and they went unto Balak, and said, Balaam refuseth to come with us." Now if the story ended there, I would have to say that Balaam is one of the most remarkable men of God of whom I have ever heard! Here's a man that has received a word from the Lord. God gives him a prophecy, and this man obeys explicitly the message. He said plainly, "I won't go. I will not curse these people!" But, unfortunately, the story doesn't end there.

As it turns out, Balak is a very determined and resourceful king. And, in my mind, I do doubt for one moment that he knew something about the character of this man Balaam. "And Balak send yet again princes more, and more honourable than they." Ah, now Balak begins to flatter the prophet by sending some of the most important men of the kingdom to confer with him. He raises the issue to a higher level of his government. "And they came to Balaam, and said to him, Thus saith Balak the son of Zippor, Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming unto me." They make him a more attractive offer. "For I will promote thee unto very great honour, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me: come therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people." Now Balak offers Balaam a cabinet position in his government! Balaam will be one of his closest advisors, and he will obey all the counsel Balaam gives him!

And now listen to this pious prophet. "And Balaam answered and said unto the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more." Now why does Balaam change the subject, and instead of referring to the high position Balak offered him, he suggests that should Balak give him his "house full of silver and gold" he still could not go beyond the word of the Lord? I will tell you why! Because that's what he wanted! With subtleness he was sowing the seed of suggestion into the mind of the king. Why mention it, if you're not thinking about it? "Why," he says, "I wouldn't go even if he gave me a house filled with gold and silver." And when he makes this statement I can hear a lot of brethren saying, "Amen! Hallelujah for Balaam! What a testimony he's giving!"

But he's not genuine here. The words that flow out of his mouth cannot be taken at face value. Balaam has a secret agenda in the words he speaks. He's actually going to take a little less than a house full of gold and silver, but it's still going to be a good price. And king Balak will feel like he got a real bargain! May I say to you, he said this because he was a covetous man. Now listen to what follows this pious declaration: "Now therefore, I pray you, tarry ye also here this night, that I may know what the Lord will say unto me more." Now, why did he say that? He already had the word of the Lord! He had already given his answer! So why does he say in effect, "Wait here tonight, and I'll go to God again to see if He has changed his mind!" Can you not see the subtlety and shrewdness? As soon as he planted the idea of gold and silver, he announced that he would go back and inquire of the Lord once more, if perchance He might have changed His mind!

Balaam was not unlike the preacher I once heard about who came to his wife and said, "I've just received a call to pastor the church in the next town. It's a larger town. It's a much better church. The people in it are more refined and cultured, they do not cause the trouble the people here do, and they've offered me a higher salary. I'm going upstairs and pray about this to see if it's the Lord's will for me to go." His wife says, "Fine, I'll go up and pray with you." And he says, "Oh, my, no. You stay down here and pack!" Balaam, you see, is going to pray about it some more, although he already has God's answer!

However, it does look like God changes His mind, does it not? Notice the development here for it's so important. "And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do." Now somebody says, "God did change His mind." No, God didn't! You see, my beloved, if you want to play games with God He will play games with you, and you will be caught in your own folly. God is no fool. He will give you enough rope to hang yourself! He is wiser than all the cunning craftiness of man! You cannot out-smart God! You remember when the children of Israel complained and murmured in the wilderness to Moses, "We want something besides manna to eat. We're tired of this stuff. We want meat!" And God says, "I'll give them flesh. I'll give them flesh till it comes out of their nostrils and they are sick of it." Later on, the Psalmist wrote, **"He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul."** (Ps. 106:15)

When we demand our way over the wisdom of His way, God will let us have our way and we will reap the folly of it! There are certain things that you can keep nagging God about which He'll permit you to do. But, my friend, you'll dry up spiritually! The idea that we can ask anything our carnal heart desires and God is obligated to give it to us is a half-truth. Oh, yes, He will give you what you demand of Him, but that doesn't mean it is good for you, or that it conforms to God's best and highest for you. Do you want Him to give you every one of your prayer requests, or do you really want Him to have His way? Do you want blessed deliverance out of every problem and trial, or do you want to learn the lessons God is teaching you, that you may grow up into the stature of Christ? Do you want His will to be done, or do you want God to come over to your side and do what you want done? The interesting thing is there are times when He will do just that! There are a great many Christians that could testify to this experience. But those who demand God to bless their plans, their efforts, and their desires are not sons. If God is giving you everything you want, that is no sign of sonship! It may be a sign of THE BALAAM CONDITION!

Now this man Balaam is being permitted to go, but God is going to warn him every step of the way. And He uses something quite interesting. "And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab. And God's anger was kindled because he went: and the angel of the Lord stood in the way." Without doubt, the reason Balaam could not see the angel of the Lord was because he was thinking about a house full of silver and gold! He was a covetous man, and couldn't see spiritual things. And talk about a rebuke! God knows how to rebuke. The dumb animal on which he was riding could see the angel; it has more discernment than he does! My beloved, this is the way of Balaam. The way of Balaam is preaching, prophesying, or ministering in any capacity for money!

Hear the words of Peter again as he evaluates this man. "**Who have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness: but was rebuked for his iniquity; the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbade the madness of the prophet.**" **II Pet. 2:15-16)** The "wages" of unrighteousness are the money people receive by departing from the perfect will and plan of God to accommodate people from whom they can profit by pleasing them. Some of the most covetous people I have met are in the Lord's work! A few of them I have met in this kingdom and sonship message! There is always a price on everything. There is always a plea for money for this project and that. Their need of your money is the object of every meeting they hold, every magazine they publish, and every letter they write. They will send you a book for your money, they will send you a tape for your money, they will send you some gold-colored trinket for your money, they will pray for you for your money, and with a thousand other crafty schemes they make merchandise of the gullible people who blindly follow them. They know the way of faith, but instead rely on carnal methods when it comes to raising finances. They coddle and flatter people at the expense of declaring the full counsel of God in order to profit thereby. There is always a gimmick to entice you to send your hard-earned money to fulfill their grandiose schemes to save the world or bring in the kingdom! Religion can be a racket. And I think every son of God is responsible for knowing what he is supporting!

Old Balaam had a message from God, but he was covetous. We're merely on the surface now; let's probe a little deeper. Look carefully at the personality of Balaam. Jude tells us this: "**Woe unto them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, and run greedily after the error of Balaam for reward...**" **(Jude 11)** Here we meet the error of Balaam. The error of Balaam was in deviating from the will of the Lord! Balaam represents a ministry or relationship with the Lord that brings a word from God. Balaam was a prophet, a true prophet of the true God bringing a true word from the Lord! Balaam was also a teacher and his student was Balak. Each of us is a teaching before we are a teacher. We teach what we are! Balaam prophesied out of the Spirit of the Lord. But Balaam taught out of who he was! What we are is much more powerful and expressive than what we say. Balaam taught Balak not only by his words, but out of his character and state of being. The word of the Lord was in his mouth, but carnality, deceptiveness, greed, and rebellion were in his heart. And that is the error of Balaam! Had you met him and said to him, "Now, brother Balaam, why are you going with these messengers? We understand that God has told you not to curse Israel. So, why are you going?" Then he would start rationalizing. He could explain his motives, and he could ascribe a worthy purpose for his conduct. That's the interesting thing!

Now let us dig a little deeper into the life of this prophet. This brings us to his doctrine. The doctrine of Balaam is satanic; it's demonic; it's hellish; it's subtle. It's the same thing that appeared in the Garden of Eden to our first parents! In our Lord's message to the church at Pergamos He said, "**But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.**" (Rev. 2:14) Balak, you see, found that God would not permit him to curse the people of Israel. He knew he could not curse them! He understood his limit in disobeying the word of the Lord. But he still coveted the favor and the money of king Balak! So he realized that he was going to have to adopt a different approach if he was to get the silver and the gold, and that's what he had come for, after all. If you think Balaam is going back empty-handed, you are not acquainted with religious racketeers! Because he wants the rich gifts of Balak, he's going to do something now that's very devious.

He would not out-right curse Israel, but he says something like this to Balak. "Now, I can't curse them, but I can tell you how to destroy them. You go down and join them. Get the good-looking women of Moab to go down to the camp and get acquainted. The Israelite men will find the Moabite women attractive, and will commit whoredoms with them. Some of them will love your women so much they will marry them! Your women will be so beautiful, so sensuous, so enticing, so caring and loving, that the Israelite men will do anything for them. They will yield to your customs, they will compromise with your gods, they will adopt your traditions, they will pollute their worship of Yahweh, they will commit trespass against the Lord, and God will no longer fight for them."

"**And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.**" (Num. 25:1) As you read the terrible account that follows, you will see what happened as a result of Balaam's counsel. And so the Moabite women "**caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord.**" (Num. 31:16) With fornication came idolatry into the camp of Israel! What the devil couldn't do by cursing and fighting from the outside, he did from the inside!

The doctrine of Balaam was the doctrine and method to corrupt a people who couldn't be cursed! They were corrupted by tempting them to be joined to the women of Moab, defile their separation unto the Lord, and abandon their holy character — union with the mind, ways, methods, and spirit of the world — which is spiritual fornication. The doctrine of Balaam is union with the world, union with the fleshly ways of the carnal mind instead of a pure walk in the spirit and by the spirit. Do you know that God's elect people have never been hurt from without? The Lord's called and chosen people can only be corrupted from within! The richest years of the early church were during its persecution. While they were being imprisoned, beheaded, fed to lions, burned at the stake, boiled in oil, their property confiscated, and all the rest, there was great boldness, glory, and power upon the people of God! They increased by the thousands and the millions, shook kingdoms, and turned the world upside-down!

You see, my beloved, the devil was fighting them from the outside. He finally caught on! He couldn't hurt the church from the outside; so he joined it! Read the story of Constantine. Turn the pages of history and read how Constantine, emperor of Rome, out of considerations of state, in order to consolidate the empire under his control, made Christianity the official religion of his empire. Read the lines, which tell how at the point of the spear he forced whole nations in a day into the communion of the church. Read Eusebius, the early church historian, to catch his enthusiastic conviction that the holy kingdom of heaven had come and that the kingdoms of this world had become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ — the carnal armies of the earth now supporting the church and bearing it onward to the full conquest of the world. Read it!

The church and the world were married together, the church and the world formed an adulterous relationship in which the church was kept and supported by human government. It still is! Even if it is only your government-chartered, tax-exempt, non-profit religious organization, preacher friend of mine, by which carnal government dictates that you choose a name other than the Lord's name, that you appoint a board and do business contrary to the government of the Holy Spirit, and by which the government of carnal men confers upon you the "right" to marry the young and bury the dead as a servant of the civil government. "By the authority invested in me as a minister of the gospel, and by the State of Texas, I pronounce you man and wife!" Human government and fleshly armies are not the kingdom of God! With that first union of the church with human

government all sorts of pagan rituals, pagan holidays, idols, cathedrals, doctrines, and practices were brought into the church. Can we not see by this that the formation of a religious organization chartered by the state is the first step into religious Babylon! The church couldn't be cursed, so it was corrupted! That is the doctrine of Balaam!

And likewise, all they who follow in Balaam's way, who have erred from the pure walk in the Spirit of God, and yet make a profession of serving and doing the work of Christ in their high-swelling words of vanity, and yet run greedily after the error of Balaam for rewards, and seek money for their preaching, prophesying, programs, books, and tapes; and that admire men's persons, flattering the people for gain, and take titles to themselves of "Reverend," "Doctor," and others of this world's recognition — are not these they of whom the Lord spoke when He said, "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication."

Ray Prinzing once used the illustration of a young woman who goes to a nursing school, where she learns the things pertaining to the medical world, and after years of training and experience she becomes an RN. Long before this she has commenced to wear the nurses' white uniform with white shoes, stockings, and cap so that she becomes an expression of that field. You see her walking down the street and before you can even recognize her as Sue, or Helen, or whoever, you have already identified her as being a nurse, for the medical world has so absorbed her into its system, that she becomes an expression of that realm. She bears their MARK! God is raising up in this hour a people so GIVEN, YIELDED to the spirit of wisdom and holiness and power of the Christ as to be absorbed therein until it becomes, without our human effort, that we reveal HIM, for HE becomes the manifestation, HE becomes the atmosphere of our living, the sphere of our existence, so that we express only HIM at all times and in all circumstances. We are being perfected to bear the mark of GOD!

In our former days in the religious systems of man, in both thinking and actions we all bore the marks of the bestial system of this world. Did we not think like the world, plan like the world, organize like the world, promote like the world, and act like the world? Who would deny that the religious systems' whole vision, methodology, and attitude is in accordance with the world's system? Just as the church in the days of Constantine "paganized" Christianity by mingling with the worship of Christ pagan practices of idols, images, altars, incense, candles, vestments, saints (bearing the characteristics and virtues of the ancient pagan gods), Christmas, Easter, and a thousand other things, so in our day the church systems' planning and program is all in harmony with the "spirit of this age" as they continually "adapt" themselves to whatever the world is doing!

Let the devil hatch rock music out of the cesspool of the demented culture of drugs and sex, and the church will immediately "Christianize" it by giving the harmonic dissonance "Christian words." They call it "Christian Rock." It is not! You cannot have Christian rock any more than you can have Christian drug lords, Christian harlots, Christian thieves, or Christian liars! It is not even Christianized demonism — it is demonized Christianity! The church systems are always trying to keep in step with the world, appropriate to themselves the world's program, and somehow make it "Christian." It is the doctrine of Balaam! Let a worldly book come off the press about near-death experiences, and soon "Christian" books on near-death experiences will line the bookshelves. Let diet books become the big money maker, and immediately "Christian" diet books and programs will flood the market. What great imitators the doctrine of Balaam makes God's people!

You see, precious friend of mine, those who subscribe to the doctrine of Balaam are not leaders, setting the standards for mankind, but followers, mimicking and adapting the world's standards under the pretense of serving Christ. If television talk shows are what the world is doing, then let us entertain the saints with "Christian" talk shows! Balaamites are never leaders and initiators, blazing the path for the world to follow; they are always followers and imitators as they partake of the spirit of the world and fornicate with her flesh and eat things sacrificed to idols!

David Wilkerson once wrote: "A few years ago, three pastors of large charismatic churches publicly stated they believed God would use rock-and-roll and rap music to bring in the next great revival. One of these ministers even declared that God used the Beatles to open people's hearts to the Holy Spirit. No — never! Those young

men glorified sex and drugs. How could that ever be the work of the Holy Spirit? One Christian magazine predicted that the next big movement in the church would be a 'nightclub' approach — including services that feature dancing, near-beer alcohol, and comedians. One pastor told me this is already happening in churches throughout England and Europe. The churches can't hold the people's interest — so they turn them into nightclubs! At one such church, a visiting gospel singer was advised not to sing anything that mentioned sin or the blood of Jesus, because it might offend the visitors. That church's leaders were trying to create a 'comfort zone' for sinners!"

God is not well pleased with the world of believers who are all too willing to proclaim the praise of God with their lips and raise their hands in seeming consecration, even while they wear the gaudy garments of Babylonish religion, running greedily after the error of Balaam for gain, and prostituting the holy truths of God with the unholy methods and program of the world. God is well pleased with those who seek only His will, His ways, and His glory. God is well pleased with those who reject the fleeting pleasures of sin and the worthless glitter of the prestige and position of this world. God is well pleased with those who forsake the excitement and noise of the crowd, who abandon listening to all manner of fantastic oratory, who in their hearts are no longer entertained by man-made programs, soulful concerts, so-called Christian television shows, and carnal schemes of a church system that has forsaken the leading of the Spirit of God.

The Father is well pleased with those who see His hand in all the happenings of their lives and give no place or glory or credit to the devil. The Father is well pleased with those whose only desire out of a pure heart is to please Him and apprehend that for which they also have been apprehended of Christ Jesus. The Father is well pleased with those who put first things first and walk daily after the spirit and not after the flesh. The Father is well pleased with those who stop seeking gifts and seek the Giver. God is well pleased with those who stop seeking things and start seeking the Lord Himself.

If the people of God today would stop following after preachers and personalities, turning a deaf ear to the slick advertising of unscrupulous men who love to promote themselves, if they would forget about revivals and crusades and supposed signs and wonders and begin to turn the knob of their prayer closet door, seeking not to run here and there, and do this and that, but seeking to enter into harmony with the mind of Him who worketh all things after the counsels of His own will, to do only those things they see the Father doing, to speak only those things they hear of the Father, then all the world would know that the Father is glorified in His sons even as He is glorified in His Son. Let us seek God that He might fashion our lives according to His eternal wisdom, that in us He might be well pleased!

There are some wonderfully instructive connections between the various items set forth in the seven churches of the book of Revelation in which we are called to overcome. Immediately following the Spirit's warning about the doctrine of Balaam, He says, "So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate" (Rev. 2:15). Why should the Lord hate the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes so much? And why is it mentioned again here in connection with the doctrine of Balaam? I will tell you why!

Their names tell us a lot about them. Balaam, I am told, means "conqueror of the people." Nicolaitane also means "conqueror of the common people." Their names are almost identical and speak volumes to us in the spirit as to what God hates! The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes put one man above another, a hierarchical system that makes some people "laity" and others "lords," rather than a family of sons under the Headship of Christ. All church systems of man still hold to this doctrine and system today with their hierarchy of ministers and offices. They conquer the people through the force of their titles, prestige, power, charisma, and rules and regulations, rather than serving in humility out of the ministration of the Spirit.

Balaam went beyond the Nicolaitanes, however, for he taught Balak to cause Israel to stumble through the seductiveness of women, so that they might commit immorality and be turned to other gods. Balaam did this in order to gain a reward of money, prestige, and power for himself. But he did not rule by that power he possessed — his purpose was carried out through the corruption of the people of God! This is a more refined and deadly form of conquest than mere Nicolaitanism, for it turns the heart away from the purity of the truth and an uncontaminated walk in the Spirit and by the Spirit.

And then — in the church at Thyratira we meet another unsavory character — Jezebel! She represents an even more insidious realm — the internal realm of the soul — the very root of everything! In each case the Spirit is probing deeper! He starts with the outward form, men, often good men, who seek to control and dominate the Lord's people. Then He moves to the Balaamites, those who bring the Lord's people into union with the flesh and the world, corrupting the work of God in their lives through error. Oh, yes, God will deal with us to bring us out of the various forms of Babylon. But ultimately He will bring every overcoming son of God to the root of the matter — getting the Babylon out of us! This is accomplished only through the salvation of the soul, the renewing of our mind, bringing transformation. Israel is the type — God brought Israel out of Egypt in one miraculous night. But it took forty long years of dealing in the wilderness to get Egypt out of them so that they could rise up in faith and obedience, enter in, and possess their land! The same pattern appears in the book of Revelation in the seven steps of the overcomer! Only at the end — in the final step of overcoming — does the overcomer finally ascend to the throne of God! (Rev. 3:21).

Some time ago a dear sister in the Lord, Sheila Taylor, shared a remarkable dream with us which has vital significance for the elect of God in this new kingdom Day. She wrote, "In this dream I was among a lot of people. I had lain down and a 2,000 foot-long snake had passed from my body through my bowels. Nobody knew what it meant or what to do with it. They hung it up over a fence, then finally made a plastic case (cheap shade of blue plastic) and put the snake in it to preserve it. They were talking about it but without wisdom, only confusion. The Lord then spoke to me and said that I had been emptied of all sins and traditions and doctrinal teachings and errors from the past 2,000 years! He said I had been born at the cross but since then man had distorted the truth and many lies and errors had come in, that had to be taken away.

"Then I vomited. The Lord said it was the residue. I was now clean! I don't know what 'residue' consisted of. But then He gave me a glass of the best tasting wine imaginable and said, Drink! It was the New Wine. I was still lying down and the Spirit poured the wine into my mouth. There are no words to describe how refreshing it was! It was sweet and wonderful and made me feel alive all over. Then I sat up and drank more and thanked Him over and over for filling me with truth. I worshipped Him. Then I woke up. Out of all the people there I was the only one who understood what was happening. The snake was dead but no one wanted to bury it; they wanted to preserve it!"

Although this experience was very real to Sheila personally, it is my deep conviction that it is also a message to the body of Christ! Truly God is purging His called and chosen elect from all the Balaamite errors and abominations of the past 2,000 years! Oh, the wonder of it! God is doing a deep and thorough work by His Spirit and by the cross in our lives, and He is delivering us completely from all that is not of Him. We are even vomiting up the residue, for the deliverance must be complete and irrevocable! The message to the church at Pergamos is just this: **THE OVERCOMER MUST, IN THE THIRD STEP OF HIS OVERCOMING, REPENT OF AND FORSAKE ALL THE MIXTURE OF RELIGION** to follow the Lord, and the Lord alone, in all things and at all times. **"Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth."** (Rev. 2:16) Everyone who is called to sonship is now repenting of all the way of Balaam, all the error of Balaam, and all the doctrine of Balaam!

EATING THINGS SACRIFICED TO IDOLS

The doctrine of Balaam seduces the Lord's people to **"eat things sacrificed to idols."** (Rev. 2:14) Balaam taught Balak to seduce Israel into two things — eating and fornication. Food and sex — aren't these the two most powerful human passions! In its spiritual meaning, eating speaks of the word we feed upon; the ideas, teachings and doctrines we take into our spirits. Balaam taught Balak to seduce God's people to eat!

You see, my beloved, the Baptists preach one word, the Catholics preach another word, the Pentecostals preach a different word, the Mormons preach something else, and so on throughout Christendom. Two millenniums ago the same beloved apostle John who wrote so extensively of God's marvelous love also left us this solemn warning: **"Little children, keep yourselves from IDOLS (that is, false gods, or false ideas and representations of the true God)."** (I Jn. 5:21) "Little children, keep yourselves from false ideas about God!" Do we have false ideas about God? I fear we do. How the world and the church are filled with them! Many people view God as a schoolboy did: "...the sort of person who is always snooping around to see if anyone is enjoying

himself and then trying to stop it." Others make God out to be a tyrant, or a vengeful, wrath-filled fiend. Some paint a God so weak that the will of man is stronger than the will of God! Then others speak of God as always trying to do this and that, but the devil is ever hindering and thwarting God's purposes, getting the upper hand, defeating God's best laid plans, tripping up and overcoming the saints, until it would seem that the devil is himself the omniscient and omnipotent one!

Some have a God so capricious that He will only save you if the correct formula is repeated over you in water baptism. Vast numbers blaspheme the Holy Ghost by attributing the works of the Holy Spirit to the devil, contending that if you speak in tongues, prophesy, heal the sick, or do miracles you are of the devil, and they dispense that perverted word into their offspring (spiritual children) who do truly trust Jesus as their Saviour. Some say that Christ can only be ministered to you through the sacraments, or a particular ritual, or the ministry of their group, or membership in their movement, or by believing only the doctrines of their church and listening to no one else. Others teach their people that they cannot go to heaven if they use tobacco, drink wine, wear jewelry, put on make-up, cut their hair, go to movies, or wear or not wear certain kinds of clothing. We could pile error upon error, with "end-time" teachings about the so-called "rapture" of the saints, about a revived Roman empire, the antichrist sitting in a temple in Jerusalem, and wrath, judgment, and tribulation poured out upon the inhabitants of the world. To this we could add pagan holidays, customs, rituals, ceremonies, liturgies, works, and philosophies that have been introduced into the church realm and have become such an established part of her practice and teaching until the whole world believes that these things are surely taught somewhere in the scriptures or were established by the apostles or by Jesus Himself! Men have created out of their carnal minds a false image of God, which is a religious idol!

Can you not see the mystery? All who partake of such false and polluted teachings and doctrines which misrepresent God and distort His truth are eating things offered to idols — eating a word which is offered upon the altar of a false idea and image of God! All who follow the error of Balaam, and teach the doctrine of Balaam, do indeed seduce the Lord's people to eat a word which is offered upon the altar of a false god — a false religious system which has usurped the very truth and spirit of our heavenly Father! Smoking, cussing, and drinking are not the big things an overcomer must overcome — these negative spiritual conditions existing in the realm of the seven churches are the things within ourselves we are commanded to repent of and overcome! Every son of God has repented and is repenting in the light that the Spirit brings!

SPIRITUAL FORNICATION

Finally, the doctrine of Balaam seduces the people of God to "**commit fornication.**" (**Rev. 2:14**) The fornication here is a symbol, not the physical fornication of the flesh, but a joining to that which is not Christ. Women in the Revelation are likewise symbolic, either positively of the bride of Christ, or negatively of the soul, or of religious organizations and activities which are soulish rather than spiritual. These are those ministries, and multiplied millions of believers, who daily sow their spiritual seed, deposit their spiritual life of Christ, into man-made religious systems, mingling the reality of Christ with the commandments of men, joining themselves to carnal programs, promotions, methods, and worldly religious activities, satisfying their own soulish appetites and lusts in the name of the Lord. It is spiritual fornication!

Consider with me two verses of scripture in Galatians 3:3 and Philippians 3:3-4. "Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" "We are the circumcision, who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." "The flesh" is the name by which the word of God designates our human consciousness — soul and body. The soul at creation was placed between the spiritual or divine and the sensible or worldly, that both soul and body might, in due time, be raised up into that perfect union in the spirit which would result in man attaining his destiny, a spiritual body. When the soul yielded to the temptation of the sensible it came under the power of the body — this union of soul and body became "flesh". And now the flesh is not only without the spirit, but even hostile to it: "**the flesh wars against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.**" (**Gal. 5:17**)

More than a hundred years ago William Law wrote that this antagonism of the flesh to the spirit has TWO DISTINCT STRATEGIES. On the one hand, the flesh wars against the spirit by its committing sin and transgressing God's commands. This is the evil of the flesh. On the other hand, its hostility to the spirit is no

less manifested in its seeking to serve God and do His work! This is the good of the flesh. The good and the evil of the flesh are represented in the Garden of Eden as "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." When man sank into the flesh realm he then walked no longer in the spirit, but after the knowledge of good and evil. In yielding to the sensual realm of the body, the soul sought itself instead of the God into whom the spirit could have raised it. Self-knowledge, self-effort, and self-development prevailed over the life of the spirit!

And now, so subtle and mighty is this spirit of self, that the flesh, not only in sinning against God, but even when the soul learns to serve God, still asserts its power, refusing to let the SPIRIT ALONE LEAD, and in its effort to be religious, wants to serve God independent of the spirit and is still the great enemy that ever hinders and quenches the spirit. It is because of this cunning deceitfulness of the flesh that there often takes place what Paul speaks of to the Galatians: "Having begun in the spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" Unless the soul is brought into absolute submission to the spirit, the surrender to the spirit being entire as a bride to the bridegroom, thus bringing about the marriage of the bride-soul to the bridegroom-spirit, which is the marriage of the Lamb, what has begun in the spirit, very early and very speedily passes over into confidence in the flesh!

We are living in a very wonderful age. It is an age of drive and hurry and stress and storm. One would not go very far afield today in describing our age as an age of impatience and unrest. The tragic fact in the life of the American people at this present time is the absence of quietness and repose. We believe in "drives". We slavishly pursue our careers and social involvements; we meet our husband or wife in the hall and say, "Hi!" and we are gone. It takes great effort and commitment in order to find a few minutes to spend "quality time" with the children. If nothing else is going on we have the television going to keep our mind engaged lest we discover the silence. We are in too great a rush for repose. We have little or no time for the inner chamber. We prefer the flurry of activities and the crowds, the hustle and bustle. Nothing appeals to us but the strenuous and the thrilling. Repose is too tame a thing entirely for this atomic space age!

The sad part of it is that it is no different in the church world. The church is imitating the world! Christians regulate their devotion by the clock. The church schedule is packed with flesh-appeal programs and activities that run day and night. They feel that unless every night of the week is taken up with some sort of activity, the ministry is an ineffective thing. They have the strange idea that nothing is being done unless someone is talking! So they fairly swarm to conferences and seminars and committee meetings and platform discussions and concerts and workshops and programs and conventions. The inquiry that is nearly always made concerning a religious gathering is, "Was there much of a crowd there?" They take it for granted that if the speaker was a good talker and the building was crowded, the meeting was a big success. Do you remember in "Pilgrim's Progress" the conversation between Christian and Talkative? "I thought we should have a great deal of talk by this time," says Talkative. The moments when he was pursuing his journey in silence seemed wasted!

God's purposes are not accomplished by intellect and soulical activity. The church systems go forward today like a little Samson shorn of its locks of power. It parades up and down, boasting of its accomplishments, and, like Samson, it knows not that the Spirit of God has departed from it. But even as Saul and his armies tremble in fear before the mighty Goliath, the Lord God is raising up a little David with a slingshot of the spirit of sonship to meet the enemy with all of his stratagems and come off with a mighty victory! This David company is still in preparation, far out in the solitude of green pastures and beside the still waters, learning by faith and obedience to slay their bear and kill their lion. But we are gaining new victories everyday and learning within ourselves the power of God and the ways of His kingdom! Saul's armor will not do! The sons of God are being prepared to step forth in the majesty of the name of the Lord God of Israel! This preparation does not take place with the seven brothers in the hustle and bustle of the streets of Bethlehem, but alone with God in the secret place of the Most High!

The church systems are reaching out their hands to society around them but their hands are so full that their hearts are empty. What do busy preachers or busy Christians know about the secret place of the Most High? What do they know about the total silence of the most holy place? The churches are filled to overflowing with members who are so busy running hither and thither, on errands of mercy and ministry it may be, but they are never alone with God. Undoubtedly they think that their heavenly Father is proud of them and their "Christian

success," their "religious career," and their eternal, unceasing business for the kingdom of God, never giving thought to the fact that they are not unlike the successful child who is so absorbed in his pursuit of position, fame, and prosperity that he never finds a moment to stop by and chat with dear old Dad who made it all possible.

There is no real power in noise. There is never any real power in noise. The prophets of Baal discovered this long ago on Mount Carmel! Many meetings today remind me of the scene on Mount Carmel as the saints shout and cry and dance about, commanding God and rebuking spirits with the noise and fervor of a pagan war dance. Strength is not in bluster and noise. The very need to make noise is proof of the absence of power! The louder we pray to God and the more vociferously we shout at demons the less likely it is that we will receive an answer or that any demon will pay any attention to our word. Strength is in quietness. The life of sonship is deep rather than demonstrative. "It is the brook and not the river that goes brawling," someone said. Jesus never sweat His garments wet while preaching, nor worked Himself into a lather when healing the sick, casting out devils, or raising the dead. If the authority is there the calmest command will evoke obedience. There is no need for the president of the United States to yell and scream and work himself into a frenzy in order to give a military general orders to initiate hostilities against an enemy. The quietest directive, even a mere whisper, will do!

Oh, for the culture of the secret place! It is in solitude that we catch the mystic notes from the depths of God within. It is deep down in the depths that the righteousness and power and glory of the kingdom of God are known. By going apart one gets the vision of eternal realities. How vast the soul becomes in the presence of the Infinite! I have learned by arduous experience that our Father usually speaks in whispers, the still, small voice of the Holiest of all, but we often cannot hear these whispers for the clamor of the street. We are called to heavenly places, far above the clamor of the world and the babble of religion. For after all our home is in the heights! Our real power is in communion and union. There is a music that no one can hear until the ears are anointed. The voice of truth is a very low sweet voice.

Amid all the religious ruckus of the hour, and all the fuss and trumpet blowing of those who run after the error of Balaam, fornicating with the flesh and the carnal mind, there is a little flock that has climbed the mount with Jesus. They care not for the flamboyant humbug of the gaudy harlot's house, but, having beheld the glories of the kingdom afar off, they are pressing through surging waves of humanity to come apart to receive instruction from the King of the kingdom. At His feet they hear the call to the heavenly mark and find a door opened for them to enter in and lay hold upon the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. These are they who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth! They lean hard upon Christ! The spirit of His sonship dwells within them! They are partakers of His mind! They have been given the knowledge of His will! They comprehend His plan and purpose in the earth, in His sons, and in the universe! They have laid aside every weight and the sin which does so easily beset them! They are running the race with patience! They esteem the hope that is set before them higher than all the pleasures of Egypt and the prestige of Babylon! They are patient in tribulation, knowing that through much tribulation we shall enter the kingdom. They continue instant in prayer to God, and He comforts them and upholds them with the right hand of His righteousness. To them the voice of the Father speaks in words of everlasting hope and assurance, "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Aren't you glad!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 45

THE CHURCH IN PERGAMOS [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART FORTY-FIVE

THE WHITE STONE THE NEW NAME

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna..." (Rev. 2:17)

The imagery employed in this beautiful passage is full of spiritual meaning, once we obtain the key to it. The phrase, the hidden manna, is an allusion to the ark of God which resided in the most holy place of the tabernacle of the Lord, which accompanied the children of Israel during all their wanderings in the wilderness, and which, as we are told in the book of Exodus, contained a golden pot of the manna by which they had been miraculously fed. While the manna collected daily, if kept over for a second day, corrupted, bred worms, and stank, that which they placed in the golden pot was preserved ever fresh by the power of the Shekinah glory which radiated the ark. But let us look beyond the letter of the word and hear it by the Spirit! The hidden manna reveals the truth of INCORRUPTIBILITY!

No spiritual person supposes, however, that the overcomers will one day go to heaven and eat literal manna from an actual golden bowl! But all who follow Christ into sonship to God shall eat and eat and eat of HIS INCORRUPTIBLE LIFE until all the death of the carnal mind and the corruption of the flesh has been swallowed up of His life and the day comes when, even in their bodies, this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality! Aren't you glad!

Under the old covenant they had an outward ark and in it they put the pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the stone tablets of the law given to Moses. But Christ in His new covenant puts His spiritual law of His divine nature, and the rod of His divine appointment by the Spirit, and the manna of His own incorruptible life, into the hearts of His called and chosen elect. They that ate of the manna in the wilderness died, but they that eat of the incorruptible life of Christ, the spiritual bread from heaven, are filled with divine and eternal life. The new covenant is not according to the old, with its outward rod, law, and manna, for all those outward things served only until the time of reformation or change, till the seed, the heavenly and spiritual man, came, in the power of God's Life and Light, who puts the heavenly law of Christ's mind and nature, and the heavenly rod of God's appointed priesthood, and the heavenly manna of incorruptible and immortal life into the sanctified hearts of God's sons. Christ abolishes all these outward things, of the old covenant and testament, and establishes the new in the lives of His called out people!

It is quite meaningful to see that the manna is in the ark. The ark represents Christ! It is not open manna, it is not manna on the ground, in the lowlands of the corruption of our earthiness, or of carnal man-made religion; it is not manna displayed — not something you will hear on TBN! It is manna in the secret place, in the secret depths of Christ in our spirit. It is not surface and shallow; it is not for the multitudes, not even the multitudes of God's people. This is that which goes beyond the veil, hidden in the ark of Christ. Hidden manna is from heaven, truth unfolded, enlightenment and quickening from the throne room of God! Can you not see the mystery?

Not only is the manna hidden in the golden pot, but this pot is hidden in the ark! **"For ye are dead, and your (new) life is hid with Christ in God." (Col. 3:3)** In the wilderness the children of Israel enjoyed the manna, but the manna they enjoyed was public manna; it was manna fallen to earth before the eyes of everyone, not manna hidden in the heavens of God's Spirit. The hidden manna is not the obvious manna that everyone else is eating, but that which is stored away in the blazing presence of God, in the ark of His covenant, in the most holy place of His glory and power. Most Christians eat of the ordinary manna, the letter of the word, the truths

of God on the level that is understandable by natural minds. They never get to the depth of truth that can only be received by the quickening of the Holy Spirit! Instead of merely believing the letter of the words of scripture, every son of God is being quickened to hear the heartbeat of the Father, to receive the words of God in and by the Spirit.

The hidden manna is Christ speaking words of spirit and life from the sanctuary of our innermost being! The showbread was exhibited on the table; it was shown forth and seen of men. But the incorruptible manna is hidden in the golden pot in the ark. Multitudes today eat of the showbread in the holy place! In gatherings, in meetings, in conventions, on radio and television, in books and magazines, they eat of that bread of life that is displayed, that all can see and hear, and be strengthened thereby. But it does not give the measure of life that the hidden manna gives! It is like the milk for babes, of which Paul wrote. The hidden manna is Christ is a deeper way, Christ in the most holy place, Christ in the inner chamber, Christ in the secret place of the Most High, Christ in the heavenlies of our spirit!

This is Christ according to the order of Melchizedek, after the power of an endless life, not according to the old order of Aaron. Aaron stands in the outer court offering sacrifices upon the altar, and in the holy place lighting the lamp of a beginning, feeble light of Christ, and burning the incense of prayer and praise. Melchizedek is on the throne of God in the higher than all heavens! We may experience Christ as our showbread in the holy place and all that we experience there is immediately known by many people. We may share it in church meetings, Bible study and prayer groups, conferences, perhaps even on radio or television. We may write of it in magazines, or in a book. Sometimes the news of our glorious experience spreads across the whole land! This is nothing but the experience of Christ as the open showbread!

The overcomers are those who press deeper into the secret place of the Most High in order to partake of the Christ in realms and measures that the world, even the church world, knows nothing of! Not to the whole church in Pergamos, but only to "him that overcometh," is the promise given of the hidden manna. The Lord Jesus ministered to men in power and great glory, but as a Son He enjoyed a relationship with, and a knowledge of, the Father that the multitudes, nor even His own closest disciples, knew nothing of. And so it is with every son of God! Isn't it wonderful!

The hidden manna brings incorruptible life! And as His divine life becomes our life, transforming us from the image of the earthly man into the image of the heavenly man, then the life of God shall flow out to the nations of the world through a true manifest sonship ministry until there has been brought into being a new heaven and a new earth. Aren't you glad! **"As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."** (I Cor. 15:49) This transformation comes from partaking of His life, eating His flesh and blood that is, eating the hidden manna! No more carnality! No more death! Not only for the sons, but all humanity! By the hidden manna the sons of God shall put death under their feet, destroying it finally, fully, and forever, as Jesus did eternally when He came and lived by the life of the Father. Not only do they win victory over death, but they now have the power of Life! Out of this temple of God shall flow a river of the water of Life to bless all creation. Even those believers who failed to attain to the status of an overcomer will be greatly blessed by those who did!

This is a supernatural manna — not the manna after the order of that which the children of Israel ate in the wilderness, for they ate and are dead. The manna in the wilderness gave the people life in a physical body, but this is a manna that will give you life in a spiritual body. **"I am the living bread,"** said Jesus, and **"this is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die."** (Jn. 6:50) As the children of Israel ate the manna every day, so we must eat the manna every day! "If any man eats and continues to eat of this bread, he shall live forever," is how it is in the Greek.

Behold, I show you a mystery! The body Jesus brought out of the tomb is the eternal body of Christ. The body that came out of the tomb was the only glorified human flesh that ever existed. Jesus was the only perfect man empowered to raise His flesh body up into the state of spiritualization — a spiritual body, truly a body, but not a natural body, for now "there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." (I Cor. 15:44) The spiritual body is His body! There will never be but one resurrection body for there will never be another man besides the last

Adam who is also the second man. There have only been two men — Adam and Christ. Just as our natural body came from Adam and is the very body of Adam, so must our spiritual body come from the Lord Jesus Christ and is the very body of Christ. His resurrection body, because it is the body of Christ, and for those who make up the completeness of the Christ body, enters into us making us truly **"bone of His bones, and flesh of His flesh."** (Eph. 5:30) That is the mystery!

When we speak of this great truth of being members of Christ's body, we are not referring to Adam's flesh body-members becoming members of Christ. Oh, no! It is not Adam's hands (our physical hands) or Adam's mouth or Adam's feet that are members of the Christ. That is how we think in the natural! Only flesh of His flesh and bone of His bones can be the members of Christ! Just as believers receive the spirit of the Son into their hearts in the power of the Holy Spirit, so does the overcomer receive that resurrected and glorified body of the Christ within, bone of His bones, and flesh of His flesh. As we continue to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, growing in His nature, life, power, and glory, we receive within ourselves in the invisible realm of the inner son, the new man, the new creation, the inward man, that same resurrection body of the Lord who ascended into the heavens and is now returning to appear in His many brethren, to be admired in all them that believe in this day.

Let us look a little deeper. Should you shed Adam's body, the natural body, the earth body, the corruptible body, this tabernacle in which we groan, that glorified body is there, raised up in the life of Christ within you, and you have a house built within you, which is out of heaven, out of Christ in the realm of the spirit, and that house IS THE LORD JESUS CHRIST — SPIRIT, SOUL, AND BODY. Can you not see the mystery? In Spanish there is a hospitable saying, when one comes to visit, "mi casa es su casa" — "my house is your house." That is what the Lord Jesus says to us today in respect to that body He brought out of the tomb in a state of glorification — "My house is your house!" This is our house from heaven, the building not made with hands, eternal in the realm of the spirit within ourselves! This is the body of immortality and incorruption the sons of God are to seek — to fully put on the Lord Jesus Christ as our house from heaven in the power of His resurrection! That is the mystery!

Is this not why the Lord said, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (Jn. 6:51). The living flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ is the hidden manna promised to the overcomer! The words of Jesus in this regard are very clear and wonderful, **"Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die."** (Jn. 6:49-50)

THE WHITE STONE

"To him that overcometh I will give a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." (Rev. 2:17)

All through the Bible, and in no part of it more than in this book of Revelation, runs the idea of a correspondence between a spiritual quality and the name of the person possessing it; the precious stone represents the quality, such as courage, patience, strength, or other quality which is most characteristic of some particular person, and the name written on it is that of the wearer. The "white" stone promised to the overcomer is not meant as a description of its appearance or color, but its nature. It stands for a flawless purity, the beauty of holiness. The white stone is the white of spiritual radiance!

White is everywhere the color of that which is righteous, spiritual, divine, and heavenly, and nowhere more remarkably so than in the book of Revelation! Of the mighty Christ of God we are told, "His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow." Then besides this white stone we have white raiment, white robes, a white cloud, fine linen clean and white, white horses, and a great white throne. When Jesus was transfigured on the holy mount before His disciples, the record states, **"His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light."** (Mat. 17:2) The white here was not the dull white like the paper these words are printed on, but glistening white — like the LIGHT! It is the character of intense white to be shining — like a diamond! It is

the brilliance of the radiance of the glory of the Lord! What a stone this is — white, like the light, glistening with the brilliance of God's glory! It speaks not of simple purity as much as it does of radiating glory that emanates out of divine nature!

When the Lord said that He would give a white stone to the overcomer He used the Greek word *psefos*. This particular word appears in the New Testament in only one other instance, namely, that of Acts 26:10, wherein Paul says, "Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice (*psefos*) against them." Paul stated, "I gave my voice against them." The word voice is *psefos*. The Emphatic Diaglott renders the word as vote. Paul gave his consenting "vote" to the death of the saints. This same word *psefos* was translated stone in Revelation 2:17!

Liddell and Scott's Greek Dictionary presents quite an array of evidence to show that stone, or pebble, referred to by the Greek word *psefos*, does not refer to just any stone or pebble one would pick up off the ground, but is in reality a balloting stone used by the ancients in casting their votes. Elections and other decisions of the people, as well as decisions of the judges, were expressed by the use of this particular kind of stone, or pebble — *psefos* Athenas. These stones were painted white to express a favorable vote, or black to express an unfavorable decision in the situation under consideration. The Greeks still use a method of voting like this. They have a tin box divided into two parts, one side painted white and the other side painted black. A hole permits the voter to insert his hand into the box and drop a little ballot made of lead, about the size of a pea, either into the white side of the box or into the black side.

There may also be an allusion here to conquerors in the public games, who were not only conducted, AND with great pomp into the city to which they belonged, but had a white stone given to them, with their name inscribed on it; which badge entitled them, during their whole life, to be maintained at public expense. Still other white stones had to do with instruments of hospitality, or friendship, or alliance. A stone could be inscribed and then broken so that the two parts, when fitted together, formed a sort of validation of the bearer. A white stone was given to a man who had been tried and acquitted. Then sometimes, the white stone was given to the man freed from slavery and made a citizen of the province. He carried the stone as evidence of his citizenship. Can we not see by all these uses of the white stone that the common denominator in each is the "rights" or "privileges" or "status" or "identity" of the one receiving it! In all these cases the white metaphor drawn by the white stone is a way of describing OUR PLACEMENT AS OVERCOMERS, INHERITORS, PARTAKERS OF THE HEAVENLY CALLING, SONS OF THE KINGDOM.

The ancient meaning of this Greek word used by the Spirit in the promise to the overcomer certainly gives a wonderful assurance to the overcomer! The Lord is saying that He will cast His vote in favor of those who faithfully fulfill all His will, who follow Him all the way, who overcome all things by the power of His life — declaring us sons indeed, imparting to us His power and glory, conferring on us life and immortality, and raising us up to sit with Him upon His throne! This is the adoption, the placement as sons! Can we not see that this is precisely what happened in the life of the firstborn Son when He came to the Jordan to be baptized of John? The Holy Spirit descended upon Him without measure and the voice came from heaven proclaiming, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!" The Father cast His vote, declared His Son, imparted His power, glory, and honor, conferred His incorruptible life and nature, and sent Him forth as the manifest Son of God! On that blessed day the Father gave His Son a white stone, and in that stone a new name was written which no one else knew saving He that received it! Oh, the wonder of it!

There is another application of the white stone worthy of our consideration. In the Old Testament times, there was a wonderful stone which was concealed in the breastplate of the high priest. (**Ex. 28:15-30**) This stone was called Urim and Thummim, meaning "Lights and Perfections." That does not mean there were two stones, only that there were two manifestations of God out of the one stone. Since the diamond, most precious of all stones, was not among those set in the breastplate itself, it could likely have been this stone which contained within itself, by the spirit and power of God, the Urim and the Thummim, which was concealed within, or beneath, the breastplate. The high priest alone knew what was engraved upon it, but the conjecture that it was the ineffable name of God is probably correct. Thus, the new name that the overcomer receives in the white

stone is the very name or nature of God Himself! It is a higher revelation of Him than has ever been communicated to others! It is, as the Lord says in **Revelation 3:12**, "My new name." It is the very nature of CHRIST!

The "Lights and Perfections" were divine manifestations of the Spirit by which the counsel and will of God was revealed to the high priest. The high priest would inquire of the Lord and God would answer him "by Urim and Thummin." God would speak out of the stone just as He spoke out of the burning bush and out of the cloud! Christ is our high priest of the new covenant! Isn't it wonderful that out of the "lights and perfections" of the nature of God within His called and chosen elect the voice of God is heard, the purpose of God is revealed, and the will of God is known! This shows that as God gives us the white stone of the Urim and Thummim within ourselves by the wisdom of the Spirit, in the power of His nature, and by the authority of Christ, we are able to see and hear as we have never seen or heard before! This is happening right now as the revelation of God is released in those who are overcoming, growing up into the fullness of Christ. We are now seeing all things as they really are, and all the old errors of the religious systems of man, and the false perceptions of carnal understanding, are being removed out of our thinking and experience. Isn't it wonderful!

Our Father is a very effective teacher and He teaches by the illumination of His word within the inner recesses of our being. He teaches through the ministry of the body of Christ from member to member in the flow of His life. He teaches through experience, and many times He teaches through parabolic experiences. We have an example of His teaching by a parabolic experience in the book of Jeremiah, where the Lord spoke to the prophet saying, "I want you to go and buy a fine linen girdle and I want you to put it on." Then the word of the Lord came to him saying, "Now, take the girdle, go to the river Euphrates and hide it there in a hole in the rock." It was four hundred miles to the Euphrates! So the prophet went to the Euphrates and buried the girdle in a hole in the rock by the river, as the Lord commanded. He then made the long trek back over four hundred long, hot, dusty, rocky, treacherous miles!

Some days later the word of the Lord came to the prophet again, saying, "Now, Jeremiah, go back to the Euphrates and dig up the girdle!" So he made the journey back over four hundred miles, dug up the girdle, and brought it home. In the meantime, the girdle had become marred, it had mildewed and decayed, it had rotted in that damp little hole in the rock by the river and the word of the Lord to him was this, "As this girdle has been marred, so will I mar the beauty of Judah and Jerusalem!" What a way to receive a word from the Lord! Don't you think that God could just have shown Jeremiah the girdle in a dream? Don't you think God could have given him a vision that would have encompassed everything that happened without walking 1,600 miles just to get a one sentence message from the Lord? But you see, that was a parabolic experience. It was the word of God in the form of a parable that was experienced by the man of God. He received the revelation God spoke to him out of the experience, rather than by a word out of the heavens! And how terribly effective it was!

Several years ago the Lord spoke to me in a parabolic experience. Beginning some thirty years ago, I developed a vision problem. I could read the finest print close-up, but things in the distance were blurred. Sometimes I could not tell whether a person half way across the super market was a man or a woman. At times, at night, I had trouble reading the large signs over the freeway. Many of those reading these lines know that in 1995 I had a major surgery. The neurosurgeon went in through the roof of my mouth to cut away a bone that was compressing my spinal cord at the base of the brain stem. When I came out of that surgery my eyesight was about eighty percent better! I questioned my neurosurgeon about this, and also asked an optometrist about it. They both said that they knew of absolutely nothing related to my surgery that could in any way affect my eyesight. God had done a strange and wonderful work and it improved my vision. But it wasn't whole yet.

A few years later I was riding with my son-in-law, coming home from Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico. Just at dusk in the evening a deer presented itself in the road. Neither of us saw it, but we hit that deer at seventy miles per hour. The only injury I received was from the air bag which struck me in the eye at 200 miles per hour! Immediately, in my right eye, which was the weak eye, I could not see anything — just a blur. I wound up in the emergency room here in El Paso where they examined me and told me that what I had was severe corneal abrasion. In time it would heal. Through a process over weeks and months, when the healing was

complete, I had perfect vision! I told my family and the brethren, "I guess the Lord knew I needed a corneal adjustment — so He set it up!" God is an expert at setting things up! Isn't it wonderful!

Following this, one day the word of the Lord came to me out of my parabolic experience and the word was this: "Just as I have sovereignly adjusted your physical vision, so am I adjusting the spiritual vision of my elect!" Ah, yes, God is correcting our vision! God is enhancing our vision! The Lord is bringing us to the place of His divine perspective to see as God sees, to understand as God understands, to know as God knows! He is bringing forth in our lives a Divine Perspective to see all things according to the mind of Christ and according to the heart of the Father! When we truly see with the eyes of God, by the spirit of wisdom and revelation, that, my beloved, is the spiritual reality within ourselves of the URIM AND THE THUMMIM! Only the overcomer can receive this measure of the wisdom and knowledge of the Lord!

The white stone carries us back all the way to the mists of the lovely Garden of Eden. The scripture tells us that the Pishon river, originating in Eden, flowed "around the whole land of havilah, where there is gold. And the gold of that land is good; the bdellium and the onyx stone are there." (**Gen. 2:11-12**) The Garden of Eden is a type of the kingdom of heaven on earth, ruled by sons of God in the image of God, and here the Holy Spirit connects the Garden of Eden with precious stones, symbolizing rich, beautiful, and wonderful spiritual realities of the kingdom realm of God.

In another place the Holy Spirit testifies of the precious stones in the land of Eden, when He speaks to the fallen Adam, saying, "You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the ruby, the topaz, and the diamond; the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper; the lapis lazuli, the turquoise, and the emerald; and the gold..." (**Eze. 28:13**) The symbolical picture given here is of a land fairly littered with sparkling gems of all sorts, as we read in the next verse, "You walked in the midst of the stones of fire" — that is, in the midst of the blinding brilliance of precious gems! Adam walked in a state of God's abundance! Fellowship with God in Eden meant living in the atmosphere of spiritual wealth, glory, and beauty! All the riches of God's mind, nature, wisdom, and power scintillated in Adam's spirit!

In our text in the book of Revelation the white stone is mentioned in connection with the hidden manna. Both are given together to the overcomer! In itself, manna was a reminder of Eden: for even while God's people were in the wilderness on their way to the promised land of abundance and fullness, the Lord rained down manna from heaven and their food was plentiful, delicious, and easy to obtain — as, of course, it had been in the Garden. But, there is a deeper truth yet! Just in case any might fail to get the connection, the Holy Spirit recorded that the manna was the color of bdellium (**Num. 11:7**) — the only occurrence of that word apart from its original mention in the book of Genesis! And this plainly tells us the color of bdellium, since we are told elsewhere (**Ex. 16:31**) that manna was white! Both manna and bdellium were white! "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone." The overcomer is given immortal life, but he no longer contains that life in an earthen vessel with a carnal nature, as we have all experienced up till now. Oh, no! For the overcomer is also given, along with the immortal life of the hidden manna, flawless purity, even the beauty of holiness, by the scintillating radiance of the divine and heavenly nature. That, my beloved, is the full return to Eden. Oh, the mystery of it!

To whom is the white stone with the new name given? To him that overcomes! When is it given? When he overcomes! Does God then not know what a believer is going to become? Is He waiting to see what we shall become before He entrusts us with hidden manna, a white stone, and a new name? As surely as He sees the mighty oak which He put there lying in the heart of the acorn, so does He see the manifest sons of God lying within the seed of Christ! Why then does He wait until the man has become by overcoming before He settles what his name (nature) shall be? He does not wait — He knows from the beginning. But it is only when the new nature of Christ has grown up, become victorious, and solidified within him as stone that the new name has truly become within. When the man has become his name or nature that God ordains for him, then he understands what the name signifies and it has become as solid and enduring as stone within him!

In the 17th century, scientists came to understand gems as "rare and noble productions of nature." They are distilled from duller rocks by processes that often involve the play of fierce heat and pressure deep within the

earth's crust. And they derive their loveliness from a variety of prosaic sources. For example, precious ruby and the common abrasive emery consist of the same basic mineral, corundum; the difference between them is accounted for by the presence of minute traces of other substances. Diamond is chemically identical to graphite; only a different crystalline structure gives diamond the hardness, clarity, and flash for which it is so highly esteemed.

As diamonds and other precious stones pass through long seasons of intense heat and cold and pressure in nature's laboratory before they reach their perfection of beauty, so must every member of God's elect pass through pain and suffering before we can be perfected. And though chemists can make diamonds and other precious stones artificially, yet when we apply careful tests to them we see their defects. That's why a zircon, though it superficially resembles a diamond, has very little value when compared with a genuine diamond! So we cannot reach in a single day, or without the heat and cold and pressure, such perfection that we will have no defects in us, but by continually living in the presence of our Father, and subject to the deep dealings of God in our lives through the crucible of experience, we will become perfect even as He is perfect!

Let us, therefore, meditate upon the precious stones of earth and see by the Spirit the analogy that the Lord draws between them and His elect people who become His crown of authority, His diadem. Let us notice some common characteristics of precious stones and see how beautifully they illustrate the spiritual characteristics inworked in the lives of God's sons. Jewels are rare, precious, pure, brilliant, beautiful, and valuable!

First, jewels are rare. Think about it — if you went out in search of precious stones how long and painstakingly must you search before one is found? The majority of stones are common and therefore of very little value. Lorain and I enjoy hiking and camping in the mountains of the southwest, and it is impressive to explore the high and numberless mountains of solid stone. And yet, it is awesome to think that the stone revealed through upturned mountains is slight in comparison to the vast quantity of stone buried deep beneath the surface! Our son, Andy, was for many years a rock hound. He could tell you that the occasional precious piece is rare indeed! And is this not an appropriate illustration of the rarity of finding a mature son of God among the hundreds of millions of professed believers in the world? Rare indeed is a saint who has seen the vision of God's truth and is yielding himself to the dealings of the Father to be a son indeed! No wonder Jesus said to His small group of footstep followers, "Fear not, little flock; it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

Then, too, jewels are precious. One could actually hold in his hands precious gems which would be worth more than half a billion dollars! Some jewels, because of their history, are virtually priceless. To illustrate the immense value of gems think of the Empire State Building in New York City. Thousands of skilled artisans worked for many, many months erecting this architectural masterpiece towering over one hundred stories high. Incomprehensible amounts of steel, concrete, wood and other materials were gathered from many quarters to go into its construction. At last this gleaming masterpiece was completed, a monument to man's ingenuity, at a cost of some twenty-eight million dollars. Yet — just one small handful of gems could be worth many, many times the value of this marvelously imposing structure! Of such value are God's elect in His eyes! For you see, the powers and processes that go into making a priceless gem exceed by millions of times the work and powers that were involved in the construction of the Empire State Building. This speaks to us of the great value of the dealings, pressures, tribulations, processings, quickenings, blessings, and workings of God in the lives of His called and chosen people! Is this not what Paul meant when he wrote, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us!" (Rom. 8:18). Those radiating His glory, as the result of all His deep and powerful processings, are His precious ones! That is why the trial of our faith is declared to be more precious than fine gold!

The best jewels are pure. Geologists tell us that precious stones were once part of the surrounding elements in which they are found. Through the ages earth movement, pressure, and heat began a separating work, and finally that which was once mixed and impure became crystal, free from alloy, and that which was commonplace became a jewel! How often does the call of a son parallel this process! The intense heat and pressure of our trials and tribulations, and Father's crushings and provings, separate out of our lives the flinty disposition of self-will and the clay of carnality and instability. We know that the diamond was once carbon,

black and soft in comparison to the clarity and hardness of the final product. In the depths of the earth, lumps of carbon are subjected to intense heat and terrific pressure, and a miracle is performed! That which was black becomes crystalline clear, and the hardest substance known to man. What a lesson! Truly the power of God can take that which is weak and black and worthless and transform it into the very image and likeness of God! Oh, the wonder of it!

All of nature in the material creation, as designed by the wisdom of our heavenly Father, is a precise natural picture of the spiritual workings of God in His new creation. Every one of God's jewels, His company of sons, is to become pure in the kingdom of the Father! The very first call of the one apprehended to sonship is to separate himself from the contaminating elements of the world in which he is found! "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and my daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (II Cor. 6:17-18)

Jewels are brilliant. How often the clear sparkle of a gem set in a ring or as an ornament of adornment catches our eye. We are fascinated by the delightful way facets reflect in varying hues the rays of light that fall upon them! The various hues represent different aspects of the divine nature such as love, goodness, grace, peace, faith, strength, wisdom, and power. All these are contained in the white light which He is! We are called to radiate the multi-faceted glory of God! Paul speaks of the "manifold wisdom" of God. Manifold means "many-splendored" or "many-faceted." Every part of God's glory is many-faceted, meaning that all are revealed in the lives of God's chosen people just as light is reflected by a diamond. This can be done only by a people processed as a priceless gem! Common stones radiate nothing of His many-faceted glory! Only to a processed, pure, gem-like, people is the word of the Lord sent, declaring, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee... His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." (Isa. 60:1-3)

Jewels are also beautiful! The clear, icy sparkle of the diamond, the warm glowing red of the ruby, the cool green of the emerald, the regal purple of the amethyst, the heavenly blue of the sapphire, the warm glow of pearls, each strikingly different from other gems, yet all reflecting the light in glorious hues, none detracting from the other, but all enhancing the beauty of the whole. So are the sons of God! Our Father is clothing us with the beauty of holiness, which is the emanation of the glory of His light of life!

Our Lord's parable of the prodigal son is the portrait of the life of every son of God. The preachers generally apply the story of the prodigal son to sinful humanity who have left Father's house for the far country of sin and shame, and I have taught it that way myself. While there may be an application on that level, it is my conviction that the true interpretation of the parable is found on a much higher plane than that. You see, my beloved, there are three separate parables about lost objects in the fifteenth chapter of Luke! The first is about a lost sheep. The sheep became lost because it wandered away from the shepherd. Jesus said that He was Himself the good shepherd who would give His life for the sheep! The story of the lost sheep illustrates the condition of all mankind, lowered into this gross material realm, who have then become lost in their own consciousness from the presence of the Lord who Himself led them here. That is the true parable of lost men!

The second parable is different. There are many truths in this story of which there is neither time nor space to mention in this writing. Briefly, it speaks of a woman having ten pieces of silver, and she lost one piece. She then lit a candle, swept the house, and sought in and under everything until she found it! The woman is the church! Many of the wonderful gifts and blessings and revelations given to the church in the early days, and through various revivals and movings of the spirit of God through the centuries, in turn became lost as men were not careful to continue to walk in the Spirit of God. The fact that the woman lit a candle reveals that spiritual darkness descended upon the church and in that darkness there was a loss of something valuable that was hers through redemption; for silver is a type of redemption.

The third parable is about a Father and his sons! Can you not see the mystery? There is progression in these stories, for the first is about lost men (sheep), the second is about lost blessings and benefits of redemption, and the third is about lost sons! Not lost sinners, mind you, but lost sons! How true it is that those whom the

Father appointed to sonship at some point received of the Father that portion of our inheritance which pertained to us at that time. Just as the prodigal son asked his Father for that portion of his inheritance which belonged to him, so each of us sought God for His Spirit, for His gifts, for His blessings, for His word, for His anointing, for His ministry, for His life, for His power, for signs, wonders, and miracles, and much, much more! Did we not ask for these things? Did we not seek for a double portion, for His fullness, for all He would give us? And He poured His power out upon us!

Immediately we left the Father's house (submission to God alone) and went into the far country of the religious systems. Just as the prodigal did, we squandered our inheritance and devoured our Father's living with the religious harlots of man-made church systems. We used Father's inheritance to build up the systems of men, to promote the doctrines of men, to enjoy ourselves rather than doing Father's will, to gather men to ourselves, to make a name for ourselves, and to do every carnal-minded, man-centered, flesh-oriented religious work in the name of the Lord! The glory of God was dissipated into the fleshly programs and activities of spiritual riotous living! Thank God, at long last, in the pig-pen of spiritual depravity, eating the theological swine's food of a corrupt church system, we came to ourselves. It was then that a mighty revelation broke within our consciousness! "I will arise and go to my Father!" In brokenness and repentance we arose and returned to Father's house and threw ourselves upon His mercy!

And now, thank God! He has fallen upon our neck, He has kissed us with the kiss of acceptance, He has killed the fatted calf of the meat of the word, He has put on our feet the shoes of a pure walk in the Spirit of God, He has clothed us with the robe of true righteousness, He has placed the signet ring of His own authority upon our finger, and, miracle of miracles, in coming home we have discovered a restored inheritance! Ah, we had squandered our inheritance, but now, out of the riches of Himself, all that was squandered is ours again, and much more beside, as though we had never left home! Isn't it wonderful!

The elder brother, who represents another side of our sonship, complained because all this favor was lavished upon one who had sinned so greatly and sunk so low. Then it is that the Father makes the most remarkable statement of the whole parable! He says, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." But is it not also true that "all that the Father has" is the younger brother's? The shoes, the robe, the ring, all testify to a restored inheritance! This brings a change in perception. Before, the son had said, "Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me." That was because he was the younger son — he lacked maturity. That was the perception of limitation. And, before we went away into the far country, all that we had received was "by measure." One had a "gift" of this, and another had a "gift" of that, but now the Father proclaims, "ALL that is mine, is yours!" Today the Father is revealing to His sons that we are joint-heirs with Christ; we do not each receive a portion, but we all possess the whole! "All that the Father has is ours!" That is the word of the Father to His sons. God is bringing us out of our consciousness of limitation, into the fullness of sonship! All the Father has belongs to the elder son, and all that the Father has belongs to the younger son. The one who stayed with the Father in unswerving obedience gets it all, and the one who went away and squandered his substance in riotous living gets it all! We are joint-heirs! Oh, the wonder of it! And that is the mystery of the prodigal son.

Jesus constantly affirms that all the glory that belongs to the Father belongs to the Son too. "And now, O Father, glorify Thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." All the Father does, the Son does too. All the Father speaks, the Son speaks too. There is no separation between the Father and the Son! "The Father and I are one." "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father." There is no division of work! "The Father loves the Son and has committed all things into His hands." There is no competition! "I have made known to you everything I have learned from my Father." There is perfect unity between the Father and Son! "The Son can do nothing of Himself, He can do only what He sees the Father doing." And this is all true of the joint-heirs! What a destiny belongs to the sons of God!

I once heard the story of a poor and illiterate widow woman who lived far out in the country. She had only one son who was grown and had gone away to a far away city. There her son went into business and made good. Back home, this poor woman barely eked out a subsistence, planting a meager garden and taking in washing from her neighbors, scrubbing the clothes by hand on an old rub-board. The house she lived in continued to deteriorate; windows broken, roof leaking, steps falling down. Her clothes were faded and patched, her diet

improper and monotonous. Each month the poor woman received an envelope in the mail from her son. These envelopes always contained pretty little pieces of colored paper. Being unable to read and understand what these little pieces of paper said, she always pasted them up on the wall of her bedroom to remind her of her son. After some years she died, and when the neighbors came into her house at that time they discovered this large number of money orders made out to her by her son — all glued neatly to her bedroom wall! If only she had known what was hers she would have lacked nothing through all those years!

How we need to know what is ours as the sons of our Father! In Romans, chapter eight, Paul says, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely GIVE US ALL THINGS? The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: and if children, then HEIRS; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also GLORIFIED TOGETHER."

Oh, to be able to grasp the greatness of our calling! We have been born again of the very life of God! When we have matured and God has brought us experientially to the full potential of His life in us, there will be nothing impossible to us. We will even have creative powers. We will be creators! Can your faith go this far? If we are born of God we are born of the life of the Creator. This is the sonship life that Jesus lived and demonstrated! Twice out of a few rolls of bread and a couple fish, He created enough food to feed five thousand people, and He said we would do the same works He did, and even greater! I want to know the life of this God! I want to know experientially the power He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead. I want to know and experience all His holiness, love, power, and goodness. To this end I seek to completely surrender to Him and I am asking Him for grace to be able to do this.

THE NEW NAME

"To him that overcometh will I give a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." (Rev. 2:17)

A new name in its spiritual meaning indicates a new nature. All spiritual people understand this great principle and I think we are now beginning to see into the heart of this great conception. Our earthly life is a divinely ordained process in which there is a great end to be gained, something to be vanquished, and a spiritual goal to be striven for and won. The prize of attainment is beyond the power of human wisdom to describe, yet it is more positive and real than any possession that is merely of this world. We cannot know in the fullest sense of the word what it is until it fully becomes ours, and then nothing can rob us of it in time or eternity; it is the open secret of all existence; it is to become like our Lord!

This new name is one which "no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it." Oh, the mystery of it! That is to say that each overcomer has his unique, peculiar, distinctive relationship to God. He is to God a peculiar being, made after His own fashion, and that of no one else. For when he is perfected he shall receive the new name that no one else can understand!

Let me illustrate. In the world today we have more than six billion people. Every one of those people is an extension, projection, and reproduction as human beings of the first man, Adam. In other words, we are all human beings so far as our natural existence upon this earth. We are known as "men" or "humanity." And we are simply reproductions of that first man! We speak of ourselves as individuals. Someone says, "I am an individual." By that he means that he is separate from everyone else. We think, "I'm not like other people. I'm me. I'm something different. I'm special. I'm unique. I'm an individual." The English word "individual," however, comes from the Latin word *individuus* meaning indivisible or not divisible. It's not that which is separate — it's that which cannot be separated! It means that if I am an individual I am not separate from the rest of humanity. I am simply a unique expression of everything humanity is! It's not separation from; it's identification with! In like manner every one of us, on the spiritual plane, is an individual — a unique expression of the word, of the spirit, of the mind, of the substance, of the totality of the being of our heavenly Father!

We all have fingerprints. It's interesting that not two fingerprints in the whole world are identical. You can't tell that by just casually looking at them. There are six billion people in the world — sixty billion fingerprints — and no two of them are alike! Yet every one of them is so similar. A fingerprint is a fingerprint. Yet each one is a unique expression of what a fingerprint is. A fingerprint represents an identity. In the case of a crime, often just a fingerprint is enough to convict a person of the crime. Each one reveals a unique identity. In other words, it's the same thing manifested in a different way! That's all any of us are in the natural, outer, physical body. We are each a unique expression of the totality of all that Adam is! We're not each a fragment of Adam, but a unique expression of HIMSELF! Spiritually, each son of God is a unique expression of the substance and glory of our heavenly Father. We're not individual sons in any kind of separation! We're just a unique expression of everything He is!

Another picture of this is the human body. Each of us began our physical existence as a single cell — one little microscopic, invisible cell. That cell divided and became two cells. The two divided and became four cells. By the time you reach the stage of an adult, they tell us we have approximately sixty trillion cells in our body! Now those cells take different forms. There are cells of our hair. There are cells of our skin. There are cells of our eyes. There are cells of our blood. There are cells of our internal organs — every part of our body is made up of these cells. Yet, all sixty trillion of these cells came from that one original cell! And the fact is that within each one of those sixty trillion cells is the DNA to reproduce a carbon copy of everything you are.

In past months and years we have seen sheep and cats and other animals that were cloned. That cute little kitten I once saw that was a clone was made from just one cell of the cat it was derived from. I don't know how many cells a cat has. But however many cells a cat has, that is, theoretically, how many kittens could be reproduced out of the one cat! Can you see the mystery? Each cell does not contain a fragment of the person — within the cell is the totality of the person! Each of us is like sixty trillion complete human beings just like ourselves! What this means is that there are sixty trillion ways of saying the same thing!

A brother told me once that he asked the Lord, "What am I in the body of Christ?" And he said the Lord responded, "You are a flake of dandruff — and you irritate!" Well, if he was a mere flake of dandruff, there were thousands of carbon copies of himself within that flake of dandruff! Isn't that a wonder? We think of individual members of the body of Christ as fragments of the Christ. Not so! Someone says, "I'm nobody. I'm just a wee little insignificant member of the body of Christ." And yet within you is the potential to reproduce the fullness of what Christ is! Manifest sons of God will not be a corporate company or collection of fragments of Christ as many have imagined. Each manifest son of God will be the full reproduction of THE SON in all the plenitude of His mind, nature, glory, and power — in a unique expression of that sonship fullness! We are not a part of the whole — we are each the whole stated a different way. Isn't it wonderful!

It means just this. You can worship God as no other man or woman can worship God! You can see God like no other man or woman can see God! You can understand God in a way no other man or woman can understand God! You can experience God as no other man or woman can experience God! You can know God like no other man or woman can know God! And above all — you can express God in a way none other can express Him! That does not mean that other of God's elect can know or express God more than you, or less than you, or better than you — but none other can know and express God as you!

With every man God has a secret — the secret of the new name. In every man there is a loneliness, an inner chamber of the unique reality of life into which only God can enter. And there is likewise a sanctuary in God Himself which none can enter but the one, out of which sanctuary that man brings revelation and life and light and love for creation. That is that for which he was made — to reveal the secret things of the Father.

No one knows what the white stone contains except the one who receives it. God calls out His elect for Himself. Each is a unique expression of His fullness. There need be no anxiety about whether we are like any of our brethren — it is enough that God has made us what He wants us to be. Is that not enough? Yet each of us will manifest Him fully, in a different way! Aren't you glad! However small or insignificant we may appear in our own eyes or to others, as long as we are overcoming in that place Father has assigned us, and are growing up into Christ in our inner son, we are receiving of that new name which no man knows but we

ourselves. We feel the sacredness and awe of our brother's holy and secret walk with the Father. Yet we are one with him in the mystery of it.

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 46

THE CHURCH IN THYATIRA [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART FORTY-SIX

JEZEBEL YOUR WOMAN JEZEBEL

"And by the angel of the church in Thyatira write..." (Rev. 2:18)

The church in Thyatira has a longer message delivered to it from Jesus Christ than any of the seven churches, although it is interesting to note that the church there is the smallest of the seven, and the city of Thyatira is the smallest of the seven cities. Thyatira was a small city, but it was the gateway into the larger metropolis of Pergamos, the capital of Asia. Thyatira was located on a trade route that led right in to Pergamos. Much of the traffic that came into Pergamos from that direction had to pass through Thyatira. Thus Thyatira was a city people went through, not to. El Paso is such a city today; not very many people come to El Paso, but millions of people pass through the city on their way to Houston, Dallas, Los Angeles, Mexico, or other points of importance.

Thyatira means "sweet perfume of sacrifice" and when you study this word it speaks of a perfume that sends forth its fragrance as the result of bruising, crushing, or breaking. As we study the message to the church in Thyatira we see that the primary emphasis is upon the Jezebel spirit in that church and the "great tribulation" into which the Lord will cast her in order to judge, break, and purify her. By this we can understand the great purpose of tribulation or pressure — to cause the bruising by which the flesh is weakened and the fragrance of the Lord is sent forth out of our lives!

Most of the ingredients in the holy anointing oil with which the priesthood of Israel was anointed were made fragrant through the process of bruising and crushing. Once the spices were gathered, only as they were pierced and crushed did their fragrance go forth. It is not easy to yield to the crushing and bruising! This truly is as bitter as myrrh, though it yields fragrance in the peaceable fruit of righteousness. The elect of God have been passing through a time of purification; we have been being beaten and pressed. But it is needful for us, for there is no other route to the anointing of sonship! How we need the pressures, the trials, and the testings! Oh, we must have the dealing hand of God!

Under pressure and bruising we turn to the Lord in a deeper, more intense way, and the Spirit moves mightily on our behalf to guide, comfort, encourage, teach, chasten, correct, counsel, instruct, develop, strengthen, and perfect. In all this the Spirit operates and we are enlightened; we learn the necessary lessons of the ways and purposes of the Lord. Under this enlightening, we receive the ability to express something which issues out of Christ as the sweet incense unto God. There comes the expression of His grace, holiness, glory, and power in our walk. Then not only are we blessed, but the heart of the Father is satisfied, and creation will be touched by the fragrance of His life. THIS IS SONSHIP ANOINTING! It is not an emotional experience received at an altar; it is the power of the Father's nature revealed through a transformed life!

There is a great and magnificent future ahead for the sons of God, and a great work our Father has for us to do in the age and the ages to come, and He is preparing us and making us ready for the high and holy place He has for us. Can we not see that all the opposing, crushing, breaking, and trying experiences we go through are working together for our good — to develop the strength, character, wisdom, and power we must possess as sons of God? Through the valley of death into the realm of life and victory is God's way to sonship, and the secret to "glorying in tribulation" is to understand the great purpose of trial and the glorious end of tribulation. Through much tribulation we enter the kingdom of God! Beautiful anointing! The time will come when the sweet fragrance of Christ will be everywhere in the reconciled universe. Nothing of self left, no stench of flesh, no

blight of sin, no pain of death. Everyone and everything in the universe of bliss will come under the anointing of His life. What pleasure for God! What peace and love and unity throughout the whole vast scene pervaded by the perfume of the holy anointing!

Are we willing to go through the piercing and crushing process in order to gather a precious cargo of heavenly fragrance and incense? Are our hearts crying out for a deeper revelation of the Son of God, and for it to be operative in our lives? Do not look for the answer in the outpouring of blessings and miracles and prosperity most believers seek, but at the foot of the cross, outside the camp. Look for heaven's perfumes in a wilderness place that no one sees nor understands, excepting Jesus who gathered the first cargo of spices to the glory of the Father. This is the revelation of the church in Thyatira!

JEZEBEL

"These things saith the Son of God, who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His feet are like fine brass; I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols." (Rev. 2:18-20)

There is one name in the Bible that no parents would think to give to their daughter, and that name is Jezebel. The name Jezebel sweeps across the pages of the Bible. The typical Jezebel of the Old Testament was the daughter of Ethbaal, king of Tyre and Sidon. The name Ethbaal means "with Baal." Prior to becoming king, Ethbaal was a priest to the goddess Astarte, also known as Ashtoreth or Ishtar. This was the goddess of sensual love and sex. From her childhood Jezebel was steeped in false religion and government. Jezebel grew up in an atmosphere of position, power, and prestige. She drank deeply of all the arts of political cunning and intrigue.

The name Jezebel means "Baal exulted," and also indicates one who is "unchaste and unhusbanded." In other words it denotes one who is lewd, sexually impure, and defiled. Jezebel's name not only reveals her character, but is also a prophecy of her life! She was so infamous for her wicked wantonness, immorality, and treachery, that lewd women down through the centuries have been dubbed "Jezebel". These women always display the spirit of Jezebel!

Jezebel married Ahab, the king of Israel. As queen of Israel, she immediately set up the altars, shrines, and temples of her false gods, and began to require the people of Israel to worship these gods. The Bible tells us that she also practiced witchcraft and that at one time Jezebel had four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and four hundred prophets of the grove who "ate at her table" (I Kings 18:19), which undoubtedly means that she supported and influenced every one of these false prophets. Baal was the god of agriculture. Baal represents the god of plenty and increase. The goddess of the grove was Astarte, the goddess of all sensual love and sex. Temple prostitutes, sexual orgies, and all manner of uncleanness were part of the ritual of her worship.

Jezebel used her seductive and manipulative ways to control King Ahab. Ahab became a puppet in the hands of Jezebel, as do all those who refuse to deal with the spirit of Jezebel. Ahab followed her every whim to keep peace in his kingdom. It is written of him, "And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him." (I Kings 16:32-33)

The great prophet Elijah came on the scene during the reign of Ahab and Jezebel. Elijah's first recorded act as the prophet of Yahweh was to inform King Ahab that it would not rain until he (Elijah) said so. After this pronouncement Elijah fled, for he knew queen Jezebel would seek to take his life. Everywhere the brooks ceased to flow, the springs became dry, the ground was parched, and the fields gave no harvest. There was no grass for the cattle and the flocks, and there was scarcely any food for the people. After three and a half years of this terrible drought, Elijah returned at the word of the Lord. Elijah met with King Ahab and told him to gather the people of Israel unto mount Carmel. We all know the story of what followed!

Ahab did as Elijah commanded and brought all the people to Mount Carmel, which stands by the Mediterranean Sea. And Elijah stood before all the multitude, and he said to them, "How long will you go halting and vacillating back and forth between two sides, not choosing either? If Yahwey is God, follow Him; but if Baal is God, then follow him." And the people had not a word to say. Then Elijah spoke again and said, "I am alone, the only prophet of Yahweh here today; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Now, let the people give us two young oxen, one for Baal's prophets, and one for me. Let the prophets of Baal take one young ox and cut it up and lay it on the altar on the wood. But let no fire be placed under it. And I will do the same; then you call on your god, and I will call on Yahweh. And the God who sends down fire upon His altar, He shall be the God of Israel."

The people answered and said, "What you have spoken is right. We will do as you say and we will see who is the true God." Then the two oxen were brought, and one was cut up in pieces and laid on the altar of Baal. The prophets of Baal stood around the altar and cried aloud, "O Baal, hear us!" But there was no answer, nor any voice. After a time the worshippers of Baal became desperate. They leaped and danced around the altar, and they cut themselves with swords and lances, until the blood gushed out upon them. And Elijah laughed at them, and mocked them, calling out, "Cry louder, for surely he is a god! Perhaps he is sitting still and meditating, or he has gone on a journey; or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened!"

But it was all in vain! The middle of the afternoon came, and there was no answer. The altar stood with its offering, but no fire came upon it. Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." And they came near. He found an old altar to Yahweh that had been thrown down, and he took twelve stones, one for each of the twelve tribes, and piled them up to form the altar anew. Around the altar he dug a trench. Then he cut wood and laid it on the altar, and on the wood he placed the young ox, cut into pieces as a sacrifice. Then he said, "Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the offering." He called them to do it again, and a third time, until the offering and the wood and the altar were soaked through and through, and the trench was filled with water.

Then in the sight of all the people Elijah drew near and stood all alone before the altar, and prayed in these words, "O Yahweh, The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel, and that I am Thy servant, and that I have done all these things at Thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me; that this people may know that Thou, Yahweh, art God, and that Thou hast turned their hearts back again to Thyself." Then the fire fell from the Lord and burned up the offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when the people saw it, they fell on their faces, and they cried, "Yahweh, He is God! Yahweh, He is God!" And Elijah said to the people, "Seize the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape!"

They took them all, four hundred and fifty men; and by Elijah's command, they brought them down to the dry bed of the brook Kishon, at the foot of the mountain; and there Elijah had them put to death, because they had led Israel into sin. Then Elijah prayed with his face between his knees, for the Lord to send rain. In a little while the sky was covered with black clouds, and there came a great rain! Thus in one day a great victory was won for the Lord God, and the power of Baal was thrown down. But Jezebel was not through!

Eventually King Ahab was killed in a battle at Remoth-Gilead by the Syrians. For the next fourteen years Ahab's sons reigned successively upon the throne and Jezebel ruled Israel through her sons, just as she did through Ahab. Then God raised up a new king by the name of Jehu, whom the prophet Elisha anointed king of Israel. The Lord raised up the spiritual power and authority in Jehu to deal with the false spirit of Jezebel! Jehu brought judgment on the whole house of Ahab and at last went after Jezebel herself. When he found her he threw her down from her upstairs window, and the horses trod her underfoot. We will refer to more of the details of her overthrow in our next Study, but her blood ran in the street and the dogs came and ate her flesh and licked up her blood. She was so mangled they found nothing left but the skull, the feet, and the palms of her hands. Jehu destroyed Jezebel as God commanded him!

Thyatira is the fourth church, and in her we see the rise of the woman Jezebel. No such lady of that name is known except the wicked wife of Ahab, Israel's worst king. In the church at Thyatira we find that the spirit of

Jezebel was alive and at work in the midst of the Lord's people! Some of the believers in the church in Thyatira were in the Jezebel condition!

A brother related, and I, too, remember in the days of my childhood, in the Pentecostal churches in south Alabama where I was raised, all it took for the Holy Ghost to speak was for a woman to come in with bobbed hair and with make-up and jewelry on, and it was automatic — the Holy Ghost was going to speak! "Yea, thus saith the Lord, There is one in the midst that has a Jezebel spirit!" Everybody would get all shook up because Jezebel was there. They would spend the whole night trying to get Jezebel in the altar, to get her saved and delivered from the "Jezebel spirit." But the Jezebel spirit was not a spirit of lipstick, rings, bracelets, and smart clothes — the Jezebel spirit was a religious spirit, a controlling and manipulative spirit that would not let God have His way.

The reign of the house of Ahab is typical of the reign of the flesh through carnal men all through the history of Israel and the church. Jezebel is typical of that internal feminine quality of the soul which works in union with the flesh and men who walk after the flesh. Jezebel represents the aggressive, seductive, lustful desire that influences people in a religious sense apart from the mind of the spirit. This soulical Jezebel is the instigator of all religious and spiritual perversions! She is the source of all error and carnal religious activities! The Lord Jesus said of Jezebel in the church at Thyatira, "which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce my servants." Jezebel is the carnal and soulish "spirit" that prophesies and teaches in the church systems and seduces many to "commit fornication" with the world and with other false prophets of the church systems! Paul Mueller once commented about Jezebel, saying, "The worst thing about this prophetic witch of evil is that she is married or joined to those who think they are appointed to rule and reign with Christ, as Jezebel was married to wicked Ahab."

In the messages to the seven churches there are three primary individuals, teachings, or spirits that are revealed to us as standing among the Lord's people in opposition to the life of the spirit. The first is Nicolaitanism. The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes puts one man above another, a hierarchical system that makes some people "laity" and others "clergy" or "lords" rather than a family of sons under the Headship of Christ. All church systems of man still hold to this doctrine today with their hierarchy of ministers and offices. They conquer the people through the force of their seminary training, titles, prestige, charisma, rules, regulations, and authority, rather than serving in humility out of the ministration of the Spirit. Then we have Balaamism. The error, way, and doctrine of Balaam goes beyond the Nicolaitanes, for Balaam taught Balak to cause Israel to stumble, to be turned away from the Lord, to be corrupted — and he did this in order to gain a reward of money, prestige, and power for himself! This is the corrupt "hireling" and "religious racketeer" system which has always been in the church, but has had a special heyday over the past sixty years in the person of big-name preachers and healers and televangelists!

Finally, in the church at Thyatira we meet the Jezebel spirit. The Lord starts with the outward form, men, often good and sincere men, who seek to control and dominate God's people. Then He moves to the Balaamites, those hireling ministries who bring the Lord's people into union with the flesh and world, corrupting the work of God in their lives. Oh, yes! God will bring us out of the various forms of Babylon. But ultimately He will bring every overcoming son of God to the root of the matter — getting the Babylon out of us! This is accomplished only through the salvation of the soul, the renewing of our mind, bringing transformation and union with the spirit. Israel is the type — God brought Israel out of Egypt in one miraculous night. But it took forty long years of dealing in the wilderness to get the Egypt out of them so they could rise up in faith and obedience, enter in, and possess their land! The same pattern appears in the book of Revelation in the seven steps of the overcomer! Only at the end — in the final step of overcoming — does the overcomer finally ascend to the throne of God! **(Rev. 3:21)**

Jezebel calls herself a prophetess, Jezebel teaches, and Jezebel seduces God's bondslaves to commit fornication and eat things offered unto idols. She seduces the bond-slaves! Her attack is against the seed of Christ within, her assault is upon the sons of God! Remember, my beloved, the real things the overcomer must overcome are not the theater, the dance hall, and the bar — it's these perverted, corrupted, fleshly, carnal,

soulical and pseudo-spiritual conditions found in the seven churches! To him that overcomes these are all the promises made!

Here is a group of God's people, full of good works and charity, having a form of faith and patience. But the eyes of the Lord Jesus appear among them, blazing with flames of fire. With all that is good and commendable, there is something very dangerous going on, something so seductive that Christ warns He will send judgment and make them an example to all the churches. Their good works, charity, service, faith, and patience were overshadowed by a seduction they were involved in, a seduction of a false spirit and teaching. They were under the spell of something false, a teaching that came disguised as the true word of the Lord but was in fact evil. It was the teaching and seduction of Jezebel!

Jezebel represents a realm more insidious than the Nicolaitanes and the Balaamites for it speaks of the internal realm of the soul — the very root of everything! She represents the mind that's sitting, not as a king, excuse me, but as queen, on our personalities. And we read about that queen further on in the book of Revelation! We read about her in the prophets of the Old Testament. Like the Jezebel of old, the Lord says of her in **Revelation 18:7**, "How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen...and shall see no sorrow." She glorifies her "self" and she sits as a "queen." This queen is the one that rules over millions of the Lord's people! This queen is one that every overcomer is called to overcome! This queen is Jezebel!

YOUR WOMAN JEZEBEL

"I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel...to teach." (Rev. 2:20)

While the King James Version calls Jezebel "that woman," translated directly from the Greek, the phrase would read, "Your woman Jezebel," or, "Your wife Jezebel." The term "your woman" and "your wife" have the same connotation in Greek. The Emphatic Diaglott shows the literal word for word (interlinear) rendering from the Greek as follows: "But I have against thee, because thou lettest alone the wife of thee, Jezebel, the one calling herself a prophetess, and she teaches and seduces the my bond-servants..." "Your woman" is your soul! Every one of us has a "woman" in us, just as psychologists tell us that every one of us has a "child" in us, and she wants to take the throne and rule. Soul wants to mingle with spirit, not in subjection to spirit, but as an independent, domineering, controlling woman, bringing duality and mixture.

On a day in the long ago an apostle by the name of Paul penned these telling words: "For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds (souls) should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." (II Cor. 11:2-3) In this significant passage Eve in the Garden of Eden is contrasted with two things: the bride of Christ and the mind or soul (psyche). The mind is a function of the soul. The vision of the bride of Christ pervades the whole of scripture, from Eden onward, with ever-increasing clearness. Eve, the mother of the human race, is the first type of this great mystery! Let us not underestimate this remarkable woman from whom the whole human race has sprung!

In that ancient shadow Adam stands as a type of the spirit, Eve is a type of the soul, and the Garden of Eden is a type of the body, which Adam was to "dress and keep." Thus we see our tri-partite being symbolically portrayed in the Adam-Eve-Garden story. The Garden was the earth, the land, the habitation; and Adam and Eve were the inhabitants, in the same way that our spirit and soul are the inhabitants of the physical body. It is through our "Eve," our soulical mind, desires, will, and emotions, that we who have been espoused to Christ the bridegroom in our spirit, can be "beguiled" and turned from our single and pure devotion to Christ, entering instead into intimate associations with things of the earth realm, the flesh, the world, and the devil. When the soul-bride is turned from the spirit-husband to fornicate with the flesh and fleshly things, we become disqualified from being presented to Christ as a chaste virgin! Paul shows that just as Eve was beguiled from her singleness to Christ, so those espoused to Christ can be corrupted IN OUR MINDS from singleness to Christ.

I would now draw your reverent attention to a very significant point in the Garden of Eden experience. The serpent can only speak to the woman! The serpent never spoke to Adam. The serpent cannot tempt the spirit, for the spirit speaks of the pureness of Christ. Let me state that again. The serpent can only speak to the woman! It was Eve who was "beguiled." (**II Cor. 11:2-3**) It was Eve who was "deceived" and was "in the transgression" (I Tim. 2:14). Can you not see the mystery? The serpent cannot deceive the spiritual man! The serpent can only deceive that which is less than the spiritual man — that which comes out of a man — the woman, the soul. The spirit of a man cannot be deceived, that is why scripture declares that the woman was deceived. The serpent cannot be where the spirit dwells! There is war in heaven, and Michael and his angels, Christ and His many brethren, cast him out! The serpent can only speak to, prophesy to, teach and control those who settle for less than the spirit!

Thus, the woman, the soul, who hearkens unto the serpent, is deceived in all facets possible. The spiritual person is above the fray, but the woman is totally immersed into it. When the serpent spoke, the woman could have asked direction of the spirit, but she did not. The woman had not experienced God, was not conscious of God, did not know the life of God, as the man had. The woman needed to depend on the man, to consult with the man, to walk in union with the man, just as the soul needs to depend on the spirit! The woman, the soul, can hear two voices. It can hear the call of the spirit, but can also hear the call of the serpent. The woman, the soul, can rule over the flesh (Ahab), but cannot rule over the spirit (Elijah)! So the serpent seeks to make the soul, the woman, a priestess and a queen over the flesh through carnal religious doctrines and activities. The soulish person must have a kingdom even if it is not truly real. So the serpent deceives the woman with the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil — religion! That is the mystery.

When we can recognize what kind of person is soulish, it is not difficult to realize what kind of person is spiritual. Since a soulish person lives by the mind, emotion, will, and desire, a spiritual person is one who does not live by any of these! A spiritual person must live in the spirit, act by the spirit, and speak out of the spirit and not the soul. He allows the spirit to be the master and source of all his action and behavior. The spirit in him occupies the preeminent position; it is the source of his behavior and the starting point of his action. The soul in this person is in the position of submission, under the government of the spirit, dominated by the spirit, and in loving union with the spirit. Thus he allows the spirit to be LORD in him! He allows the spirit to direct his whole being so that he becomes the expression of the spirit. Whenever he encounters a situation he does not consult his mind nor draw from his mind, desire, will, or emotion to deal with it; rather he draws from his spirit to comprehend and understand it, seeking first in the spirit for the Lord's wisdom and purpose in the matter. This is the spiritual man, living by the life of the spirit, and the soul is but a vehicle of expression for the spirit. Isn't it wonderful! It is the one spirit; our spirit joined to His Spirit, that ultimately is joined to the soul — receives the soul unto itself — the marriage of the Lamb within ourselves!

Jezebel, like Delilah in the book of Judges, was a harlot. The name Jezebel means "one without a husband" or "one that can't be touched." Jezebel is that soul that will not allow the Spirit of God in our spirit to touch her, or to be a husband unto her. She will not enter into union with the spirit! She spurns the purposes of God and rejects the living word of the Lord, and will stone literally or figuratively any prophet who would speak the word of the Lord. She has multitudes of lovers, she follows after men and man's way, man's methods, man's programs, man's promotions, and man's organizations; but she seeks no intimacy with the Christ of God, nor does she submit to the spirit's lordship.

Furthermore, Jezebel relates to the "strange woman" of the book of Proverbs, which speaks of a soul or a mind that is perverted and twisted and needs to change. Jezebel is your soul before it is transformed! Let me talk to you about an attitude. Let us explore that attitude, that mind-set, that soulish condition in your life that would seduce you away from the headship of Christ. This seduction is carried out by Jezebel! Jezebel speaks of the soul-life and ever since Eve she is a woman who wants to do her own thing. She will not allow the spirit to touch her. She cannot enter into a mature relationship with the Christ within. She cannot be subject to One as her head. She cannot love and be faithful to one husband. She cannot walk only in the Spirit of God, for she is lusting after carnal, fleshly, man-centered, need-oriented, religious ways, involvements, and activities. She has roving eyes and a lustful, flirtatious, wild, rebellious nature. She wants blessings, chills, and thrills — a religious good time — not a marriage.

Let us look at this "strange woman." The wise man said, "My son, keep my words...and live. Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart...that they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger which flattereth with her words. For at the window of my house I looked through my casement, and beheld among the simple ones (spiritually ignorant), I discerned among the youths (immature ones), a young man void of understanding, passing through the street near her corner (church on every corner); and he went the way to her house (denomination). In the twilight, in the evening, in the dark of night (darkened fleshly understanding); and behold, there met him a woman (the untransformed soul) with the attire of an harlot, and subtle of heart. She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house: now is she without (seeking fleshly things), now in the streets, and lieth wait at every corner. So she caught him, and kissed him, and with an impudent face said unto him, I have peace offerings with me; this day have I paid my vows (I am very religious, I go to church, pray, pay tithes, and serve God in all kinds of programs and activities). Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face (to invite you to church, get you involved), and I have found thee. I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry (creeds, doctrines), with carved works (images, programs, rituals, ceremonies), with fine linen of Egypt (self-righteousness, works). I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon (false anointing, soulish worship, emotional appeals). Come, let us take our fill of love (soulish emotional thrills and chills, blessings, excitement, good times, fun, play) until the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves." (Prov. 7:1-18)

You will find in the book of Revelation that there is a true church and there is a false church. You will find in the book of Proverbs that there is a true church and there is a false church. In the book of Revelation they are called the bride of Christ and the whore. In the book of Proverbs the bride of Christ and the Jezebel spirit are presented under the figure of the virtuous woman and the strange woman. Proverbs chapter thirty-one gives you the characteristics of the virtuous woman, and Proverbs chapter seven gives you the essence of the strange woman. Here's how you can identify a soulish or false ministry. First of all they will flatter you! Then they will substitute emotion and religious fervor for the anointing to seduce you. The main way this harlot's anointing is seducing the church is by preachers going forth in an entertainment-based, man-centered, need-oriented thrust, keeping the Lord's people in constant need so that they can come back every week and deliver them. The constant "altar calls" in which the same people go down front time after time to be prayed for for the same things, to dedicate, rededicate, and then re-dedicate again and again, to get all encouraged and blessed, to receive their weekly "fix" so they can make it through to the next meeting, is simply the young man void of understanding returning over and over to the harlot's house for his fill of loves!

A true ministry will grow you up unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ! A true ministry will bring you to know God for yourself, and work himself out of a job! A true ministry will not desire to rule you or dominate you! A true ministry will support you and serve you, not control you! A true ministry will give you the word of God by the Spirit and commit you into the hands of the Father to learn by your own experience the ways and dealings of the Lord! A true ministry will encourage you to hear from God by the Spirit out of the anointing which abides within you through the Christ in you, your hope of glory!

It pains me to say it, but vast multitudes of the Lord's people today have been seduced by an imitation anointing. The land is filled with lying signs, wonders, miracles, and prophesying by those who will one day come before the Lord, saying, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name have cast out devils, and in Thy name done many wonderful works?" Then will the Lord profess unto them, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (lawlessness)." (Mat. 7:22-23) That's not a heaven or hell issue! The Lord is saying, "I never knew you as Lord, I never knew you in intimacy of fellowship and vital union. I never knew you as a man knows a woman. You did all those works, but you did those things in my name. You did things you wanted to do and you did it as by my authority and at my word — but I had nothing to do with it! I never knew you as Adam "knew" Eve when she conceived and brought forth a son! Nothing that you did led to sonship! Everything that you have done "in my name" that didn't originate out of union with me, will go up in smoke for all the world to see! Depart from me — there is a place for you, but you cannot share my throne — for you worked iniquity, lawlessness, unauthorized activities!" Can we not see by this that within these folks the religious soul is acting independent of the spirit. It is the spirit of Jezebel!

Now, dear saints of God, this brings us to an important thought. I must confess that I have often been distressed by the lack of understanding among the Lord's people. Somehow so many seem to miss the point. And nowhere is this more true than when we come to the harlot church systems of man! Let me make this point as clearly as I can. The mother of harlots is not the Roman Catholic Church. The mother of harlots is a lot closer home! The mother of harlots is still birthing her children! The mother of harlots is the soulish dimension of man's life that through her carnal sense-consciousness and human logic and reasoning births what she believes is pleasing to God, what she feels is the worship of God, what she perceives to be the work of God, and what she determines to be the way of God. The mother of harlots is our own soul — our very own religious mind, will, emotion, and desire! Where did the Roman Catholic Church, with all her false doctrines, pagan practices, and carnal rituals, come from? Did it not proceed right out of the soulish heart of man? You see, beloved, carnal church systems, creeds, rituals, ceremonies, and methods are not really birthed out of other carnal church systems at all — they are, one and all, birthed out of the mother of them all — the soulish heart of man!

God's people have been walking after the mother of harlots too long. We have been deceived by her prophecies, we have been misled by her teachings, we have been enticed by her attractiveness, we have been seduced by her wantonness, we have been betrayed by the spirit of Mystery Babylon right within the midst of us! We have walked by the direction of the soulish nature rather than by the leadership of the spirit. It is time for "our woman" to keep silence in the church! I do not hesitate to tell you that most of the men I have met in my life-time who were concerned about "women preachers" were themselves under the control of the loudest-mouthed woman of all — their own soul! They were so stuck in their soulish dead-letter-of-the-word understanding that they could never hear the spirit! But now we have the word of the Lord Jesus Himself — it is time for "our woman" to be brought under subjection! This is one of the vital keys to overcoming! It is time for the spirit to BE LORD in the house of God! When we reach the place where we willingly refuse to accept as spiritual that which thrills and chills and seems right to the soulish realm, where we willingly refuse to identify with that outer world that stimulates the soulish affections, casting ourselves upon Jesus Christ who Himself is the truth, the light, the reality — then the spirit takes the throne of our life to reveal out of our innermost being the wisdom and the power of God.

This should help us see how it is that when the soul speaks — Jezebel prophecies! The soul is always prophesying! The soul is just bubbling over with all kinds of revelations out of the tree of knowledge! The soul wants to serve God just as Jezebel wanted to run the kingdom of Israel, but always in a manipulative, carnal, perverted way. The soul is assertive, aggressive, creative, articulate, seductive, controlling, and demanding. The soul will invent a thousand ways to serve God, none of which are sanctioned by the spirit, born of the spirit, or led by the spirit. Eve and Jezebel are both cut from the same cloth and instead of living by the tree of life they live by the tree of knowledge. The soul wants to serve God independent of the spirit and always quenches the spirit in favor of carnal means and methods. Furthermore, self-knowledge, self-effort, and self-development are major subjects in the Seminary of the Soul! The New Age mandate, "Know thyself," is a prophecy from Jezebel. The mandate, however, from the School of the Spirit is: "Know the Lord!" The Lord is in our spirit. Our Self is in our soul! That is why the firstborn Son of God said again and again, "Except a man deny himself, and come after Me, he cannot be my disciple." Again He proclaimed that we must hate our self.

In making the above statement, I am fully aware that such a thought runs contrary to what is being proclaimed in some circles of this kingdom word today. Some time ago I received a little article, part of which I quote: "I am experiencing a gradual, yet constant, awakening to Reality. I am experiencing my true identity. I am experiencing who I am. I am experiencing I am one; there is no other. I am experiencing being that which I am. I am experiencing all things coming to me from within — from Me — for there is no other — there is no transfer, for nothing is really coming. It is already here. I am experiencing no need to seek anything; for I am that which I might be tempted to seek. I am experiencing the truth that all that one experiences is within one's consciousness (mind, awareness, soul), which I am."

Oh, yes! The work of God is within! Oh, yes! God is the Father of our spirits! And yes, the seed of God is within every man! But if all of the above article is true, then we have absolutely no need for the preaching of the Gospel, no need for Jesus Christ, no need for the body of Christ, no need for the word of God, no need to be

filled with the Holy Spirit, no need to seek the Lord, or to seek the kingdom of God, no need for any moving of God on any level beyond our Self, for there is no transfer, nothing coming, I am everything, there is no reality beyond ME! My "consciousness" is ALL! That sounds very deep and very spiritual, but may I reverently suggest that it is, in fact, the seductive voice of the Soul, the deceiving claim of the Self, the bewitching call of the Woman, the false prophecy of that woman Jezebel! It is like the tree saying, "I am, and outside of me there is nothing. I don't need the sun, I have no need for the rain, and the soil is of no use to me. I am the only reality!" Ah, "he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit" — not he who discovers his own reality apart from the Lord in his own self-consciousness! If my spirit has not been quickened by His Spirit then I know nothing and will never amount to anything. If there is no God outside of me, no God above me, no God beyond me, no God before me — pray tell me just who created all things, who upholds all things, who fills all things, who was before all things! Do you uphold all things? If you and all other men in the world suddenly ceased to exist, would there then be no God anywhere? Would the universe spin out of control and self-destruct? Let me tell you something. There is no man on Mars, no man on Venus, no man on Jupiter, and no men throughout vast stretches of the endless vastnesses of the universe. If the God in me is the only reality anywhere, then there is no God on Mars, there was no God who was there directing and creating when Mars was formed, there was no God who established the laws of the universe, and the whole Bible story of God's dealings with men, God's revelation to men, God's appearing to men, God's manifestations to men, God's pouring out His Spirit on men, God saving men, God reconciling men, God quickening men, God's giving to men is all a lie and irrelevant to anything! Watch out for Jezebel! Watch out for the soul! She will pass herself off for the SPIRIT!

The supreme mission of the prophet Elisha was to destroy that which had destroyed the anointing and work of God in the land of Israel. So Jehu (the king) went into Jezreel and the scripture says that when he arrived Jezebel got her face all painted, her hair tired, and looked out of the window high upon the wall. The painted face wasn't what made her Jezebel — she was Jezebel before she put the paint on and had already done great damage. But she had herself all made up this day because she heard that something was going to happen in town. The painting of the face has the meaning of painting the eyes. Painting the eyes has the meaning "to allure, to look more appealing." What Jezebel was actually doing was appearing at the window high upon the wall with the tawdry appearance of a harlot. She counted on Jehu being a man, and she thought she could seduce her way out of her problems. Jezebel tried all her alluring and deceptive ways to dissuade Jehu from his appointed task! King Jehu, whom Elisha had anointed, was on his way to get her! Jezebel hoped to flatter her way out of King Jehu's advance to take her captive or destroy her! She plotted to get into a high place, up on the wall of the city, into a high and elevated position in the church, as it were, where she could see all that was going on and manipulate and control and create a resistance to the thing the prophet of God had said he was going to accomplish. But Jehu was on a mission for Yahwey and wasn't having any of it!

Terry Crisp wrote once about the marks of harlotry: "In the natural, the spirit of harlotry was generally evidenced in a woman's countenance, and in her attire. It was easy to spot a prostitute by her appearance; by the way she excessively painted her face, and seductively dressed herself, the message she sought to convey was unmistakable. This is why the Lord admonished Israel to "clear her face of the marks of harlotry." He knew that as long as she adorned the countenance of an available woman, seeking to enhance her features in order to attract the attention of others than her husband, she would not be true to Him. No matter what she told Him, or how she tried to convince Him that she was doing it all for Him, the intents of her heart were obvious; the image she projected told the story! It was a manifest token that she was not committed to a monogamous relationship; and she was not ready to settle down and become one with Him. The underlying truth was that she sought independence from her Husband!"

Jezebel is the spirit of harlotry — mixture. Mixing the truth of God with the carnal philosophies of the world; mixing the revelation of Jesus Christ with pagan eastern religions or other strange voices; mixing the move of the Spirit of God with the promotions of man; mixing the work of God with the efforts of the flesh; mixing the light of Christ with the darkness of the carnal mind. It is the soul joined to anything — except the spirit!

Thyatira is the stronghold of Jezebel. It is the place of corrupt self-proclaimed ministry. They can't wait on God to develop something in them. They must be saying something and doing something for God! They will prostitute the life of God in them with anything which will be to their benefit. They care nothing about purity and

will accept any mixture as long as they can profit by it. They receive their "life force" from more than one source. They seek out many lovers — join themselves to many causes, trying to receive life from each. Bigger crowds, bigger buildings, bigger television ministries, bigger, bigger, bigger — not better! Not more godly! Not more mature! Not after God's own heart! All the works of man are soulish; man's works exist in this world for the sensual, for the sole purpose of gratifying the desires of the carnal souls of all mankind. Religious soulishness is for the same purpose!

God has now called His elect to overcome the Jezebel spirit! Every son of God has overcome the spirit of Jezebel! Our spirit can only be satisfied by communion with our Father in the spirit! Our spirit must find its life from God, for He is the Father of our spirits! The carnal soul, on the other hand, rejoices at the sound of a man's voice, for the soul is fed and sustained by many voices of man. The soul is always playing the harlot, seeking many lovers other than the Lord alone in the spirit. The false prophetess, Jezebel, who becomes later in the book of Revelation the great whore which sitteth upon many waters, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication, is the fleshly, carnal wisdom within all of us organized into a world religious empire.

The carnal mind is enmity against God; it is that which resists and is hostile to the Spirit of God, for it seeks not a husband to be lord over it, but rather uses its subtle and beguiling ways to be joined to her fleshly lovers. Thus, Jezebel, who is also the great whore, lies in the inmost recesses of our soul! It is the wisdom of the flesh. That is the mystery! Jezebel is the wisdom of the flesh in man, which proceeds out of the soul, which is the mother of all the religious abominations which are committed against the Lord. All outward religious creeds and activities not born of the Spirit of God are, as Joseph Salmon wrote, "but bastards of this strange woman, the brats of this great adulteress. And happy, yea, thrice blessed shall that Man be called, who shall take and dash these children of the great whore against the stones. This Man is Christ, who shall come in power and great glory in a Christian, and destroy, and dash in pieces the conceptions, bringings forth, and appearances of fleshly wisdom in us."

Joseph Salmon goes on to say, "Now see O Man! whether this whore be not your fleshly wisdom. Look into your soul, and behold and see, how opposite your fleshly wisdom is to anything that is good or goodness. What means those often resistings of the spirit in you, O Man! Do you not see how the whore deceives you? What conception, bringing forth, or appearance of God is there in you, but the wisdom of the flesh seeks to devour it (as the dragon the manchild), by violent attempts, and oppositions. This is what crucifies the Lamb afresh, and puts him to open shame. And all this is done by that bloody whore that harbors in your bosom.

"Now therefore know, O Christian! that this whore appears to you in all your spiritual performances, and sacrifices to the Lord. If you but observe, you shall see her appear in prayer, in humiliation, in fasting, nay, in all outward ordinances, you shall see your wisdom in all these things, steal your heart from the Lord, by attributing something to form, flesh and creature: so that we are apt oftentimes to bless ourselves in our spiritual performances, and sing a requiem to ourselves in our fleshly forms; so that hereby, all our duties are but the sacrifices of the whore, the vows of our fleshly wisdom which she appears in, to delude us.

"Now, woe and alas for us! That we should even be deceived by this whore, in those things wherein we think she appears least, herein is plainly seen her mystical apparition. This whore meets you, O Man, in all your religious performances; and there does she attribute all the goodness of all that is done, to her self. And you also gave consent to it, and to commit fornication with her. Now when the whore has thus estranged the heart from the Lord, then she propounds her own way to the creature; she will persuade the creature...to go and feed upon the husks. And here the soul commits adultery, in subsisting on the shadow, forsaking the Fountain, running to broken cisterns, and so commits a great evil against the Lord. And thus poor naked man runs from God, as from an enemy, behind the trees...he will cover himself with the fig-leaves of his own fleshly wisdom, and so commits adultery with the mother of harlots" — end quote. J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 47

THE CHURCH IN THYATIRA [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART FORTY-SEVEN

THE JUDGMENT OF JEZEBEL THE REINS AND HEARTS KILL HER CHILDREN WITH DEATH

Thyatira is the fourth church, and in her we see the rise of the woman Jezebel. No such lady of that name is known except the wicked wife of Ahab, Israel's worst king. In the church at Thyatira we find that the spirit of Jezebel was alive and at work in the midst of the Lord's people! Some of the believers in the church at Thyatira were in the JEZEBEL CONDITION!

The reign of the house of Ahab is typical of the reign of the flesh through carnal men all through the history of Israel and the church. Jezebel is typical of that internal feminine quality of the soul which works in union with the flesh and men who walk after the flesh. Jezebel represents the aggressive, seductive, lustful desire that influences people in a religious sense apart from the mind of the spirit. This soulical Jezebel is the instigator of all religious and spiritual perversions! She is the source of all error and carnal religious activities! The Lord Jesus said of Jezebel in the church at Thyatira, "Which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce my servants." Jezebel is the carnal and soulful "spirit" or attitude that prophesies and teaches in the church systems of man and seduces many to "commit fornication" with the world and with other false prophets in the church systems! Paul Mueller once commented about Jezebel, saying, "The worst thing about this prophetic witch of evil is that she is married or joined to those who think they are appointed to rule and reign with Christ, as Jezebel was married to wicked Ahab."

Jezebel calls herself a prophetess (one with the word of the Lord), Jezebel teaches, and Jezebel seduces God's bondslaves to commit fornication and eat things offered unto idols. She seduces the bondslaves! Her attack is against the seed of Christ within; her assault is upon the sons of God! Remember, my beloved, the real things the overcomer must overcome are not the theater, the dance hall, and the bar — it's these perverted, corrupted, fleshly, carnal, soulful, and pseudo-spiritual conditions found in the seven churches! To him that overcomes all these are the promises made!

THE JUDGMENT OF JEZEBEL

"Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts..." (Rev. 2:22-23)

The kind of God we have revealed in the Holy Scriptures is a God of both mercy and judgment — the two sides of love. He is not a nebulous nonentity of sentimentalism. He is a God of character! We thank God today that He is a God of compassion, love, and mercy — and there would not be one of us alive today to breathe His fresh air if it were not for His amazing love toward us. But there is a purpose in judgment, and it is always a purpose of love. There is a deep, clear purpose in everything God does. And His love for us, deep and tender, is the fire burning under that purpose. The character of God must be kept ever in mind. The leading trait of His character is expressed, not by the word "purity," nor "righteousness," nor "justice;" but by the word "love." Though if we knew the real meaning of love we would find it includes these others, and more. The purpose in judgment is two-fold. It is a purpose toward sin, to get rid of it. And God's attitude here is uncompromising! No exceptions are ever noted. And there is a purpose toward men. Now regarding the purpose toward men, it is disciplinary. The whole thought is to change the man! It is love working, love for the man. It is the same

purpose as the surgeon's. He thrusts his keen-edged blade, not to hurt or destroy life, but to save it! He is driving hard against the disease. The knife that cuts and hurts is held steady by the kindly purpose in his heart. We must learn this fact early: our Father loves us just as much when He is subjecting us to surgery, as when He sends His blessings and gifts and brings us into the sunshine of His glory. Precious friend of mine, He loves us most when He is dealing severely with us, "for whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." (Heb. 12:6) "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth (prunes) it, that it may bring forth more fruit." (Jn. 15:1-2) Ah, the Father reaches into your life and mine and prunes away that which is not fruitbearing — and it hurts! But, as some Puritan divine said years ago, "The husbandman is never so close to the branch as when he is trimming it." The Father is never more close to you, my beloved, than when He is reaching in and taking out of your heart and life those things that hinder the development of HIS LIFE and the manifestation of HIS NATURE.

The Lord said of Jezebel, "I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not." (Rev. 2:21) Thank God! He gives us a space to repent! He sees into the depths of our being. He reveals what He sees to us. Like a parent correcting a child, He gives space to repent. He doesn't just slap us around! If we will not heed His warnings, then come His feet of brass that burn as a furnace! Can we not see? Do we yet understand? He casts her into a bed of trouble rather than pleasure, He throws all who fornicate with her into great tribulation, He kills her children. This is the judgment which comes. This is the judgment which will redeem Zion! This is the judgment which washes away the filth of the daughters of Zion and the blood of Jerusalem! This is a revelation of the Lord which starts at the house of God (I Pet. 4:17) and then flows out from that house to all creation! The sons are the firstfruits — every other man must at God's appointed time pass through the same dealings, the same revelation and purpose of the Father. When the process is completed God will be ALL IN ALL, everything to everybody, the indwelling and controlling factor of every life. (I Cor. 15:28, Amplified)

You may remember the story of the man who was trying to get his mule into the barn. The man was tugging on the rope and pulling with all his might. He got behind the mule and pushed; he put his shoulder to its back but he could not budge the mule who just stood there, stiff-legged, and would not move. He could not get it into the barn! A fellow walked up and watched for quite a while. Finally, he said, "Mister, I'll get your mule into the barn for you if you like." The man stopped in astonishment and said, "Can you?" He said, "Of course, it is easy." The stranger walked over and picked up a two-by-four, came over to the mule, quietly lifted the two-by-four, and whacked him on top of the head, right between the eyes. The mule went a little cross-eyed! Then he hit him behind the ears. Before the mule could quite straighten up again, he struck him underneath the chin. With that he took hold of the rope and with two fingers led the mule into the barn! The owner stood there astonished. The fellow came out again and said, "You see, mister, actually this mule is a very cooperative critter. You just got to get his attention!"

Sometimes God has to GET OUR ATTENTION. And to do that He chooses to use events which are instruments of His judgment. God told Moses that the reason for His judgment upon the Egyptians was to make them know that He is God. Everything God does shows us something about who He is, but in this instance of judgment God particularly expressed that His intent was to show Himself to the Egyptians. And He was successful in this, for in chapter eight of Exodus Moses records the Egyptians telling Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God."

Taken to the isle of Patmos, John was made to see a "great multitude" of saints which no man could number, from every nation, kindred, people, and tongue, standing before the throne of God and before the Lamb. Each was clothed in a white robe and held a palm branch in his hand. The white robe speaks of purity; the palm branch denotes victory. Being made pure by the inwrought righteousness of Christ also brings victory over self! Asked by one of the elders, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, with palms in their hands, and whence have they come?" John answered, "Sir, you know." And the elder said to him, "These are they which have come out of GREAT TRIBULATION; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Each of these white-robed saints had to experience great tribulation!

Can we not see by this that these are the very people, nominal Christians, who had been followers of Jezebel, the false prophetess, the soulish religious works and worship which were not born of the Spirit of God. And the false soulical ministry of the church systems, which led them to commit spiritual fornication and to eat spiritual food that was defiled by idols — by false images and conceptions of God. Were we not all there at one time? Some of us repented when the Lord corrected us, and we have continued to repent as the Lord has revealed the deception within our hearts. Others of us have been dealt with by the judgments of the Lord in our lives, and then we repented! To Jezebel and her followers the Lord said, "Behold I will cast her into a bed (of trouble), and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds."

It is significant to note that the term "great tribulation" appears only twice in the book of Revelation and in neither case does it apply to the nations or to the world! Both times it has to do with the Lord's own people! The idea that the book of Revelation is about the "great tribulation" that has come, or is yet to come, upon the nations of earth is a myth, a fable, folklore, and a fairy tale! That is not what the Book says! The Lord Jesus said that He would cast the spiritual fornicators of the church age into great tribulation unless they repented. What do you suppose would be the purpose of the great tribulation? Why, bless your heart, it would be to influence and motivate them to repent! It would be God's two-by-four hitting them over the head to get their attention!

Then John sees a great multitude that has come out of great tribulation. A wonderful transformation has taken place in them through the process of the great tribulation. They have now "washed their robes" and have "made them white in the blood of the Lamb." They were already the Lord's people! This is not sinners coming to wash their robes from the filth of sin and the world they walked in before they were saved. No! These are the very people the Lord had said He would cast into great tribulation except they repented! These were believers in the church of Thyatira! Through this great tribulation they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood (life) of the Lamb. They have washed their robes from the defilement of their own untransformed souls, and from the soulish defilement of religion and religious doctrines, activities, and systems! As a result of the Father's chastisement by this great tribulation, God's purpose is accomplished in their lives. Cleansed and purified by the Lamb, they are transformed and brought very near to His throne of love, grace, and power!

Let us understand clearly just who these white-robed saints of God are! They are the redeemed of God who have washed their robes from the defilement of the false doctrines, empty rituals, lifeless ceremonies, fleshly methods, soulish worship, and carnal programs of the church systems of man. White robes in the book of Revelation denote "the righteous acts of the saints" (Rev. 19:8). It is the righteousness of Christ with which they are clothed, resulting in righteous, truly spiritual acts manifested out of their lives upon this earth. All of them have endured the strippings, purgings, prunings, threshings, refinings, and purifying dealings of God and have been thoroughly chastened and corrected by the Father!

This great multitude is seen coming out of the great tribulation clothed in the white robes of Christ's righteousness and waving palm branches of victory and praise to God! This great tribulation is not a seven-year tribulation here at the end of the church age. Not at all! It is the symbol of the Lord's chastisements upon His people throughout the age, upon all whom He has set His hand to purge and purify unto Himself. Many of these saints were in the great movements and revivals throughout the age when the Lord moved mightily by His Spirit to bring a people out of the existing errors and carnal systems of man, into a closer and purer walk with Him in the Spirit. The Lord led them through the processings of His Spirit, which made them pure and righteous in God's sight while they walked this earth in the midst of worldly sin and religious corruption.

These are the ones "coming out" of "the great tribulation" having their robes washed in the blood of the Lamb! How many are there? "A great multitude that no man could number." It is the "great" tribulation because of the "great" multitude! No man can experience more than his own tribulation. This "great tribulation" has lasted throughout the two thousand years since Christ came and began to form His body in the earth. All through the age He has called out people after people, company after company, from the apostate church systems of their day, and now, praise His name, there is a great multitude that no man can number!

It should be obvious to every spiritual mind that the great multitude that no man can number is not the same company as the 144,000 sealed ones that can be numbered. Not that 144,000 is a literal number, but it is the number of divine government ascribed to a select called and chosen company who reign with Christ upon His throne. Both companies are described in the same chapter of the Revelation, chapter seven. But there is a difference! As the spirit of revelation and understanding floods our minds, we are left without question as to the meaning of all this. The difference can be seen in the position of the two companies. God's kings and priests are always referred to in relation to the throne. Jesus said that to the overcomer it is granted to sit with Him in His throne, even as He overcame and is set down with His Father in His throne (Rev. 3:21; 21:7). Then in chapter twelve the man-child is caught up to God and to His throne and rules the nations with a rod of iron (Rev. 12:5). Later, in chapter fourteen, the 144,000 stand with the Lamb (who is in the midst of the throne) upon mount Zion, again the figure of the throne, for king David ruled Israel from his throne on mount Zion (Rev. 14:1).

The "great multitude," however, is not "on" the throne — it is "before" the throne of God and the Lamb! Neither do they "rule" or "reign" over anything, but they "serve" God day and night in His temple, and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They are a blessed company indeed! They are very near the throne, and dwell in the light of the throne, and in the presence of Him who sits upon the throne, and receive great and eternal and unspeakable blessings from the throne! They are the vast multitudes of the redeemed out of the age who have walked with God in a pure walk in the Spirit in the measure of light they had. And while they are a redeemed and sanctified and spiritual people, they are not the sons of God who reign with Christ upon His throne. They have not taken the spiritual steps that cause them to fully grow, mature, and progress all the way into God to become kings and priests. They have not attained unto the measure of the stature of the fullness Christ. Yet, they are the Lord's own people, precious in His eyes! He who sits on the throne of the Lord — Christ and His many brethren — dwells among them; they live in the wonderful, rewarding, sustaining presence of the King of kings and the Lord of lords!

"Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither shall they thirst any more; neither shall the sun (the illumination of the outer court) light on them, nor any heat (processing). For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water (life in the Spirit): and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." (Rev. 7:15-17)

No saint of God can escape the great tribulation! You will not be raptured out before it comes, for it is already here! It is not some horrible judgment of vindictive wrath and unrestrained vengeance poured out upon the nations, my friend; it is God's own process of discipline and purification for ALL WHOM HE IS REDEEMING AND TRANSFORMING INTO HIS IMAGE AND LIKENESS!

THE REINS AND HEARTS

By the work of this great tribulation and judgment Jezebel is destroyed! It is not the people involved who are destroyed, but the carnal soul in all its assertiveness and fleshly lewdness — the spirit of Jezebel within! How can we know this is a truly inward work, rather than the Lord dealing with people and movements in the outer world? We know this first by revelation of the Holy Spirit, but the truth we know is confirmed in these words: "And all the churches shall know that I am He which searches the reins and hearts." (Rev. 2:23) This refers to the inward life of our being — reins and hearts. That's where the work is, and when it is finished all the churches will know that God has searched, judged, and cleansed His people in the inward parts!

"Reins" is an old English word derived from the Latin *renes*, meaning "kidneys." "Renal failure" is the medical term today for kidney failure. Renal, of course, is the adjective form of the old English "reins" or the Latin *renes*. The kidneys are the organ which separates many of the toxins out of the blood to prevent the body from becoming poisoned. People who suffer kidney failure have to go on dialysis, a mechanical method of removing the toxins from the blood, which substitutes for the kidneys. The kidneys, in a spiritual sense, speak of that faculty which is able in our spiritual life to separate between flesh and spirit, between soul and spirit, between truth and error, between the precious and the vile. The kidneys are truly our faculty of DISCERNMENT! To lack

spiritual discernment is to suffer spiritual kidney failure! Because the vile things of the soul, the flesh, and the spirit of error are not filtered out of our lives, our spiritual life becomes poisoned or polluted. The Lord, the Spirit, is the one who searches the reins and the hearts — He examines our discernment and the source of our life, to determine our true spiritual condition!

Our reins or spiritual kidneys give us the ability to discern and separate the good from the evil and the soulish from the spiritual. Jezebel and her followers were all suffering spiritual renal failure! They had no discernment by the spirit, so they were carried away by every wind of doctrine, soulish emotion, and carnal reasoning. Of all the virtues needed by God's called and chosen elect in this significant hour, methinks that discernment is among the serious. There are many people in this hour who talk about being overcomers, manifest sons of God, kings and priests after the order of Melchizedek, deliverers of creation. and many other wonderful things, yet they themselves are unable to discern truth from error, the soulical from the spiritual, fleshly manifestations from divine operations of the Spirit of God, or kingdom-building preachers from a true son of God.

I am often appalled at the vast number of saints I find across the land who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship to God, while at the same time ignorantly devouring books published by occult publishing houses, authored by deceivers who deny the Lord who bought us, laced with pagan heresies of eastern philosophies, and many other weird beliefs out of the kingdom of darkness. There are many like that today who cannot discern truth from error! I care not how profuse your knowledge of the doctrines of sonship, reconciliation, and the kingdom of God; if you are lacking in keen spiritual discernment you are still disqualified from the high calling of manifest sonship. You suffer from renal failure and stand in need of a mighty healing! God provides no spiritual dialysis!

There is placed within every true son of God that inward sensitivity to spiritual realities. We are made conscious, by this spiritual sensitivity, to the spiritual atmosphere about us in our own walk with God, in those we meet, and any gatherings we may attend. Perhaps the most important function of our reins has to do with our personal contact with God in the spirit! In this we are made aware of the presence and life of God and convictions are given to us concerning His word, His will, and His ways. So little are we taught about this and so little do we understand, that often we disregard that "still small voice" within. It is soon quenched and the spirit is grieved, and this inner sensitivity is lost. If it is lost, we need to repent and earnestly seek the Lord that there may be a restoration of that which was lost!

By this inner function of the reins we are told of the spiritual quality of a ministry, of prophecy, preaching, teaching, testimony, prayer, and worship. By this same operation of the reins within one is made aware of the motives in ministry. Among the things that are sensed are love, truth, humility, righteousness, gentleness, sincerity, genuineness, and dependence on God. On the negative side we may sense pride, error, self-esteem, deceitfulness, impurity, envy, strife, carnality, or a kingdom-building spirit. This inner spiritual sense is DISCERNMENT! It is a "knowing" not derived from the physical senses, information, observation, soulical intuition, or suspicion. Some have called it "inner witness," others have called it "inner light," but it is a quickened ability in the powers of the new creation man which flows out of the mind of Christ enabling one to perceive the spiritual states and motives of men, teachings, manifestations, and spirits, though to the natural man this knowledge may be hidden.

I have found that even among good men there is a tendency to mistake one's natural perception and soulical intuition and cognition for that of the spirit. What most people know as intuition, including psychic powers, are of the soul, not the spirit. How necessary it is to walk close to the Lord Jesus and take care that we do not confuse that which is soulish with the spiritual! By a careful guarding against critical, suspicious, and uncharitable attitudes, and a concern for God's glory alone, we will be kept from error in this realm. Many people have a keen sense of natural perceptiveness and soulical intuition by which they detect conditions, but this is not discerning by the Holy Spirit! As a result they may think that which is natural is of God and be mistaken or deceived. Natural discernment fails when it comes to the great mysteries of the spiritual realm and activity. The natural or soulish man receiveth not the things of the spirit, for they are spiritually discerned!

More than forty years ago a preacher and his lovely wife appeared in a Convention we held in Florida. This man possessed a dynamic personality, oozing with charisma, was wonderfully articulate, and had a fantastic testimony. At the invitation of the brethren I was associated with at the time, he spoke to the Convention in one of the evening sessions. The audience sat spellbound and the whole atmosphere was charged with excitement as he related how God had poured out upon him a powerful and supernatural visitation of the Spirit while pastor of a Baptist church in the state of Michigan. Some strange and awesome things transpired in his ministry at that time and in that church. But many rejected the wonderful things that were happening, and even his own family did not understand the unusual manifestations of the Spirit in his life.

Misunderstanding, then opposition, and finally hostility arose, and the battle raged until finally his persecutors were successful in having him committed to the State Mental Hospital. On and on the story went, climaxing with his sensational escape from the asylum on a bicycle, and the dramatic dealings of God which propelled him into a vibrant kingdom ministry. The people were deeply moved and the ministers were ecstatic! But deep within my spirit, as I listened attentively that crisp January night, a bright red flag was hoisted by the Holy Spirit. I knew distinctively by that inner voice that something was wrong — seriously wrong. While he was yet speaking, amidst great rejoicing and praising God, I turned to Lorain and said, "I don't believe a word that man has said!"

The brethren, however, received him with open arms and opened numerous doors for him across the land. They flew him and his companion to the mission station in Haiti. While there his wife received an astounding vision of the judgment soon to be visited upon America. Another group of brethren took him up and opened many doors for him in various states. He soared to higher and higher heights as the days swiftly passed. Then suddenly — six months later — the lid blew off! A precious prophet of God also discerned that something was amiss. He traveled to the town in Michigan where this man said that he had been the pastor of a Baptist church and began to do an investigation. What he found out was startling. He discovered that this preacher had, indeed, been pastor of a Baptist church there, but he was dismissed, not for any outpouring or unusual manifestations of the Spirit, but for gross immorality. Furthermore, it was true that he had spent time in a mental institution, but again not because of any spiritual experiences! He had a wife and several children back in that town whom he had abandoned, and the woman now traveling with him was not his wife at all — she was his mistress!

The brethren confronted him with the truth and he promptly confessed that his whole testimony was a fabrication, a lie, and his ministry a fraud. When asked why he did it, he replied, "God has raised me up in this hour to see how many of His people can be deceived!" And when the news reached me, the Spirit witnessed within me, "Amen!" Yet — how sobering this is! What an indictment! How terribly awesome! For out of the thousands of saints and ministries exposed to this fraud, only one prophet and myself (as far as I know) discerned him!

God is setting judgment in the midst of His elect today! We are not playing games. God is not playing games. Sonship and the revelation of the holy mysteries of God are not playthings for the entertainment of the immature. There are qualifications for every attainment in God, and the council is set. The Holy Ghost is closely examining candidates for the sonship ministry. The Lord Himself, the One with eyes as a flame of fire, and feet as burnished brass, walks in the midst of His called and chosen people searching the reins and the hearts! The qualifying time is now. Matters not how many great visions and deep revelations you have received, or how many wonderful acts of God you can perform. It is impossible for a person void of discernment to be a manifest son and rule and reign with Christ! There are no manifest sons with spiritual renal failure — you can count on it!

Sadly I confess that the land is filled today with those excitable souls who love the excitement of gifts, prophecies, visions, meetings, conventions, personalities, and new and deeper revelations without number, but have not an ounce of spiritual discernment. These gullible souls swallow every ridiculous absurdity peddled in the name of "deeper revelation." Tell such starry-eyed super spirituals that not everything they see, read, or hear in the name of the kingdom message is the truth, or of God, and they gaze upon your ignorance with the sympathetic understanding generally reserved for a lunatic.

I shall never forget a "Kingdom Convention" I attended once. It was sad — a monstrous mixture of flesh and spirit, truth and error, of the precious and the vile. Assembled was a great host of people from all parts of the United States and other countries. Some of these people were very spiritual, others exceedingly fleshly. There were true prophets of God there with a word from the Lord, and others who were merely pretenders, prophesying vanities off the tops of their heads. There were profound truths of God ministered, while others consumed the valuable time rambling about in a multitude of meaningless absurdities. The pastor's wife rose to receive the offering. Among other things, she declared that God had revealed to her that there were twelve persons present who were to give \$10.00 each, and seven who were to give \$20.00 each. These she instructed to bring their offering to the front where she would lay hands upon them and confer "the deacon's blessing" on the twelve and "the apostle's blessing" on the seven! For an hour it dragged on, pleading, coaxing, persuading, appealing, to get the amount she wanted.

Deeply grieved in my spirit I was prepared to rise, walk to the pulpit, and read the scripture, "**Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money**" (Acts 8:20), after which I purposed to walk out of the Convention. At that instant the Holy Spirit thundered in my spirit, "No, you don't!" I sat still. Back in the audience a prophetess arose, weeping, and began to prophesy the word of the Lord, saying, "Yea, my people, it is time that you learn the difference between that which is of God, and that which is of man. It is time that you know the difference between that which is of the flesh, and that which is of the spirit. It is time that you discern the difference between that which is truth, and that which is error."

As the Spirit travailed through this dear sister, it came to me so powerfully; my eyes were opened to behold by the spirit the wonder and magnitude of what the mighty God was doing in that place that day. HE had assembled His people together from far and near. HE had drawn both the babes and the mature, the tares and the wheat, the men of God and the pretenders, the fleshly and the spiritual, the true and the false. HE had set them side by side, the sons and the bastards, drawing forth a manifestation from each. And by this judgment was set in the midst! How terrible! The Lord would then and there test, try, and prove His people, that it might be manifest who among them could discern between light and darkness, flesh and spirit, and truth and error. Every man was justified or disqualified through the judgment of the Lord! Those justified would press forward into deeper depths and higher heights of glory. Those disqualified went their pitiful ways to sink ever deeper into the bottomless pit of flesh, fruitlessness, delusion, and darkness.

Precious saint of God, have you been asking the Lord to give you discernment? The first step that you must take is to be able to discern yourself! God cannot trust you to discern others or the great powers of the spiritual world, until you can discern between your own soul and spirit. That which prepares you for all discernment, is to draw so near to God that you will see yourself in His light, and then everybody and everything from His viewpoint. You must dwell in His presence and smell His odors until you will instantly detect any strange odor that comes near your life. The story is told of a Chinese boy who wanted to learn about jade. He went to study with a talented old teacher. This gentleman put a piece of the stone into the youth's hand and told him to hold it tight. Then he began to talk of philosophy, men, women, the sun and almost everything under it. After an hour he took back the stone and sent the boy home. The procedure was repeated for weeks. The boy became frustrated — when would he be told about jade? But he was too polite to interrupt his venerable teacher. Then one day when the old man put a stone into his hands, the boy cried out instantly, "That's not jade!"

Ah, the Lord brings every son into such submission and intimacy with Him, that we discern the least uprising within ourself, or any temptation thereto when it is afar off. God is teaching us to become so quiet as to our own self-effort and fleshly activities, that our life is like still waters; and any strange sound will alarm and arouse us to prayer and watching. He has drawn us apart from the false odors of the flesh, the strange scents of religious Babylon, and the stench of the spirit of the world, for none can learn discernment in the harlot's house.

I well remember sitting on the platform of a large meeting many years ago. We were cooperating with this meeting in hope that through fellowship with these people we might be able to reach some of them with the word of reconciliation, sonship, and the kingdom. A well known minister from a large Charismatic church on the

west coast was the guest speaker. After giving his testimony, he called those with needs to the platform for prayer. With great flourish he entered into his "word of knowledge" ministry by which he told various ones what their problems were. I had sensed, all through the ministry that night, something strange. Like a lightning bolt from the sky, the Spirit spoke from within myself, "This is not of me — this man is operating in a psychic gift, not by the mind of the Spirit of God!" "This isn't jade!" Then followed this piercing inquiry, "What are YOU doing here?" At that moment I would have welcomed a trap door to open beneath me, permitting me to just quickly and silently disappear! At that rebuke from the Lord I learned a valuable lesson — we do not make people pure by mingling with their mixture!

KILL HER CHILDREN WITH DEATH

"And I will kill her children with death..." (Rev. 2:23)

The Lord searches the reins and the hearts, deep within the inner life. Yet, there is also an outward dealing for the Lord says, "I will kill her children with death." The "children" of Jezebel, the offspring of the religious nature of the soul, are all those carnal religious thoughts, attitudes, ideas, concepts, doctrines, works, methods, activities, manifestations, movements, systems, and kingdoms which are born of the flesh. This is not a battle to kill people, or literal flesh! People go around saying that God is going to kill babies. Hogwash! These are symbols, types, and shadows of spiritual realities. God is going to kill the soulish children that are the offspring of the carnal mind of the soul. Every union bears fruit, and the fruit is the children.

It is of utmost importance that all of God's elect see this great truth, because once we grasp it, we understand the severity of the Father's dealings with the spirit and works of religion in our lives which are, one and all, the children of Jezebel. The power of the Christ comes with eyes blazing with fire, and feet burning as in an oven, to slay all the religious children in our lives! Oh, yes, He will kill each and every one of them, and He will reduce us to God. This is a spiritual battle that shall end the prophesying of the Jezebel-soul within ourselves, and will bring down the rule and dominion of the self-life. Just as Jezebel of old came to her ignoble end by being trampled to death by the horses of Jehu, so shall all the ways of carnality and soulishness be destroyed from the lives of all God's called and chosen elect. So also the Four Horses of the Apocalypse (Rev. 6:1-8) shall trample under foot all the wiles of the Jezebel spirit within every son of God! As soon as these four horses have finished their work in us, we read, "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls that were slain because of the word of God." (Rev. 6:9) These are souls that have been brought to death, all their carnal, soulish manifestations ceased. The spirit is now Lord! In this connection Paul Mueller wrote some time ago, "Our feminine souls are being crucified to be renewed and resurrected, then to be married to our masculine spirits, in preparation for our transformation." Aren't you glad!

I have a word from the Lord for Jezebel. "All your children shall be killed!" saith the Lord. They cannot live because there is no life in them. Anytime there is in our life, or in the church, the Jezebel spirit, and we do not allow the spirit to move and touch us, but we follow after other lovers that we esteem higher than the Lord Himself, everything we produce out of that attitude and union — dies. It comes to naught. "So whether you repent, or whether you don't, Jezebel, I'm going to kill every one of your children! They cannot live! They will not live!" If you want to know how the Lord is going to kill your children, I'm going to tell you how He's going to kill your children. "O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones." (Ps. 137:8-9)

Everything that Babylon produces; everything that the soul, apart from the spirit, generates; all that the church systems by self-effort, carnal wisdom, and fleshly zeal bring forth; for all of this God has a man, a corporate man, a new creation man, a man in the image of God, a man in the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, full of faith and the Holy Ghost who shall smash the images of Baal and dash the children of Jezebel, and establish the order of the kingdom of the Lord in the midst of God's people in the earth. This heavenly man refuses to accept anything less than the life and power and wisdom and glory of the Son of God. "And all the churches shall know that I am He that searches the reins and the hearts." That is the scope of the ministry of GOD'S MAN in this wonderful day of the Lord! Aren't you glad!

Jehu, by the word and anointing of God, took care of Jezebel without even touching her. It happened by the word of his mouth, by the spirit and authority of a spoken word. With the words of his mouth he looked up on the wall, and there were some brethren standing around, and he said, "Here's what I want you to do. GRAB HER AND THROW HER DOWN!" A word of authority is coming in the mouth of God's sons today, and they are commanding concerning Jezebel, "Throw her off the city wall!" This has already happened within all who are entering into this new kingdom Day, for Jezebel has already been cast off the wall of our personal city. But I tell you something else. The most dangerous place you can be in this new Day of the Lord is in the church system. "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord who judgeth her." (Rev. 18:4-8)

It's a dangerous day to be involved in organized religion! I'm not trying to be rude, crude, or vindictive in any way, but there are a lot of things going on right now in the midst of God's people that are highly esteemed and getting the attention of the whole world, but it's just Jezebel raised up upon the city wall. It's almost a circus atmosphere in the Charismatic and Pentecostal scene, drawing the crowds, catering to soulish excitement, with all kinds of theatrics and showmanship, as men look at the lying signs and wonders going on about them, but pay no attention to the deep and eternal work of God to be wrought within. It's time for Jezebel to be thrown off the wall! I'd like to grab her right now! But God has a time and a way, and it's not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord!

Once Jezebel was thrown from the wall and trampled by the horses, the dogs came and ate her flesh and licked up her blood. The dogs love Jezebel. She's dog food! There are a lot of dog ministries around, trying to lick her blood and eat her flesh — to receive an impartation of the death that is in her. That's alright, let them eat her, let them devour her — she's still dead in your life! God has thrown her down from her high place in the lives of all God's elect. Jezebel can no longer have any influence over those called unto sonship. She can no longer control, she can no longer manipulate, she can no longer deceive, she can no longer seduce the called out of the Lord!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 48

THE CHURCH IN THYATIRA [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART FORTY-EIGHT

THE LAND THE LAND IS OCCUPIED!

"And he that overcometh...to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father." (Rev. 2:26-27)

Generally all Christians, of whatever persuasion, interpret these words to mean that the Lord's people shall rule and reign from the throne of God's glory over the physical nations of the world, thereby bringing the kingdom of God to pass in the earth. I have taught it that way myself! There are many, many scriptures that clearly point to a rulership of God's elect over the kingdoms of man, over all the nations of earth, in fact, over the endless vastnesses of infinity — indeed, over all things! That rule is given to man — God's Man!

As I have been taught by the Holy Spirit and have progressed in the unfolding revelation of His truth I have come to see, however, that the above passage is not the best one to teach this beautiful truth from! Remember, we are dealing here with symbols, and the symbols portray the spiritual work of God within His people as related to their "overcoming." When a carnal person reads this promise his response is, "Oh, I'm going to sit on the throne, I'm going to have power and authority, I'm going to be the boss, I'm going to tell people what to do, I'm going to demand respect, I'm going to crack the whip and make things change in this old world!" That's exactly what the carnal nature wants to do! From a child it wants to be an authority over everybody else, it wants everyone to bow down before it. With great earnestness I pray that God will open the understanding of all who read these lines, for it is of perfect truth that I tell you that the Lord is not talking about the outward, external realm of authority and dominion. He is speaking of spiritual authority, spiritual power, and spiritual dominion that begins in that spiritual "land" which we are!

We have now come to the fourth step in our progressive journey as we continue to overcome. We have eaten from the tree of life. We have escaped being hurt by the second death. We have been filled with the Spirit of God and have begun to feast upon the hidden manna. We have received a white stone and have been given a new name as revealed to us by Christ, and the next step is to be given power over the nations. As we continue to overcome, the Spirit of God leads us to continue to grow in Christ and in the victory, glory, and power of His kingdom. At this fourth stage of our overcoming are we truly ready to rule over the nations with a rod of iron, and break them to shivers by the power of the word of the Lord? I think not!

Much of the book of Revelation is rooted in the events, conditions, and arrangements set forth symbolically in the Old Testament. The tree of life is drawn from the Old Testament. The hidden manna is taken from the Old Testament. The white stone and the new name are from the Old Testament. It is here that I see the key to what the Spirit is speaking about when He says, "To him that overcometh will I give power over the nations." Over what nations? Which were "the nations" that Israel of old was given power over? The imagery here is drawn from Israel's conquest of the land of Canaan! To conquer is to overcome — that is the precise meaning of the word overcome in the Greek language! When Israel came out of the wilderness to enter in and possess the land God had promised them, for which purpose He had brought them out of Egypt by a mighty hand and had watched over them for forty years during their wilderness wanderings, the record states, "When the Lord thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; and when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; and thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them: neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from

following me that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire. For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself above all people that are upon the face of the earth." (Deut. 7:1-6)

At that time in history, Israel's new land was occupied by the seven "ites" — by seven heathen nations who were exceedingly vile and corrupt, which they had to conquer, drive out, destroy, and possess. As we compare the above scripture passage with the Lord's admonition to the overcomers in the seven churches we see revealed not only the "nations" we are given power over, to break them to shivers, but we see also the Balaamite and Jezebel conditions as the Lord explains to Israel why they must destroy these nations and make no covenants with them, nor make marriages with them, nor preserve at all their images, idols, and groves. Our new land in this new day of the kingdom of God is the fullness of Christ!

THE LAND

In the scriptures all the outward, physical, material, and earthly things that we see, touch, and enjoy are not the real things. I do not mean by that that they are merely illusions and don't actually exist; they are, however, but outward symbols, shadows, and figures of the true. The true and eternal are the things of the spiritual world! Paul was explaining this mystery when he wrote, "For ever since the creation of the world His invisible nature and attributes, that is, His eternal power and divinity have been made intelligible and clearly discernible through the things that have been made — His handiworks." (Rom. 1:20, Amplified) Day by day we see, use, and experience so many material things — we walk on the ground, we open doors, ride in automobiles, eat food, drink liquids, bathe in water, sleep in beds, wear clothes, and contact a thousand other objects. Yet none of these things are truly real! They are but shadows, pictures, types, and figures. The food we consume every day is not the real food. The water we drink is not the real water. The light that radiates our atmosphere and falls daily upon our pathway is not the real light. Even the country we live in is not the real land, but a figure pointing to something higher and grander.

Then, what are the real things? The real things, my beloved, are SPIRIT! The spiritual flesh and blood of Christ are the real food. The life of God by the Spirit is the real water. The radiating presence and revelation of Christ is the light to us. Christ Himself is the reality of everything to us! Even our physical life is not the real life. That is why Christ said, "I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly." "He that has the Son has life," said the apostle. All natural life on this planet is merely a figure, pointing to Christ who is our life. If a man's spirit has not been quickened by HIS Spirit, that man knows not life nor does he have life. "He that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

We all live in houses of some kind — some live in shacks, some in mobile homes, others live in modest dwellings while still others occupy mansions. But whatever the nature of our residence, it is not our dwelling place; it is not the real one! Moses, who had been brought up in the palaces of the Pharaoh of Egypt, who also lived with Israel in tents in the wilderness, understood this great truth and prayed, "Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations." (Ps. 90:1) And again, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." (Ps. 91:1) What wonderful depth there is in the words of the apostle John, "No man hath seen God at any time...hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit... God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God." (I Jn. 4:12-16). Yes, the Lord is the real habitation to us!

Have you ever realized that Christ is also the very land you are living upon, the country of your citizenship? Christ is the land! You may be proud of the piece of real estate you own, the location is perhaps ideal, the community splendid, the setting picturesque, the view enthralling, and it may be quite valuable. But that is not your land! You may also be very patriotic, loving the country of which you are a citizen, cherishing your life there, and even willing to die defending it. Yet, that land is not your land! Your real estate, your nation, and even the earth itself are nothing but a figure pointing to Christ. Christ is the real land to us!

In the hidden language of the Spirit, the symbol of "land" often has the meaning of "inheritance." In some cases it deals with our inheritance, in other references, the inheritance of the Lord. And in addition to these, many other varied ideas are conveyed by the word "land." In the Old Testament the Lord always referred to a piece of Land. God called out Abraham, telling him that He would bring him into a certain land, which was the land of Canaan. All the way from the book of Genesis to the end of the Old Testament the Lord stressed that special land again and again. "The land...the land I promised Abraham... the land I gave to your fathers...the land I brought you into... I will bless you in the land..." It was always the land, the land, always the land! When Israel sinned God drove them out of the land; but He always promised to bring them back into the land. Many people are still focused on that land over in the Middle East. Jewish, Christian, and Moslem pilgrims from all over the world travel to that land and many are expecting the kingdom of God to be established in and from that land.

Many times we hear people express the desire to go to the "Holy Land." I have been to the land of Israel, and believe me, there is nothing holy about it! It is interesting to visit the country and see the geography where so many historical events took place in the purposes of God. But preachers and broadcasters are literally making a mint of money conducting tours to the so-called holy land! Songs have been written about walking where Jesus walked. Many people want to go to the holy land and see the stable where Jesus was born. They want to see the house in Nazareth where Mary and Joseph lived with the boy Jesus. They want to see the hill of Golgotha where Jesus was crucified. They want to see where Jesus was buried in the tomb. They want to see the tomb of David and all the other supposedly sacred places. And there are a great many tour guides there who for a price will take these gullible pilgrims to any of the places they desire to visit. But most of these sites are not genuine — they are fabrications!

I have even heard preachers get greatly excited about going to the upper room and having the Spirit of God come upon them mightily, as they describe it. Far greater than they ever knew before! I have seen people actually go into ecstasies over such stories. It saddens me to say it, but what they are experiencing is intense soulish excitement, not the Spirit of God! You see, that upper room where the hundred and twenty were filled with the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost no longer exists! In A. D. 70 the whole city of Jerusalem was completely destroyed. The soldiers of the Roman army plowed it under and leveled it completely. So there cannot be any upper room there! The rubble from that original upper room is buried some thirty feet beneath where men walk today. But the gullible tourists still go and feel their goosebumps.

Incredible as it may seem, the land of Israel is but a figure of the true land — Christ as everything to us! Abraham from the beginning understood this clearly, even if modern-day Christians don't! The writer to the Hebrews tells us, "By faith Abraham when he was called, obeyed and went forth to a place which he was destined to receive as an inheritance; and he went, although he did not know or trouble his mind about where he was to go. By faith he dwelt as a temporary resident in the land which was designated in the promise of God, in a strange country, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs with him of the same promise. For he was waiting expectantly and confidently, looking forward to the city which has fixed and firm foundations, whose Architect and Builder is God. Now those people who talk as they did show plainly that they are in search of a fatherland — their own country. But the truth is that they were yearning for and aspiring to a better and more desirable country, that is, a heavenly (spiritual) one. For that reason God is not ashamed to be called their God..." (Heb. 11:8-10, 14, 16) (Amplified)

Now we know what is meant by the land! It was but a shadow and figure of the true land, the heavenly land of the Spirit, where the called and chosen elect of the Lord dwell in Christ in God! Everything that God prepared naturally for the children of Israel was concentrated in that land. "For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven: a land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." (Deut. 11:10-12) They were called to live on the land and to enjoy all the provision and abundance of God. They were to be formed into a kingdom in that land, observing the statutes, judgments, laws, ways, and will of the Lord in the land. They were to become a kingdom of priests and an holy nation in the midst of the land so that through them all the nations of the earth might be blessed! All the promises, provisions, plans, and purposes of God were concentrated in the land.

All these types are fulfilled in Christ as a piece of land! All the promises, provisions, plans, and purposes of God for mankind are concentrated in Christ! Christ is the true, real, appointed, abundant, fruitful, heavenly land to us! Our citizenship is in Christ in the heavens of God's Spirit! We are not of this world, nor of the earthly Jerusalem, nor of the physical seed of Abraham, nor of the land of Canaan in the Middle East! God has given us a citizenship in the heavenlies where we are seated together in Christ Jesus! God has given us this heavenly, spiritual, incorruptible, eternal, all-sufficient land that we may become a kingdom of priests, an holy nation, and that through us as the very sons of God all the nations of the earth shall be blessed!

"In Christ" is the place where all things that were lost in Adam are restored unto us and to all mankind. It is the place where the true word of the Lord flows as rivers of living water, and the deceiver has no power to deceive anymore. It is the place where all the trees of the land bear the fruit of the Spirit and all will partake to the full. It is the place where the leaves of the tree of life are for the healing of the nations. It is the place where the wolf dwells with the lamb and the leopard lies down with the young goat, the cow and the bear graze together, for all the aspects of the bestial nature within have been subdued, tamed, and transformed by the law of the land, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus! It is the land where death shall be swallowed up in victory, where the corruptible puts on incorruption and the mortal puts on immortality, as the last enemy is conquered and we fully possess our land and inheritance.

Today we are at the border of the land, and we are beginning to conquer and possess it! We are hearing the rallying trumpet! The sharp, piercing, clear word of the Lord is calling us to press on. This is what Jesus has prepared for us! This is the Father's house of many mansions. This is why He has led us to overcome daily our personal battles, small or great, intimidations, doubts, weariness, pain, tribulations, discouragements, fears, emotions and all things that stand before us and our full possession. Indeed, Canaan represents that place in God where the sons of God who have valiantly fought their own battles, and led by Jesus are putting all enemies under their feet, are possessing their heavenly land of fullness in Christ!

We are now rooted and grounded in Christ (Col.2:7). A plant or a tree is rooted in the soil, in the land; and the Lord's people become trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, rooted and established in the land which is Christ! Christ is the land where every son of God dwells, where he lives, where his roots are, where he grows, where he becomes fruitful, where he fulfills all the will and purpose of God! Christ is the sphere, the realm in which we live and breathe and walk and work and from whence all creation shall be delivered and blessed! He is our land, our kingdom, and we dwell in Him and walk in Him. Just as God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, and just as God called Moses and the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt, to give them the land of Canaan, so has the Lord now called His elect out of the world, out of the old-order church systems, out of all our old carnal, fleshly, worldly, and religious ways and bondages, that we might inherit the land which Christ is. Christ is a good land, a large land, and a fruitful land! This land is our eternal inheritance! Isn't it wonderful!

of His habitation. "Be ye therefore holy, as your Father in heaven is holy." While that old land of Canaan has always been, and still is today, a land of sin and carnality and false religion and constant wars and troubles, the kingdom of God is a heavenly, spiritual land of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost! Jesus pronounced doom upon that earthly land and further stated that the kingdom of God would be taken from the people of that land and given to a nation (people) bringing forth the fruits thereof. WE are that holy nation and God's royal priesthood, a special, chosen people showing forth the virtues of Christ our King! As long as the Jews, the mis-guided Christians, and the great nations of this world continue to believe that the people in the earthly state of Israel are the chosen people of God, there will never be peace there. But when once the church world and the nations see, by the manifestation of the sons of God, that God has moved His true Israel people out of that old land and has brought them into Christ, the true land, and our eternal inheritance and resting place, they will all cease supporting that carnal, fleshly people and erroneously treating them like privileged people, as they have been doing for so many years. Then, and only then, will the peace of the kingdom of God be established among all the nations and peoples of the Middle East!

THE LAND IS OCCUPIED!

God has promised to give us the land, which is the fullness of Christ. There is just one problem with this beautiful hope. THE LAND OF PROMISE IS OCCUPIED! It is infested! It is not vacant, ready to be taken over by God's elect. It presently is occupied by God's enemies. Seven mighty nations occupy the land! The Hittites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, the Jebusites, and the Canaanites. Each and every one of them is "greater and mightier" than Israel. **(Deut. 7:1)** These enemy nations have walled cities replete with towers, huge gates, and citadels. They are fortified strongholds with massive arsenals of bows and arrows, swords, and daggers plus special weapons like the steel-edged Canaanite battle-ax. They have chariots of iron! The people of Canaan are tall and strong; their warriors renowned. **(Deut. 1:28)**

The Promised Land was lived in by brutal and ruthless tribes who practiced devilish idolatries, including the worship of their own sexual lusts and the burning of their children in the fire as sacrificial offerings. Their abominable, degrading, disgusting patterns of behavior had been inviting the wrath of God during the time that Israel was multiplying in Egypt. When we say that Christ is our land of promise, this doesn't mean that Christ Himself is full of wickedness and abominations! You see, my beloved, the land is the realization of Christ within ourselves. The land is not in some far-off heaven somewhere. The land is within us! And in that land of the experiencing of Christ within ourselves we find a great number of hindrances, problems, bondages, fears, perceptions, ideas, concepts, fleshliness, carnality, habits, sin, sickness, and death — all enemies of the realization of Christ.

The realization of Christ as the totality of our life is experienced in three areas — our spirit, soul, and body. Christ is the land of promise, but Christ is entered into and possessed through the experiencing of Christ in spirit, soul, and body. That is the land! This land is occupied by enemies, and Christ is not realized without a battle. It's not news to any of us that we are in the midst of a war between two kingdoms: the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. Neither is it news to us that we are the battleground! More particularly, the major focal point of the battle is our mind. There the battle rages at its greatest intensity, because the war is a struggle for our hearts and our loyalties — the very souls and lives of men.

Israel increased in strength and became an army and strong in faith during the time it was wandering in the wilderness, and all the while God was preparing the people for the coming fight against the inhabitants of Canaan. In like manner, throughout two thousand years of the church's (and our own) wandering in the spiritual wilderness of religious carnality, testing, and proving the elect of the Lord have been gathering strength and faith and becoming an army to drive out the enemies of God in our spiritual land of Canaan.

Beautiful, inspiring, and challenging are these words from Brother Ray Prinzing. "There is another point which also must be reckoned with, and that is, the deeper your life in Christ, the deeper the conflict also. One of the indications of the degree of our spiritual maturity is the degree of spiritual warfare which we face. Divine wisdom is revealed in that God does not send His 'spiritual babes' to fight the fiery contests of the 'conflict of the ages.' Nor does a revival-like atmosphere, with the blessings and shoutings of victory betoken what the battle is like. The shout of the multitude with whom you keep 'holy day' is much different than the sound of travail in the dark valley. God retains the sole authority of the battle. HE IS THE CAPTAIN OF THE HOSTS, and He knows full well that a new believer cannot face the 'dark night of the soul' until they have been prepared for it, so steadily He leads and works His purpose within, to fit us for the battle.

"We have a beautiful type of this in the Old Testament: 'And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent (change their mind) when they see war, and they return to Egypt: but God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea...' **(Ex. 13:17-18)** It was later, after they had learned to trust Him, after they had received His commandments, after they had been put in order according to their ranks and divisions, that God permitted them to face a few battles. Furthermore, just conquering the wilderness alone, with its severe dealings of proving and inner discipline were enough, so that in all of their wilderness journey they fought but few battles, and met with few enemies, compared to those they would later encounter in the land of Canaan, where they would face the walled cities, and the giants, kings and nations which they would have to overcome.

"Dare we say that the stronger the battle, the greater the temptations, the more it is a sign that we are developing and growing in grace? Great testings are often a sign of great grace and great faith, not a sign that

we are weak and of little faith. The Lord knows that HE has processed you to the point that you are now ready to face some of these battles. However, don't suddenly begin to look at your own strength and sufficiency, and begin to take pride that you must be 'arriving,' it is not your strength, but HIS IN YOU that is equal to the need. "Israel could not have fought the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites until they had come into the land where these enemies dwelt. The very fact that they were not in this intense conflict while they were wandering around in the wilderness was proof that they had not yet come into the land of Canaan. But once they found themselves face to face with the giants and the walled cities, they knew they were 'in the land,' and the battle was the proof. Therefore, the very power of your trial and testing may become one of the strongest proofs that you are really entering into the land of promise, since these pressures are peculiar to that land. Canaan's battles are fought in the land of Canaan, not down in the land of Egypt, nor even yet in the wilderness." — end quote.

In this, our generation, a righteous remnant is coming out of their wilderness of trial, testing, and chastisement. Our days of wandering, murmuring, rebellion, immaturity, and vacillation are ending! Our wilderness journey has also ended! There is a specific people in the earth today who witnessed the mighty power of God as He revealed Himself in signs and wonders, and thereby led us out of our enslavement in the Egypt of the world of sin and death. We have also endured the testings and chastisements of the Lord through the provings of the wilderness. Many who read these lines will bear witness that this is true, and now the spirit of sonship groans and travails within you for the fullness of Christ and the glory of the kingdom of God. You have faithfully obeyed in all the deep dealings of the Lord as experienced by all other sons of God, and those experiences made you the overcomer that you are.

There are many other of the Lord's people who have walked with God in the light they have received, and have also walked through testings and wilderness experiences. But unless the spirit of sonship drives and compels them on this journey into the promised land of the fullness of Christ, they will not profit from the unique trials of the wilderness that prepare one to cross the Jordan and possess their land. Rather than increasing in faith and following Joshua-Jesus into the kingdom land, they are of those who perish in the wilderness. We are not critical of them, for they are the Lord's people and have at least come up out of Egypt and have eaten the manna and drunk from the rock. The primary work of God in this hour is with His elect remnant whom He has called to rise up and take the land so that all nations might be blessed and creation delivered.

Now we are crossing the Jordan, in spiritual type, and are entering the new land of the kingdom of God or the fullness of Christ on the earth! We may have held the erroneous idea that upon entering the new land of the kingdom we would at once know absolute peace, joy, kingdom blessings, power, and incorruptible life. Perhaps we once thought that by entering into the kingdom of God the entire order of things within and without would change overnight. But I call you to remembrance, my beloved, that the new land of Canaan was the place where Israel of old faced their enemies and conquered them. Even so do we now confront our enemies in this new realm of the kingdom of God! Israel conquered their enemies under Joshua's leadership after they crossed the Jordan, not before! Even so shall the Lord lead us in conquering all our enemies when we have crossed over our spiritual Jordan? The truth is, the most powerful and entrenched of our enemies are across Jordan in the new land! Israel of old entered this new Promised Land first, and then they saw their enemies and conquered them. All that happened with Israel then is written for our admonition and instruction, for those natural events are the figures of the spiritual events within the lives of God's elect by which we enter into our land of the fullness of Christ within ourselves.

Only now are we discovering our enemies! As we cross over our Jordan all our enemies, including death the last enemy, must be driven out before we shall inherit the kingdom of God in all its glorious fullness. But the battle is not ours! Our enemies are also the Lord's enemies, and HE has promised to drive them out before us as we walk forward in obedience to Him! Here in this new land of the fullness of Christ we shall be fully saved in spirit, soul, and body. Then death, the last enemy, shall be totally conquered within ourselves and defeated. Some say that it is in crossing the Jordan that death is overcome, but such is not the case! Death is the "last" enemy that shall be destroyed, not the first! The battle only begins after we have crossed our spiritual Jordan! Jordan is simply the "crossing over" of leaving our wilderness wanderings behind and stepping forth in faith and obedience to enter in and begin possessing the land of our inheritance! As we enter into this land and begin to conquer the enemies and possess our inheritances, we will know that we are truly His people and that He is our God!

Complete and perfect obedience to the Lord is required of every one who shall follow Jesus across Jordan and possess the kingdom of God. Every part of our being must be under His control, for there is no way we can do His will unless our entire being is in subjection to the Lord. The part of our being that stands in our way is our human consciousness, the self, what we are and think and know and can do naturally. The natural part of us is not subject unto the Lord, nor ever can be. Call it what you want to, self, the flesh, the carnal mind or nature, or any other description; these are all one and the same, and this is what stands in the way of us fulfilling the purposes of God and doing His will.

This old nature cannot be reformed! Reformation is of no use; many try it, but all you have is a whited sepulcher full of dead men's bones — dressed up on the outside, but full of death and corruption on the inside. We must be transformed, not reformed! There has to be a complete transformation of our entire being! The old nature has to go, and a new man takes its place! It is impossible for the old nature (natural man) to be in obedience to the Lord. Only the Christ within us can be obedient to the will of God! When He said, "I come to do Thy will, O God," it was not only the man Christ Jesus, who walked the shores of Galilee, that was speaking here, but also the Christ that is within us. He comes to dwell in these temples, to take control of these vessels, to conquer, crush, drive out, and destroy every enemy that in our land the will of God may be done.

The Father has given unto the Son power over all flesh, as He said, "**As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh...**" (Jn. 17:2) Because He has this power over the flesh He is able to subdue it unto Himself. "**But our citizenship is in heaven, and out of it we await a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His body of glory, by the power which enables Him even to subject all things unto Himself.**" (Phil. 3:20-21) What a word that is! Only HE within us has the power to do this! The Father has given Him this power over the flesh to subdue it unto Himself. He alone can bring about this transformation in our beings. That is the mystery! On the one hand the Lord says, "You drive out the enemies," while on the other hand He says, "I will drive out the enemies from before you." He alone can make the enemies within us subject to the will of God. He can subdue this flesh of ours, and all that is within it, so it is necessary for us to turn it over to Him that this transformation can take place. As we turn our body over completely to His control He will go before us and give us the victory! We must be obedient and follow our Joshua!

Our enemies must be destroyed! On the plains of Moab, near Jericho, the Lord told the people, "**And ye shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land, and dwell therein: for I have given you the land to possess it.**" (Num. 33:53) The Lord told them how to divide the land among their tribes. He also told them to drive out all their enemies; otherwise, those enemies would vex them. Then He said, "**this is the land that shall fall unto you for an inheritance, even the land of Canaan with the coasts thereof.**" (Num. 34:2) Oh, yes, the land is yours, but you must dispossess its inhabitants! The Lord was faithful to them, and He is now faithful to us as we press forward in faith and obedience to expel every enemy from our land of promise.

In one sense the enemies are to be dispossessed, but in truth they are to be destroyed. The word of the Lord to Israel was, "**Thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them: neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire.**" (Deut. 7:2,3,5). The Lord stated the same thing to the church in Thyatira in these words, "**And he that overcometh...to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers...**" (Rev. 2:26-27)

The city of Thyatira being a crafts city, and also a place where pottery was made, understood this reference very well. Once pottery is made and there is something wrong with it, there is nothing you can do. You can't take a piece of clay that has baked in the kiln and reduce it back to clay. It just won't work, once the clay has been thoroughly baked in the fire it is finished. The only thing you can do is to break this thing up. This is not talking about people — it's speaking of the rule of the "nations" of carnality within each of us! There is only one thing God can do to these strongholds in our lives, and that is to thoroughly smash and crush them to shivers (little pieces) that the righteous rule of God might arise in their place.

Great and mighty things were destined to take place when Israel set foot in their promised land of Canaan! Although the enemies were formidable, the Lord promised that He would drive out all those enemy nations from before them. He also said, "Then will the Lord drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves. Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be. There shall no man be able to stand before you: for the Lord your God shall lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon, as He hath said unto you." (Deut. 11:23-25)

Imagine what it would be like for a nation of some two million people to march into another country with the intention of possessing it and driving out all who live there, with the fear and dread of them put on those nations by the Lord! It was not by their numbers, for these nations were greater than they; neither was it by their military power that these nations would be defeated, for they were mightier than they! It would be because the Lord Himself would fight for them in every one of their battles. And God is teaching us today that same wonderful truth! There is sufficient wisdom, grace, and power in the Christ within each of us to conquer every enemy that occupies our land!

Just before going to battle against Jericho, Joshua came face to face with a messenger of the Lord. He told Joshua to remove his shoes. The message was just this: Come out of the way you've been walking because now you are going to walk in a high, holy realm. Canaan requires a whole new kind of warfare that we have never fought before. This messenger's sword was drawn and the sword is the word of God. Not the written record, but the living revelation of God's will in our lives. In this realm it is no more the dead letter of the word, but the inner voice of the spirit by which the commands of our general and commander, Jesus, are disclosed to us. This message causes us to see and think and understand and act differently than we have before. It is a new way! The word of the Lord has come to let us know we don't have to fight this battle, for we have gotten out of our shoes and the Lord has gotten into our shoes! Now we will be able to walk in the Spirit, and we will not fight our own battle any more. As the power of the Lord goes before us, and overshadows us, the fear and dread of us will fall upon every enemy and they shall flee from before us! The way we used to fight is over. Now the victory shall be the Lord's!

Just before entering the land, Joshua, as I have mentioned, saw a mighty man standing before him with his sword drawn in his hand. When Joshua asked the man if he was for them or against them, the man replied, "Nay: but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come." (Jos. 5:13-15) Today, in and by the Spirit the eyes of God's called out people are being opened to see that man with his sword drawn in his hand ready to do battle with our enemies "as captain of the host of the Lord." Oh, yes, we see the Lord! The Captain of our salvation, the Author and Finisher of our faith, our Forerunner who for us has entered in to that within the veil, our Head and King and Commander is prepared to do battle on the battlefields of our lives against every one of our enemies, including the flesh, the carnal mind, the devil, the world, sin, sorrow, fear, and death! Nothing that would hinder or prevent us from receiving our inheritance and fully possessing it shall stand before this mighty Conqueror! IT IS THE LORD!

Once the victory has been secured in "our land" then we shall become a holy nation, a royal priesthood, kings and priests to bless all the nations of earth. Don't even think about ruling over those nations out there in the world until first you have conquered the nations that occupy your own land of inheritance! Mighty spiritual power shall be released in the earth when the elect of the Lord have possessed their land by dispossessing all their enemies. Our victory in our land will change all the world! When the enemies of our land have all been routed, including death itself, we shall then have great power to bring the whole earth and all nations under the dominion of the rule of the kingdom of God. Those mighty enemies of God — the three-fold Babylon world systems — political, economic, and religious — all created by the same Canaanite carnal mind of the Adamic man, shall fall before the greater wisdom and power of God in His sons, for the Christ-man of the spirit is coming forth to begin the new creation and make all things new. That is the divine purpose for the sovereign, kingdom reign of God through His sons! J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 50

THE CHURCH IN THYATIRA [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART FIFTY

THE MORNING STAR

"And he that overcometh...to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers..." (Rev. 2:26-27)

The imagery here is drawn from Israel's conquest of the land of Canaan. To overcome means to conquer — that is the meaning of the word "overcome" in the Greek text. At the time Israel entered into their new land of promise it was occupied by seven "ites" — seven nations greater and mightier than they, seven nations that were exceedingly vile and corrupt, which they had to conquer, subdue, break to shivers, dispossess, rule over, and destroy! In the hidden language of the Spirit, the symbol of "land" has the meaning of "inheritance." The land of Canaan which Israel possessed is a figure of the true land — our inheritance in Christ! Our new land in this new day of the kingdom of God is the fullness of Christ! Our spiritual inheritance is in Christ, and the full possession of our spiritual inheritance means everything Christ is experientially realized within ourselves!

The great mark of Canaan was that the land had to be conquered and that God gave such glorious victories over the strong, entrenched enemies. There is warfare in Canaan! There are giants in Canaan! There are seven great and mighty nations that must be subdued in Canaan! If we are going to possess the kingdom we are going to have to fight for it. The powers that are there will contest every foot of it; as soon as we start to possess our inheritance in God, we will come face to face with them. In that land of experiencing the fullness of Christ within ourselves we find great strongholds of hindrances, problems, weaknesses, bondages, discouragements, fears, misperceptions, carnal ideas and religious conceptions, fleshly desires, habits, sin, sickness, and death — all entrenched enemies of the realization of the mind, nature, victory, and power of Christ. But God has promised to drive out all these enemies from before us, giving us dominion over all these nations with rest, blessing, abundance, glory, and power in the land of our inheritance!

What are some of these nations the Lord has promised to deliver into our hands as we enter in to possess our spiritual land of promise?

[Let us look at these seven nations!](#)

[The first is the Hittites.](#) Hittite means terror, coming from a word meaning to prostrate or break down by confusion and fear. Terror is the emotion people feel when facing the unknown or when threatened, as Israel was when they took the first step to conquer their land. It is the emotion we come face to face with when we hear the doctor announce, "You have cancer," or the stock market falls a couple thousand points right when we are ready to retire. There is also spiritual terror inflicted by what Lynn Hiles calls terrorist preachers. When I was a boy, the churches in which I was raised painted such a picture of God as One who is so exacting, demanding, judgmental, and vindictive, that if you went to bed at night with one little unconfessed sin in your life, not under the blood of Jesus, and should the "rapture" take place during the night, you would be left behind! I tell you that in those days I could not truly love God for being afraid of Him! The coming of the Lord sent no thrill of glory through my soul; the very thought of His coming struck terror in my heart! God was so high and holy, so awesome and exacting, so stern and demanding that I was sure I could never be quite ready to stand before His fearsome presence. How my ransomed soul exults with joy unspeakable and full of glory that God has driven that false Hittite religious spirit of terror out of my land so that I now may KNOW HIM AS HE REALLY IS! Do you think we should be afraid of someone as gracious and merciful as our heavenly Father? Should we cringe before Him like a dog that expects a kick? What has God done to us that we should be afraid of Him? God so loved the world that He gave His Son for us! God is Love!

It is a fact that most fear has its root in the unknown. People fear what they cannot see, or what they do not understand, or what they imagine to be. It's no wonder, then, that since religion deals with an unseen world — with spirit beings, the hereafter, eternity, future punishments and rewards, heaven and hell — that people's fears play a very important role in most of the world's religions. You must admit that fears of pain, suffering, or death; fears of coming judgment, tribulation, or wrath; fears of spiritual punishment and unknown, unnamed torments in hell; all of these fears virtually dominate most of the religions on earth!

Those who are God's called and chosen elect in this great day of the Lord are now being delivered from all fear and terror, for they understand by the deep inner revelation of the Spirit that all things are in our Father's hands and all that happens in our lives is part of His wise purpose for our growth and development in Him. He is in control, no matter how dark or hopeless things seem, and He will bring us forth triumphantly as we commit our way to the Lord and trust also in Him. Now together we can raise our voices in blessed chorus with the Psalmist and joyfully sing, "I will bless the Lord at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth. I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears!" (Ps. 34:1, 4). The writer to the Hebrews adds, "He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." (Heb. 13:5-6)

Even in the "valley of the shadow of death" He has promised to be with us, and even there we shall "fear no evil" (Ps. 23:4). Those in whom the spirit of sonship is revealed fear no evil! We do not fear the wrath of men! We do not fear sickness or tragedy! We do not fear death! We do not fear judgment! We do not fear hell! We do not fear the antichrist! We do not fear world government! We do not fear tribulation! We do not fear the beast! We have no fear of the "end time"! We have no fear of economic collapse! We have no fear of terrorists! We have no fear of conspiracies! We have sought the Lord, He has heard us, and has delivered us from all our fears by the revelation of His mighty power working in us! By this you can know a son of God!

We all learn the spiritual lessons our Father teaches us in different ways, but He has a wonderful teaching strategy for each of us. More than forty-five years ago a young prophet and his wife came to the church I was pastoring in Florida. One night in our home this brother's wife went into a trance and through visions and prophecies began to reveal some awesome things. Some of them concerned murders and other terrible events that had happened far away. Times, locations, and names were given. Others concerned folks right in our church. Secret sins, including homosexuality, and even murder, were revealed in the lives of some of the saints. This continued into the early hours of the morning. It really got scary! We were told that a certain one of these people somehow knew that we had learned about his dark secrets, and that he would be coming after us. We fled out of the house in terror and spent the rest of the night at another location!

Upon returning home the next day, as soon as I pulled the car into the carport, I noticed that someone had opened the trap door overhead into the attic. My blood ran cold. My hair bristled. Fear seized me more than ever. I just knew someone was up there and they were waiting to murder me! Things got even more bizarre before the Lord intervened. Then powerfully the word of the Lord came to me, thundering within my spirit, "I HAVE N-O-T GIVEN YOU THE SPIRIT OF FEAR, BUT OF LOVE, AND OF POWER, AND OF A SOUND MIND!" At once I saw all this for what it truly was. It was a delusion! It was not of God! And through this traumatic experience the Lord taught me one of the fundamental principles of His kingdom and life, laying it as a line, a foundation in my walk. Isn't our Father a wonderful teacher! Every son being brought to maturity will learn some of the most valuable lessons in God's unique laboratory and on His peculiar field trips! The principle the Lord laid in my life that day was just this: I HAVE NOT GIVEN YOU THE SPIRIT OF FEAR. Any message that genders fear is not of God! You can take that to the bank, my brother, my sister, and you can judge all things, experiences, teachings, and ministries by that truth!

There are some preachers in this sonship-kingdom word, sad to say, who specialize in preaching fear instead of the victory and glory of Christ! They wildly speculate about world events, conspiracies, world government, the antichrist, the mark of the beast, great tribulation, etc., supposing that every national or world crisis portends the end. With each new election, or change, they suspect a vast conspiracy. They live on the brink of Armageddon. I have known precious brethren who out of fear of the world government takeover, or the Y2K delusion, sold their homes and moved to some remote area or some "safe" place. Their lives would have been

better, happier, and more productive if they had stayed right where they were. It wasn't the word of the Lord that sent them to their wilderness; it was the spirit of fear! It was the false spirit of the Hittites — one of the enemies we are now called to conquer as we possess our new land of the fullness of Christ!

For years preachers warned us that the Communists had a plan and time-table for world domination, and we were told that they were ahead of schedule. What fear this struck into men's hearts! But it was not the word of the Lord; it was the word of the Communists! And the word failed as Communism collapsed in Russia and Europe. The preachers didn't take time to hear from God, they just accepted the word of the Communists, inserted it into their erroneous theories about the "end-time," and proclaimed it as truth. In this new day God is delivering His elect people from all this carnal and soulish sensationalism! There is a beautiful prophecy of King David that is addressed directly to those who have faith and confidence in the wonderful promises and plan of God, and of these he declares, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. **THEREFORE WILL WE NOT FEAR, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof...**" (Ps. 46:1-3)

"We will not fear!" declares the prophet. WE WILL NOT FEAR though the earth (social order) be removed! WE WILL NOT FEAR though the mountains (strong kingdoms, empires) be carried into the midst of the sea (brought down by raging, surging masses of humanity)! WE WILL NOT FEAR though the waters (peoples) be troubled! WE WILL NOT FEAR though the mountains (governments) shake! No place to hide, there, no "safe area" unto which to flee — but — WE WILL NOT FEAR because GOD IS OUR REFUGE! Aren't you glad! As the Lord said to Israel when they entered their new land of promise, "Let not your heart faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them; for the Lord your God is He that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, TO SAVE YOU." (Deut. 20:3-4)

So much for the Hittites! God is giving us the victory!

Next we meet the Girgashites. The Girgashites were known only as the offspring of Ham which means dark. Spiritually it means to be ignorant, without understanding, or having a false understanding. It speaks of the carnal mind of the natural man who "receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." All of us have battled with our human perceptions and the reasonings of the carnal mind! And nowhere more than in the area of the word of God. Well do I remember back in the days of the great Latter Rain outpouring when a friend said to me, "Preston, I now know what the New Jerusalem is." "What do you mean?" I asked. He replied, "WE are the New Jerusalem!" And immediately my carnal mind with its dead letter-of-the-word literalistic understanding, sighed, thinking, "Oh, brother, I've heard it all now!" Very shortly thereafter the mighty winds of divine revelation blew in quickening power into my own life, and in one blessed moment a whole storehouse of my old, carnal-minded, literalistic, religious interpretations put on the scriptures were swept away like chaff before a summer breeze. At last I understood!

The carnal mind is exceedingly dark and there is not one micro-milligram of spiritual understanding in it. Only those who have met this kingdom of the carnal mind and have defeated it are sons of God empowered to reign with Christ in His kingdom! I have observed through many years that in the vast majority of cases, when one is apprehended and receives the call to sonship, the very first carnal-minded tradition that is swept away is the old-order doctrine of the rapture. It's as though that one false teaching is somehow the key or the gateway out of carnal understanding of the scriptures into the spiritual life and revelation of the kingdom of God! People who cannot within their minds cross that barrier never progress into the depths and heights of God. It is a deep mystery, but it is a divine truth that once one has slain that Girgashite giant, many others then fall in quick succession before him!

In our day when Bibles can be bought at Wal-Mart and almost any department store, and sermons can be heard any hour of the day or night, practically no one, the preachers in particular, is hearing the word of God! Multitudes read the words of the Bible but do not hear them! Intellect may grasp what is written there...but that is not a hearing. Hearing the word of God will work transformation in a man! A true hearing of the word will

reveal the Father's heart and uncover His ways and give understanding of His purposes. Hearing the word by the Spirit will bring obedience to the word — the obedience of faith — and things will begin to happen!

Taken by the Spirit to the valley of dry bones, Ezekiel was asked, "Son of man, can these bones live?" "O Lord God," was the prophet's response, "Thou knowest." He was then told to prophesy to them: "O dry bones, HEAR THE WORD OF THE LORD!" The prophet obeyed, and as he declared to them the word of the Lord, they came together, bone to its bone. Covered first with sinews, then with flesh, those lifeless bodies were also quickened by the breath of divine life which entered into them. **(Eze. 37:1-10)** The quickening of the dry bones was effected by their response to the Lord's word! As they kept hearing what He was saying to them, the Holy Spirit kept working within them until they were made alive by His breath and stood up, an exceeding great army. In like manner, as we keep hearing and keep responding to the living word the Spirit is speaking today, the army of the Lord shall stand up in the earth and we shall possess all of our inheritance in Christ! Oh, yes! When the giants of the darkened carnal understanding are slain within us, the Gergashites are cast out and we possess more of our spiritual promised land! Oh, ye sons of God — HEAR THE WORD OF THE LORD!

Then we meet up with the Amorites. Amorite means publicity, prominence, or exalted. Amorites were mountaineers and lived in the high places. This speaks of spiritual pride and every thought and high thing in our lives that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. It includes all vain imaginations. It is very true that once we have conquered fear, becoming full of faith, confidence, and vision, and have slain the giants of the carnal understanding of the word, being quickened to spiritual truth — the very next formidable enemy we encounter is spiritual pride! I have seen many young saints in this walk of the kingdom become all puffed up with spiritual pride over their call to sonship and the abundance of revelation they have received. They walk around with a super-spiritual attitude looking down their noses at all the poor spiritual slobs who don't understand who they are, or know what they know! Just this week I received a letter from a brother, at the end of which he signed his name and then wrote in parenthesis, "a manifested son." How I wish it was true!

God's true people are an humble people, and there is no place in the kingdom of God for an exalted spirit of self-importance because of our calling in God. That is not the spirit of sonship! Believe me, my beloved, it is all by His matchless grace! The words of the wise man are true for every son of God, "**Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.**" **(Prov. 16:18)** "Be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." **(1 Pet. 5:6)** Pride is a kingdom within each of us to be overcome! Away with the Amorites!

The Canaanites are the next kingdom we encounter in the land. Canaanite means a peddler, trickster, or trafficker. This bespeaks of the spirit of charlatanism, showmanship, gimmickry, pretense, and religious racketeers! It is the misuse of the anointing and revelation one has received. Ah, what a temptation that is! The Canaanites are the harlot spirits of the fleshly religious methods of Mystery Babylon. These Canaanite preachers are always peddling something, hawking their wares — some little gimmick to get you to follow them and send them your money. This is the "business" side of religion! The church systems are full of Canaanite preachers and programs and most churches today are of the Canaanite spirit. So-called Christian television and radio are the strongest Canaanite spirits of all and if you are a son of God I do not hesitate to tell you that you have cleansed yourself from following after these religious hucksters! We have all met these Canaanite giants through the years and sometimes bought of their wares. But no longer!

Above all, we have met this Canaanite spirit right within ourselves, in our very own land, for every ministry the Lord raises up, on whatever level, faces sooner or later the temptation to use the anointing of God, the revelation of God, or the power of God, and to use God's precious people for his own profit and ends. Oh, yes! You will never go anywhere in God without meeting up with one of these giants! Thank God, most of us have encountered that nation in our land and by the power, wisdom, and understanding of the mind of Christ we have thrown down their altars, cut down their groves in all their high places, and have burned all their images within ourselves that they might not any longer turn our hearts from wholly and only following Christ into the land of our full inheritance in the Spirit!

The next nation, the Perizzites, is an open or unwallled country. They are defenseless, those who have no spiritual immune system, who dwell in a spiritual land of weakness, doubt, indecision, vacillation, limitation, inferiority, and condemnation. These are always upset, worried, offended, confused, discouraged, distressed, beaten down and full of trouble. Everything goes wrong for these folks! Their lives are one disaster after another. Those who are constantly battling within themselves this inner condition of the Perizzites have not yet learned this one simple but sublime truth — you have within you the self-existent Life of God! How many weak and weary saints are constantly running around from meeting to meeting, from revival to revival, from preacher to preacher, from prayer group to prayer group, seeking Life. These dear souls always stand in need of some “blessing.” They need you to pray for them, encourage them, counsel them, and help them on an on-going basis.

You can always spot a person controlled by the Perizzite spirits, because his whole world is on the outside. He has no defenses, no strength, and no ability in Christ of his own, but is totally dependent upon what others can and must do for him. If he gets fed, someone else must feed him. If he gets clothed, someone else must provide the garment. If he gets bathed, he must borrow someone else’s water. He cannot solve any of his problems for himself, they must all be ministered to from without. He gets no word from God out of his own spirit; others must teach, counsel, prophesy, and guide him. Thus we see that there are three basic characteristics of those in the Perizzite condition. First, they have more problems than most other folks. Second, they are dependent upon others to meet their needs and solve those problems. Third, when they have a need they let it be known until someone comes and meets it!

The Perizzite spirit causes people to have the victory when everything is going good, or when they are struck with some ecstatic experience, some special blessing; but as soon as the blessing wears off they are so weak they can’t make it without another spiritual “fix.” What’s wrong with these folks? I will tell you! Their source of life is on the outside! They have not been awakened to that all-sufficient, omnipotent, self-existent life that dwells within their spirit. They are unable to appropriate the power of the Christ within for themselves. Their senses have not been exercised to discern that truly “greater is He that is within you, than he that is in the world!” They have not developed to that point of spiritual maturity where they know Christ to be the substance of their inward life, their all-in-all, sufficient to answer every question, meet every need, solve every problem, deal with every situation, overcome every obstacle, conquer every enemy, and transcend every problem within and without.

God is raising up a people who know that THEY HAVE LIFE IN THEMSELVES! These are they who have battled the spirits of the Perizzites and overcome them, and occupied their land. Oh, yes! Let me present this glorious company of overcomers, even those who have life in themselves. They are strong. They are full of faith and the Holy Ghost. They have discovered the river of life that flows out of their innermost being, life full, abundant, overflowing! They are never discouraged by any situation, nor upset by any circumstance. They are constant — not up one day, and down the next. They seldom have prayer requests. They are always encouraging others, but never seem to need encouragement themselves. They minister to many, but do not stop to be ministered to. They are not offended by what others say or do. They are not oppressed or burdened. They are not fearful, worried, or confused. They don’t quit when the going gets tough. They don’t talk about the devil, or how he has been after them. They don’t magnify their problems. They are not sad, sorrowful, or downcast, regardless of what happens. They always have the victory. They love all men unconditionally, and manifest toward all the spirit of reconciliation. The word of Christ dwells in them richly. They have been given a new song, even praise unto their God! They walk in wisdom and understanding, in confidence and faith, and rejoice in expectation of the glory of God. Their consuming passion is to see God’s kingdom purposes fulfilled in the earth.

What is the secret to these people’s victory? I will tell you! THEY HAVE LIFE IN THEMSELVES! The firstborn Son of God said, “For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself.” (Jn. 5:26) LIFE IN HIMSELF! That is self-existent life; a life not derived from any source, not drawn from without, not dependent upon any substance — inherent life! Therefore Jesus could say, “I am the Life!” No man before Jesus could say that. May I reverently add that just as the Father has life in Himself, and just

as the Father has given the Son to have life in Himself, so has the Father given to the sons to have life in themselves! That is the power of sonship to God! Once the Spirit of God has quickened our spirit; once we are joined to the Lord as one spirit; once the spirit of Christ dwells within us as the spirit of sonship — we too have life in ourselves!

Jesus did not come to receive life, for He was life. Jesus did not come to receive life, but to give life. Within that life was contained all the fullness of God! If He needed understanding, the understanding was in the life which was within Him. If He needed wisdom, the wisdom was in the life which was within Him. If He needed power, the power was in the life which was within Him. He possessed a nature and a life that was not dependent upon anything without, nothing could hinder, quench, or destroy that life, nothing could add anything to that life, for it was self-existent life, all-sufficient life, inexhaustible life, incorruptible life! This is the life of sonship! Once we discover this life, appropriate this life, and by it swallow up all limitation and death, we have conquered the Perizzite spirits within ourselves and are now living and resting in this wonderful new land of victory!

The next nation with which each of us contends on our march into our spiritual land of promise is that of the Hivites. Hivite means a village or encampment. It refers to that which is organized as a society — the systems of this world — doing things the world's way! Every little "organized fellowship" which establishes some "order" to which we all must conform apart from the sovereign and spontaneous flow of the life of the Spirit, becomes one of the villages of the Hivite kingdom! This spirit of organization, exclusiveness, control, and sectarianism may be found within the flesh of each one of us and we will surely meet up with this enemy before we have fully possessed our land of the fullness of Christ. Every man-made religious system is a Hivite village or encampment!

The Hivites are sons of Canaan, the peddler and huckster, and also speaks of external forms of worship. It is impossible to worship God externally! Oh, yes, one may go through the physical motions of singing, shouting, raising the hands, swaying, dancing, or prostrating the body, but that does not mean he is worshipping. One can appear to worship externally, and it be a sham, a façade, for God is a Spirit, and they that worship the Father must worship Him in spirit and in truth. The "villages" of the Hivites take many forms, but it is always what man does and builds "for" God rather than the work of God by the Spirit!

The last of the seven nations we are called to conquer within ourselves is the Jebusites. It is interesting to note that the Jebusites occupied Zion, the stronghold of Jerusalem, and they were not dislodged from there until David conquered them long after the days of Joshua. There David established his kingdom and he reigned from mount Zion gloriously. The conquest of the Jebusite kingdom represents the final battle for possession of the land, which then qualifies us to rule and reign in the kingdom, and upon mount Zion, with the son of David, the Lord Jesus Christ! And notice, now, the final promise to the overcomer, following the final step in his overcoming in the messages to the seven churches, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne." (Rev. 3:21) That is the promise to those who conquer the nation of the Jebusites within themselves!

Jebusite means a threshing place. Ah, this is the place where we encounter trials, testings, troubles, tragedies, reversals, problems, strippings, cross-currents, and all those traumatic experiences by which we are made strongest in the Lord! This is the "much tribulation" through which we enter the kingdom of God! A lot of people are reluctant to face the warriors of this fierce kingdom! These warriors may be temptations, lusts, habits, sickness, accidents, loss, marital problems, troubles with our children, the boss, or other people, financial disaster, or a thousand other seeming tragedies that come our way for our processing. Each of these battles is tremendously important, for this is the final victory that prepares us for the throne!

As I have pointed out many times before, this journey to the throne of the universe begins in that small and undistinguished place where you are. The kingdom of God is within you. The inChristed who are to reign with Christ from sea to sea, then from planet to planet, and finally from galaxy to galaxy, are being prepared to rule. Think not in your heart, precious friend of mine, that you may pass your life here careless, indifferent to the dealings of God, suddenly to awake one fine morning to find yourself sitting with Christ governing the universe,

because such a thing will not be. Begin today to MAKE WAY FOR THE KING! This present time is but a proving ground for those who through grace will reign with their Lord over the endless vastnesses of infinity. He is raising us up to sit with Him in the higher than heavenlies. And the place which He is preparing for each one is not only a world to come, and a kingdom of Life and Light, but a place in Him, bone of His bones, flesh of His flesh, spirit of His spirit, mind of His mind, nature of His nature, life of His life!

Years ago an IBM junior executive made a mistake that cost the company several million dollars. IBM's founder, Thomas J. Watson Sr., summoned him into his office. Assuming the worst, the sullied young executive said, "I guess you want my resignation?" Mr. Watson replied, "You can't be serious. We've just spent millions of dollars educating you!" God is the founder of the most important enterprise of all — the kingdom of God. God is now in the process of hiring, educating, and developing His management team. He is training us to become powerful rulers in that kingdom in the day when He initiates the next phase of the kingdom of heaven on earth. How much has God already expended on your training and education? God has made a supreme investment in us through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Without that price, none of us could even enter into the kingdom of God, much less attain the high-ranking positions God has waiting for those who overcome — who graduate from His School of Dominion. God doesn't stop there. He invests in us daily through His guidance and processings, through His teaching and training, and the continuous deep and vital dealings of His Spirit. By these we learn to rule!

God will never give up on us! He is investing in us with every intention of making a profit and expanding His kingdom. Our all-wise Father sees our potential. He knows our capacity to grow and develop. He is keener at discerning it than we are! Often when He initiates a training session in our lives, we think He has forsaken us, or that He hates us, or is punishing us. He is well aware of our weaknesses, and is ever ready to help! The children of God make a lot of mistakes, for children are children. Our ability to learn from our mistakes is part of what God uses to build character in us!

It is the overcomers — those who don't leave God's school or resign from His purposes when the lessons get hard and the going gets tough, who ultimately are given power in His kingdom. Have you made costly mistakes? Did God send a difficult test your way and you reacted badly, or failed it? Have you been stumbling and seemingly wasting God's time? Don't resign! Don't lose hope! Don't drop out of God's school! His investment in you is too great! He will see you through! Graduation day is coming! The positions in His authority and glory are waiting! Learn the lessons that will help you to better serve in the kingdom of God. As you do, great heavenly wealth and power and opportunity lie before you in the age and the ages to come. Through you creation will be lifted, redeemed, restored to life and liberty and glory — and that's where the real profit begins!

If you truly are being prepared to fulfill your sonship, then the Father has brought you out of the nursery of man's comfortable religion and He has drawn you into His School of Dominion. The curriculum of this school is a very difficult one! It just means this that God is going to thrust us into the most difficult situations. A situation is only difficult if we are unable to cope with it. When we find the thing altogether beyond our measure; beyond our understanding, wisdom, and strength, then we are in difficulty. And that is the sort of thing the Lord does with people who aspire to be sons! He places them in difficult circumstances, His objective being to get their spiritual senses exercised so that they may experientially gain HIS understanding, wisdom, and strength! It requires no genius, experience, testing, or stretching to remain as we are. But it takes some processing, growth, and development to be a son!

A son is one who is in the way of having substance within himself. Children must have everything done for them, and they live in the blessing of that to which they have contributed nothing. Spiritual children live on the benefits of what Christ has done for them and continues to do for them. They also draw upon the abilities, accomplishments, experience, faith, prayers, ministry, knowledge, strength, and wisdom of other saints. Everything comes to the child from the outside, and nothing has been done by the child itself. There is nothing wrong with that! We all love children! But these are the marks of infancy — not maturity. Sons have come out of the realm where everything is done for them! They are no longer living off of other people's prayers, encouragements, prophecies, strength, and revelation, for the ability of God is being raised up within them by

the indwelling life of the Spirit. What the son needs is BEING PRODUCED IN HIM and he is more and more walking in his own reality of the Christ within. His spiritual senses have become exercised, and he is possessing his new promised land of inheritance in Christ!

To deal with us and bring us to this state of maturity, the Lord puts us in difficult situations so that we can face the reality of His purpose in us and grow up! God says, "I will compass you about, hedge you in, shut you up, strip away every prop, remove all that you have depended upon, trusted in, and drawn your substance from; then I will precipitate you into the fiercest trials, tribulations and testings, I will make the furnace seven times hotter, and I will grow you up into sonship!" All our nice, comfortable line of things fall away at once and we find ourselves in a realm with which we cannot cope, not unlike the boy who cannot swim and is thrown into the river by his buddies.

We have been in the habit of asking questions and getting them answered, but when we enter into the battle with the Jebusite kingdom, suddenly no one can answer our questions; no prophet gives us a word, no word of wisdom is forthcoming to give us direction, no one's prayers avail anything, the rivers all run dry, the food we have eaten becomes stale and unpalatable, the heavens are as brass, and God seems a million miles away! We are separated from all that has sustained us. Do not despair, dear one! For a season it seems that we will perish in the swirling waters — but our wise Father knows that before we go down the third time we will learn to swim! God has shut us up to the fact that from this point on everything must become ours EXPERIENTIALLY OUT OF THE CHRIST WITHIN. It is no longer something that is ministered to us, but a work that is done in us.

To truly come through to God's full and intended place on mount Zion, we must know the Lord for ourselves in an inward way by the Spirit. It is often necessary for the Lord to suspend all external helps and render all others incapable of coming to our rescue, flinging us wholly upon Himself, that we may prove Him, know Him. This is not a permanent condition, but one we all pass through as we climb the rocky slopes of Zion and do battle with the stronghold of the Jebusites. It is a threshing place! It is there that Christ becomes ALL to us! When we have conquered in this realm, we are then ready to sit upon the throne! We now have power over all the nations and have broken them to shivers as the vessels of a potter. We rule with a rod of iron — the very strength of God in the right hand of our sonship! Aren't you glad!

THE MORNING STAR

"To him that overcometh...I will give the morning star." (Rev. 2:28)

We are becoming overcomers by the power of the Christ within! When we have fully overcome all the "nations" that have occupied our land of promise, we shall be given "the morning star." The morning star is that concentrated spiritual light and glory of Christ in His called and chosen elect which brings forth the dawn of the new kingdom day for all mankind. The sons of God, who have been given that morning star, which Christ within us is (Rev. 22:16), are themselves the herald of the new day which brings that glorious arising of the light of God to dispel all the night of darkness of man's disobedience and unbelief, flooding the world with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. It is therefore imperative upon every one who has received the call to sonship to put forth every effort, spiritually speaking, to conquer every enemy in our land, grow up in Christ, and rule over all things by the life of Christ within. Then we shall receive the morning star! Then creation shall know that the dawn approaches, that the kingdom of God is coming in power, releasing the creation from its long and painful bondage to sin and death.

The appearance of Christ within His elect as the morning star is a most glorious manifestation of the Lord! It is amazing how one fresh word of revelation from the Lord can change the whole course of our understanding and give us renewed hope and a fresh vision of our Father's purpose in us. I have been inspired and encouraged with this precious truth! It is my deep desire that all who read this message shall be encouraged in their forward walk in Christ. Every person understands what the morning star is. The morning star appears at the darkest part of the night — just before the dawn! It is not the dawn, but it proclaims the approaching dawn. It comes at the hour when the night is disputing with the morn. It is seen and greeted only by a few who

are watching for it. The rest of the world is asleep. But they will soon be awakened by the arising of the Sun of Righteousness!

The morning star is promised to all who overcome, especially to those who conquer all the enemies within their land which prevent them from possessing their full inheritance in Christ. Inasmuch as Christ declared Himself to be “the morning star” and He promised to “give” this morning star to all who overcome, it is obvious that something unique and special of Christ is imparted to the Lord’s faithful overcomers. This is a “coming” of the Lord you will seldom, if ever, hear anything about from the preachers and teachers of the church systems. The televangelists, who love to flaunt the “rapture” before their undiscerning audiences, know nothing of this coming of our Lord as the morning star. But the giving of the morning star involves an impartation of the Christ! On the individual level it is Christ arising out of our spirit to enlighten the darkness of our soul, announcing the dawning of God’s glorious day that shall fill the whole earth which we are. The morning star is the glory of the Christ within arising out of our darkness which is ending, giving a vision of the dawning of the full day.

Someone once wrote, “At 4:00 A.M. I awakened and looked out my window which was half covered by frost, and half was clear, and there I saw the bright morning star. As I lay there for a while beholding the brilliance and beauty of that star, I slipped away into sleep. When I awoke again the brilliance of the sun flooded my room.” Is it not thus with God’s Christ, with God’s Day? Now we see Christ, the bright and morning star, the firstfruit, the forerunner, the prototype, the sample and first specimen of what God has purposed and planned for each and every man and woman of Adam’s race. And now Christ is coming in His overcoming elect, making them corporately what He is individually — the firstfruits, the forerunners, the prototypes, the sample and first specimen of what God intends for every man. The bright and morning star! That is what Christ gives the overcomer! The star of hope that tells us the long night of sin and death is almost over and the Day is not far hence.

There is a remnant of God’s people over the whole earth in whose hearts the morning star is beginning to arise. This remnant have fixed their eyes upon Jesus, they are looking away from all the darkness of this world, from the chaos of sin, sickness, pain, rebellion, crime, drugs, war, terrorism, hatred, injustice, fear, and death stalking the earth; and they are looking away from the seeming hopeless carnality of the church world, away from everything to the everlasting hills of God. There is to be a restoration! The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it! His prophets have beheld it in the Spirit! Praise God, we are living in the times of this restoration!

It is the greatest day in the long history of man! I know it’s at hand because I see a people being pressed and processed into the very life of God. Not only you and me, but all creation as well will thrill to what God brings about in this glorious restoration! Everything hinges on that body of sons that is to be manifested in the perfect state of the image and likeness of God. And those who receive of this victory and glory, filled with the mind of Christ, conformed to the image of the Son, with a full and complete triumph over sin, carnality, limitation, and death — these make up that blessed company to whom is given the morning star. Flooded with His life and light they become the herald, the harbinger of the near-approaching dawn.

We have passed through a time of great darkness. It has been a long night of travail — yearning, waiting, longing. Darkness has blinded the minds of men, a deep sleep has been upon the Adamic race, the death of the carnal mind has kept earth’s inhabitants in the regions of the shadow of death. But let it be shouted from the housetops — THE LIGHT IS COMING! THE MORNING IS APPROACHING! It is time to cast off all works of darkness, now to be clothed with the armor of light. CHILDREN OF LIGHT, STARS AND SUNS, WE ARE TO BECOME. Birthed into the new age, to bring forth the glory and triumph of His kingdom. Thank God, the morning star is piercing the sky darkness! Thank God, a few of His chosen ones have arisen to behold the glories of the dawn and to drink in the intoxicating freshness of the morn!

One of the reasons there is darkness today is because of the false doctrines and dark traditions of the church systems of man. No wonder God’s people are full of unbelief, filled with doubts, overwhelmed with fears, and walking in the carnality of the natural mind. No wonder they magnify the works of the devil and declare him more than they declare the power of God. They know not the DAY in which we are living, because of the

darkness of their minds. They receive death and they feed on darkness all about them. But God has raised you up, my brother, my sister, as a light this very day, that you might dispel the darkness and remove these heavens that men have been dwelling under and establish something completely new in the earth, a new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness! Bring forth in your life a new likeness, the image of God, that you may declare HIM that is supreme throughout all the earth and that He may reign in every heart. Behold the dawn!

Let us not sleep as do others. We who have received the love of the truth are heirs to a higher calling. We have privileges, and we have duties to perform. We must be about our Father's business. It is time to take the kingdom. It is time to cross over this Jordan and conquer all the nations and every enemy that stands before us. He who conquers shall receive the morning star. Christ in all His glorious and eternal fullness shall be given to this one! He shall then, upon mount Zion, herald the dawn for all mankind! It is time to look up, time to arise and shine. The day is at hand. The night is far spent. We must go forth and lead the way for all who will follow.

Hallelujah for the morning star!

**I awoke, and the night was passing,
And over the hills there shone
A star all alone in its beauty
When the other stars were gone.**

**For a glory was filling the heavens
That came before the day,
And the gloom and the stars together
Faded and passed way.**

**Only the star of the morning
Glowed in the crimson sky;
It was like a clear voice singing,
"Rejoice, for the Sun is nigh!"**

**O beloved! A star is shining,
Arising in God's sons —
It is Christ with a voice of singing,
"Rejoice! for today I come!"**

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 51

THE CHURCH IN SARDIS [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART FIFTY-ONE

A NAME THAT YOU LIVE, BUT ARE DEAD

"And by the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith He that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars..." (Rev. 3:1)

Throughout the early years of my walk in God I did not know that God has seven spirits! Although I had received the baptism in the Spirit at the age of twelve, read the Bible through at the age of fifteen, and had been in ministry nearly all of my life, I had never seen anything about the seven spirits of God. We all knew that "there is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." (Eph. 4:4) We all thought that when we received the one Spirit, that was the beginning and the finish of it! We spoke in tongues, prophesied, did a few miracles, danced in the Spirit and rejoiced with joy unspeakable, and that was it! This is all we knew God had for us this side of heaven.

The Lord Jesus proclaims that He is the One who has the seven spirits of God. Before the throne are seven lamps of fire burning, which are the seven spirits of God. (Rev. 1:4; 4:5) In the midst of the throne is a Lamb, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God. (Rev. 5:6) Since this is so, let me ask you. Are there seven spirits of God? If you say that God has seven spirits, you seem to contradict the truth that there is but one Spirit! If, on the other hand, you say that the Spirit of God is not seven spirits, you are disagreeing with the very words of the Lord Jesus to John! Is the Spirit of God, then, seven or one? If God says there is one Spirit, then there is one Spirit; if God says there are seven spirits then there are seven spirits. That is the mystery.

Through the Spirit of God in the body of Christ the visible creation is brought into contact with the invisible God. By the living Spirit of God within us God manifests Himself in His perfection of life and love and power. If God fills all things, as various scriptures state that He does, then all things are containers of Him. All of creation contains within it the seed of God, the essence of God. But only those who are made in God's image and likeness can contain and express GOD AS A PERSON. A person cannot manifest as a person through anything else than a person. You may appreciate a cat, a bird, a stone, an ocean, or a rainbow for what they are, but you can't fellowship with them. I can fellowship with you, and you with me, because we share the same quality of life.

The heavens and the earth declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork. We can view their marvels through the telescope, and stand in awe before their magnificence, but we do not say, "That is God." The greatest wonder of the ages is when we can look at another personality and say, "There is God!" Creation can declare the glory of God, but only personality can declare the person of God. Did not our brother Paul have this in mind when he wrote, "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts." (Gal. 4:6) Sonship is the criterion for union with the personality of God by the Spirit. For God to manifest His personality through a star, a mountain, or an unregenerated human, would be like me trying to manifest my personality through a tree, a dog, or a horse. There we have different natures! There is no compatibility between these natures. Therefore God appeared to be on the horns of a dilemma when man, the image of God, the connecting link between the invisible God and the visible creation, fell into sin, darkness, and death. In this state of man's alienation from God in his mind and by wicked works there ceased to be the compatibility between the nature of God and the nature of man. This is why we must be re-generated by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, our spirit quickened by His Spirit, so that we become containers of Him — of the very PERSONALITY OF GOD BY THE SPIRIT. Can you not see the mystery?

We have been made containers of God and God intends to be our only content. Bottles are made to contain liquids of various kinds, cans contain food, tanks are designed to contain water and fuel, electric wires contain electricity. When we look at these we realize that each of these containers is “peculiarly made” to contain a specific substance. Sons of God are “peculiar” containers, for we have been brought forth by our Father to contain a specific substance — the Spirit of God! If we do not know God as our only content, we become a meaningless contradiction. Matters not how much of the wisdom of the world we imbibe, nor to what heights of human recognition or accomplishment we may attain; we are still void and meaningless, since we have been purposely generated by our heavenly Father to CONTAIN GOD AS OUR SOLE CONTENT; to reveal HIM as the personality of our life! As it is written, “And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places might be KNOWN BY THE CHURCH the manifold wisdom of God, according to the purpose of the ages which He purposed in Christ Jesus.” (Eph. 3:9-11)

Seven, in the scriptures, is the most sacred number of the Hebrews. This number is used more often than all other numbers, save the number one. It is the number denoting spiritual perfection and completeness. In this connection it is interesting to note that in the title “Holy Spirit” the word “holy” comes from a root meaning “whole.” Hence, the Holy Spirit is the Whole Spirit! The seven spirits of God, seven denoting spiritual perfection and completeness, are likewise a figure of the “Holy” or “Whole” or “Complete” Spirit! When we understand that the number seven conveys the idea of unity and completeness, rather than diversity, then we can with unclouded vision see that the seven spirits of God are the sevenfold, intensified Spirit of the Lord — the absolute FULLNESS OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD!

An object lesson of this truth is referred to in these words, “And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God.” (Rev. 4:5) In the Old Testament, the structure of the lampstand (candlestick) in the tabernacle of Moses was quite unique: below was one lampstand, above there were seven branches, and in each branch there was a lamp. (Ex. 25:31-37) It was one lampstand, yet it had seven lamps; there were seven lamps, yet it was but one lampstand. Therefore it is correct to say that there is one lampstand, neither is it wrong to say there are seven lamps! Without question, the Lord is one Spirit; but He is also called “the seven spirits,” that is, the sevenfold, intensified Spirit of the Lord!

The fullness of the personality of God, with all its attributes and powers, is THE SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD. As we have previously noted, the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne of God are the seven spirits of God. The seven horns and the seven eyes of the Lamb upon the throne are the seven spirits of God. John saw One sitting upon the throne, and He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne in sight like unto an emerald. A rainbow is one, but it has seven colors, and the seven colors of that glorious rainbow represent the sevenfold, intensified fullness of the Spirit of God!

When the fullness of these seven spirits of God is realized in the manifest sons of God then shall be fulfilled that which was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, saying, “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles (nations) shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.” (Isa. 60:1-3) In that day it shall also come to pass that “the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun (the glory of Christ) shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of His people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.” (Isa. 30:26) God’s promise is the sending forth of the glory of God’s Christ, not in the single light of the man Christ Jesus (Mat. 4:13-16), nor yet in the double portion of the Spirit, the former and latter rain in the first month, but AS THE LIGHT OF SEVEN DAYS CONCENTRATED IN ONE. This sevenfold intensified fullness of the Spirit of God shall be revealed upon the Lord’s people whose “wound” has been healed, whose “breach” has been bound up — those who have been fully redeemed within themselves, completely restored to the image and likeness of God!

The church of Jesus Christ will one day move out of the darkness of tradition, bondage, carnality, immaturity, and limitation and move into the bright light of the fullness of the glory of God. The history of the church is a history of darkness and sorrow and bitterness. But, thank God, rays of promise are even now beginning to

break forth from the heavens, and there is a small company of apprehended ones that is even now rising up into higher realms of the Spirit to drink in the intoxicating freshness of the morn! To them God is witnessing that He shall bring forth a light that is sevenfold in its intensification, so that there will be nothing hidden from it, and its heat and brightness will consume and destroy everything that opposes. Nothing short of this will lift up this sin-cursed world out of the dominion of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

Paul certainly had the realization of such an incomprehensible fullness in mind when he wrote to the Ephesians, "May He grant you out of the rich treasury of His glory...that you may be filled through all your being unto all the fullness of God — that is, may have the richest measure of the divine, and become a body wholly filled and flooded with God Himself." (Eph. 3:16, 19) (Amplified) What a word! We have no problem believing that the firstborn Son of God is the One who has the seven spirits of God, or the fullness of God by the Spirit. (Rev. 3:1) In the days of His flesh this firstborn Son of God said that the Father had given the Spirit to Him without measure. (Jn. 3:34) And now the Lord is teaching His elect that we also have the fullness of God in our spirit, for God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, and he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

There is a strange situation in the church at Sardis, the church to whom the Lord revealed Himself as the One who has the seven spirits of God. Though the church at Sardis had the reputation of being a LIVE church...it did not appear that way to the Lord. "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead," the Lord said, and even the little life they had was close to death. The question follows — Why would the Lord show Himself to this church, as One full of light, and resplendent with glory? Because that is what every son of God must see if he is going to spring forth in LIFE! "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." He shines forth in the darkness that He might cause the darkness to flee away.

It is not Christ in heaven that we see — it is Christ in the midst of the candlesticks. It is Christ in the midst of each one of us, Christ in our spirit, who shines forth in the glory of God! Until we see the mystery of the Christ within, the One who is closer to us than the air we breathe, the One who is closer to us even than the blood coursing through our veins, the very Christ within our spirit who is our life — until we see that it is this Christ who has the seven spirits of God, we cannot arise and shine in the glory of the Father! Oh, yes, the Light has come, the darkness is past, God has lighted our candle, and the true light now shines! Christ is arising, standing up within His called and chosen elect, and He reveals His glory out of our innermost being. From there — from deep within — He addresses all our folly, all our dead works, all our forms of godliness, all our soulish activity, all our carnal perceptions, our natural reasonings, our human understanding, and our fleshly zeal.

Christ in our spirit steps forth from the Holiest of all within each of us to shine into all the darkness of our outer life, our limitation, fears, and self-effort, causing us to realize and know at last that our inner son, the Christ within, has the seven spirits of God! We can now live out of that glorious realm and walk with Him in white — walk with Him as Light! This reality is the root and fountainhead of our sonship life of victory, wisdom, power, and glory! This is why the Lord Jesus appears in the midst of the church at Sardis revealing Himself as the One having the seven spirits and the seven stars! This is the wonderful purpose of Christ's message to the church at Sardis! Though outwardly we may have a name that we live, and are dead, we may turn from all the death of the outer realm of soul and body, of the world and religion, turning to Christ in our spirit, that we might truly see the One who has the seven spirits of God! Aren't you glad!

A NAME THAT YOU LIVE, BUT ARE DEAD

"I know thy works, that thou hast a name that livest, and art dead." (Rev. 3:1)

It is evident in the letter to the church at Sardis that the world was invading the church. The church became very much like the city around it. Society should be influenced by the people of God; God has designed that the body of Christ be filled with His power and holiness, to change and transform the world! But the sad truth is that often the church becomes influenced by the world. Amid all the fiery admonitions found in the epistle of James is the counsel that worldliness is the enemy of God (James 4:4). The blessed Holy Spirit warns every saint who cherishes the beautiful hope of sonship to flee worldliness. Some have mistakenly thought that

meant to flee the world, so they hide themselves away in wilderness retreats, remote areas, jungle farms, or mountain monasteries, in physical separation from the world system.

It is not the world we must flee from, but worldliness. Our Lord Himself has taught us that we are in the world, but not of the world, and in the loving embrace of His final earnest prayer for His own He petitioned the heavenly Father, "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." (Jn. 17:15-16) How our glad hearts rejoice in the sacred knowledge that "greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world." Oh, let us always remember that the people of God are to influence the world, not the other way around. The saddest event of all is when it is not a saint, or a number of saints, that is influenced by the world, but a whole church is captivated by the world and its light goes out. This is indeed the present condition of all the church systems of man!

In the kingdom of God everything moves out of the energy of the Holy Spirit. We must see beyond the vessel and apprehend the Life within. This reminds me of an incident after the end of World War One. The famous desert fighter, Lawrence of Arabia, brought several Arab leaders to Paris to represent their interests at the Versailles Peace Conference. Those sons of the desert were filled with astonishment at the sights of Paris, but nothing intrigued them quite as much as the running water in their hotel rooms. In the desert water was such a luxury and here in their rooms it seemed to be free and never ending, at the turning of a tap. When it was time to leave Paris, Lawrence found those Arabs removing the faucets, believing that those magic instruments would give them water at will in their native Arabia. Only with great difficulty did he finally convince them that the faucets were no good if detached from the water supply. "No good if detached!" What a word is that! Oh, let us give earnest heed to this tremendous statement! It reveals to us that any outward activity apart from the flow of HIS LIFE is dead and utterly worthless. A faucet without a water connection!

The Holy Spirit says, "You have a name — a reputation and recognition by the people — that you are alive." You mention the church at Sardis and the response is, "Wow — things are happening down there, that church has everything; you walk through the door and your hair stands up on end. They are alive; their pastor is a live wire bubbling over with zeal and dripping with charisma. They have interesting guest speakers and beautiful special music. They've got every kind of program going; why they've got a bus ministry, a youth program, a ball team, a senior citizens outreach, a home for unwed mothers, a coffee house ministry, an outreach to addicts and homosexuals. They've got a choir that will send chills down your spine; and, man, you walk in the door and they'll have you busy doing something in no time at all!"

Ah, they have a name that they live because they are filled with all kinds of activity, but God sits back in His high and holy place and sadly fills out that church's death certificate. "Thou art dead!" Instead of operating in the power of the Holy Spirit who is the life of the body of Christ, like computerized robots they go through the form of flesh-generated programmed activity that appears to the undiscerning eye to be evidence of life. The name that is lived is being lived before people. "Thou hast a name..." among the people. "Thou hast a name..." among the church systems of man. "Thou hast a name..." at the local Ministerial Association. "Thou hast a name..." on the church page of the newspaper. "Thou hast a name..." before the affluent, the intellectual, and the influential of the community. "Thou hast a name..." at the Kiwanis Club and the Rotary Club. "Thou hast a name..." with the mayor, the city council, the sheriff's department, and social services. Everyone esteems you highly! "But — THOU ART DEAD!"

The carnal Christians in the church at Sardis had a name that they lived, yet in fact they were dead. They were dead, but still they assumed the appearance of life! Human nature does not want to face the ugliness of death. We have invented a new vocabulary to discuss death. The people of previous centuries talked quite frankly about death. They spoke of the body as a corpse. Today we call the corpse "the deceased," or the "loved one." He is not dead. People do not die, they "pass on" and make their great "transition." The deceased is not in a coffin, he is in a "slumber room." He was probably reading a book when he went to sleep! Morticians, with lipstick and rouge, are busily engaged in transforming the dead into perennial members of a horizontal cocktail party. "He looks so natural, doesn't he?" Every effort is made to "dress up" death so that it appears as life! And spiritually, that is what the believers in Sardis were doing. They were dwelling in a realm

of death, the death of the carnal mind, but with their religiosity they had painted themselves up and made a name for themselves that they lived!

I am sure that all who read these lines know what a taxidermist is. A taxidermist is a person who stuffs dead animals and makes them look like they did when they were alive. No doubt we have all been to museums where they have displayed stuffed foxes, elephants, or buffalo. We have been in someone's home and have seen their fishing or hunting trophies — a fish or a deer head mounted on the wall. When you look at these they look exactly as they did when they were alive. You almost expect to see them move at any moment! The scales are all in the right order, the fins and tail look so very powerful, the eyes are open. The deer appears so graceful and majestic with startling innocence in his eyes, standing at attention. There is only one problem — he is not alive! There is no life on the inside. No matter how good he looks, the fact is he is dead! Multitudes of the Lord's people are like these animals. I'm not talking about dead people who are stuffed like mummies. And I'm not talking about the people out in the world who are dead in trespasses and sins, alienated from the life of God in their minds, and therefore dead to truth, dead to reality, dead to God. Oh, no! It is to the saints in the church at Sardis that the Lord speaks when He says, "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead."

You see, my beloved, it relates to works — for the Lord prefaces His remark in this way: "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." Works are the expression of life — movement, activity, performance, accomplishment. These saints are busy, active, involved, working, doing great things for God! But their works do not originate out of life; they are neither ordained nor energized by the Spirit, but stem rather from a realm of death — the unquickened soul, the Adamic mind, the natural man, carnal understanding and human zeal. By all these wonderful works done in the name of Christ, and accomplished for God, these have a name that they live, that the very life of God is manifested out of them. Yet they are dead! Their works are dead works!

This is a realm in which every son of God must overcome in order to reign with Christ! Now, do not misunderstand me! Living people have works, too! Their works are born of the living word of God, the living will of God, and accomplished in the power of the Holy Spirit! Some kingdom people will not witness to anyone, some people will not do any good works to bless others, some who call themselves sons of God hibernate in their own little sonship kingdom with no expression of the life of Christ to anyone. Others release their children to go out in the world and live like the devil with the notion that if GOD is calling them He will somehow reach out and touch them by His sovereign power. There is no reign of wisdom, responsibility, righteousness, or power through the lives of these folks. But if our sonship is worth a hill of beans there will be an expression, a ministration of the Spirit of wisdom, counsel, grace, salvation, deliverance, glory and power flowing out from us!

To know the difference between these two realms of works is what determines an OVERCOMER! It is right here, in connection with this spiritual condition revealed in the church at Sardis that we are called upon to overcome. As I have mentioned repeatedly in recent writings, in Christ's messages to the seven churches it is not so much "cigarettes and whiskey and wild, wild women" that we are called upon to overcome, although those realms, too, will be overcome, but the emphasis in the letters to the seven churches concerns the spiritual conditions within the church realm. Those who are called to sonship have every one, without exception, heard the voice of the Lord calling them to totally forsake and utterly abandon the dead religious works of the old order church systems in order to serve the LIVING GOD! It means to act and serve and minister spontaneously out of the living power of the Christ in our spirit, not out of the carnal programs and promotions of the religious systems of man.

Hear, oh man of God, and give earnest heed, ye sons of God! "For if...the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood (life) of Christ...PURGE YOUR CONSCIENCE FROM DEAD WORKS TO SERVE THE LIVING GOD." (Heb. 9:13-14) He who writes these lines testifies to those who read them that no one can serve "the living God" with "dead works." Dead works are the fruit of the flesh seeking to serve God and they have no spiritual life in them, no life from the living God. Some think that "dead" means "sinful" works. These certainly would be dead weight upon the conscience. Yet here "dead works" are not gross sins or evil of the flesh, but the good of the flesh attempting to serve God

through outward, empty, meaningless religious observances, self-invented works whereby men think to please God.

Dead works are produced out of a polluted conscience. The polluted conscience dictates that this or that must be done to appease God, to please God, or to serve God. But they spring not from a spirit that is alive, and able to produce life; they are dead works brought forth out of the death of the carnal mind. They spring not from the fount of all life, and therefore are dead and obnoxious to God. It is the conscience that must be cleansed from dead works! The polluted conscience will feel better, it will feel justified and spiritual, after performing dead works; but it is a false reading, for a polluted conscience is as faulty and dangerous spiritually as a malfunctioning altimeter would be for an airplane pilot! It is the blood of Jesus that purges the conscience from dead works. Can you not see the mystery?

The blood of Jesus is the life of Jesus! "Except ye eat my flesh and drink my blood, ye have no life in you." It is the power of Christ's life within that purges the conscience from dead works, so that we may serve the LIVING GOD! A conscience fully cleansed by the blood of Christ is freed from that inner gnawing demand to participate in the activities of the carnal church systems of man. Those who are called to the kingdom in this hour live in the dispensation of the Spirit — the spirit of sonship which has been sent into our hearts. It is the dispensation of the inner life, in which we are brought into the inner sanctuary, the secret place of the Most High; and the inner sanctuary is found within us, in that secret inner place where none but God's Spirit can search out. In that hidden depth is the house God has prepared for Himself; there, in the mind of Christ in the new man of the spirit, God reveals, in a way that sense and reason cannot apprehend, the works of the living God by which the kingdom of God shall be brought forth in the earth. It is indeed wonderful!

The words of this beautiful passage of scripture cast a ray of eternal hope across the gloomy pages of human tradition and ritualistic religion with its static creeds, outward ordinances, empty ceremonies, and carnal methods and programs that for centuries have blinded men's minds and made their feet to stumble and lose their way so that they have become lost to the glorious and eternal reality of the life of God in the spirit. Oh that men might know that it is the Holy Spirit alone who makes men alive, and it is the Holy Spirit alone who must lead us into all truth and bring to fruition the purposes of God in our lives. Oh that men might know that we are the servants of THE LIVING GOD! Our spirits have been quickened by His Spirit that we might live His life. The works done by God's called and chosen elect are works that spring out of His life within! That is how we serve the living God. No man can know the fullness of His presence nor the greatness of His power until his conscience has completely and forever been cleansed from dead works.

How vain have been our strivings about externals and our insistence upon little technicalities which we in ignorance deemed so very important! How often my own heart has been saddened as I have listened to brethren wasting their time contending over baptisms, communion, foot washing, sacred names, meats and drinks, holy days, sabbaths, fleshly Israel, dress codes, long hair, short hair, women preachers, so-called New Testament church orders, and petty doctrines of every kind, and when they were through with all their pietistic wrangling, they had accomplished nothing but to prove that they knew everything about the dead letter of the word and absolutely nothing about the LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT!

When I consider the vastness of God's great plan and the awesome majesty of His wonderful purpose of the ages, my soul grows weary with the petty quibblings of earth-bound, tradition-ridden men who are never able to deliver themselves from the externals of religion, and as a result are not able to see the ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF HIS INDWELLING LIFE. Men do not need any external ordinances, ceremonies, or regulations of any kind. THEY NEED THE INDWELLING CHRIST! They do not need to know doctrine. They need to KNOW HIM as their INDWELLING LIFE AND LAW.

When I know God as LIFE, then I will discover the LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE. That is the only law for a son of God! Then, when the SPIRIT OF LIFE WITHIN leads me to eat, I will eat. When the LIFE prompts me to drink, I will drink. When the LIFE anoints me to fast, I will fast. When the LIFE quickens me to sing, I will sing. When the LIFE commands me to speak, I will speak. When the LIFE orders me to be silent, I will be silent. When the LIFE stirs me to go, I will go. When the LIFE tells me to stay, I will stay. When the LIFE directs me to work, I will work. When the LIFE guides me to rest, I will rest. When the LIFE impresses me to

wait, I will wait. When the LIFE draws me aside to a season of separation, I will turn aside. When the LIFE speaks that I should go here or there, I will go. When the LIFE urges me to give, I will give. You see, my beloved, with Christ there are no regulations, no rules, nothing to do by rote, only the indwelling commandment of HIS LIFE. In this kingdom of the Spirit today it is not a matter of law, or ordinances, or traditions, or observances, or regulations, but wholly a matter of the indwelling Christ. Each of God's elect is learning the new way of the kingdom, living by the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus!

As long as the Christ within directs by His law of Life you are safe — for Christ today is the present, instant, up-to-date, indwelling LAWGIVER. Aren't you glad! The words of Moses the prophet are fulfilled in the sons of God today: **"The Lord thy God will raise up a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, LIKE UNTO ME; UNTO HIM SHALL YE HEARKEN."** (Deut. 18:15) Christ is today's real Moses, and we are His followers. God has raised up Christ! A greater than Moses is here! Christ is today's real Lawgiver, not Christ in the Bible, not Christ in heaven, but Christ in the midst of us. "The Lord thy God shall raise up a prophet from the midst of thee." This prophet is within us and we are learning to do all things in His presence, at His word, and by His life. There are no regulations today, just the real Moses, Christ in our spirit with His glorious Law of Life. There are no external rules, observances, traditions, ordinances, or ceremonies — just the indwelling life. As long as I am following my Lawgiver today, as long as I am one spirit with my Christ, whatever I do as a product of His indwelling life is both the will and the work of the Father. Whether it is building furniture in a shop in Nazareth or feeding a multitude by the sea, it matters not; for a son of God lives only and always by the indwelling life, a state of being. In this kingdom of the Spirit there are not secular things and spiritual things. There is only the will of God by the Spirit!

This is a great and surprising revelation to many. Some will tell you that life is in keeping the commandments, another that life is in using the correct form of the sacred name, another that life is in keeping the Sabbath, another that life is in attending meetings, another that life is in taking communion, another that life is in winning souls, or in water baptism, or speaking in tongues. But life is none of these things! It is more than all. Life is not to have an experience, or do this, or that, or the other — life is the living power of Christ within! Plus nothing! Can you grasp the power of that, my beloved? The works of a son of God are the works dictated by the law of Christ within whether that be working or waiting, or winning or losing, or suffering or recovering, or living or dying. We feel helpless beside a truth so great and eternal! In union with Christ His will is done as naturally as breathing. If you are struggling to know His will, and laboring to do His works, then sit at His feet like a little child and learn the simple truth that God's will may be done as much by hewing stones, or sweeping floors, as by preaching or prophesying or doing miracles. God's will is THE LIVING OUT OF HIS LIFE! Seek not a dream, or vision, or great revelation of what you should do. Start where you are...LET HIM LIVE THROUGH YOU right there...His will shall begin to be done in you today!

Oh, yes! For Jesus, the firstborn Son, the will of God began in the mundane things of His everyday life in the dusty mountain village of Nazareth, the place of no good thing. It was there, for thirty years, that He learned to live by the Law of the Spirit of the Life of the Father within. As that life grew in Him the day came in the fullness of time when the Life led Him to Cana of Galilee. The Life led Him to the Jordan. The Life led Him into the wilderness. The Life brought Him out of the wilderness in the power of the Spirit. The Son of God was manifested! Yet, the truth of the matter is that He was every bit as much the Son of God while He fashioned a plowshare with His rough hands, and spoke mercy and comfort to His sorrowing neighbor, as when He laid His hands of power upon the blind and deaf, held the winds in His fist, and commanded the waves with the voice of omnipotence.

Did you ever stop to think that when Jesus Christ, the firstborn Son of God, came into this world HE WAS THE ONLY LIVING MAN IN A WORLD OF DEAD PEOPLE? The whole world lay in the hands of the wicked one and death reigned over all the earth realm! No wonder the scripture says that flesh is a stench in the nostrils of God, because spiritual death sends forth its reek and stench. How the soul of Jesus must have recoiled at the state of death that was rampant over the earth! We, too, the walking dead, walked according to the course of this world, we are told. When Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, came into this world to reveal the Life of God, He came outside the existing religious systems. He spoke the words of God and did the works of God and manifested the nature of God. What an appalling shock to the established religious order to have this

strange man, speaking as one with authority, suddenly appear in their midst not as a Pharisee, a Sadducee, or a priest of the order of Aaron, but in the power of the Spirit of God!

Sunday after Sunday thousands of ministers stand in their pulpits to preach dead sermons while untold millions of church members sing the same songs repeat the same prayers, go through the same motions, observing lifeless forms, meaningless rituals, and empty ceremonies. I tell you frankly that that is the way to spiritual stagnation and perpetual immaturity, but it is not the path to sonship and the fullness of God, or life in the Spirit. Oh! There is no death anywhere more horrible than that to be found in dead religion. It is the land of the living dead, a land filled with zombies, having the outward appearance of being alive, and yet dead. There are but two kinds of people: the dead and the alive. If you have not been made alive by His transforming power, you are still dead no matter how rosy your religious cheeks may appear. If you have been made alive may I tell you that, as assuredly as Lazarus knew that he had been raised from the tomb, so also you know that you have been quickened by God, made alive, and you walk in newness of life as a son of God in the land of the living.

You will understand a great mystery when you understand that the soul is instinctively religious. The human soul, apart from union with the spirit, loves to appear and act spiritual just as a little girl loves to play house with her dolls and toys and pretend she is mothering her babies and keeping the house. The glorious Christ within, who has the seven spirits of God, is none other than the Word of God Himself. He arises out of our spirit, entering into mind and heart to take away the defilement and death of the outer life. He stands up in our inner sanctuary to remove, not the iniquities which separate between God and the sinner, but some dead thing by which the people of God are defiled.

Sadly the great apostle wrote to young Timothy about those “**having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.**” (II Tim. 3:5) Then he added, “From such turn away.” The “form of godliness without power” is an abomination, but the FORM OF GODLINESS WITH POWER is a mighty thing! Not a form of religion, but the FORM OF GODLINESS or God-like-ness. Without a form you have no power. The “image” and “likeness” of God is a form! If you have some gunpowder, it may be a pound weight, and scatter it in a plate and set fire to it, there is no power to it: but ram it into a cannon, put a bullet there, and you had better stand out of the way of the power, for it is very real! The sons of God are being prepared, pressed, and formed in the processings of the Father, not as power dispersed, but as power concentrated. Through His faithful dealing with us His nature, glory, and power are being built into us, intensified within us, formed in our lives for the hour of unveiling. He cannot dwell “loosely” within us, only casually experienced. Through the unique experiences He brings into our lives His life is being meticulously pressed into every facet of our being until HIS FORM becomes all that is seen in every circumstance and situation.

Forms without power are forms without Christ. Forms without power are a curse. All forms of prayer and praise and religious activity which have no power in them are abominations. The church that has a form without a power ought to have been buried long ago, and all who are in contact with them are defiled by death. Under the law it was defilement to touch a dead thing! Power goes into form; form does not always contain power. Empty forms are dead carcasses that defile; living forms embody and express all the power of the indwelling life. The only form that does contain power is the FORM OF CHRIST as He is formed as truth and reality in our lives by the power of the Holy Spirit. All forms which are not His living form in us are dead forms and men are defiled thereby.

There is only one form in the whole universe to be desired, and it is the one created by God Himself. Millenniums ago the great king Nebuchadnezzar gazed in transfixed wonder upon this form and cried out in astonishment, “**Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.**” (Dan. 3:24-25) Ah, there is the form! Paul, by the wisdom given him, penned these words of truth, “**Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.**” (Phil. 2:5-6) Think diligently of what the apostle has told us in speaking thus: “**My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until CHRIST BE F-O-R-M-E-D in you.**” (Gal. 4:19)

The church in Sardis has a name that it lives, but is dead. The church of today is like an autumn leaf, dry and dead but retaining its form and structure. Death has come to man on all levels through the eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This tree is the tree of death! This tree of death stands in stark contrast to the tree of life! The tree of life is Christ, for “in Him was life, and the life was the light of men.” “When Christ who is our life shall appear...” “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath the life of the ages.” The life given men by the tree of life is a higher kind of life than the masses of men upon earth know today. It is divine life, incorruptible life, eternal life, God life, the life of the Spirit. The tree of life in Eden was nothing else than the life of God in man’s spirit made available to man simply for the taking.

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil, on the other hand, is not life, but death. The truth of this can be seen in the very ingredients of the fall! When Adam sinned, of which tree did he eat? Why, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Hear this! The elements of that tree were not only the element of evil; they were the elements producing a knowledge of both good and evil! The tree ministered to man a knowledge of good as truly as it ministered to him a knowledge of evil. Thus, the fall of man introduced him into a realm of duality, of admixture: good and evil. The fallen man is both good and evil! How prone we have been to declare the unregenerated man only evil! It is true that the element of evil in some men predominates, but it is also true that the element of good in other men predominates. The good in man has not been corrupted to the point of non-existence. It is for this reason that the philosophers and psychologists have discovered that within man are some “illustrious virtues” and “innate goodness” and have reached the mistaken conclusion that the nature of man is good. They have merely discovered that within fallen man there is still the principle of good which naturally causes us to want to do good.

The problem is that when man came into the knowledge of good and evil he did not come into a better condition. Man came to know “good and evil” but he didn’t come to KNOW GOD! He now possesses a knowledge of the good and of the evil, but he does not possess the KNOWLEDGE OF GOD! Man passed into the knowing of good and evil but he did not BECOME HOLY! He merely added evil to his good producing a mixture of the two, but in so doing he forfeited THE LIFE AND GLORY AVAILABLE TO HIM IN THE TREE OF LIFE! He chose good and evil — but missed Life!

The knowledge of good and evil concerns itself only with external behavior, judging all things on the basis of whether they are “good” or “evil.” Man, as long as he walks in this consciousness of the fall, the knowledge of good and evil, can understand and judge only within this framework: is a thing good or is it evil? He then presumes that if a thing is “good” it must be acceptable and godly. Nothing could be farther from the truth! If “good” was acceptable with God then man could surely be justified by “the works of the law.” The law is good! But the “good” of man is the good of the creature — not the good of the Creator! It is the good of the soul, but not the good of the Spirit!

In the Garden of Eden we have two revelations from two kinds of trees. First, life is the nature of God, whereas good is the nature of man. Second, life is good, but not all good is life! The tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil show us that on the highest level life and good are definitely different; life is neither good nor evil. Life, good, and evil ARE THREE DIFFERENT AND INDEPENDENT THINGS. The good of God can only be experienced through participation in the life of God. Evil mingled with good produced death. And even before man fell, all of his good, of itself, could not give him life. There was no life in good, just as there was no life in evil. Only the tree of life possessed the power of life! If man had been partaking of the tree of life he could not have fallen. Can we not see by this that “good” and “life” are things which pertain to two different worlds!

Just as evil is something other than life, so also is good something other than life. Just as evil is not life, so also good is not life. Evil and good, though different in nature, are really of the same world for they come from the same tree. Neither one contains life or is life! Thus in the scriptures, good and evil are not two trees, but one tree. Life is in another tree, being something of another realm, from another world, pertaining to another kingdom. This is how it is that a man, by his own determination and effort, can improve considerably in his character and actions and yet still be entirely VOID OF THE LIFE OF GOD! He can be upright, honest, truthful, caring, compassionate, influential for good in the world and yet have no more spiritual understanding

or life than a dog or cat. This is because his goodness is completely apart from life! It is of his own good human effort, and not a product of indwelling life.

All who dwell in THE SARDIS CONDITION are those who suppose that good is life! Oh, how “good” religion is! How “good” are their doctrines, their rules, their morality, their standards, their causes, their programs, their ordinances, their organizations, their charities, their rituals, their forms, their works! How it all soothes the human conscience, giving the illusion that the living Christ is being served! They have a name before men that they live, but they are dead. Only the power of Christ in our spirit is the light of men and the light of the world, and all who follow Him will not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.

How I rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory that for the called and chosen elect of the Lord who have been born of the Spirit, there is no longer merely the two realities of good and evil; there is now within our being the very LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS! He who is in union with the tree of life has the power to offer that to others of which they can eat and live. Amid all who surround him he becomes a tree of life, of which they can taste and be refreshed. He is in his circle a center of life and of blessing, and that simply because he abides in Christ who is the life.

The sons are of that company which has discovered a realm of life, reality, and glory that transcends all the good of man. This dimension of life is the kingdom realm of God! This is where the difference lies between the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life. The tree of knowledge (doctrines, rules, commandments) can only impart to men a knowledge of good and evil. The power of Christ in the manifest sons of God shall reveal to all creation the power of incorruptible life! Creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God!

God has through the years given us a foretaste of how the kingdom of God works in the lives of men by the power of life. In fellowships we have been associated with a number of people were brought to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Some of these dear ones had deep problems and powerful habits in their lives. Some, for instance, were smokers. Knowing that such habits and bondages are a hindrance in the lives of those who would truly be overcomers in the Lord, we could have told these people, “You must stop smoking. You can’t be a member of this fellowship as long as you smoke. You can’t function in our meetings until you get deliverance. You can neither teach, prophesy, or assume any role of ministry until you become an example to others. Smoking is a sin and will destroy your spiritual life. Forget about the high calling of God until you get delivered!”

We could have counseled these dear ones thus, but we would have only been offering them some fruit off the tree of the knowledge of good and evil! So instead, we offered them fruit from the tree of LIFE! Rather than condemning them for their habit, we blessed them and encouraged them in the Lord. We received them. We loved them unconditionally. We got them into the word of God. We ministered the life of the Spirit to them. We shared the truths of sonship and the high calling of God with them. We unveiled the mysteries of the kingdom unto them. We withheld no good thing from them. And guess what happened! To my knowledge, within a very short time every one of them was delivered from their cigarettes!

Their deliverance, therefore, was the product of life, a working of the growth of divine life in them. Death became “swallowed up” of life! The Son of God came that men might have life. He did not come to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. The sons of God are arising for the very same purpose, in the very same ministry — LIFE! The world is condemned already. The last thing creation needs is some preacher out on a street corner screaming about sin and death and hell. Cursed fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil! The whole creation is groaning and travailing in pain, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. Deliverance is arising! God is purging a people from dead works, and raising up sons of God in this new kingdom Day who serve the LIVING GOD! A flood of Life, Light, and Love is about to break forth upon the nations! It is indeed wonderful! J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, Part 51, The Church In Sardis [J. Preston Eby] ~ BIBLE STUDY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 52

THE CHURCH IN SARDIS [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART FIFTY-TWO

I HAVE NOT FOUND THY WORKS PERFECT

"And by the angel of the church in Sardis write...I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." (Rev. 3:1)

The Holy Spirit says to the church in Sardis, "You have a name — a reputation and recognition by the people — that you are alive. This name that they have relates to their works. They have a name that they live because they are filled with all kinds of activity, but the sentence of the great Judge of all is, "Thou art dead!" Instead of operating in the power of the Holy Spirit who is the life of the body of Christ, like computerized robots they go through the form of flesh-generated programmed activity that appears to the undiscerning eye to be evidence of life. But their works do not originate out of life, but stem rather from a realm of death — the death of the carnal mind and human zeal.

This is a realm in which every son of God is called to overcome in order to reign with Christ! Those who are truly alive in Christ have works, too! Their works are born of the living energy of God, the living word of God, the living will of God, and accomplished in the power of the Holy Spirit! Those who are called to sonship have everyone, without exception, heard the voice of the Lord calling them to totally forsake and utterly abandon all the dead works of religion, in order to serve the LIVING GOD! It means to act and serve and minister spontaneously out of the living power of Christ in our spirit, not out of the carnal programs and promotions of the religious systems of man. The works of the sons of God are the living expression of Christ as life! To know the difference between these two realms of works is what determines an OVERCOMER! It is right here, in connection with this spiritual condition revealed in the church at Sardis that we are called upon to overcome!

We find a beautiful type of what it means to be an overcomer and qualify for priesthood and kingship in the kingdom of God in the order of the Aaronic priesthood in the Old Testament. There were three primary qualifications for priesthood in the order of Aaron. The first was birth. The second was freedom from blemish. The third was maturity. The very first requirement was that one must be a son of the high priest, a descendent of Aaron. A man might be the brightest and most capable Israelite, but if he was not the offspring of Aaron he was prohibited from serving in the office of the priesthood. Spiritually, the new order of priesthood after the order of Melchizedek begins with the new birth! One must be the son of the High Priest of the Melchizedekian Order, the offspring of the priestly nature of God's Christ!

God made Aaron high priest in such a sense that his life carried priesthood to all his descendants. The life of Aaron carried the blessing! And, oh, the life, the divine life of my High Priest! Do you think that would carry less blessing than the priesthood of Aaron? Verily, no! The order of the priesthood of the sons of God begins with our being born again of the incorruptible seed of the word of God which is Christ the Lord.

But being born again no more makes one a priest than being born into Aaron's house made one a priest. Babies, though of the right lineage, were not priests! Right birth was the first requisite — but merely the first step down a long path of preparation and qualification. The second qualification for priesthood is found in the book of Leviticus. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whosoever he be of thy seed in their generations that hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God. For whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose, or any thing superfluous. Or a man that is brokenfooted, or brokenhanded, or crookback, or a dwarf, or that hath a blemish in his eye, or be scurvy, or scabbed, or hath his stones broken..." (Lev. 21:16-24)

One could be a son of the high priest and still not be qualified for priesthood if there were some blemish in him — any kind of disease, deformity, or physical impairment. These natural conditions of the Old Testament order are always the type and symbol of the spiritual in the New Testament; thus, in this case the spiritual purity and perfection of him who would draw near unto God as a king-priest after the order of Melchizedek is prefigured by the physical regulations laid upon Aaron's priesthood. Though we all have been born again of the Spirit of God, it is only as we possess the spiritual qualities of the wholeness, perfection, and maturity of Christ that we become qualified to minister as a priest in the kingdom of God! As there were dwarfed and blinded sons of Aaron, are there not multitudes of the Lord's people who are spiritually dwarfed and spiritually deformed and spiritually blind and yet these continually take hold of the bread of God and serve up a garbled mess of man-made tradition and confusion! It is being done in thousands of churches across the land, and flooding the air waves day and night. My deep and earnest prayer is that God will open the eyes of all who read these words to see what it takes to have a pure ministry and a pure word as the priests of God in His kingdom!

It is not my purpose in this message to dwell upon these various qualifications for priesthood, but I would point out one in passing, the twelfth and final blemish which the Holy Spirit has signified as disqualifying one for the priesthood — that of "broken stones." The Hebrew word here for stones is eshek, meaning testicles. It is the reproductive glands in a man's body.

Bill Britton once wrote such a pungent and pointed word on this that I would be remiss if I failed to share it with my readers. He says, "A man with broken stones cannot produce life. He can be a husband, but he cannot be a father. What has this got to do with the ministry of the priesthood? God used it as a type of ministry today who preaches sermons, but does not give life. God help us, there are so many in the ministry like that today! They are educated, they are eloquent, they are convincing, but they do not have the ability to produce the life of God in those who hear them. Their ministry is polished, but dead. Their sermons are interesting and well preached, but lifeless. People listen to them, and continue in their old carnal ways, for there is no life-changing power in their words. Their stones are broken, and they are disqualified to feed the bread of God to His people. "We have had preachers come by and preach for us, only to discover that they had stirred our imagination, fed our intellect, painted pretty gospel pictures with their eloquent words, but produced no new life in us. Sons of God are being birthed in the image of Jesus Christ. It is because a word of life is being planted in the hearts of dedicated and hungry saints! Thank God, there IS a ministry of life in the land, and God is sending them forth with the Holy Ghost anointing! They may shout their message in a loud voice, or they may quietly teach the word in a modulated tone. But they have life to give! And lives are changed, and the image of Christ is appearing in His people.

"Circumstances have nothing to do with this. Jesus could sit on a well in the middle of the day talking to a much married woman, but there was so much life in His words that the entire city was shaken with revival. They could put Paul in prison, his feet fast in the stocks, but before the night was over the jailer and his family had been birthed into the kingdom of God. They could exile John to the isle of Patmos, but the words God gave him are still turning men to God many centuries later. On the other side of the coin, a man can preach to thousands in a million dollar cathedral, with millions watching on television, and produce nothing more than a plastic people following a plastic ministry with broken stones and no life to give. There is nothing plastic or man-made about the real people of God! We have a real Saviour, and He is going to have a real people. He is going to put that people on exhibit in the ages to come, to show all creation what His life has produced in the earth!

"I have met men who wrote books and claimed that their writing had the same inspiration and authority as the writings of the apostles and prophets in the Bible. That is tommyrot! If you read their writings you will find that you receive information, but no real life. I certainly do not claim that my writings are equal in any way to the scripture. But I do believe that I have a right in God to expect to put words in print that have enough of the life of God to change lives, and bring forth more of His life in His people. Someone said to me once, 'I enjoyed your message, but you were preaching over my head.' I answered that I was not shooting for his head, but at his heart! I was not trying to bring information and feed the intellect. I wanted to touch the heart and bring forth life! The man called into the ministry of the High Calling, the Melchizedek order, does not have broken stones. What can we say to these things? With such a high standard for the priesthood in these days, who can qualify?

Have no fear, for the Holy Spirit is doing His work. We (and all creation) desperately need that priesthood of life, and we SHALL HAVE IT!" — end quote.

There is a dimension of the revelation of Jesus Christ that transcends the speaking of words, the writing of books, and the preaching of sermons. The revelation of Jesus Christ is the need of the hour! Only a present intervention of the divine mind, only a present revelation of wisdom and grace will be able to meet the need. If God does not give a special ministration and the spirit of power and glory to meet the need of the world and all creation, it will not be met. There are no buttons to press that can solve the complex and frightening problems that exist in the world today! The further we move in God the more helpless and totally empty we become, for our nothingness is magnified in the light of HIS GLORY. But I know beyond any shadow of doubt that God is preparing His overcoming company of sons at this very time to bring forth deliverance to the church, the world, and all creation!

Only God can teach us these things. Only God can accomplish the mighty work within each of us to bring us to the fullness of sonship to God. How awesome are His dealings in this hour! We are truly being stripped, pruned, processed, changed and transformed from glory to glory into the image and life of the Christ! Patiently He is teaching us line upon line, precept upon precept, establishing in us His ways. If we are not in the life of the Spirit, regardless of what way we use, or how we do things, we are still in deadness. That was the problem in Sardis! They had works, and mistook the works for life. "Thou art dead!" the Lord thundered. And it is here that every son of God shall overcome, to walk in the LIFE of the Lord! God has very practical ways to teach each of us these things.

Many years ago when God was drawing us out of the old order forms and traditions of the religious systems, we discovered a new way to have a meeting; that was, to arrange the seats in a circle rather than in one direction. The logic behind this was that in the church systems the pews all face in one direction toward the elevated platform — representing man's order — the "show" directed from the platform and watched by the "spectators" in the audience. That arrangement seemed to embody the division between the so-called "clergy" and the "laity." On the other hand, the chairs in a circle represented to us the closeness and unity of the body of Christ — with liberty for each member to participate in a true "body ministry."

Soon we made a startling discovery! After we had changed our arrangement of chairs we found that we had just as much deadness as before! You see, the problem was not with the chairs — it was with the people! The secret to life does not lie in any external arrangement nor in some physical thing you may do outwardly in the natural. How chairs are arranged neither promotes nor hinders the work of God by the Spirit. God is greater than all! I know people who have thrown the chairs out altogether and now sit on the floor — as though there is some intrinsic value, some inherent spirituality in sitting on the floor! It has been my experience that God pays no attention at all to how such matters are arranged. However we do it, it is for our convenience, and is neither an inducement nor a hindrance to the Holy Spirit!

The truth is I have been in some glorious meetings in conventional church buildings, while I have attended some very dry meetings with the chairs in a circle. Conversely, I have witnessed precious and beautiful movings of the Spirit of God when chairs were in a circle and a great number of horribly dead meetings with the pews facing the platform. Ah, it was the heart condition, the spiritual attitude, the hunger after God and yieldedness to His Spirit that made the difference — not the seating arrangement! Oh, how we do get the cart before the horse! Some of the brethren in this kingdom word feel that the only gathering together God approves for the sons of God in this hour is in that impromptu meeting where two or three brethren are brought together in a casual way and share with one another in the Lord. Let me tell you something. God really does not care one whit about any of those natural things! Concern about how many gather, when they gather, how they gather, is missing the point altogether. All of the things we do apart from the life of the Spirit are dead. You can refuse to attend a meeting and be just as dead as some who attend meetings. The issue is not a meeting or no meeting — the issue is LIFE! In the meeting or out of the meeting, the man or woman who is of a broken and contrite spirit, God will never refuse, praise His wonderful name!

If we are not walking in the life of the Spirit, the more directions we have, the more deadness we will have. If we arrange the seats in one direction, we will have one direction of death. If we arrange the chairs in four directions, we will have four directions of death. If you attend a meeting apart from the life of the Spirit you will have deadness in a crowd, and if you sit at home in your separation you will have deadness all by yourself. When you are a dead person, no matter what way you arrange yourself, you are still dead. When I am living, regardless of how I am sitting, or how many people are with me, I am still living! It is not a way; it is life! It is not the method; it is the Spirit! There are too many silly teachings among the saints today, and all the ways have been tried in the past. It is not the way, but the life, the Spirit, the priesthood in the Holiest of all. Forget about the way; get into the presence of the Lord and let HIM saturate you! The presence of the Lord is upon mount Zion. Let us ascend in the spirit into the mount, into the high places of God, and there open ourselves, and be filled with Him. A son is one who possesses God and is possessed by God. Anything else than this is not sonship.

In the religious systems the order, the method, the technique, the organization, the liturgy, the creed is all-important. But in the Melchizedekian Order THE ONE WAY IS THE LIFE OF THE LORD. We now live and move and have our being in the life of the Spirit. This is why there are no patterns, no methods, no precedents of any kind in the New Testament for the Melchizedek Priesthood. Jesus never did the same thing in exactly the same way twice. When He healed blind Bartimaeus He merely spoke the word, "Go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole," and he received his sight. But when He healed the two blind men in the house He touched their eyes in addition to speaking a word. And when He healed the man born blind from birth He spat on the ground, made clay of the spittle, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, then commanded him to go wash in the pool of Siloam.

So, what is the best way to heal a blind man? Should we assume that the power is in the method, someone might go out and form a new "spitting religion"! The only way to heal a blind man would be by spitting on him. But no one can tell you the right way — not even Jesus! What is the best way to preach the gospel? No one can tell you. What is the best way to hold a meeting? Again, no one can tell you. If you were to ask me what the right way is, I would have to say that I do not know. I really do not know what is the right way to do anything! I do not know the right way to meet humanity's needs, or solve the saint's problems, or bring people into the present truth. In the Bible you can never find T-H-E RIGHT WAY to minister to creation or to do the work of the kingdom. This is because the New Testament is the dispensation of the SPIRIT! Whatever you do, whatever way you use, wherever you go, it must be by the Spirit.

The Spirit is original, He is never static; His way is always fresh and new and transcendental! He may never repeat what He did yesterday, or the way He did it. In these last years, wherever I have gone, I have never paid any attention to the way. Regardless of the way people meet, or don't meet, or minister or serve the Lord, it does not mean anything. The real question is this: Is there the life of the Spirit? Is there the unveiling of Jesus Christ? What is GOD doing? And how is HE doing it? I look to see what God is doing, rather than trying to introduce some "order" for God to move in.

May the Lord have mercy upon all who cherish the beautiful hope of sonship that we may be delivered from anything other than the LIFE of this calling. We are learning this one lesson — the priesthood of Melchizedek is known only by the OUTFLOW OF HIS LIFE. Our Lord Jesus is the High Priest of this order, and you cannot have a High Priest without a priesthood. The sons of God are being apprehended to be kings and priests unto God! Melchizedek was a king-priest, and the Lord Jesus Christ is both king and priest. The only thing we are told about this priesthood is that it is not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless Life! (Heb. 7:16). The order of Melchizedek is the order of the ministration of LIFE! The order of Melchizedek is not the same as the so-called New Testament Church order. It is more than that, it is something of life, the order of life, the power of life, the order brought forth by the power of incorruptible life, something living, something divine, something sovereign, something transcendental, and something that operates by the POWER OF GOD WITHIN. It is not an order of gifts, positions, offices, or external structures. It is LIFE FULL AND ABUNDANT! We are conscious that God is bringing something new and glorious into being. He is bringing something into this earth that is far, far beyond anything we know. He is birthing a manchild, a priesthood, a kingship, a new order. It will make right everything that has been wrong! It will make everything

as God has ordained it to be! It will bring righteous judgment, it will bring mercy, and deliverance, and power, and glory to creation beyond our fondest hopes or our wildest dreams. It will set creation free! There will be life for all. And God will be ALL IN ALL!

I HAVE NOT FOUND THY WORKS PERFECT

**"Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, for I have not found thy works perfect before God."
(Rev. 3:2)**

We find the Lord speaking to the church in Sardis, this church which is still filled with the ways and energy of Adam. The name Sardis means "red ones" and according to Webster's dictionary refers to the sardius or sardine stone which is a very hard, deep orange-red variety of chalcedony used in jewelry, etc. Some teachers believe that the word actually means "those who have escaped" or "things which remain" but in my study of the etymology of the word I have found no evidence to support this interpretation. The name Adam means "red earth" and therefore carries a similar connotation with Sardis. Sardis speaks of Adam, the Adamic nature, the flesh. Sardis was a church which, except for a "few," the "remnant," who are the "overcomers" in it, still operated out of the carnal mind and nature — the living soul (I Cor. 15:45). They had experienced a measure of the life of the second man, who is the last Adam, who is Christ the quickening spirit, but they had not grown up into His fullness. This church, those in THE SARDIS CONDITION, is very prominent in the world today!

"For I have not found your works perfect before God." Wuest translates this as, "I have found no works of yours that have been brought to a state of completeness." The words "not perfect" mean "unfulfilled, immature, incomplete." They had stopped short, they had not gone on to maturity; after aiming at the goal of the fullness of Christ, they had grown careless and never attained it. Something was started in them but had not come to full fruition and was now about to die. They had become content in this "in-part" realm, and in this state of limitation and immaturity and incompleteness had made them a "name" that they were alive. They were little spiritual children playing church, doing childish things with great flourish and pretense, and were having a wonderful tea party! They were all excited about the little bit of Christ men could see shining through them, and hoped that one day God would build them a bigger and more glorious play house in the sky where they could romp and frolic forever and ever in Father's wonderful love!

Some today are proclaiming that since by faith we have entered in to that which is within the veil, into the Holiest of all, now all that is necessary to bring forth the manifestation of the sons of God is for us to come out from that glory behind the veil and begin to minister and manifest out of that realm. That is a beautiful thought — yet it is my conviction that until we have truly experienced within ourselves all the holiness, wisdom, glory, life, incorruption, and power of that realm beyond the veil we can only come out and manifest whatever measure we have attained to. I know a lot of precious, wonderful, and highly esteemed (by me) brethren in this word of the kingdom, but the reality is that I have yet to meet one who has appropriated the full glory, life, and power of that Most Holy Place!

Of those who by faith have entered in by the blood of Jesus I know not one who manifests much more than we have already known and experienced in the Outer Court and the Holy Place, or in the feasts of Passover and Pentecost. Most are still meeting in the same kind of church meetings, singing the same songs, speaking in tongues, prophesying, preaching, dancing, laying on hands, moving in gifts, passing offering plates, and making announcements; some prayers are answered, there is an occasional healing, miracle, or deliverance, a few souls saved, and some people blessed and encouraged in the Lord. That is all very wonderful! But may I remind you, my beloved, that we have had all these things for many, many years in the Holy Place and in the feast of Pentecost! There is nothing new there. There is nothing different, greater, or higher in any of it! I have yet to meet the man or woman who is ministering out of the higher realm of fullness and immortality — manifest sonship!

I do not for one moment despise or reject any of the aforementioned things, for they are truly Father's provision for His people in the in-part realm — the realm where our works are not perfect, complete, and mature in the stature of fully manifest sonship. We still know in part, and prophesy in part, until that which is perfect is come

— the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ! I tell you this in all sincerity and truth. We have had all these wonderful blessings for two thousand years and they have not set creation free! They have not brought all nations into the kingdom of God! They have not restored all things and all men to God! The whole world still lies in the darkness of sin, sorrow, hatred, war, greed, fear, sickness, pain, poverty, and death, and the saints of God are not yet fully released from carnality and death.

Should we step out from behind the veil and presume to call ourselves manifest sons now unveiled to deliver creation from the bondage of corruption, we still will not manifest anything more than we have personally appropriated and experienced within ourselves. Some will despise me for saying it, but of those I have seen who assert that they are now manifesting and ministering out of the realm of the Most Holy Place, I have yet to witness one who, apart from having some deeper truth and higher revelation, is moving in any realm beyond the feast of Pentecost! That is the plain, unvarnished truth, my brethren. These words are not intended to belittle, disparage, or ridicule any precious brother or sister in Christ, but my deepest prayer is that all who read these lines will be given the spirit of wisdom and revelation to understand that the salvation of the nations and the deliverance of creation DEMANDS a glory greater than any glory we have yet known or experienced!

If there is no greater glory to come, if there is no greater revelation of Christ in His elect, if manifest sonship is just "more of the same," then sonship is a farce and the world is without hope now and in the ages to come. Oh, yes! There is a glory yet to be revealed in us, my beloved, and we would not look back, but set our faces as a flint and press forward to lay hold upon the REAL THING God will do in this day. I cannot, dare not, settle for any "watered down" version of manifest sonship, for the stakes are too high; nor shall I engage in the zealous presumption that I am already something I have not yet fully appropriated in spirit, soul, and body!

I have observed in the ministry of the firstborn Son of God that there was never a problem He faced that He could not solve, never a need that He could not meet, no victory He could not win, no sickness He could not heal, no devil He could not cast out, and no realm of revelation, relationship, or being in God that He could not possess. The supreme evidence of this is when He rose from the dead! Some of us speak of the exploits we have done in Jesus' name, but we seldom mention all the times we have failed! Some of us fast and pray and wrest an answer from the Lord, and then run squarely into another problem we can't deal with at all. If Jesus Christ, the firstborn Son of God, needed the fullness of the power of God, which is the seven spirits of God, the Spirit without measure, then we His younger brethren must have it too!

In the realm of that which is in part, in limitation, one cannot meet every need that arises. "Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts." (I Cor. 12:29-31) Does it say in I Corinthians 12:8, "To the whole church is given the word of wisdom?" or, "To the whole church is given the gift of healing?" No, it says, "To one is given," to one member of the body of Christ. Then, "to another is given the gift of faith, prophecy," etc. In other words, there is a distribution so that everyone does not have all the gifts. How can you meet every need if you don't possess all the power and wisdom and ability of the Holy Spirit? And how can you meet every need, even in the area of the gift you do possess, if the gift itself is by measure? You can't! And that is why we feel so helpless sometimes. You can try, you can fast and pray, you can think positively, you can confess and claim and step out in faith and boast of your inheritance in Christ, but you still can't meet every need, solve every problem, speak to every situation, bless every life — in the gift realm! In that realm it is always a word here, a miracle there, a healing someplace else, a failure here and a success over there. Who can stand and deny that this is the truth!

The ministry of Jesus was not in the gift realm, it was not in part, it was not by measure, but His ministry was the ministry of a MANIFEST SON OF GOD in all the power and wisdom and glory of the Father! The great secret to the ministry of Jesus was that it was not in limitation but in fullness. It was not a gift in the church realm, but the incarnation, the embodiment, the personification of THE FULLNESS OF THE FATHER. This is the realm of sonship. Sonship is not the church restored to the glory of the early days when the apostles walked the earth; sonship is the man-child, a people birthed out of the church in the full stature of Jesus Christ the Son of the living God. Each one of these sons of God is exactly like the firstborn Son! And that is just why

creation is not groaning for another gift of healing, or another gift of miracles, or another gift of faith, or another apostle, or another prophet, or another evangelist, or another revival.

Creation is in pain and travail waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God! Only the sons of God will possess within themselves the full measure of the power of the kingdom of God as did Jesus! Only the sons of God can deliver the creation from the bondage of corruption. Jesus is not the firstborn among many Christians, or among many believers, or among many saints, among many church members, or among many ministries — He is the firstborn among many brethren! The brethren are like Him. Each and every one is like Him! God is not bringing many gifted saints to glory, He is not bringing many apostles to glory, He is not bringing many prophets to glory, He is not bringing many teachers to glory, He is not bringing many musicians to glory, He is not bringing many preachers to glory, but He is bringing many SONS to glory! Aren't you glad!

Sonship is glorious beyond anything our eyes have seen or ears have heard. Jesus Christ is the firstborn Son of God. And now all His brothers are empowered to follow Him to maturity. All will follow His steps, becoming what He is. The spiritual life of every son of God has the same origin as the firstborn, for all are born of God. We are being perfected by the same process, and will ultimately achieve the same result. Jesus Christ was the personification of the Father within Himself, and so shall we be. The holy nature of Jesus is ours to be raised up within us. The works that He did, we shall do as well. The authority of Jesus Christ, even the dominion of the ages and all things, He will share with those who come to the measure of the stature of His fullness. Jesus possesses the totality of God's substance, and this is the heritage of every manifest son of God. The present resurrection, ascension, and enthronement of Jesus is a portrait of our destiny! This will be a company of whom it is not said, "I have not found thy works perfect, complete, and mature before God."

The sons of God are destined to inherit all things. **"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."** (Rev. 21:7) The sons of God are selected by the Father to become the dispensers of life and blessing to all created realms. Thus creation groans in sympathetic birth pangs, longing for their arrival! From powerful angels in heaven, to worlds in the farthest galaxy, the universe resonates with anticipation of the glorious unveiling of the sons of God. The sons will share the fullness of the glory of their Father. They will grow up into the attributes of God as a permanent state of being. The sons of God will partake of Godlikeness, and a spiritual inheritance that is incomprehensible to natural men, even religious men, saved men, and Spirit-baptized men. This celestial race of beings shall be endowed with all the authority and capacity of God. Immortal omnipotence will flow from them as the light rays from the sun.

In the days before us, those who have attained to sonship will be displayed in the blazing glory of immortality. This climatic finale is a fast approaching certainty. From the difficulties, struggles, testings, and processings of this present time the son company will burst forth into everlasting splendor, streaming glory, wisdom and power as a shower of stars. With Jesus as the Captain, this reigning government of God shall invade the bastions of darkness and by war, yea, by spiritual warfare they shall take the rule from the kings, presidents, and prime ministers of the earth. These are celestial kings and priests, trained and tested in conquest! They are invincible in the nature and power of the Father. Nothing shall confound them; all will succumb to their sway. This company of sons is the final world government — it will never be overthrown! They will subdue every enemy, and be the fountainhead of every blessing! They are the solution that God has ordained for the travail of earth's teeming billions. God's sons will enter into His state of being — they will become what He is in an unchangeable personal possession. This is the destiny of God's Christ, Head and body!

For many years now there has been a great moving of the Spirit of God across the land and around the world. It has manifested itself through many movements on various levels. We have witnessed great healing meetings, evangelistic crusades, baptism in the Holy Spirit, prophetic ministries, sign-gift ministries, apostolic ministries, five-fold ministry, gifts of the Spirit, impartation through prophecy with the laying on of hands, revelatory ministries, and much more. And I have rejoiced with joy unspeakable to be a partaker in this glorious visitation of God! But I testify to you today that not one of these ministries, nor all of them put together, has come within the range of the ministry of Jesus Christ, the Son of God! No matter which of the healing evangelists, or which of the miracle workers, or which of the prophets you watched; and no matter which

church or movement with all its ministries and gifts and outreaches you observed; it did not measure up to the ministry of THE SON OF GOD.

We kept saying, "We have the same anointing, the same Holy Ghost, the same power, and we can do all the works Jesus did, and greater!" And as confidently as we asserted, as hard as we tried, as much as we wanted to believe it, and as faithful as we were, it just wasn't true! We had the same anointing alright, and the same Holy Spirit, and the same faith, and the same power, but — we had it by measure — not WITHOUT MEASURE, as Jesus did! "For to one is given by the Spirit...to another is given by the Spirit..." And that is just the difference between the church realm and manifest sonship! Don't get me wrong, I'm not knocking the church and I'm not belittling anything we have had or done. But my heart is desperately crying out for something more, for a greater, grander, more complete and glorious unveiling of Christ in the earth, and I certainly know that this sin-cursed world is crying out for something more! Oh, yes!

It is true, we are the body of Christ, and members in particular, and every joint supplies in a different way and measure. But let me tell you something. Within the DNA of each cell of your body is contained the complete blueprint of everything you are, of the totality of your being. That is why scientists today are able to clone animals and eventually human beings. You see, they take the DNA from one cell of the parent animal and from that one cell they raise up another animal exactly like the one from which it is taken. The bone, skin, flesh, internal organs, senses, everything is constructed from the blueprint in that one cell. Now, every human life begins when the sperm of the father unites with the egg of the mother. That union produces one cell. Within that one cell is contained the blueprint for all that that new person will ever be! That cell then divides into two, the two divide into four, the four into eight, and so forth, until by the time you become an adult you contain within your body some sixty trillion cells!

The mystery is this. There are cells that through this process have become hair, some have become eyes, others have become blood, etc. The different cells make up all the various parts of the body. Yet — the original blueprint of everything you are is contained within each of these sixty trillion cells just as it was within the original one cell at the time of your conception! That is how cloning works. The DNA from one cell is used to construct another organism which is a precise copy of the original. That means, that within my body is the potential to raise up sixty trillion Preston Eby's just like me! Herein lies the secret to manifest sonship. Although we are currently "members in particular" of the body of Christ, mere "parts" of the whole, functioning "by measure" within each of our gifts and callings, yet within each one of us is contained the blueprint of the totality of Christ and there is the potential to raise up out of our spiritual DNA the reproduction of ALL THAT CHRIST IS! Can you not see the mystery?

The manifest sons of God are those who out of the Christ life within them grow up into the fullness of Christ, not in measure, but in the fullness of Himself. These become perfect reproductions within themselves of Jesus Christ, the firstborn Son of God! These sons are individually exactly like Him in the totality of His mind, wisdom, understanding, nature, glory, and power! With these sons it does not take a whole body of people, as in the church, to equal Christ — each one equals Christ. That, my friend, is the difference between the church realm and MANIFEST SONSHIP. When you have 144,000 of these sons you have 144,000 actual reproductions of Jesus — not 144,000 "parts" that "corporately" reproduce Him. Oh, the wonder of it!

With what joy and holy wonder do I tell you today that this is the power that will again be manifested on earth through the ministry of Christ's many brethren, the sons of God! What a calling rests upon the firstfruits! How humbly we should seek God, how fervently we should cry out to the Lord, that His work be completed in us to bring this sonship ministry to pass in the earth! How we praise God for the in-part ministry of the church realm — it has been glorious beyond words. But none can deny that the ministry of Jesus has not been fully duplicated even through the millions of believers and thousands of ministries in all the power and glory of the kingdom of God! Who among us can raise his hand to tell me that in him, or in his prayer group, or in his church, or in his movement, the miraculous sonship ministry of Jesus has been reproduced in all its fullness and power? Were we to make such a claim we would all be found liars. After two thousand years of the meticulous formation of the body of Christ, creation still groans and travails, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God who shall deliver creation itself from the bondage of corruption.

The greater ministry of the sons of God will allay every disturbing element; break the power of sin and death; put down every wrong; silence every clamoring tongue; calm every raging sea; touch every inflamed sore of society; unite into harmony every quarrelsome crowd; heal every excruciating pain and suffering; pilot every soul into the harbor of rest; banish all fear, malice, bigotry, and hatred in the melting fire of divine love; bind every demonic power; heal every sickness, disease, and torment; fill to the full every lack and void; impart life more abundant to all men everywhere; and give joy unspeakable and full of glory until the whole earth is full of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea, and all creation pulsates with the scintillating life and light and love of God!

The spirit of sonship is the power of God manifest first in the personal lives of His elect, then in the world around us, unto all time and the ages of this world, then in the whole universe. The life of sonship is the power of God that changes everything in its reality, function, and influence, as determined by the Lord in His great and glorious program of creation, redemption, and the restitution of all things. The power of the spirit of the Son within us shall eventually change us not only in spirit, but in soul and body, from human to divine, from earthly to heavenly, and from mortal to immortal; then it shall in like manner change the world around us, including all the nations of men, and nature itself, and then it shall change the vast universe unto the endlessness of infinity. The elect of the Lord today are experiencing the power of the spirit of sonship within; it is the power of Christ that is consuming everything within us that is foreign to His nature and life. Christ is taking His throne and is now reigning in our lives! And He must continue to reign in us until He has put every enemy under His feet!

Jesus rose from the dead and appeared on earth in the sight of men in the body of His resurrection, which is the spiritual body of incorruption and immortality. With this clear and obvious demonstration of the power of sonship life, all doubts and fears were removed from the minds of His disciples. Now they knew that He was the very Son of the living God and the King of kings and Lord of lords! Now they knew the reality of His message of life and glory. In Him they saw the fullness of sonship to God! Again, in the end of this age, and in the beginning of the age now dawning, Christ's many brethren shall come to the full measure of the stature of the firstborn Son. In them Christ shall come with power, even the power of His resurrection. Then shall creation see the manifestation of the sons of God, just as Jesus' disciples saw Him manifested in all the glory and power of His resurrection. Christ was revealed to His disciples, and He is still revealed only to His disciples, His very own brethren. But the manifest sons of God shall be revealed unto creation. Christ in us is now our hope of glory, but Christ revealed in His many brethren is the hope of the groaning creation! Christ is now our life, but His life in His sons shall become the life of creation, delivering all men from the bondage of corruption, raising them up into a place in the liberty of the children of God. **(Rom. 8:19-21)**

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 53

THE CHURCH IN SARDIS [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART FIFTY-THREE

THEY SHALL WALK WITH ME IN WHITE

I WILL NOT BLOT OUT HIS NAME

"Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." (Rev. 3:3)

Sardis had become a famous city. It was a very ancient city, and the old world was full of tales about its wealth, and it had once been the proud capital of Lydia. It was located thirty-five miles southeast of Thyatira. The spacious valley of Hermus was bounded on the south by mount Molus. Projecting from this range there was a narrow ridge of land terminating in a lofty peak that dominated the plain below. On the plateau of that peak was built the splendid city of Sardis. It was over 1,500 feet above the valley. It had towering cliffs leading up to it, and directly behind it. Sardis was also reputed to have an impregnable fortress. Unless one came up by the narrow road over the narrow ridge of land, which was easily defended by a handful of soldiers, it seemed an impossibility for enemy troops to get into the city. It would seem as if nature itself had made the place unattackable.

Its people were proud, arrogant, and over-confident. They felt safe there in their mountain fortress! They were sure that no one could scale this hill with its perpendicular sides. But one day the enemy came, and Cyrus of Persia began a siege of Sardis. For fourteen days Cyrus waited. Then he offered a special reward to anyone who could figure out a method of military entrance into the city. A young soldier was watching the cliffs intently one day when he saw a soldier in Sardis drop his helmet over the battlements. It went clanging down the mountainside. Now, although Sardis stood atop a precipitous hill, the hill had developed faults and cracks. The soldier's helmet fell into one of these fissures. The soldier began to climb down the precipice into the fault to recover his helmet, and then climbed back up again.

The soldier below, watching this activity, noticed this and reasoned there must be a crack in the rock...perhaps an easy entrance into the city above. That night a carefully selected group of Persian soldiers searched out the fissure and made their way to the top of Sardis and found it completely unguarded. As a result Sardis was easily taken. Sardis fell to Cyrus because her defenders had become complacent; they thought themselves too impregnable to need a guard. The enemy slipped in and came upon them "as a thief" and they knew not the hour that he came! Surely it was upon this background that the Lord warned the complacent believers in Sardis, who gloried in their great works and programs for God, while neglecting their inner spiritual condition, "Remember therefore how thou hast received...and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee!" Later in the book of Revelation the Lord stated again, **"Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garment, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." (Rev. 16:15)**

There is a coming of the Lord as a thief! This is not a coming or an appearing that is before the public. It is not an unveiling before the multitudes. A thief does not go down to the public square with a trumpet and say, "I'd like to make an announcement. At three o'clock in the morning I'm going to visit the wealthiest man in this town and I'm going to steal everything I can get my hands on." He doesn't do that! He comes at the darkest part of the night. He comes with softest tread, without noise, without light, without warning. He comes as silently and stealthily as possible, unobserved by the sleepers. He comes to rob. He comes to take away everything that he can. He is after gold and pearls and jewels of great price. Men are unaware of the event until he has come and gone and the items of value to the owner have disappeared with him. The Lord Jesus Himself says that HE WILL COME AS A THIEF!

Almighty Lord! In whom dwellest the wisdom and knowledge of the universe, flood our souls with understanding from above. Remove the dark veil from our minds, and flood our hearts with light divine, that we may clearly behold the sacred secrets of truth long concealed in Thee. Our understanding of this beautiful truth will be greatly enhanced once we understand that in that long ago in the land of Israel Jesus came as a thief. The carnal mind conceives Him as coming in royal splendor and magnificence, with a band of trumpets sounding, a host of angels announcing His arrival, as He makes His triumphal entry into the world riding on a chariot overlaid with gold, His royal garments glistening with jewels of the rarest kind, and a crown of gold on His head and the omnipotent scepter of His kingdom in His hand.

Perhaps one of the greatest mysteries of all is that Christ came, not to dazzle the world with a spectacular political coup or military overthrow of the kingdoms of the world, but to reveal the kingdom of God within men, to unveil the internal rule of the spirit by which men and families and communities and cities and nations are transformed from domains of sin, ignorance, fear, evil, greed, lust, sorrow, darkness, disease, and death into shining citadels of righteousness, wisdom, love, joy, peace, health, light, and life. He came the first time to an out-of-the-way place, in the womb of a woman, and lying in a manger. He came riding on a little donkey. **"Behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass."** (Zech. 9:9) He came in weakness, in meekness, in obscurity. His coming was shrouded in secret. Very few knew when He arrived in the midst! When Jerusalem and the great city of Rome closed their shops that star-lit night they knew not that the King of glory had come to earth. Even Bethlehem did not know.

When our Lord rode into Jerusalem He came not with the flamboyant and dazzling style of an earthly king. There were not legions of angels, no blasting of trumpets, no marching of armies, no royal chariot pulled by lively, prancing, expertly groomed and trained white horses. There was no palace where royal attendants waited to escort Him to His throne, and to await His every command. Our glorious King — yours and mine, beloved — came to the common, ordinary multitude in the most lowly, humble, and unpretentious way — riding on a common beast of burden — yet He came in the quiet and hushed movings of His omnipotent Spirit! The kingdoms of the world knew nothing of His coming until it was too late — the feet of iron and clay were smitten by the power of His word as like a thief He came upon them and spoiled their houses, setting up a kingdom of life and light and love in their midst which shall never be destroyed and of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, and all the kingdoms of men shall be driven away like the chaff of the summer threshing floor before the wind.

As our Lord came into the world two thousand years ago silently, with softest tread, without fanfare or warning, so does He come to every man! Every well-marked crisis in the life of a child of God is a "coming" or "appearing" of the Christ, whether we know it at the time or not. Many times we encounter Him in the most unthinkable places, and under the most unpropitious circumstances. In places and ways where we least expect to find the Lord, He will meet us face to face. There are times when we are faced with a mountain of circumstances, which appears unsurmountable and immovable. This is often the very place where we find Him waiting for us! All the mountains in our lives are raised up through our lack or unbelief, but there are no mountains of difficulty with God!

There are occasions when such appearances of the Lord seem the very opposite of what they are, times when our fate seems to be at the mercy of haphazard influences and accidental events. The really great crises in the experience of any of us are in most cases unexpected, take us unaware. If you read the Lord's symbolical and figurative descriptions of His coming in this light you cannot fail to see how true they are in each of our lives. He says no warning will be given! People will be going about their ordinary avocations in the ordinary way, taking for granted that nothing different will occur from what they have been accustomed to from day to day; outwardly there will be nothing portentous, no sign that the old order of things is at an end; and then, like a clap of thunder, the cataclysm will be upon them! "For as the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; SO SHALL ALSO THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN BE."

We are bidden to look for the Lord's appearing in all the changes and happenings of our lives. The Lord directs and mandates every experience in the lives of His called and chosen elect, there are no accidents for any of us, and every event is the vehicle of His appearing to us. In the crises, changes, processings, strippings,

purgings, prunings, blessings, and quickenings HE COMES to succor and relieve, to claim us for Himself, to teach us His ways, to inwork of His nature, and transform into His image and likeness. Nothing happens without Him; nothing can reach us that is not directly the token of His presence — or, as I prefer to put it, it is His very own special advent, the coming, the appearing of Christ to us in a fresh experiencing of Himself! "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh!"

As a thief! Can the natural mind even fathom the depths of a truth so eternal and sublime? This statement plainly indicates the manner of the Lord's coming. It shows that He is always present unseen, doing a work of which men are for a time entirely unaware. His working is therefore in a quiet manner, unobserved and entirely unknown until the discovery is made in consciousness of the handiwork He has wrought in secret. His arising steals its way upon us as the dawning of the day. The sun comes up at an early hour in the morning and if you are awake and up at that time you will see it rise, but if you sleep until noon, a great number of important things can transpire ere you are aware. The morning can be over before you know what is going on!

Traditional teaching has led us to think in terms of the first coming of Christ and His second coming, whereas the scriptures speak in terms of the progressive revelation of Jesus Christ. The Bible nowhere talks about the "first coming" and the "second coming". People use those terms as though they are found everywhere in the word of God! Yet the truth is, they are found nowhere! If I were to request a preacher to preach a sermon on the "second coming" of Christ using only the scriptures that mention His "second coming" it would be a short sermon indeed! In fact, it would be no sermon at all. We could just turn out the lights and all go home. The term is not in the Book. Neither is the term "first coming" in the Bible. These are unscriptural and extra-biblical terms. Those who use them have invented a theology all their own which is foreign to the word of God.

What the Bible does talk about is the progressive revelation of Jesus Christ, the unveiling of the Son of God, and many different "comings" of the Lord. The Holy Spirit records, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me who is to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting." (Mic. 5:2) Notice His "goings forth." The plural is used. The goings forth of the Lord speak about the Lord Jesus Christ! Now, the idea of "goings" has to do with the onward marching of God — the unfolding of the purpose of God, step by step. This is what is indicated here. This is what history is all about, the progressive revelation of the Christ, the marching forward of God, the ever-increasing of the unveiling of Himself to man!

Like the sound of many waters, the testimony of the word of God records with abundant and stunning and inescapable evidence that the coming of Christ is not a single event, or two great events, but includes many different manifestations. His coming to us is a many-sided experience. To multitudes He appears as Saviour. They find Him at the crossroads of their lives. They invite Him to "Come into my heart, come into my heart, Lord Jesus!" And this coming is just as real and meaningful and powerful as was His coming long centuries ago! To many He becomes their salvation, but they never venture any deeper to know Him intimately. They have only a superficial knowledge of Him. To others He appears as Bridegroom. "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!" is the cry that meets the ears of the virgins waiting for His appearing. And for those who were unprepared, whose lamps had gone out and they had no oil, He came "as a thief" and they missed their hour of visitation. But for those who are prepared, they hear His voice and are moved by His love, and follow on to know Him in deeper measures of intimacy and union. To others He appears as a Refiner's Fire. "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple...like a refiner's fire...He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver...and He shall purge the sons of Levi (priesthood), that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness" (Mal. 3:1-3). This is a coming of the Lord that the "second coming" preachers miss altogether! The Lord comes to His priesthood company consuming their hay, wood, and stubble, eliminating by the spirit of burning all that is of self and not of God. These are only a few of the many "comings" and "appearings" of the Lord mentioned in the scriptures. The coming of the Lord is as many-faceted as the most dazzling crystal of earth! And in many of these comings the Lord comes upon men either in blessing or in judgment "as a thief."

THEY SHALL WALK WITH ME IN WHITE

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment...thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy." (Rev. 3:4-5)

White garments (or robes) are mentioned seven times in the book of Revelation. The Laodiceans are counseled to buy white raiment to hide the shame of their nakedness (3:18). Those who have been slain, who have laid down their lives to take up His, and are awaiting vindication, are given white robes (6:11). In the celestial throne room the twenty-four elders are clad in white garments (4:4). Before the throne stands a great multitude that no man can number, who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (7:9,13). The armies of heaven who follow the conquering Christ upon white horses are arrayed in fine linen, white and pure (19:14). We may conclude, therefore, that the white garments promised to the overcomer are the white raiment in which all of these are clothed, representing a spiritual attire, indeed, a state of being!

There is another thought here that we must not overlook. All down through the ages, from the time Adam was expelled from the Garden on; God has never left Himself without a remnant. Somewhere in the world, no matter how dark the age, or overwhelming the apostasy and wickedness, God has had a people who walked with Him in the Spirit. To Sardis the Lord said, "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy." This glorious promise is made to the "few" or God's remnant out of the church of Sardis. This remnant is composed of people who have not soiled their garments with the spirit and ways of the world or the seductiveness of man-made religion. That this remnant is God's called and chosen elect, the company of the overcomers, is clear, for the Lord continues, "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment."

This white raiment is not the imputed righteousness that is given to us when we receive Christ as Saviour. You will note that the Lord, in the book of Revelation, is sending these letters to the seven churches. Therefore, He is speaking to people who have already received the imputed righteousness to their account! Though righteousness has been imputed to them through faith in Jesus, there is yet another white raiment that comes only through overcoming. This is not the imputed righteousness of Jesus as Saviour, but the actual righteousness which God is bringing us to as our state of being, that perfect walk in Christ, His nature and glory raised up in us as our very own life, that perfection that He is bringing us to fulfilling the words of Jesus, **"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."** (Mat. 5:48) And fulfilling the exhortation of Paul, **"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ"** (Eph. 4:15). This is the fifth stage of our journey into the fullness of Christ — to be led to that perfection, that perfect righteousness, nature, and glory of the Son of the living God!

The miracle of what God has done through Jesus Christ ravishes my heart. I am enthralled beyond measure that He has translated me out of the kingdom of darkness, and is clothing me with the fullness of the Son of God. Daily I am putting on the Lord Jesus Christ who is my robe of righteousness and my house from heaven, the new man, the spiritual body, and the new building of God, eternal in the heavens. Just as the life within a lamb produces its covering of wool, so does the life of Christ within each son of God create the garments of our full salvation. We put on the robe of Christ's righteousness, not by putting it on from outside of ourselves, by our own self-effort and good works, but by the working and power of His life within.

Some time ago Jody Dragoo shared with us a beautiful experience the Lord gave him in vision in which he saw the glory of the robe of righteousness as the spiritual body of the new man. The following is his account of this manifestation. We have shared this once before, a number of years ago, but it is so precious and powerful I cannot but share it again in connection with our present subject.

"The events that I now share are none other than the sons and daughters of God coming into their own, having overcome through the blood of the Lamb and having put on the incorruptible, immortal, and resurrected body of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was about seven o'clock one morning when I awoke to get ready for work. I didn't stay awake long as the next thing I knew I found myself in a foreign land. The name of the land was not revealed, but it may have been in Africa. The area was hot and dry without any wind on this day. The sky above was blue and clear for miles around. The sand beneath my feet was bright due to the sun beating down upon it. There were areas of sparse plant life, but not sufficient to sustain life. The area had apparently been in a long drought as there were very few cattle around. There were a few people who still resided in this village, one of which was a woman who was carrying a pail of water upon her head. She was off to my left and under the porches or walkways of the village.

"Another individual was a young black man who wore a light shirt and dark pants, who took me through the village. He spoke of the conditions that the people faced daily and how hard the drought had been on the livestock and all concerned. As we walked, he said the greatest need of his people was for rain. While he talked, I did not answer a word. It seemed I was completely aware of the situation at hand and the conditions they were in (Amos 8:11-14). Next we came to an open area within the village where we stopped and this individual stepped a few feet away from where I stood. After he spoke of the greatest need of the village being rain, immediately my hands and arms raised upwards toward the Father. It was at this point that I began to notice my garment. I was wearing a white robe with a small belt around the waist. There were no wrinkles or spot within the robe, and no sand on it. The robe kept out the effects of the climate and I felt no heat at all. As for my feet, I don't recall them touching the ground at any time.

"One aspect of this robe which has deeply impressed me is the fact that it felt different from the clothes or 'robes' we normally wear. With the clothes we usually wear we can feel the separation from our body. Furthermore, the fact that we have to change them daily, testifies to us that they are not really a part of our being. They are only temporary coverings until the permanent garment is put on. This robe, however, was part of my being. It was inseparable from my body. There was no sense of division or separateness. Is this not the picture of the corruptible putting on the incorruptible, the mortal putting on the immortal — the putting on of the Lord Jesus Christ who is formed within us! Is this not but the fulfillment of Romans 8:23 in regard to the complete redemption of the body? The sons and daughters of God clothed with the incorruptible, immortal, resurrected body of Christ, covered with the glory of God! And these go forth ministering from that incorruptible realm of pure spirit, delivering creation from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

"From this we should understand that putting on the robe — the incorruptible, immortal glory of God — is actually our union with the robe, making us complete, perfect, and lacking nothing! It is interesting to note that the robe comes forth from the inner working of the Father Himself. It is He who weaves each and every strand into a whole, complete unit. It is brought forth from within as the Lord Jesus Christ is formed within us, revealed in fuller detail day by day. This is the Father's work, and it is beautiful to behold! The robe is out of our innermost being and part of our entire being.

"The next thing I noticed was my thought processes and how they worked. The mind seemed to operate on a completely different realm from what we are accustomed to. This reveals that the mind of Christ was in full operation. This is the new mind and heart promised by the Father. The mind that was in Christ Jesus was the mind of the Father. And it was this mind which was in operation within me. This is the renewed mind of which Paul spoke. It is this mind that the Father is perfecting within His sons and daughters. And it is this mind that sought the Father for rain for a dry village!

"As I raised my hands upward an intercession for the people began, the Father was seen in a large white cloud which began producing rain clouds. Almost immediately these clouds began pouring rain down upon the village. It was rain in abundance that watered the ground and filled their wells. I can't say what the words I spoke were, but they had such power and authority in them that the elements themselves were brought to obedience. As the rains came, the man who guided me through the village had an astonished look upon His face. He asked, 'How did you do this?' It was at this point that I awoke.

"As I have continued to meditate on this it has begun to transform my attitude, my understanding, my life, and all that is within me. It has become strong meat in times of testing. The scripture which states that 'it does not yet appear what we shall be,' comes to mind in reference to this dream and witnesses to my spirit about the things shortly to come to pass. How beautiful it is when Father pulls back some of the veil and shows us these things! To see the ministry of the sons and daughters of God coming into their own, being clothed with the glory of God, and delivering creation from the bondage of sin and death is wonderful to behold. I will never forget the robe which He revealed, and how it was part of my being, and covered and protected all of my being. Ah, the sons and daughters with the mind of Christ shall lack nothing!" — end quote. And may I add — nothing shall be impossible unto them! They shall ask for rain for all creation, even the presence, life, and power of God to restore all things, and suddenly shall it come upon the world! Isn't it wonderful!

I thank God today that there is a righteousness, a divine righteousness that God can raise up within men, and which can exalt a man to the image and likeness of God. In no other way can men ever be exalted or lifted up out of the power of sin, self, sorrow, and death. Thank God for the imputed righteousness of Christ — it is sufficient to remove your sin-consciousness and bring you into fellowship with God. But it is not enough to make you an overcomer, perfect, mature, in the full stature of Christ. Men get all hung up on the imputed righteousness of Christ and never get on to the business of transformation into the image of God. They major in milk, but have no meat. They get men started, but never grow them up!

So I gladly and thankfully this day record this truth that the righteousness of which I speak is the righteousness of God, which by faith we may possess; not only a righteousness imputed, in which we can trust for the beginning of our salvation, but a righteousness IMPARTED, INWORKED INTO THE NATURE, RAISED UP AS ACTUAL RIGHTEOUSNESS AS A STATE OF BEING. All very good is this talk about imputed righteousness, but I cannot — will not — settle for a righteousness that is only imputed. If it is not the very nature of our being then we are not really changed at all. The robe of imputed righteousness is the robe that can become soiled! "Thou has a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments." **"And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." (Jude 23)** But there is a robe that cannot be soiled! This is the robe of the overcomer! This is the perfection and glory of Christ which transforms us into the likeness of God!

It is clear that the garments which can be defiled (Rev. 3:4) are not to be identified with the white raiment of the overcomer or with the white raiment in which those who have not defiled their garments walk with Christ. The white raiment that is not and cannot be defiled, soiled, or stained, is the garment of glory — being a part of that inheritance which is incorruptible and fadeth not away. This is the garment of the overcomer of which the Lord speaks, "and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy." The Greek word here translated "white" actually speaks more of the brilliant radiance of light than it does of a color. It is the same word which is used of the appearance of Christ at the time of His transfiguration as "white and glistening."

Actually what is being said here is that those who overcome will be clothed upon with the radiant glory of the risen and ascended Lord! Just as He is robed in celestial light (Ps. 104:2), so we are progressively being clothed from glory to glory with light as with a garment. The words used carry the sense of shining in intense whiteness, in a dazzling heavenly glory. A vesture of light would enclothe the overcomer and the glory of the celestial realms would be his garb. In that great day when we shall perfectly image and out-ray the exact likeness of God in the fullness of our sonship, we, too, shall be clothed in glistening garments of white light. We who "walk in the light as He is in the light" shall show forth the glory of God through our incorruptible bodies of glory!

George Hawtin has written in this connection, "So it was on that never-to-be-forgotten day our Lord led His three disciples to the top of a very high mountain and was transfigured before them. **(Matt. 17:1-2)** The record states that "His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light." Only light is truly white. His garments were not white like a snowflake; they were as white as the light! Jesus was transfigured before them. He was transformed. He was changed. The Greek word metamorphoo is the word the evangelist Matthew used to describe the change that took place in Him on that wonderful day. As a groveling worm is transformed to become a butterfly, so our Lord was transformed from corruptible to incorruptible, from natural man to manifested Son of God. The celestial light of the glory of God shown from His face brighter than the glory of the sun. This was the shining forth of the incorruptible! Our Lord was revealing the unspeakable, excellent glory of the incorruptible realm. He was showing them, first, what He Himself would be, and secondly, He intended that these astonished onlookers should understand what the incorruptible sons of God will be when they reign with Him in that heavenly realm. This was the overpowering sight John beheld in the Revelation — one like the Son of man whose voice was as "many waters" standing in that same brilliant glory of heavenly incorruption. This is the fullness of the body of Christ!" — end quote.

Those who are following on to know the Lord in this new kingdom day shall fully receive that new garment of white, which is the garment of the incorruptible Life, Light, and Glory of Christ! The message of Christ to His elect of the present time is, "He that overcometh shall be clothed in white raiment...and they shall walk with me

in white, for they are worthy." FOR THEY ARE WORTHY! Not because they have believed in Jesus and been forgiven and cleansed from their past sins. Oh, no! It is because they have been changed, transformed, metamorphosed into the nature and glory of Christ Himself. This white raiment is nothing less than the new body of the Christ Life, for how else could these "walk with Him in white?"

The Lord Himself also said to His elect, "I counsel thee to buy of me...white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." (Rev. 3:18) This white raiment is certainly not the imputed righteousness of Christ, for that you do not need to "buy!" Paul also expressed something of the groaning and travailing we all experience as we endure the bondages and frustrations of this body of death. He said that we long to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven, so that when this earthly house of this body is dissolved, we might not be found naked. As long as we are in this body, we are burdened, yea, we groan, not that we would be unclothed (as in the death of the grave), but clothed upon with the new body of the Christ Life, so that this mortality might be swallowed up by HIS LIFE.

"Now He that has wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit." (II Cor. 5:5) The "earnest of the Spirit" is the indwelling life which assures us that we shall attain to our appointed goal, for the fulfillment of His promise must be by the Spirit, and not by any ability we think we have. I must confess I do not know how the Lord will transform these bodies, nor do I wish to presume upon the timing of the Lord. I do know that any self-effort is vain, health foods contribute absolutely nothing, and confessions by which we try to "name it and claim it" have not worked for any I have known who tried it. I am only aware of the strange inner working of the Spirit of the Lord that has awakened me to the truth that the sons of God shall step into the immortality of the Christ in spirit, soul, and body, for any reality less than this cannot set creation free from the bondage of corruption!

The Lord has spoken this beautiful truth to many thousands of His called and elect saints in these recent years, but we would not be so foolish as to claim anything before the time. God does have a time! And it is in His appointment. God does have a way! And it is by His Spirit. Father will do the work in His "fullness of time" just as Jesus came "in the fullness of time" and "when the day of Pentecost was fully come" He returned in mighty Spirit power! I am only able to declare what I hear of Him. The timing is up to Him. So we press forward into His life while patiently waiting for the moving of His Spirit. Should my body go to the grave before Father's appointed hour arrives for the manifestation of the sons of God I will not miss that unveiling, for just as surely as Christ Jesus rose from the tomb in resurrection power and glory, as the Son of God with power, so shall He raise me up in that day in the power of His resurrection, for the manifestation of sonship is the manifestation of HIS RESURRECTION LIFE!

Doesn't it stir up your pure mind and incite your spirit to heights of wonder when you read of the "young man" who sat at the sepulcher after the resurrection of Jesus who was "clothed in a long white garment." (Mk. 16:5) He had just descended from that high and lofty spiritual realm to give counsel and comfort to the bereaved disciples, that realm where there is no sickness, darkness, or death, but where all is LIGHT AND LIFE. And it is that same realm of LIGHT AND LIFE to which Christ Himself has invited us, when He said, "and they shall walk with me in white."

At the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ in human flesh as the first begotten Son of God, the brightest light the world had ever seen shone upon mankind. "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (Jn. 8:12) Christ was literally clothed in light that shone as the noonday sun, scintillating with all the colors of the spectrum as He walked and talked in unbroken fellowship with Him who is the Father of Light. Saul of Tarsus was blinded by the dazzling light of this Son of God, when he met Him on the road to Damascus, and John the beloved beheld this glory again as the actual out-ricing of the Light which God is. Think of it! As Jesus is in His glory of resurrection, brilliant in scintillating splendor, so shall we be when we have come to know Him fully in the power of His resurrection, helping to illuminate the entire universe with the out-ricing of Christ from within us.

As surely as the Daystar is arising in your heart, my brother, my sister, just so certain is it that the glory of the Lord shall be seen upon His people! "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise

upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." (Isa. 60:1-3) This glory is not religious zeal or soulish emotionalism and excitement — it is real spiritual power. It is the divine effulgence that radiates His majesty and affects all things. The glory is arising upon the Lord's elect, is being activated within us, and shall dwell upon us until we all become radiant with the substance of His celestial being, the emanating train of His power. This is the celestial garment of His white-light!

Can one hold back the dawn or forbid the sun to rise? The night is for them that sleep; but for those who walk in the light of the Lord even the darkness shall be light before them. The dawn belongs to all who have lifted their eyes from the shadows unto the realm of Light and Life and Truth...for they walk in the glorious freedom of the sons of God. The sons of God shall arise above the mountains of the earth as the living radiance of His kingdom, yea, even as the embodiment of the Father of Light. Each son a living member of His Christ. God is clothing them with the garments of His glory, and the brilliance of God's eternal sunrise shall shine from their eyes and speak from their mouths. All realms shall be flooded with the light of God as all creation partakes of the liberty of the sons of God. Aren't you glad!

I WILL NOT BLOT OUT HIS NAME

"To him that overcometh...I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels.." (Rev. 3:5)

Here is one who by no means will have his name erased from the list of those having attained to THE LIFE. We cannot escape the conclusion that it is possible to have one's name erased from this wonderful book, else the promise would be meaningless. So, what does that mean? Since the qualification for having one's name or nature inscribed eternally in this book is overcoming, this being something done subsequent to becoming a child of God, what is being presented is not the salvation and life which are the free gift of God's grace, received by simple faith in Jesus. The subject here is MATURITY OF LIFE — the very life of the Son of God reproduced in a people that are like Him in the fullness of Himself. This one can be disqualified from!

"And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." (Heb. 6:11-12). "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end" (Heb. 3:14) "Wherefore the rather, brethren, make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (II Pet. 1:10-11) "Be ye faithful unto death (of self), and I will give thee a crown of life. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." (Rev. 2:10; 3:11) "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway (unapproved)." (I Cor. 9:27)

It is interesting to note that in the genealogies of the Bible there are only two books which are identified: (1) "the book of the generations of Adam" (Gen. 5:1) — all mankind is in that book, but it is a book of death — and (2) "the book of the generation of Jesus Christ (Mat. 1:1). The phrase, "the book of the generation," is an unusual expression. It occurs only in connection with Adam and then in connection with Christ. The book of the generation of Jesus Christ is THE BOOK OF LIFE! It speaks of the life of Christ being generated, raised up and reproduced in us until we are fully like Him!

The book of life is called in the Revelation, "the book of the life of the Lamb." (Rev. 13:8) If I were to give you a book entitled THE BOOK OF THE LIFE OF GEORGE WASHINGTON, you would understand at once that it is the biography or autobiography of the life of the first president of the United States of America. That book should contain everything you always wanted to know about George Washington! Every detail of his life would be there: where he was born, who his parents were, where he was raised, the schools he attended, who he married, how he became General of the Army, and finally president of our great nation.

In the same way, THE BOOK OF THE LIFE OF THE LAMB is the biography of God's Lamb, the expose of who He is, what He is like, and what He does. Everything you ever wanted to know about the Son of God is

contained in this wonderful book of the life of the Lamb! It is not a literal book, of course, for we are dealing with symbols; the sons and daughters of the Most High are themselves the LIVING RECORD AND REVELATION of the life of the indwelling Lamb! It was to the apostle Paul that the revelation was given that the book of life, the book of the Lamb, the book of the Son of God IS A PEOPLE. "Foreasmuch as Y-E are manifestly declared to be THE EPISTLE OF CHRIST ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. Who also has made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." (II Cor. 3:3-6)

How pitiful that the people of earth for the most part have never read this beautiful EPISTLE OF CHRIST, this glorious BOOK OF THE LIFE OF THE LAMB. They have poured over the books of religion, the books of hypocrisy, the books of fleshly wisdom, forms of godliness, dead doctrines, static creeds, empty rituals, lifeless ceremonies, and man-made rules and regulations. But precious few have ever seen the BOOK OF THE LIFE OF THE LAMB! Oh! What a wonderful gospel shall fill the earth beneath and the celestial worlds above when God opens His holy book of life! The book of life is that blessed company of the sons of God, elect, chosen, and transformed into the image of Christ throughout the ages. This book is being carefully written word by word, sentence by sentence, paragraph by paragraph, page by page, and chapter by chapter in the nitty-gritty of our daily experience with God until the full revelation of the Christ shall be written therein. Time's clock is striking the hour and the time is drawing wonderfully nigh for the manifestation of the sons of God, the opening of God's book of life people, and what a revelation it shall be! There the whole world shall see and read in the simplest of language everything there is to know about Jesus Christ, the Son of God! All creation from time immemorial has groaned and travailed for the manifestation of the sons of God, to see and read and understand and know in them the many-faceted beauty and glory of God's Christ, that they also might be delivered from the bondage of corruption.

God has a message for the world — the revelation of Jesus Christ! This message is being written in flaming words of glory upon the pages of the lives and hearts and minds of men and women who are dying to that impudent and death-dealing devil of self, in order to walk and live by the spirit of HIS LIFE. I am terribly at a loss of words to express the glory of God's BOOK OF LIFE COMPANY, but I can assure you that once it is fully ready, prepared and finished, it shall become the world's "best seller" throughout the ages to come! As the pen is mightier than the sword, so this book, above any that has ever been written by the finger of man, shall alter the course of history, and the dark covering that has been cast over the minds and the hearts of the people for generations and ages will be completely destroyed by the flood of transforming light and wisdom and knowledge and glory and power shining forth from the living pages of God's eternal and incorruptible BOOK OF LIFE!

The promise that our name will not be blotted out of the book of life reveals the great truth of that condition or state of being where one's walk in divine nature can no more be tainted, mixed, mingled, contaminated, stagnated, reduced, or lost in any way through the lower realms of the flesh — soul and body. No more can we stumble, make mistakes, offend, fall short, fail, miss the mark, or descend to walk out of a lower realm. OUR WALK WILL BE ALWAYS AND UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE POWER OF THE DIVINE NATURE OF CHRIST IN OUR SPIRIT! In this reality we will live continually and unflinchingly in the victorious life of the spirit, soul and body united in the life of the spirit to express only that life which we are.

Preachers debate over the issues of "backsliding" or "losing one's salvation" versus the teaching of "eternal security." I do not hesitate to tell you, however, that this promise of Christ not to blot your name out of the book of life proclaims the very highest realm of the truth of eternal security — a walk in the perfection of Christ beyond sin, sickness, sorrow, fear, temptation, struggle, and death. Isn't it wonderful!

Ray Prinzing has written an encouraging word in respect to this beautiful hope. "When we have this deep delight, respect, desire unto the REVEALED WILL OF GOD TO US, then we read, 'and nothing shall offend them.' No existing condition or circumstance, situation, or even a person, can offend us. NOTHING shall offend them! What a beautiful dimension of His grace is set before us in this word. Yet it is not to be some lofty vision to be fulfilled 'in the sweet bye and bye' of mythical religion, but that which He would work into us in these

days. The word 'offend' from the Hebrew mikshal and the Greek skandalizo means 'to cause to stumble' or 'a stumbling block.'

"We read that He is 'able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.' (**Jude 24**) This is not a barely making it in, as by the skin of our teeth, as the expression goes. It is being wrought in us triumphantly, gloriously, to His praise. Kept from 'FALLING.' Here the Greek word is aptaistos and means: to stumble, to fall. He is able to keep us from stumbling — being thrown off balance, and teetering on the edge of sin. There are so many things which can disrupt our sense of tranquility, and when these things crowd in on us, we begin to stagger and flip-flop around until, spiritually speaking; we would look like a man trying to regain his balance after he had stumbled over a rock in his path. God is able to KEEP US CALM, COOL, AND COLLECTED — keep us from stumbling! And He is able to present us FAULTLESS unto Himself. If we are 'offended,' stumbling over something, it is a clear indication that there is something of self in us that has not yet been dealt with. We are not faultless as long as we continue to be offended, to stumble, be thrown off balance. But there is a place in God where 'NOTHING shall offend them,' and it is into this realm that we would be led" — end quote.

We can never know the power of Christ's resurrection until we know union with Him. It is in union with Christ in God that brings the constancy of His life as our very own reality. There are a couple verses of scripture I would like to consider with you in closing this message. If you will let these gracious inspired words speak for themselves, you will be given to understand a mystery comprehended by very few men and women who have walked the face of this planet. The following words of the apostle Paul are freighted with meaning and spiritual significance. "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence we also look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." (**Phil. 3:20-21**)

The opening statement of this beautiful passage declares that "Our conversation is in heaven." The word "conversation" is from the Greek politeuma meaning "citizenship." It is not our words that we speak that are in heaven, but our citizenship — our habitation and residence with full civil rights. We are citizens of heaven! Our residence is in heaven! We have been raised up and made to sit together in the heavens in Christ Jesus! Heaven is the place of our birth, our nativity, our homeland, our sphere of living. We already dwell in heaven — NOW! God is SPIRIT, and heaven is the REALM OF THE SPIRIT, the SPHERE OF EXISTENCE in which God dwells. To be born of the Spirit, to be born of God, is to be born in heaven! To live in the Spirit is to live in heaven! To walk in the Spirit is to walk in heaven! His presence,

It will be worth our time to examine prayerfully just what is actually stated in the passage of scripture now under consideration. "For our citizenship is in heaven, from whence we look..." "We look..." I ask you to notice this particularly. "From whence we look." "From whence we look." It does not say, "from whence we shall look." Nor does it say, "From whence the Lord shall come." What it does say is, "From whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body..." It does not say at all that the Lord Jesus Christ shall come from heaven, although that is how our superficial reading and carnal-mindedness has taken it! Nothing is said here about where Christ dwells, or where He is coming from. The subject is not where Christ is, but where WE ARE and WHAT WE ARE DOING THERE!

Where are we? "Our citizenship (residence, homeland) is in heaven!" This beautiful passage shows the believer to be an heavenly man, positioned in the heavenlies — living out of the realm of SPIRIT. And what are we doing there? Why, bless your heart, from that lofty vantage point and exalted state of consciousness we are LOOKING FOR THE SAVIOUR to change our vile body! Just as a man may sit in a fire-tower steadily looking for the tell-tale signs of smoke that alert him to a forest fire, so WE SIT IN HEAVEN LOOKING FOR THE SAVIOUR TO CHANGE OUR BODY! The message is clear — we are not on earth looking for our Saviour to come crashing down from heaven. Rather, from our exalted seating in the height of heaven, in the high place of the Spirit, we look for this change, for we know the Christ there, we belong to Him there, we are joined in one with Him there, we are heavenly because He is. He will extend the work of salvation and exaltation to our members which are upon earth, to the body realm that still dwells in an earthly state, so as to present our whole being in the power of divine, incorruptible, and immortal life in the true sphere and home of that life above — a spiritual body!

Oh, yes! We are to possess a fully developed body which belongs to the celestial world! This change from mortality to immortality takes place as Christ arises from the inner, heavenly sanctuary of our spirit, coming out of heaven (spirit) within us to manifest in the visible world. We know our true spiritual and divine state in our heavenly life, and now soul and body are to be raised up into union in that heavenly life. As we find Christ in us as the source of our life, tremendous changes take place! Oh, the mystery of it! It is not from earth that we look for heaven to swoop down and change us; it is in heaven that we look for our outer man to catch up to our inner man. "From heaven we look for our Saviour to change our vile body!" Hallelujah!

This, my beloved, is that full salvation that includes the plenteousness of His incorruptible life, nature and power. It is the full salvation of the whole man, spirit, soul, and body, a victory so complete, so powerful, so divine and eternal, that there is NO POSSIBILITY OF EVER SINNING OR DYING AGAIN! These overcomers possess the very fullness of the divine nature! They are not merely "saved by grace," but have totally laid down their own lives and completely taken up HIS. They are incorruptible in nature and immortal in substance. This, dear ones, is the TRUE ETERNAL SECURITY! These are they to whom the promise is given, "and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life." When the process of redemption and salvation is completed in us and we are like Him fully, there will be NO MORE CHANGE, for we will dwell in the totality of being in that state of being as unchangeable as He is unchangeable, as eternal as He is eternal!

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 54

THE CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART FIFTY-FOUR

THE KEY OF DAVID
HE THAT OPENS AND NO MAN SHUTS
I WILL KEEP YOU FROM THE HOUR OF TEMPTATION

"And by the angel of the church in Philadelphia write..." (Rev. 3:7)

The church in Philadelphia is the sixth of the seven churches in Asia addressed by the Lord in the vision of John. The Greek word for Philadelphia is Philadelphos and its meaning is "one who loves his brother." Philadelphia was a young city founded and colonized by people from Pergamos. This was done during the reign of Attalus the Second, who ruled in Pergamos from 159 — 138 BC Attalus had great love for his brother Eumenes, and it was because of this love that he was called Philadelphos. It was after him that Philadelphia was named.

In the letter to the church at Philadelphia we find many of the same phrases that were penned to the other six churches, so we must look a little closer to see what the Lord is really saying. Philadelphia is a great church to study for so many wonderful things are said about this church! In fact, not one negative thing is said about the church in Philadelphia! We can benefit from the positive things said about a church, and we can also benefit from the negative things said about a church. The fact is, the word of God is filled with great commendations, and also with great corrections, and we can profit by both. The scriptures are replete with people's mistakes and people's successes. God has never made it a practice to hide His servant's mistakes as the leaders of this world are wont to do.

Most men who write their autobiography maximize their successes and minimize their failures. Some of us have surely noticed in scripture how the Holy Spirit often takes just a verse or two to record a man's successes and chapter after chapter to talk about his failures. Let us then be men and women of understanding, that, instead of seeking only the praise and blessing of God, we may also receive the rebuke, correction, and chastening dispensed from the Father's hand of divine wisdom and purpose upon all who receive the call to sonship. These are the great lessons in the letters to the seven churches freely offered to all who seek after glory, honor, and immortality in the kingdom of God!

Of the seven churches, two of them received no indictment from the Lord, nor were they told to repent. The church in Smyrna was known as the "suffering church" because of their severe persecutions, and they were not told to repent. The Lord saw their trouble and tribulation, their poverty and imprisonment, their unswerving steadfastness and great faithfulness, and they did not need to be told to repent. It was in their hearts to repent when the need arose, for the work of God ran deep in their lives. Considering their great trials and intense tribulations and the mighty dealings of God in their lives, the Lord said to them, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. 2:10) It was not to the death of the body that the Lord referred, but to the death of the carnal mind of the Adamic life!

The second church, of course, against which the Lord laid no charge, nor did He tell them to repent, was the church in Philadelphia. Because they kept the word of His patience, by which the kingdom of God is inherited, He gave them wonderful promises. To the church in Philadelphia the Lord said, "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." These last words mean "that no man steps into that place which was designed for thee." For example, after the manner that Jacob stepped into Esau's place; Judah stepped into Reuben's place; David stepped into Saul's place; Matthias stepped into Judas Iscariot's place; the church stepped into Israel's place. The message is clear — God will have a victorious body, a company of overcoming sons of God, who shall within themselves overcome all things and be crowned with life, glory, authority, and power!

Should we fail to move in and possess our inheritance in God, as the generation of Israelites who came out of Egypt did, the Lord will reach out and raise up others to take our place, and they will thus take our crown!

The "crown" is mentioned in connection with only two churches out of the seven: Smyrna and Philadelphia — God's overcoming remnant! The word picture is that of a royal crown of triumph — total victory over every enemy, including the last enemy, death. The Greek word for crown in these passages is *stephanos*. The popular name "Stephen" is derived from this word and this crown was usually a laurel wreath woven of fragrant branches, or the like. It was granted to winners in the Panhellenic games and also as a token of public honor for distinguished service, especially of military leaders who had been victorious over their enemies on the battlefield. It was also given at marriage feasts, especially in royal families, to celebrate the joy of the bridegroom in having "won" the maiden as his bride. This crown always denotes A VICTOR'S CROWN — the crown of an OVERCOMER!

It is my conviction that these two churches, the church in Smyrna and the church in Philadelphia, represent the Lord's elect and chosen remnant in the earth throughout the church age. They also correspond to the two witnesses in chapter eleven of the Revelation. We know that a candlestick represents a church. There are two churches out of the seven that received no condemnation or reproof from the Lord, and were given only great and precious promises. Of the two witnesses it is testified, "And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth (humility, brokenness). These are the two olive trees (anointed ones), and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth." (Rev. 11:3-4) Two candlesticks! Two churches! Two given a special anointing and standing before God! Ah, Smyrna and Philadelphia, what a calling you have!

THE KEY OF DAVID

"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." (Rev. 3:7)

The key of David speaks of he who has the "key" or the "authority" and "dominion" of the king of Israel. The king of Israel is the king of God's called and chosen people! The people of Israel in the Old Testament experienced great and mighty things. God called them, chose them, and made them a great nation in the earth. The hand of God was upon them in favor and blessing so long as they loved, honored, obeyed, and served Him; but when they departed from the Lord and did wickedness, in faithfulness He judged and corrected them.

One such occasion was in the days of Isaiah when both the house of Judah and the house of Israel were filled with corruption, sin, idolatry, and rebellion. Their response to God's correction at that time is described in these words: "In that day the Lord God of hosts called you to weeping and mourning (in sorrow and brokenness), to shaving off all your hair (in humiliation) and to the girding with sackcloth (of repentance). But instead you gave yourselves to pleasure and mirth, slaying oxen and killing sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine, with the idea Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die! And the Lord of hosts revealed Himself in my (Isaiah's) ears as He said, Surely this unatoned sin shall not be purged from you until you are punished — and the punishment will be death, says the Lord God of hosts." (Isa. 22:12-14)

The Assyrians came and laid siege against the city of Jerusalem and the city was about to be taken. The defenses of Judah were inadequate to protect the city. There were "breaches" in the walls of the city of David and the people were tearing down their houses to fortify the wall. Their water supply was endangered. It was a desperate time for the inhabitants of Jerusalem! God was calling for weeping and mourning, but they chose instead joy and gladness, eating flesh and drinking wine. They were partying in the face of catastrophe!

The government was exceedingly corrupt. A man by the name of Shebna was the steward of Hezekiah, king of Judah. As steward he had authority over all the king's house and affairs of state. Today we might call him the chief of staff. His authority was the very authority of the king himself to administer the affairs of the kingdom on behalf of, and in the name of, the king. Shebna, however, was a vain, proud, glory-seeking man! Shebna was living in ease and splendor while all the trouble was going on, heedless to the problems that were piling up. He

misused his authority and spent the king's money on frivolous things. In those days when men spent lavishly, it was not the races, casinos, yachts, or huge estates, but expenditures were made on sepulchers. Shebna was presumptuous enough to be building himself a tomb among the great men of Israel, a massive, ornate, and expensive tomb worthy of a king, far exceeding his known income. The inevitable inference, of course, was that in order to accomplish this he was appropriating the state funds for his own use.

Through the prophet Isaiah the Lord declared that He would violently take away this corrupt government, and roll it like a ball into a large country. "Behold, the Lord will hurl you away violently, O you strong man; yes, He will take tight hold of you and He will surely cover you with shame. He will surely roll you up in a bundle and toss you like a ball into a large country (as a captive): there you will die and there will be your splendid chariots, your disgrace to your master's house! And I will thrust you from your office, and from your station will you be pulled down." (Isa. 22:17-19) (Amplified)

This prophecy had a literal fulfillment in the days of King Hezekiah, but it has deep spiritual significance to the elect of the Lord in these days! All the things which happened to the fleshly Israel are written for our admonition, upon whom have come the transition of the ages. They teach us great and valuable lessons in the spirit! The Lord told Shebna that He would take away his authority and position and that He was going to install a new government. The record continues, "In that day I will call my servant, Eliakim son of Hilkiah. And I will clothe him with your robe (position) and bind your girdle (will, administration) on him and will commit your authority to his hand; he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. And the key of the house of David I will lay upon his shoulder; he shall open and no one shall shut, he shall shut and no one shall open. And I will fasten him like a peg or nail in a firm place; and he will become a throne of honor and glory to his father's house. And they will hang on him the honor and the whole weight of his father's (David's) house." (Isa. 22:20-24) (Amplified)

God said He was going to install a new government, rise up a new administrator, even one named Eliakim, and lay the key of David on his shoulder. This is the first mention in scripture of the key of David, and the Lord quoted this prophecy in His message to the church in Philadelphia — confirming that HE was the One to whom Isaiah had prophetically pointed! Shebna's position was given to Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, whom the Lord calls "my servant." Eliakim was a bondsman of the Lord, one who had an ear to hear what the Lord said, and a heart to obey His word and do all His will. He was a bond-slave of God! Eliakim was of the same spirit as God's called and chosen elect, to whom the book of Revelation is addressed, the bond-slaves of Jesus Christ! (Rev. 1:1)

When God called Eliakim to rule Judah, the Lord said of him, "And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open." (Isa. 22:22) The key of the house of David represented the God-given power and authority given to Eliakim to rule and reign over Judah. With that key, Eliakim was fully authorized of God to open doors of authority and opportunity that no one else could shut, and to shut doors that no one else could open. For us, the key of the house of David represents God-given power and authority, first of all to rule in the circumstances of our own lives, to rule and bless in the midst of the Lord's people, and to govern all the nations in the kingdom of God. And when that kingdom key is given to us as the body of Christ, the body of the One who has the key of David, we shall govern wisely, for we shall do so with the mind of Christ and with the authority of our Father.

Shebna is a type of the sinfulness and arrogance of the people of Israel, and therefore of the natural man, of the religious man! The beautiful parable here reveals the great truth that the authority over the house of the Lord is to be taken from the carnal, religious man of flesh, and given to another. Eliakim is a type of the new man, the new humanity, the new order, and the new dominion that supersedes the authority of the old man, the carnal mind, and all the old religious systems of man. The government and authority of the house of Judah, which had corrupted its ways before the Lord, forsaken His covenant, broken His commandments, polluted His name, prostituted His truth, and paganized His worship, would be given to another, a true one, a faithful one, who would reign in righteousness and be a father to the Lord's people and a deliverer of all creation. This is the Christ! This is the Christ, both Head and body, the true one, the faithful one who shall reign in righteousness over all things in the kingdom of God!

This new Christ-man, the spirit, the spiritual man, the inner man, the elect of God in the full stature of Jesus Christ will never be replaced by the man of flesh or any other order unto the ends of the ages. "And I will fasten him like a peg or nail in a firm place; and he will become a throne of honor and glory." (Isa. 22:23) These words were spoken of Eliakim, to whom the Lord gave the key of David and the authority of the kingdom. Prophetically, in type, it points to God's Christ! And in the message to the church in Philadelphia the Spirit says to the overcomer, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out." (Rev. 3:12) A pillar is that which is set, established, permanent, immovable. The Lord also told the church in Philadelphia, "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; 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, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name...to him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God." (Rev. 3:7-8,12) The intent of the Spirit in this passage is to show the awesome power and authority invested in Christ, and then to show God's intention to share that authority and power with us!

The true application of this "key of David" is to the government of Christ. In Christ God is bringing forth a new man, a new ministry, a new order, a new authority, a new rule and government that has concern, respect, and honor for the kingdom of God. A key is being cut and formed and prepared to administer the kingdom of God in all the earth! Our Lord has that key on His shoulder, for the government is upon His shoulder (Isa. 9:6), and the shoulder is the point where the weight of the kingdom rests upon the body of Christ. Notice that God told Eliakim that He would lay the key of the house of David "upon his shoulder." The Hebrew word translated shoulder in this verse indicates the area where burdens are placed. When a man such as Eliakim is called of God to reign over an earthly government or kingdom, it is truly a burden. To rule and reign in the earthly governments and kingdoms under man's corrupt order is indeed a burdensome experience. I have noticed through many years that most men elected to the presidency of the United States of America appear to age ten years during one short four-year term. There is a dramatic increase of wrinkles in their face, bags under their eyes, and gray in their hair. What an awesome weight they are under! But in the kingdom of God, there are no burdens. It is not a burden to rule and reign with Christ in our Father's kingdom! The kingdom of God is a kingdom of righteousness, blessing, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost! It is joy and peace and rest to reign with Christ in our Father's kingdom, for we are then doing our Father's will on earth in righteousness, blessing, peace, harmony, and perfection. Those who make up the mature and perfected body of Christ, upon the shoulder of which the kingdom rests, rule with great delight, gladness, and joyfulness!

HE THAT OPENS AND NO MAN SHUTS

"These things saith He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth." (Rev. 3:7)

The Lord knows when to open doors, and when to close doors — and no man is able to close the door that He opens, or to open the door that He closes. Only by the Spirit of God are the realms of God opened up to us! Man will have nothing to do with "electing" or "appointing" God's kings and priests who shall reign with Christ over the nations and over all things! The man-made religious systems elect and appoint their elders, deacons, pastors, superintendents, presidents, overseers, bishops, and archbishops, and they can dismiss them and move them from one assembly or area to another at will. The kingdom of God is not a democratic organization — it is a spiritual administration — and its kings and priests are not subject to the will of the people, nor the whims of ecclesiastical leaders. The name Eliakim means "God raises up." Oh, yes! Only God can raise up the government of His kingdom in the hearts of His called and chosen elect, and this He does sovereignly by His Spirit. All who occupy positions in the religious systems of man by the vote of the people, the vote of a board, or the will of man, are the servants of men and not the ministers of Christ by the Spirit. No man can close the door the Spirit opens, and no man can open the door the Spirit closes. Christ alone possesses the key of David! He opens doors that no one else can shut, and shuts doors that no one else can open. It is His delight, joy, and utmost desire and holy will to share all that He is with us. We are receiving the keys of the kingdom as we continue to grow in Christ! As we receive these keys we are learning the ways of Christ, the mind of Christ, and the will of Christ in all things. We are now doing only that which we see our Father do! Therein lies the authority of Christ.

There are many churches and individuals who are constantly trying to open doors that God has not opened for them. That is truly an effort in futility, for the Lord assures us that when He opens a door no man can shut it,

and when He shuts a door, no man can open it. When one "confesses" and "names and claims" and "speaks" to a situation and nothing happens, that one is truly trying to open a door that the Lord has shut! Only by the mind of Christ are we able to speak to the situations that GOD purposes to change and deal with, and refrain from endeavoring to move mountains that God is not moving. Oftentimes brethren try to fit into someone else's vision when what they should be doing is seeking the Lord to know what door He has opened for them. There are doors God has opened in our life, and there are doors God has closed, so why do we expend precious time and unnecessary effort trying to open a door that it is impossible to open?

Have you ever felt yourself to be in the lovely presence of Christ? I am sure you must have at times. If you have never waited for His presence, I strongly advise you to wait with Him until all earthly voices are stilled, until the sounds of business, family, pleasure, and your own rampaging thoughts and clamoring desires are silent, until you hear Him whisper His message to your heart. Find out by the spirit of wisdom and revelation in that holy moment which doors are open in your life, discover through prayer and holy waiting upon God what your calling in God is; determine within yourself by that inward voice of the Son of God what is the will of God in your present walk; seek after that and give yourself to it instead of trying to kick open a door that God has closed. He has opened it up for someone else, perhaps, but not for you, at this time, therefore be content, my precious brother, my dear sister, in God's purpose within you. If your life seems small, confined, and uneventful, do not fret; abide in Father's provision, for none of us can go beyond the door He has opened or shut before us. God will teach you the greatest things and do the most marvelous work within you right there in that undistinguished place where you are! Leave the door opening and shutting to the Lord!

Every member of the body of Christ has a function, a vision, a direction to go in the Spirit. Many of us in this hour God has called to stand in the word of His kingdom, to ascend in the Spirit into the high places of God, and there to worship and minister in His holy temple. Everything about us is being affected as we fulfill this priestly ministry! You have callings and abilities of God in the Spirit and therefore are admonished to faithfully go through those doors God has opened for you. John was "in the Spirit" when he saw a "door opened in heaven." Ah, the doors opened for God's elect are in heaven! They are in heavenly places where we sit with Christ and rule and reign with Him in the Spirit. These are doors that God has sovereignly opened in your life, which others cannot enter; they are not doors of your choosing, but doors of divine ordination. Our calling to sonship and the kingdom of God is the door that God has opened before us, which we are now entering by the grace and power of Christ.

Many do not understand this truth, but it is an utter impossibility for any man or woman, at any point of time in his or her life, to go beyond the will of God. It is as impossible for you to open a door that God has shut, or shut a door that God has opened, as it is for a whale to fly with eagles. Learn this, oh man, and you will know a great truth: there is a time for every thing and every man! Truly did the wise man write, "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; a time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace." (Eccl. 3:1-8)

There is a time to be born into God's family! There is a time to wait upon God! There is a time to grow and learn and discover! There is a time to mature and be manifest as a SON OF GOD! It is a great mystery, but the truth is that not one of these realities can be obtained or attained apart from God's appointed time. I know brethren who think that by their own intense desire and faith they can by-pass the grave, lay hold upon immortality, and step right in to manifest sonship. Some will consider me an unbeliever, but I do declare to you that it won't happen! God has a time! The firstborn Son of God came "in the fullness of time." At age twelve He could have gone to Cana of Galilee and tried to turn water into wine, but nothing would have happened! "My hour has not yet come," He said. There was a time to be born in Bethlehem's stable. There was a time to go to Nazareth and be subject, growing in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and men. There was a time for His "showing forth unto Israel." When the day of Pentecost was "fully come" the Spirit was poured out from on high. Peter and the rest could have gotten tired of waiting, left the upper room, determined to bring in the new dispensation sheerly by faith, but their efforts would have proven futile! God has a time for everything. God has a time for the manifestation of the sons of God! Don't think you can hasten it, my friend. Abide in

Father's dealings and wait patiently upon the Lord. All who are walking in the light of the Lord, in expectation of the glory of God, and doing the will of the Father will stand in their place in the hour of manifestation! GOD will do this thing, my beloved, not the will of the flesh nor the zeal of man.

I am reminded of an incident in the early 1960's when Lorain and I were laboring as missionaries in Mexico. Two new doors of ministry had opened to us and we were not certain which we should enter. We asked a dear sister, a prophetess of the Lord, to pray with us about the matter. Shortly she sent a note with a prophetic word which said, "Do not enter either door — stay where you are. One year from this date, as man reckons time, a door will open and you will know it is the door the Lord has opened." We honored this word and continued to minister in the area where we were.

The following summer I was attending a convention in the state of Pennsylvania. As I sat in the meetings a strange thing happened. The voice of the Spirit came to me powerfully, telling me to return to Sarasota, Florida to minister with the church where I had been an associate minister prior to going to Mexico. For two hours I reasoned with the Lord, for, as far as I knew, the church in Florida was not in need of my services, and they certainly had not contacted me or invited me to come! Furthermore, we were involved in the ministry in Mexico with plans for an expanded ministry there in coming months. At last I said, "O.K. Lord, but it's up to you!"

A few days later I was in a brother's house in another place in Pennsylvania, where I was ministering for the weekend. His phone rang. It was a long distance call for me from Florida. One of the elders in the church in Sarasota was on the line. The senior minister there had resigned. The brethren had prayed and discerned in the Spirit that I was to come and fill that place. Of course, I accepted at once! Shortly thereafter we returned to Mexico to settle our affairs there. While sorting through the papers in my desk I ran across the prophecy from our prophetess friend. I opened it and began to read, "One year from this date, as man reckons time, a door will open and you will know it is the door the Lord has opened." I glanced at the date on the top of the page — it was exactly, to the day, one year before the brother's phone rang in Pennsylvania with the invitation for us to return to Florida! You see, my beloved, God is the great door-opener! When the Lord opens a door, no man can shut it; when the Lord closes a door, no man can open it. It is the law of the kingdom! And there is a time for everything! It is not by trying to force the issue, but by faith and patience we inherit the promises! It is by abiding in His will, paying the price, rejoicing in hope, and preparing our hearts for GOD'S TIME!

"I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it..." (Rev. 3:8). While there are many doors God opens and shuts in our lives as we walk with Him and grow in Him, this open door is the same door John saw "opened in heaven" at the end of the messages to the seven churches. Because the church in Philadelphia is God's faithful overcoming remnant, a door is opened by which they are ushered into the heavenlies — into the high places of the Spirit in Christ! To enter this door is to have a transformation from the earthly consciousness and state of being into the heavenly. If any of us seem to fall short, be encouraged, for He will deal with us until we are able to enter in. No man can shut this door! No one can keep you out of God's purpose for you! The door is open before us! We have heard the voice as of a trumpet saying, "Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter." The Spirit is bidding us to arise and enter in to our full inheritance in Christ! This call goes out only to the called and chosen elect of the Lord! If you have heard the voice, the door is open before you!

I WILL KEEP YOU FROM THE HOUR OF TEMPTATION

"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." (Rev. 3:10)

Another way of saying this is, "I will guard you from the hour of afflictions sent by God to test one's character." Each of us must have specific tests that are custom made for us. God in His infinite wisdom has chosen the ones that you need to bring you to maturity in Christ. The tests I have are not the same ones you have. Yet, thank God, there is a place where the testing ends! That place is where we move out of our fleshly consciousness to live and walk in the Spirit and by the Spirit.

This process of testing, or the "hour of temptation," comes upon all the world, saith the Lord! The word "world" here is not the Greek word kosmos, but oikoumene, meaning the entire globe and all its inhabitants. But the

Lord goes on to say, "to try or test or discipline them that dwell upon the earth." I find myself too limited to set forth this truth as I should do, but let us request of God's Spirit the ability to see that the "earth" speaks to the natural realm of the carnal mind, and there are vast multitudes of believers who dwell all their lifetime on a natural plane of man-made religious experience, unquickened to the supernal glories of the heavenly realm where spiritual men and women sit together in the blessedness of the divine life and celestial glory of the ascended Christ.

Those who dwell in the heavenlies in Christ live and walk in the Spirit far above the earth realm where the testings of those "upon the earth" cannot reach. In this high and holy realm we are kept from the hour of testing, trial, and discipline that is designed for men dwelling in the lowlands of the flesh and the carnal mind. Oh, yes, our bodies are still upon the earth, but our spirits have soared to celestial worlds where what happens in the flesh does not affect how we live our lives. All are tried — but those who live the life of ascension are unaffected by the pressures of this Dark Age. What happens in the outer world has no power to take us off our course that God has set for those who are called to obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore we are not judged with the world, we are not tempted or tested or tried as are those who are still struggling and have not overcome the world, nor are we moved by any of the allurements, pressures, or powers of the earth realm of flesh and carnality. The words of the beautiful song by Bob and Charlotte Torango express it so aptly:

**Come up hither, in the Son realm,
No dragon here abides;**

**For the sure word now has conquered
And in Him we have our life.
Though the kingdoms of men crumble
Have no fear, just stand and see
That the kingdom of our Father
Is brought forth in you and me!**

It will greatly aid our understanding of the book of Revelation when we see that almost all the events in the book take place in one of three dimensions: HEAVEN, EARTH, and SEA. These are, of course, symbolical and prophetic terms! They represent states of being, life-styles, levels of consciousness, and dimensions of life within each of us. The lowest of these three realms is the sea. Throughout the book of Revelation a number of things transpire in the sea. "And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood." "I stood upon the sand of the sea, and I saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns." "And the sea gave up the dead that were in it." "Woe to the inhabitants of the sea, for the devil is come down unto you."

Throughout the scriptures the sea is a type of the inner storms and turbulent nature of the Adamic man. The prophet Isaiah penned these inspired words: "The wicked are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." (Isa. 57:20-21) Jude also described wicked men when he said, "These are raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame" (Jude 13). The beloved John, on the isle of Patmos, had a vision of a great whore sitting on many waters. The angel revealed the meaning of the many waters, saying, "the waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." (Rev. 17:15)

The natural sea is a great deep, an abyss. (Gen. 1:2; 7:11; 8:2; Deut. 8:7; 33:13) The Psalmist wrote of this abyss of the wickedness of man, "They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart is D-E-E-P (an abyss)." (Ps. 64:6) To the enlightened mind of David the depth of iniquity of which the human heart is capable is so great that it is beyond the ability of man to comprehend. The heart of man is an unfathomable depth, or, as Jeremiah observed, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9) While John the Revelator saw a beast (nature) rising out of the sea (abyss, depth) of humanity, Jesus expressed the same truth thus: "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed all these evil things!"

No one can dispute the fact that it is this restless, turbulent, raging, evil heart of the fleshly man that inspires every evil and devilish perversion, and has filled the world with ever increasing confusion, faithlessness,
FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, Part 54, The Church In Philadelphia [J. Preston Eby] ~ BIBLE STUDY 7

immorality, falsehood, fraud, hatred, violence, greed, cruelty, strife, wars, bloodshed, and oppression. Ah, the sea is the lowest realm on earth, and this vast sea of fleshly, Adamic humanity represents mankind at his lowest point — as bad off as man can be! Individually, however, it speaks of the lowest aspect of our human nature and life — the body with its passions and lusts. The sea represents the physical desires and impulses that are restless, driving, compelling, and raging out of control!

The second realm is that of the earth. In contrast with the sea and with heaven, the earth is the symbol of the second dimension of life, a realm higher than the sea, but lower than heaven, an intermediary realm which at its highest peak kisses heaven, and at its lowest level embraces the sea; yet, in the true sense it is, of itself, neither heavenly nor degenerate. The sea, as we have seen, comprises the masses of restless, surging, sinning, warring men who live only and always after the unrestrained desires of the flesh (body realm). Heaven, on the other hand, speaks of those who have been quickened, raised up, made alive in Christ, seated in Him in the heavenly places, who walk only and always in the Spirit. Those who "dwell upon the earth," however, are a moral class, religious folk, with many up-right citizens of the community and church-going Christian people in their ranks; but these, while not overtly wicked, are not spiritual either, but in most aspects of their daily lives "mind earthly things."

On the individual level the earth speaks of the soul — mind, will, and emotion. It is an intellectual realm, but also the realm of the carnal or natural mind. Out of this realm comes our organized society, law and order, charities, good works, even good religious works which are deemed spiritual, but which do not originate out of the spirit. The man who walks in this realm of "earth" is that good neighbor of yours, a nice fellow, a good person, who wouldn't cheat you or lie to you or misuse you in any way. In fact, he may be helpful, caring, and compassionate. He may attend First Methodist or St. Mary's Church; he may be a Sunday School teacher, a deacon, or board member; he is socially and religiously active, a God-honoring, flag-waving man, but has never ascended into the heavenlies and does not live out of a heavenly dimension. You can't accuse him of any gross sin, or any wicked or ungodly act, but if you start talking to him in a spiritual realm he will look at you like you came from Mars. He has absolutely no idea, not the foggiest notion, of what you are talking about! He doesn't live in the sea, he doesn't wallow in the lusts of the flesh, in pornography, crime, drugs, adultery, dishonesty, or any lustful thing. BUT NEITHER HAS HE BEEN TO HEAVEN!

In the earth realm one can touch the sea, and one can touch heaven, but one doesn't dwell there! The hour of temptation is to "try them that dwell upon the earth," the Spirit says. The Greek word for "dwell" is not the ordinary *oikeo*, but the strengthened form of the word, *katoikeo*, meaning those who have settled down upon the earth, who have identified themselves with it. They are content to remain in a carnal, soulish, natural-minded state of being! The man of earth lives out of the dimension of the first man Adam — the living soul! It is a soulful realm of life.

The third and highest of the three realms is heaven. This is the highest dimension of life, the dimension of spirit. Those who live out of the spirit are spiritual and heavenly. The Greek word for heaven is *ouranos* meaning elevation, height, exaltation, eminence. It has both physical and spiritual applications. In its spiritual sense it bespeaks of the eternal, invisible, and omnipresent realm of the spirit in which God and all celestial beings dwell — far above the realm of the physical, material, earthly, and mortal. It is not a geographical or astral location. It is not a planet or a place. It is a DIMENSION OF LIFE, REALITY, AND BEING. It is a SPHERE OF EXISTENCE. It is a PLANE OF CONSCIOUSNESS. Every spirit life-form lives on a plane of spiritual awareness. Each of these planes constitutes a "heaven," a spiritual realm above the physical.

Heaven is naught but the biblical name of the REALM OF GOD'S SPIRIT, the invisible and omnipresent dimension of Spiritual Reality. And it is all around us! It is as near to us as the air we breathe, closer to us even than the blood coursing through our veins. We are one with it by virtue of our spiritual life. "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." We touch heaven as we touch God in our spirit. We behold heavenly things as with our spiritual mind we behold spiritual realities. We walk in heaven as we walk in the spirit. We think like celestial beings when we think with the mind of Christ. We act heavenly when we live by divine nature. Heaven is, furthermore, the realm of God's government — His infinite power and almighty authority. This kingdom is rooted in our spirit, the heavenly dimension of our life.

Our Lord Jesus Christ had left His heavenly glory. He had humbled Himself, had taken upon Himself the form of sinful flesh; and becoming a man, was despised and rejected. He made Himself of no reputation. And yet, while in humanity and reproach, a Man among men, He made this statement: **"No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which IS IN heaven."** (Jn. 3:13) The Son of God left His glory, and descended to the depths of shame and reproach. He came and took our place of disgrace in order that we might be raised and exalted and honored and, with Him, be given a name (nature) above every name! He, the Christ, who was made in all things like unto His brethren, yet, while a man on earth, in humility, Himself said, "The Son of man which IS in heaven!"

Jesus the Christ, when a man on earth, was at the same time, in heaven! Our Lord was in heaven; He came down from heaven, and still was in heaven. It is something a person can be in, can descend from, and still possess. Our Lord was the Mighty God — God manifest in the flesh, Emmanuel, God with us! Yes, even while in the flesh, by the eternal Spirit within, He was ONE with the invisible, infinite REALM OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD. His outer man was conscious of the earthly realm and one with it, but His inner man was conscious of the eternal realm and one with it. Oh, the mystery of it! The heavens were open to Him, He dwelt and lived and thought and walked and manifested out of the divine sphere of life. He was a heavenly man on earth!

No word written or spoken could hold more truth in this regard than the words of the apostle Paul wherein he speaks of **"the power which God exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavens, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come."** (Eph. 1:20-21) These wonderful terms used by Paul are figures of speech. God is omnipresent spirit — He doesn't physically sit on anything! Nor does He physically have a right hand! It means that Christ is raised up permanently into that highest spiritual realm where He has all power and authority! The "throne" spoken of in other scriptures refers to His omnipotent power. So now we know where Christ ascended! HE ASCENDED INTO THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION OF SUPREME AUTHORITY AND ALMIGHTY POWER!

Then Paul says, **"And He raised us up together with Him and made us sit down together with Him in the heavenly sphere."** (Eph. 2:6) (Amplified) It will be a blessed day for us when God makes it clear to our hearts that we have already been raised up and given joint seating with Christ in the very same heavens where He is enthroned with His Father. YOU ARE WHERE HE IS! That is the true heaven — not visionary mansions, golden streets, or a flowing river out of the throne. Most Christians have no idea where heaven is, what heaven is, or where they are! Therefore they live in the consciousness of a lower realm out of which they think, walk, act, and live.

The vast majority of believers think of heaven in futuristic and sentimental terms, somewhat as when a mother in some little country town sends her boy to the great city, and at once feels familiar with the great city because somewhere, lost in among its hurrying thousands, her boy is there. His familiar life, transported to it, seems to make it familiar. She feels as if she knew all about it. She talks of it with a kind of affection. As if it were almost her home, because it is the home of one she loves. She catches every mention of it as if it were a message meant for her. To go there is the constant dream of her life, and she feels as if when she came there she would know immediately the streets in which her heart has had its home so long. But though she dreams about it, and feels familiar in a strange way about it, the fact is she has never been there! That is how people think of heaven. But that is not how spiritual people think of heaven!

Those who are God's elect in this hour have been taught of God, they have been given an understanding for they have been quickened, made alive, raised up into the higher than all heavens, and in consciousness, in spirit, in reality are seated even now in the heavens in Christ Jesus! People think they are where their natural mind tells them they are. They have missed the spirit reality altogether and understand not that they are born from above and their citizenship is in heaven! That high and holy realm is not a place away off beyond the galaxies, but a place in our spirit where we rise up above our earthiness and learn to compare spiritual things with spiritual things. It is there that we discover reality!

Dear ones, how can we live in the heavens? Just by being in Christ. Christ has ascended. Christ is now the highest heaven in this universe! Most of those who read these lines understand what it means to experience

the ascended Christ, to daily live out our lives in the victory and triumph of the Son of God who dwells in our spirit, and in whom we dwell in blessed union, far above the sorrows, strife, sin, problems, perplexities, limitation, struggles, fears, disappointments, and death of the carnal realm. THIS is sonship! In spirit I hear the wonderful words falling upon the ears of the prophet of Patmos, "Rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them!" (Rev. 12:12) This should help us see how it is that the promise of the Lord is fulfilled in us, "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." The sons of God do not "dwell upon the earth!"

Those who dwell in heaven, who walk in the spirit, who think with the mind of Christ, who live out of divine nature, have no need to be "tried" as men who dwell in an earthly state. There is no processing in heaven! There is no condemnation, no judgment, proving, purging, refining, correction, discipline, or testing of those who live and dwell and sit in the ascended Christ! Those who truly walk after the spirit are not depressed, perplexed, worried, or victimized by any kind of "earthly" situation. When our affections are set upon things above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God, and where we sit with Him and in Him, we are resurrected and ascended, for the Christ with whom we are joined in spirit is the Christ who has ascended into the heavens! When you stand in union with Him you are high above the mountains, not in the valleys. You are in the heavenly places, far above the earth. The things of earth grow strangely dim to those who truly are in Christ.

In the book of Revelation everything that comes out of heaven is good and wonderful! Angels, great and mighty, come out of heaven (Rev. 10:1; 18:1; 20:1). Voices of wisdom, revelation, and power come out of heaven (Rev. 10:4,8; 11:12,15; 14:2; 18:4-5; 21:3). The all-conquering army of God, Christ the firstborn with all the holy sons of God, come out of heaven (Rev. 19:11-14). And a city, a glorious city, the New Jerusalem, comes down from God out of heaven (Rev. 21:2,10). The throne of God is in that city, the Lamb is on the throne, and every overcomer is on the throne! So heaven is a wonderful realm, and I live there. All who live and walk in the spirit live there. Individually, I live there in my spirit. Collectively, we all live there in our walk with God in the spirit.

Within me, and within you, my beloved, there is a sea realm, the outer man of the body. In our intellect, in our soul life there is an earth realm. And in our spirit there is a heaven realm! There are things that are true in each of these realms, in each of these dimensions of our life. Every man on earth fits into one of those three categories — every man! There's not a man on this planet who isn't living out his life from one of those three realms. Millions of people live in the consciousness and power of one of those three categories of being. All processing takes place only in the realms of earth and the sea. Everything that comes out of heaven affects and deals with the earth and the sea. Fire comes down from heaven and brings purifying judgments upon those who dwell upon the earth and in the sea. Mighty messengers come down out of heaven and the sea rages and the earth shakes. Oh, yes! When heaven comes down and touches earth there are voices, and lightnings, and thunderings, and earthquakes, and judgments, and fires, and blood, and hail, and mighty transformations. I can't think of anything greater that could happen to my body and soul realms! I can't think of anything better that could descend in power upon the self-consciousness and self-righteousness of my soul realm, and the lusts and passions of my body realm. In the book of Revelation all that happens in the earth and in the sea originates out of heaven! I'll tell you why that's important. If you're trying to deal with your carnal mind and your flesh and your religious hang-ups or any other thing apart from the life of God out of your spirit, then you indeed are making a great effort of futility.

There is only one way to deal with the soul realm and the body realm, the earth and the sea, and that is to deal with them out of heaven, in the spirit and by the spirit. We should earnestly meditate upon the words of the apostle Paul wherein he writes, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." (Rom. 8:13) It is impossible to conquer the activities of the soul and the body by any effort that originates out of those realms. They have no power to reform themselves! But if you through the spirit put these realms into neutral, out of gear, you shall then live by the spirit and in the spirit. Paul continues, "For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Aren't you glad!

For those who live in heaven everything is in the spirit. We walk in the spirit, live in the spirit, pray in the spirit, worship in the spirit, speak by the spirit, and do all things in and by the spirit. This is sonship! We find that as

we walk and live after the spirit, judgment is brought into our lower realms of soul and body, and we have not to do anything about it. It is all accomplished out of a heavenly realm, by the spirit! There is no other way. If we go around preaching death to self, how to crucify the flesh, how to kill the old man, how to reform and change the old Adamic nature, then we've missed the whole book. None of that is of any value at all. My brother, my sister, nothing will even happen in your earth or in your sea until there is an administration of life out of your heaven. Read the book! It's all there. THIS IS THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST!

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 55 THE CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART FIFTY-FIVE

A PILLAR IN THE TEMPLE

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out." (Rev. 3:12)

Lorain and I visited the city of Philadelphia a number of years ago, and it is today a rather prosperous Turkish town. The city was built on four or five hills in a very beautiful valley and picturesque setting. Today it is spread out a great deal, and it is a typical Turkish town. But it is interesting to note that the only thing that remains of the ancient city is two pillars! It's as though God has sovereignly preserved these two pillars, even in the natural, as an abiding testimony to His promise to the overcomer, "I will make you a pillar in the temple of my God, and you will go no more out."

Before we consider this wonderful promise of being a "pillar" let us look at the "temple of God" in which the pillars stand. All types and shadows are forever done away when Christ, the reality, comes. The Lord dwells not in temples made with hands! They are but shadowy figures of the true. **"What temple will ye build me?" saith the Lord. So wherever we see a reference to a temple of the present or the future, it must refer to "the true sanctuary, and the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." (Heb. 8:2)** Furthermore, there is only one such tabernacle, or temple. The Word nowhere tells of two, or three, or one hundred; one away off somewhere in space where Jesus is ministering, another in Jerusalem built by the Jews, and another spiritual one composed of living stones. There is but ONE temple, ONE great High Priest, and ONE royal priesthood. So when the priests of old served "unto the example and shadow of heavenly (spiritual) things," those heavenly things were the same that Moses saw in the mount, and the same heavenly and spiritual things to which we, God's spiritual and heavenly people, have now come, for, we **"are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." (Heb. 12:22)** None of these are a future reality to be entered into after we die, or after Jesus returns. We ARE COME! Let us never forget that fact.

More than three thousand years ago Solomon built a magnificent temple of stone and precious materials. He overlaid it with gold and adorned it with silver. There was no sound of hammer or chisel or saw, for all of the stones and every part had been carefully made and cut far away, down in Solomon's quarry. The pillars reflected the light of the Judean hills; the great Corinthian brass door shown in the sunlight. So wonderful was it that the Queen of Sheba stood transfixed at the sight. But the temple built by Solomon was only a fleeting shadow of the living temple which Christ would build by the Spirit — a temple not made with hands!

The tabernacle of Moses in the wilderness and the temple of Solomon upon mount Moriah were merely shadows of better things to come; merely the natural type of the spiritual reality which Moses saw in the mount. These never did constitute the TRUE TEMPLE of God! How absolutely clear are the inspired words of the apostle, "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: we have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary and of the TRUE TABERNACLE, which the Lord pitched, and not man." Jesus is now a minister in the true tabernacle or temple! Concerning the old tabernacle and temple with its priestly ministry the writer to the Hebrews continues, "Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount." The tabernacle of old was made as a physical, material copy or representation of the true heavenly tabernacle which Moses beheld in the spiritual realm of the heavens. What Moses saw in the mount was heavenly and spiritual! And that which is heavenly and spiritual is the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man!

We are now come to the true! The true temple is the body of Christ. The temple of the Lord is that vast family of God's sons who are coming to maturity in the image of Christ. It distresses me to hear preachers constantly proclaiming as fact the old wives' fable that the temple of God must be rebuilt by the Jews in Israel! Listen to the words of Peter as he presses this golden truth home to the understanding hearts of the saints. "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious: and he that believeth in Him shall not be confounded." **(I Pet. 2:3-6)**

Our Lord Jesus Christ is remarkable as the cornerstone of this human heavenly temple because not only is Christ the sure foundation in the midst of a world where the pillars are trembling and the foundations are shaken, but He remains ever sure and ever stable and gives His stability to the entire structure. More than that, He is the living stone that communicates that stability to all the other stones that are joined to Him. Praise God that in the midst of all the pressures and testings there is that INNER STABILITY of the Christ! So, we see painted before our eyes a magnificent structure, the living cathedral of Christ rising into the sky, made of living stones. This is the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man! Not a temple of dead stones, but of living stones, each stone a spiritually living person indwelt by the glory of God, whose temple we are. Not covered with glittering gold, but overshadowed by God. Not adorned with silver, but founded on redemption. Not fashioned with glittering, precious stones, but with the eternal jewels of His own nature, glory, and power!

God will never vacate this heavenly, spiritual temple to return to a temple made with hands. No temple of God, formed from stones and ornamented with cedar and silver and gold, will ever be rebuilt in Jerusalem! The notion of a rebuilt temple is a lie that would be humorous, were it not so ridiculous and absurd. The very thought is a horrible blasphemy! God doesn't go backward in His purposes, nor does He reinstate the type once the reality has come. The temple that God builds is the temple of which Jesus spoke to the poor, sinful woman at the well of Sychar. She was quibbling about the place to worship God, and He said, "Neither in this mountain, NOR IN JERUSALEM, shall ye worship the Father...the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit (in their own spirits) and in truth (spiritual reality)." **(Jn. 4:21-24)** And our brother Paul adds this testimony, "Now therefore...ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an HOLY TEMPLE in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an HABITATION OF GOD through the spirit." **(Eph. 2:19-22)**

Almost two thousand years ago the Lord Jesus spoke to the house of Judah, saying, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." **(Mat. 23:38)** This was a pronouncement of doom upon a city and a nation that had not received its King. He is saying that the presence and the glory and the purpose of God had departed from Judah. God took His presence even from the Holy of holies in the temple, leaving their house desolate unto them. Finally, in A.D. 70, He came and destroyed that vacant shell of a building so that not one stone of it was left upon another. He scattered the people of Judah throughout all the earth, abolished their law and their priesthood, which to this day has never been restored, nor can it be. It seems to me that when Jesus Christ was anointed with the fullness of the Holy Spirit the presence and glory of God left the dwelling place in the Holy of holies and came into the firstborn Son of God, taking up His abiding place in human flesh. All of those years the priests had been offering sacrifices to God who was not in His accustomed dwelling place, though they did not know it. He had left His centuries-old habitation and had moved into a body of flesh, the body of His Son, the true temple of God. All of the world was ignorant of this for we read, "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." **(Jn. 1:10)** And again, standing before Herod's temple, beholding the stones and the glory thereof, He said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews were furious, demanding, "Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?" But, the record states, "They wist not that He spake of the temple of His body." **(Jn. 2:19-21)**

At the crucifying of Jesus, God drew a curtain of darkness over the earth and blotted out everything from sight. Beneath the cover of that dense darkness God tore the temple veil from top to bottom so any carnal, earthly priest of Aaron's passing order could peer into the Holy of holies, the former abode of God, and plainly see and

know that God was not there! This Holy of holies was empty. Ah, what must have been the thoughts of the priesthood as they returned to the temple! What must have been the feelings of the priests who had remained in the temple! When the darkness was lifted and the desolation seen and they discovered that they could enter into the Holy of Holies and not suffer death! Then they must have known that something catastrophic had taken place. Surely a deep, inward fear seized them. They would not dare breathe a hint of this to the people! They must hide the facts and continue on with the form of the sacrifices as though nothing had happened.

God was establishing something entirely new and different. Beneath the cover of darkness God ripped open that veil and let the whole world see that He had departed, leaving that room empty. It was desolate, and now this was the beginning of the end for Jerusalem, the temple, and its priesthood. And I want to say again, in spite of what many tell us, WE WILL NEVER SEE ANOTHER TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM! Are we so foolish to even entertain the impious thought that God would allow the unbelieving Jews to build in Jerusalem another desolate temple? To again institute a priesthood offering the blood of goats and calves after Christ has been offered once for all? The very idea is ludicrous!

Now I would draw your attention to some significant truths in relation to the temple of God. We will begin with a few passages of scripture from Hebrews, chapters eight and nine.

"Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: we have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." (Heb. 8:1-2)

"But Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building (material creation); neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once to the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." (Heb. 9:11-12).

"It was therefore necessary that the pattern of things in the heavens should be purified with these (the blood of goats and calves); but the heavenly things themselves (purified) with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself..." (Heb. 9:23-24)

We should earnestly consider the following points. (1) Christ our High Priest is now a minister in the heavenly sanctuary, the true tabernacle. (1) This tabernacle is greater and more perfect than the former one which was merely a type. (3) This tabernacle is not made with hands; i.e. not something man has built. (4) Christ has entered into this heavenly tabernacle to purify it with the better sacrifice of His blood.

Armed with this understanding that we are the temple of the living God, and that Christ is now ministering in the true tabernacle, which we are, the question follows — WHERE is Christ ministering as High Priest? Into WHAT Holy Place has He entered with His blood? And WHICH HEAVENLY THINGS has He purified with His own blood? Is Jesus officiating in some literal, material temple in some far-off heaven somewhere? Are there two temples of God, one in heaven, and another on earth; one literal, and the other spiritual? I do not hesitate to tell you that the answer to this last question is a resounding NO! The true understanding of Christ's High Priestly ministry and the outworking of the efficacy of His blood is contingent upon our absolute and total acceptance of the great, irrevocable, and eternal truth that God has only one temple, the true one, the heavenly one, and WE ARE THAT TEMPLE! That is the mystery. Truly "we are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem...and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things..." (Heb. 12:22, 24)

The book of Hebrews tells us plainly that the blood of Christ has purified heavenly things. (Heb. 9:23-24) To accomplish this Christ has entered into the Holy Place in heaven itself to present His blood for this purification (Heb. 9:6-12). But do heavenly things require purifying? Is there something in some far-off heaven somewhere that Jesus shed His blood for? Did our Lord come all the way down to earth and become a man in order to take

His human blood to cleanse some sanctuary up in the heavens from whence He had come? Did He take His blood up beyond the Milky Way in order to purify those heavenly things?

Let us UNDERSTAND! Christ is in heaven ministering as a Priest in the temple, the Holy Place in heaven! The truth is — we have been raised up and made to sit together with Christ in the heavens! We are in Christ! Christ is in us! We are builded together, an habitation of God through the Spirit! We are raised up a building of God, a spiritual tabernacle! WE ARE THE TRUE TABERNACLE WHICH THE LORD HAS PITCHED, AND NOT MAN! Nothing can be plainer than this. WE ARE THE TEMPLE OF GOD IN HEAVEN!

Can we not understand by this how it is that the heavenly tabernacle had to be purified by the offering of the blood of Christ. There is not some material holy place away off beyond the blue which had to be cleansed by the blood of Jesus. It is WE who needed to be purified! The work of the blood of Christ is not on behalf of something up in the sky; rather, the blood of Christ has cleansed our hearts from sin and purged our consciences from dead works that we might serve the living God! "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost who is in you, whom ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." (I Cor. 6:19-20)

Our Lord Jesus Christ gave perhaps the greatest parable of His ministry when He cleansed the temple and then spoke to the people about the temple of His body. He said what He meant: His body was a pure body, and He stood there to let them know that the fore-court of the temple was a symbol of the body of the believer. There were three courts in the temple: the outer court, the inner court, and the most holy place. The Lord meant them to understand by that purification that the outer court of man's temple, the body, had to be cleansed! There are three courts in this temple of man's being, just as there were three courts in the temple made with hands. Your body, as the apostle Paul eloquently proclaims, is the temple of God. He also said, "The temple of God is holy." And again, "If any man defiles the temple of God, him shall God destroy." When we defile our body we defile the temple of God just as surely as did Antiochus when he offered a pig upon the altar of the typical temple in Jerusalem.

Redemption demands that a man be restored SPIRIT, SOUL, AND BODY to that sphere of life and purity and incorruptibleness and glory which was his in that first blessed moment when he came forth from the bosom of the Father. There are three courts in the temple which constitutes a man. The first is the outer court of the body; the next is the inner court of the soul; the next is the innermost court of all, the spirit, which God Himself has given. God demands that every part of the temple shall be cleansed and restored and embued with the incorruptible nature of God! There is the true temple!

The purification of the temple begins in the spirit, the most holy place of Being. It is there the blood of Jesus is presented before God! It is there that the blood of Jesus, the incorruptible life of God, is sprinkled, quickening our spirit by His Spirit, making us alive to God again. All purification begins in the Holiest of all! Nothing can be cleansed in soul or body until by the washing of regeneration our spirits are quickened unto God, affecting the release of His life within. Would you worship God? If you are to worship God in a holy temple, let Him quicken your spirit by the sprinkling of the blood-life of God in Christ; then let Him cleanse your soul, let Him cleanse your body, and worship God in the temple of your own Being. God wants that. Oh, the mystery of it! Therefore it is that God sent His Son, not merely to cleanse the outer court, but through His death, through His resurrection, through His life, and in the power of His Spirit, to cleanse man FROM THE CENTER TO THE CIRCUMFERENCE. Hence it is that the purification of the temple of humanity must begin in your spirit and mine.

You will see then that the Lord Jesus Christ, when He purified the fore-court of the typical temple in Jerusalem, determined to show His people that even this temple of the body which God has given man should no longer be the prey of foul disease, and of filthy, sensual passion, and of putrefying death. He showed them that the body should be purified, that the soul should be purified, by the quickening of the spirit, and that He had come to pour out His Spirit (the life-blood of Christ), not only upon the spirits and souls of men, but upon all flesh, and that all flesh should rejoice in the advent of One who was not only the Saviour, but the Healer of mankind, the Cleanser of the outer court of the temple, the body, the giver of immortality so that even this corruptible shall

put on incorruption and this mortal shall put on immortality, and even this vile body shall be changed, to be fashioned like unto His body of glory. Isn't it wonderful!

The deep mystery is that we are the heavenly tabernacle where Christ the High Priest is ministering! His ministry is in and through us! It is in His body that He now walks and manifests His priestly ministry. The only true contact that the world has with the gracious person of Jesus is the contact they have with us, the members of His body. Christ loves the world, but He loves it through us! He reveals His mercy, but He shows that mercy through you and me! He saves men, but we are the instrument through which He reveals His salvation! God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, yet it is unto us that He has committed both the word and the ministry of reconciliation! He has forgiven all men, yet it is given unto us to remit men's sins! Oh, yes! Christ is the great High Priest in the heavens; He ministers in the holy place (spirit) of His heavenly temple, which temple we are!

I know no definition of God more sublime, outside of scripture, than this definition of a philosopher of France, who said, "I conceive God to be Him whose CENTER IS EVERYWHERE, and whose CIRCUMFERENCE IS NOWHERE." The spirit, soul, and body of a purified being is a center of omnipotent God. That God in whom we live, and move, and have our being, has His center in us. If God has no circumference then His center is certainly where I am, where you are. There can be no other center! Every man who has been quickened to God and made alive in Christ, is the center of the infinity of God! I want you to know, my brother, my sister, matters not how carnal, how weak, how limited you may have been, God desires to make your spirit a CENTER WHICH SHALL HAVE NO CIRCUMFERENCE. He wants to make your spirit alive, your soul pure, your body redeemed and incorruptible, and cause the River of all Life to flow out to the whole creation, unto the vast multitudes of hopeless men and women who came before you, and into unborn generations before you, so that you shall be a CENTER for an omnipotent and omnipresent and holy God; that is the object of the purification of the temple. This is sonship! THIS IS THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST!

Would God that all the saints of God might understand these sublime and divine mysteries and see that God's purpose from the foundation of the world has been the building of a spiritual house, a holy temple, an eternal abiding place in His creation in which He can be at home, and in which place He and His creation can meet. Praise God, we are living in the days when this glorious building of God is being completed, the full realization of which causes us to bow our heads in awe and wonderment. It is not temporal or transient as were the temples in Jerusalem which were all destroyed in turn. The temple which is Christ's body is eternal in the heavens! It is not earthly nor does it belong to the earthly realm, but to an heavenly. It is not of corruption, but of incorruption.

God is preparing us to minister to all creation, equipping our spirit, soul, and body to live forever in harmony with the mind and will of God. All the God-like qualities of your life are due to the fact that God by His Spirit indwells you. You are the temple of God! That is the wonder of the indwelling Spirit. It is not a work of grace; it is God possessing you. The knowledge of this sublime truth will make you holy. No one can ever thus see his place in God and remain in carnality. Christ has come to purify His heavenly temple with His blood! Should one claim to see these truths and yet remain as he was before, then he has not seen by the Spirit, but by the natural mind only. Away with the man of sin who usurps the place of Christ in His temple!

A PILLAR IN THE TEMPLE

"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem...and I will write upon him my new name." (Rev. 3:12)

An understanding of the Old Testament background is essential to understanding this figure. Pillars played a prominent role in both Israel's tabernacle and temple. There were two pillars at the door of Solomon's temple. (1 Kings 7:13-22) Each was solid bronze covered with gold, and when the sunlight struck them they would send forth shafts of light so brilliant it would blind one's eyes. Each was thirty-five feet tall and five feet thick. They could be seen for miles around the countryside for the temple was situated high upon mount Moriah and

the pillars stood taller than the temple. These two pillars supported the full weight of the temple's roof and were key to the structure. They were given names: Jachin (established) and Boaz (strength). They spoke clearly of firmness and security. The gold speaks of divinity or the divine nature. Two is the number of witness in scripture, revealing the importance of the pillars as the outward witness of the strength and government of the God of the temple.

The builder of a temple, who spares no expense, will sometimes bring his pillars from the very ends of the earth. Whenever he hears of a rock with rich enough veins of color in it, and which is, at the same time, capable of taking on the finest finish, which is able to bear all his carving tools, and receive all his intended polish and resplendence — at any cost, he will bring home such stones, and will with them rear a long vista of such pillars, till his temple is a perfect edifice of praise and beauty before all people. And so, the Lord declares, will it be with the heavenly temple! It is not by any means any and every stone that will qualify and take on all that is in the master-builder's mind. It is not every pillar that will carry all His Father's name, and all the name of the holy city, and all His new name. And thus it is that wherever the heavenly builder finds such a possible "pillar," even if it is in the utmost end of the earth, at any price He will choose it for His great design, and will not leave off working on it, till He has set it, in its proper place, in His heavenly temple. And then, when that heavenly temple is at last finished — what a vision of strength, power, beauty, and glory it will be — supported and adorned with a column of dear-bought, far-borne, and magnificently-wrought pillars! And every one of these pillars inscribed with His Father's name, and His own new name!

I repeat, the temple of the living God is not a natural building constructed by hands. None of the church buildings on earth, be they called temples, cathedrals, or some other high sounding name, are in reality a temple of the living God. People talk about the presence of God filling a building, but the presence of God does not fill any man-made building in that manner. God indwells only His living temple of living stones and if the life-presence and glory of God is in any building it is only because God's living stones are gathered there! The man-made building has nothing to do with it, and you cannot go back to the building once God's living stones have departed and find any lingering glory of God. The glory rests upon His people, the saints of the most High!

During my lifetime there have been many buildings that have been called temples. Some are called Calvary Temple, Grace Temple, Faith Temple, and various others. But you will not find God there! Years ago Aimee Semple McPherson, one of the early Pentecostal leaders, had a temple in Los Angeles; it was named Angelus Temple. Later a man named A. Earl Lee opened Emmanuel Temple in Los Angeles. Back in the days of the great Latter Rain outpouring a brother and sister received a word from the Lord to build Him a temple, and that when it was finished God would move in mighty power and thousands of people would flow unto them to be blessed in the kingdom of God. Immediately they began to construct a huge building called Faith Temple, seating several thousands of people. Their congregation was small, and the people were constantly bled for finances to complete the vision. It became a wearisome burden, but on and on they plodded, to build the Lord's temple. When it was nearing completion I remember them remarking about what "butterflies" they had in their stomachs at the prospect of the great move of God that was at hand. But the move of God never came, and they passed from the scene. You see, my beloved, they had mis-interpreted the words of the Lord! God wasn't talking about building a natural building out of concrete and steel! He was talking about them raising up the true temple of the Lord in that place, matured and perfected in Christ, with the Father's name and Christ's new name inscribed in every living stone, filled with His glory, that the ministry of manifest sonship might be revealed in them. Sadly, they neglected the true temple, draining the people's lives, strength, and pocketbooks to build the wrong temple! Many others have opened temples. Perhaps thousands have called their buildings temples, but not a one of them is the temple of God, for "YE are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." (II Cor. 6:16)

Here we have tremendous depth of God's plan for us. First, to him that comes to the sixth stage of overcoming will "I make a pillar in the temple of my God." Here the Lord Jesus says that He is going to place us in the temple of God. We will not be sitting in some building worshipping God or doing great things, but we will be part of the building. We will be a pillar in the building! God is not building a temple for us to sit in or minister in. He is raising up a temple out of us. In the day of His manifestation out of this temple in all the glory and fullness

of Himself there will be no need for the sons of God to put up large tents, rent great auditoriums, or erect huge buildings to accommodate the crowds. Oh, no! God isn't going to move that way again. The Spirit of God will flow spontaneously out of the sons of God wherever they are — in the streets, in the business places, in the fields, on buses, trains, and airplanes, in the restaurants, in the movie theaters, in the schools, in the churches, in the homes — wherever these sons appear in the purpose of God and at the word of the Father, there shall the mighty works, deliverances, revelations, and transformations be wrought. Up and down the land, in every place, to rich and poor, to educated and uneducated, to affluent and the down-trodden, needy, and hopeless, in the halls of government and to the common people, unto all without respect of persons, without announcements or advertising, without organized meetings or gatherings, without radio programs or television networks, without organizations or promotions, shall the glory flow into men's lives. God will visit men wherever they are, reveal the secrets of their hearts, confound their intellects, break their wills and their bondages, cleanse them from their sins, heal their sick, raise their dead, transform their minds and hearts, and raise up the revelation of Christ in their lives.

Let us consider the temple that man builds. Its gates are open for people to come in and pray. Its courts are also open and children come in and play, while its roof offers hospitality to the birds which have built their nests there. All this, however, is temporary and transient. When winter comes, the birds forsake their nests and fly away in search of warmer lands. The children, too, leave only the echo of their laughter in the deserted courts of the temple as they run away to seek the shelter of their homes. And the passerby who came to pray in its sacred atmosphere leave only the warmth of their petitions while they themselves are called by the demands of life. They were led there by the consciousness of some particular need, and then they resumed their way and left the temple behind. By night the temple's doors are closed and locked, all is dark and cold, and men have no access.

NOT SO THE PILLAR WHICH IS WITHIN THE TEMPLE! It is not a bird to stretch its wings and fly away. It is not an outsider who comes in for a few moments seeking a suitable environment for his prayer and then goes. The pillar is part of the very "being" of the temple! It belongs to the essence of the temple and constitutes an integral part of it. It cannot go away from the temple. Only when the temple itself would be demolished could the pillar be severed from it. So the Lord Jesus says to him that overcometh He will make a pillar in the temple of God, and he shall go no more out. No more will we be "in and out" of the presence of God! No longer will we be in and out of the leadership of the Spirit! We will be in perfect union with the spirit, mind, purpose, life, victory, and glory of God and shall go no more out!

Philadelphia was situated on the edge of a great volcano. Since it was located at the edge of a volcano the ground around it was very fertile making Philadelphia a rich agricultural area, especially for the growing of grapes. The city became one of the choice areas of the ancient world for the production of wine. But since it was next to a volcano they had a problem with earthquakes. Many, many earthquakes had hit this city and in A.D. 17 it was totally destroyed. The emperor Tiberius came in and completely rebuilt the place because he loved the wine. There were frequent tremors and the inhabitants lived in constant fear. The people were used to leaving the city during times of tremors and volcanic activity, and coming back in when it appeared the danger had passed. They were conditioned to living on the edge, fleeing in panic at a moment's notice then returning again and again. Their flight was always into the valley, away from the city, in case the buildings collapsed, as often was the case. Their lives seemed to consist of a never ending saga of going in and out, in and out.

In the loving embrace of one verse the Holy Spirit presented to the saints in Philadelphia a most astonishing and beautiful promise, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out!" Saint of God how is it possible to read such thrilling words of promise, declared and proffered to all who seek and believe? Behold with wonder and holy reverence the majesty of what is promised in this blessed passage — "and he shall go no more out." That doesn't make much sense to the modern mind, but it made a world of sense to those believers in Philadelphia! The very idea of a city, of a temple, of a position and an abiding place of security and permanence was reassuring and wonderful beyond words. Just imagine, if you can, living in Los Angeles, California and one day learning the glad news that you will never be shaken again! It is indeed wonderful!

A pillar is a load-bearing support. In the great temples of ancient times there were pillars made of marble that were polished smooth and when the pillar was set in the temple it was strong — it had been tested, they knew it would handle the load. Today great buildings and bridges are erected with giant steel girders that have been load-tested, and the architects are certain that they can bear the weight. The overcomer is one who has been tried and proven! He has overcome all the obstacles God has placed in his path to test his character. He is tested and proven and is qualified to bear the responsibility given to those who are the temple of the living God. God does not choose and shape and polish us just so we can be beautiful and take pride and rejoice in our own state of being — He makes us pillars so we can bear someone else's burden.

No overcomer will be transformed into a pillar to be placed in a literal temple in heaven. This is a symbol of the sure and fixed position to be attained by those who overcome all things. At the present time every one of God's called and chosen elect is being processed, shaped, tried, and tested, and is subject to "falls" along the way. We catch a vision of high and holy realms in God and, in moments of exceptional anointing, enter for a little while into those blessed experiences, only to have the anointing lift and the vision fade, once more to face the mundane activities and the struggles of daily life. Ah, there is a promise, bright and blessed, that in due time the processing will be completed, the testing will be finished, the secret inworkings of God consummated, and those who have overcome, who have passed the tests will be as pillars, fixed and secure, in that glorious spiritual temple which will be the meeting place between God and men in the ages yet to come.

We do not belittle the circumstances; they are often cruel. We are not blind to the burdens; they are crushing. We are conscious of the fierceness of the storms; they are doing their utmost to overwhelm us. We do not minimize the temptations; they are doing their worst to break down our strongest defenses. Yet our eyes are turned away from these to Him who is mighty within. Of ourselves, our outer man and human consciousness, we are like the reed shaken with the wind; but in the Christ within our spirit, we read, "**Behold! I have made thee an iron pillar and brazen walls, and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail.**" (Jer. 1:18) So we see the reed stiffened and rooted by HIM who is never moved! The Christ within is neither changed nor affected by any outward thing! From everlasting to everlasting He is the same.

The Lord is raising up a people in this hour who are not tossed about by every wind of doctrine; who are not gullible; who are not being controlled by man; who are not being made merchandise of; who have discernment and are not being deceived; who need no special teacher with some new revelation; who do not need a human shepherd to guide their every step; who do not have to depend on someone else for their happiness and spiritual strength — but who have been tested and tried and have proven the very life of God is within them, being raised up as wisdom, righteousness, power, provision, and glory in their lives. Christ has been revealed not only to them, but is revealed in them! They are drawing on the strength of their inner man, the spirit, Christ in them, according to the riches of HIS GLORY!

Dearly beloved — I beseech you in the name of the Lord, to open your eyes to the mighty power of God at work in you, and to appropriate the fullness and completeness of the Lord Jesus Christ. No matter what fiery furnace we may be cast into, there is One who walks in the midst of us, and He is the Lord of glory! It is overcoming — it is standing and walking and living in the victory of Him who is holy and Him who is true — that makes us a pillar in the temple of God! "I will make you a pillar," saith the Lord! Do you hear that? Christ within makes us a pillar! That is the secret. It is not that someday, somewhere, Christ will confer this "position" or "office" or "degree" upon us. He makes us a pillar, we become the pillar, as His stability, steadfastness, immovability, strength, victory, incorruptibility, and immutability are raised up within us as the reality of our lives.

In looking at a piece of petrified wood we can see this. Several times we have visited the petrified forest in Arizona and seen the huge trees that are now stone, and it is a wonder. Once they were wood, NOW THEY ARE ROCK. For something has happened to them! Certain minerals entered into every cell of each piece of wood and wrought a complete change in it. This process continued until that piece of wood became rock. Same shape, same size, and it has exactly the same cell structure. But what a great change has taken place! All those trees would have decayed by now, disintegrating in weakness and corruption. But now they are

strong enough to be set up as pillars in a temple! THAT IS WHAT GOD IS DOING IN US! Something is happening to us. We do not understand all about it, but we know that there is a change going on in our innermost beings. It is God permeating us with Himself! God has impregnated us with His life, and now He is taking over, filling even our very cells with all He is and will be. This change is flowing out of our innermost selves, unto our souls and even in our bodies. This process shall continue until we arrive at the condition of being saturated with God! God shall so fill us, shall so overwhelm us that we take on the very characteristics of God. Aren't you glad!

When we have become a pillar in the temple of God, we shall remain there in blessed union with Christ and the Father, for the Lord's word to us is that "WE SHALL GO NO MORE OUT." Once we have truly overcome all things of this carnal, worldly order of man, we shall be established in the pure, unchangeable, eternal nature of God and stand as pillars in the temple of God. Once we have realized the fullness of God and His kingdom within, we shall never again leave that state of His complete, perfect, and glorious presence. We shall remain in His temple, in blessed and holy union with Christ in our spirit, never again to leave that realm of His life, wisdom, power, and glory. We will be "pillars" in His temple, this is God's unalterable and unchanging promise to us, His overcomers! Only as we bring His holy temple and the glorious fullness of His presence with us, shall we come "down" to the needy multitudes of earth and of the whole creation to deliver them, set them free, and restore them all.

In closing this message I would mention again that a "pillar" in the temple is a part of the structure. Just think of that! I doubt not that thousands of saints who read these lines rejoice in the knowledge that they are living stones in the wall of God's building, but here is a promise, given to overcomers, that is greater than all — they shall be pillars in the temple of God. It is a high and wonderful promise! Only God can reveal such things to us. The pillars bear the weight of the superstructure. One day when Paul was writing to his son in the faith, he wrote of the house of God "**which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth**" (I Tim. 3:15). This house of God, in which God dwells, lives, and works out His life, is also the P-I-L-L-A-R OF THE TRUTH.

What is truth? Be not deceived into thinking, my beloved, that truth is a doctrine, a creed, or correct understanding about God. The most simple definition of truth is — REALITY. Nothing is real in the whole material universe, nothing is truth; everything is but a shadow, all is temporal, illusion, and is passing away. Everything that can be seen, touched, tasted, possessed, and analyzed is not real, but at best a shadow. Whatever exists as a "form" of matter in this universe of appearances is but a figure, not the real thing.

What is the real thing — REALITY? "The things which are seen are temporal," the inspired apostle says, "**but the things which are not seen are eternal (abiding).**" (II Cor. 4:18) The things which cannot be seen by the natural eye are the things of the spirit. CHRIST, the SPIRIT, is the reality of everything! You may think that the human (Adamic) life you have is real, but it is not; it too is only a shadow. "**For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away.**" (James 1:24) Every cemetery bears witness to this! Real life is Christ. If you have the Son of God, you have life; if you do not have the Son of God, you do not have life. (I Jn. 5:12) If your spirit has not been quickened by His Spirit you have not discovered life and abide in death, and this death has passed upon all men.

If someone sends you a photograph of himself, you will say, "That is uncle Joe, or cousin Mary." But in truth that is not any person at all! It is merely a picture, an image, a false likeness. From time to time dear ones on our mailing list send us pictures of themselves or their families. We have a bulletin board in our office filled with pictures of folks from all over the world. Some of them we know, many of them we have never met. Sometimes someone stops by and I will point out some of these: "This is Paul and Emily Mueller, this is Ray and Doris Prinzing, this is..." and on and on we go pointing out our friends from here and there. But what they see is not these folks at all! REAL things are not found in pictures!

The whole universe is but a picture, an image, a likeness. All the types, shadows, and figures in the Bible were but symbols and images of reality to come, and that reality IS CHRIST. Christ is the truth, the reality of all! In the physical realm we have food for sustenance; but Christ is the living bread that came down from heaven,

that if a man eat thereof he shall never die. On earth we have great rocks, and the wise man, Jesus said, builds his house upon the rock; but Christ is the true rock of ages, the foundation and stability that cannot be moved or shaken by anything. We dress our bodies in clothing for protection, warmth, appearance, and identification; but Christ is the eternal robe of righteousness covering the nakedness of our flesh nature, and the royal robe of the king of glory and a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, giving us our identification as king-priests in the kingdom of our Father.

Christ Himself is the truth, and His Spirit is the Spirit of truth (Jn. 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; I Jn. 5:7). Christ is the reality, and His Spirit is the SPIRIT OF REALITY. Only Christ, the Spirit is real! The people in whom the living God dwells, lives, and moves, is the PILLAR OF THE TRUTH, the support upon which reality stands, the buttress that bears the reality. Upon this people can be seen the glory of the Lord, the reality of the universe! Upon this people can be seen what is real and true — the truth! Upon the sons of God can be seen the reality of life and incorruption, the reality of love, the reality of righteousness, the reality of mercy and goodness, the reality of wisdom and knowledge and power. The sons of God are the pillars of God's great temple, the support of the superstructure, the resting place of all truth, the foundation of all REALITY! God is raising up a many-membered temple, all indwelt by Christ, all in perfect union with Christ, to be filled with all the glory of God throughout the ages to come. This body is God's house, His habitation, His temple. The overcomers are the strong and tall pillars upon which this reality rests! Oh, the wonder of it!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 56

THE CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART FIFTY-SIX

THE NAME OF THE CITY OF MY GOD MY NEW NAME

"Him that overcometh...I will write upon him the name of my God." (Rev. 3:12)

God is doing a wonderful work in His elect in this hour! It is a complete work. He is thoroughly changing us from flesh to spirit, from earthly to heavenly, making us the overcomers He has apprehended us to be. It is His plan and purpose to thoroughly cleanse and transform us! As He does this, we are losing our own identity and taking on the identity of our Father, the characteristics of His holy city, New Jerusalem, and the new, creative identity represented in His new name. When this work is completely accomplished in us, we shall be fully identified with God and the realm of His Spirit.

Perhaps you have heard the question, "What's in a name?" A name is more than a moniker, more than a simple badge or means of identification, something by which we address people specifically and individually. In biblical usage there is much in a name! True, the names we give our children in this modern day usually have little or no significance. It has become the custom to give foolish names which do not mean anything, except a jingle of sounds. We often name our children after some favorite aunt, uncle, or grandparent, or choose a name because we like its sound or association. But in Bible times names were chosen with great care and were frequently given by prophetic utterance or under divine inspiration so that the names actually revealed the nature, character, attributes, and destiny of the person, and thus carried a message to all who spoke or used that name.

In a very real sense the "name" of a being is regarded as being a real part of the person. In a certain sense there can be no separation whatsoever between a man's name and what he is as a person. In the scriptures the innermost being of a man is expressed in his name. That is why Esau declares of his conniving brother, **"Is he not rightly named Jacob (supplanter)? For he has supplanted me these two times." (Gen. 27:36)** After wrestling with the angel of the Lord, however, Jacob underwent a change of attitude and alteration of character which was accompanied by a change of name. Having seen the "face" or presence of God he was no longer the same man that he had been before his encounter with the Lord. Since name and character are absolutely identified there had to be a change in Jacob's appellation! The angel of the Lord, therefore, said, **"Thy name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel (Prince): for as a prince thou hast power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." (Gen. 32:28)**

Abram, which means "father," had his name changed by God to Abraham, meaning "father of many nations," for such he was to become in very fact. His wife also was given a change of name from Sarai, which means "contentious," to Sarah, meaning "Princess," for, said the Lord, "I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be of her." There was a man, who later became a very excellent minister in the early church, possibly that rich young ruler whom Jesus loved, and told to sell all, give all to the poor, and then to follow Him. He went away very sorrowful, for he was exceedingly rich. But a very ancient tradition says that after the Lord Jesus died, rose, and ascended, he became a true disciple. He was known among the disciples as Joses, and then he was called Barnabas, meaning "son of consolation," because he became such a good man in comforting and helping others.

The inspired prophet summed up in one bold statement what it means to be a priest of God in His kingdom. **"Ye shall be named the priests of the Lord: for men shall call you the ministers of our God." (Isa. 61:6)** There is marvelous significance in that one word "named." Named! You shall be N-A-M-E-D the priests of the Lord. This

passage forcefully reveals the great truth that all who would be priests of God MUST UNDERGO A CHANGE OF NATURE, to become priests by name, by nature, so that priesthood is not merely a title given to them but a nature lived out through them. If our spiritual minds can grasp the fact, to be named the priests of the Lord means to be natured the priests of the Lord, to so be imbued with the priestly nature until we become a priest in our very state of being.

Jesus, after teaching His disciples to love their enemies, bless them that curse them, do good to them that hate them, and pray for them that despitefully use them and persecute them, continued, "That ye may be the sons of your Father which is in heaven; for He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." (Mat. 5:38-48) You see, God makes no difference; He is not a respecter of persons. He loves His creation and wills only blessing and life for all men, the evil as well as the good! He has one great plan to draw all men and restore them to the glory of God. That is OUR FATHER! And we are His sons, those who share His nature, who think as He thinks and act as He acts. This is what it means to be named — natured — the priests of the Lord! Let us note in passing, the King James Bible says, "that ye may be the children of your Father in heaven." The Greek word here, however, is huios meaning "sons," mature sons, not little children. Mature sons are NATURED priests!

There are many names and descriptive titles of God in the scriptures. He is called Counselor, King, Shepherd, Rock, Shield, High Tower, Strong Arm, Saviour, Redeemer, Father, Yahweh, Elohim, El Shaddai, El Elyon, Jesus (Yahshua), and many, many others. Someone has said that there are about two hundred names for God in the Bible! The moment one begins to splinter the absolute wholeness that God is, to examine all His multi-faceted aspects and attributes, the number of splinters are as infinite as God is infinite. Each name of God, as He progressively revealed Himself, was a fresh and fuller revelation of the nature of God. One was a revelation of His Self-existence, another of His might; another was the unveiling of His grace. One revealed something more of His wisdom, another of His holiness, another of His tenderness, another of His exaltation and honor, another of His judgment, and so on.

As already stated, a name with God is indicative of the one who bears that name. Those who will be worthy to bear the name of God are the ones who have been changed, transformed, and recreated in the image and likeness of God! If we are not completely in His image and likeness there is no way that the Christ can write that name upon us. The name describes God, and it will only be given unto us when it can describe us! We must, of necessity, be like Him in every respect, if we are to be the possessors of that name. It is "him that overcometh" that receives the name, and it is by overcoming that we obtain the name! Christ obtained a name more excellent than angels and higher than all other names. He obtained the name of the Father by overcoming all things! And that is how the name of the Father is being written upon His elect in this hour, in our overcoming we are putting on the nature and character of our God.

The "name of my God" means the nature of my God. This is Jesus Christ speaking! Of the firstborn Son of God it is written, "He is the sole expression of the glory of God, the Light-being, the out-raying or radiance of the divine, and He is the perfect imprint and very image of God's nature." (Heb. 1:3) (Amplified) Again in Colossians 1:15 we find that Christ is the image of the invisible God. He bore the image of His Father, as many an earthly son does of his father. I have known boys, that as soon as one sees them it is not hard to tell whose son they are; they are so much like their father. They can look so much like dad in build and physical features; they will walk, talk, and act so much like their dad that there is no mistaking whose son they are. I look much like my dad, so much so, in fact, that once in the 1960's in Belize, Central America I was walking across the porch of a hotel when a voice called out, "Luke Eby! Are you Luke Eby?" I was stunned to hear that call, for we were only briefly visiting Belize on a missionary journey and knew no one there. We had only arrived the day before! I replied, "No, I am not Luke Eby — Luke is my father." By an exceedingly strange coincidence this man had known my father in Pennsylvania many years before and was now living in Belize. He recognized me because I looked so much like my father at that age. But sons on earth are never the express image of their father, because they inherit some characteristics from mother's side as well. So though they may look much like dad there is always some little difference. It was not so with Jesus! He was the express image of God! In every respect He was exactly like His Father, so much so that He was able to say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." He bore His image, His likeness, and in this He manifested to the world what God is like!

"I will set him on high because he has known my name." (Ps. 91:14) To know His name is to become, in union with Him, the name-nature of God in every hour and in every way. To know His name is to enter in to the pure inner life of God, and exude His nature, His life, His character and all else that He is. To know means more than mere intellectual understanding or carnal knowledge. It means "intimate union" as when "Adam knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain." (Gen. 4:1) Some people think because they use or pronounce the names Yahweh, El Elyon, Yahshua, and all the other Hebrew names they have dug out of the concordance, that this truly honors the Lord, makes the use of these names magical, procures favor with God, or is a mark of spirituality. People without a revelation from the Lord, or participation in His life, are disposed to go back and use the "letter" of that given to past generations of men of God. Some even become so radical that they rewrite the Bible, inserting the Hebrew names in the New Testament text, although they do not appear in the ancient manuscripts!

The Psalmist says, "And they that know Thy name shall put their trust in Thee." (Ps. 9:10) The message is clear: "They that have experienced the inworking, the development and formation of Thy nature will confidently trust in Thee." If this has not been your experience yet — that is, the inworking and formation of His nature within — then you do not yet know the name of the Lord though you may be zealous to consistently use the Hebrew words Yahweh, Yahshua, and all the other name forms in the Old Testament.

Again the scripture declares that "the name of Yahwey is a strong tower." There are many precious revelations coming forth these days concerning the names of God, and the depth of meaning therein. Some immediately get caught up in the externals, with an emphasis on the mechanics — the spelling, syllables, and pronunciation of the names — dealing with the outward or "letter" of the Word. But it is the "letter" that killeth — that is, there is no life in those things! They strike no chord deep in my spirit. In fact, they leave me somewhat cold and uninspired. The "spirit" of the Word gives life! The spirit is the substance, the essence and reality of His nature that the outward name reveals. As Ray Prinzing has so aptly written, "Of this we are certain, there is a walk that is 'not of the letter, but of the Spirit: for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life' (II Cor. 3:6). When certain truths are set down as a doctrine, and one receives only the letter thereof, it does not serve to gender life within; it only becomes one more burden to bear, adding to the load of traditions and commandments. But when the Spirit of God illumines the inner man, quickens the heart to receive that Word of Life within, it is not some doctrine to contend for, but it is a LIFE TO BE LIVED."

So the Lord gives this promise to the overcomer: "I will write upon him the name of my God." Is God going to literally write upon the overcomer the Hebrew letters of the name Y-A-H-W-E-H? Is this some form of tattoo we are to have burned into our flesh? Certainly not! Realizing the awesome glory and power that was given to Moses by the Lord when He proclaimed His name to him, we can well understand the significance of "the name of my God" which is to be written upon all who overcome. It is certainly not the Hebrew name of the Father, nor is it a new spiritual name that some are now using for themselves. Rather, it is the impartation of HIS CHARACTER AND AUTHORITY! Let us clearly understand the deep truth of God's Word! When He proclaims or writes His name upon His called and chosen elect, He is in fact imparting to them His honor, His authority, His nature, and His power. It has nothing to do with letters of the alphabet or phonics!

THE NAME OF THE CITY OF MY GOD

"Him that overcometh... I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem." (Rev. 3:12)

One of the keys to understanding the book of Revelation is to understand why it was written. Like most of the scriptures, the book of Revelation is one of those writings that have been the subject of deep superstitious speculation which is of no benefit to those who approach it in that way. Tradition makes the word of God of no effect, saith the Lord! Nowhere in all of the scriptures are fairy tales, myths, and superstitions fabricated more than out of the book of Revelation! I grew up hearing that there was a city in space, a bright square star, discovered by some unnamed and unknown astronomer, moving toward the earth from a distant part of the universe. I grew up hearing this as the word of God!

I was taught that the word of God says that there is a city coming down from heaven, and immediately the carnal mind assumes that it is a huge monstrosity floating down from space which someday will land on the earth like a bump on a little boy's head. Having minds that are darkened by ignorance of divine mysteries, these have not spiritual understanding. Their comprehension of spiritual realities is not unlike that of the Pharisees who were offended, disturbed, and angered when Jesus said, "**Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.**" (Jn. 6:53) Understanding only with carnal minds and human logic they interpreted His words as a suggestion of cannibalism! They were unable to see beyond the letter of the word to grasp the deep spiritual truth of which He spake. Just as Jesus spoke of His spirit and His word under the symbols of His blood and His flesh, so the apostle John described the heavenly origin and character of the bride of Christ under the figure of a city coming down from God out of heaven.

The bride of Christ is not a physical city of gold and stones and streets and gates. The bride of Christ is a people, a spiritual people in union with Christ. John says that this city is prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. He introduces this glorious city as a bride brought to relationship with her bridegroom. A bride is one who is deeply in love with her bridegroom, submitted and joined in the intimate union of that love. That is why in the Revelation we see the woman giving birth to the man-child. No one can become a son until first he has experienced what it means to be a bride! It is brideship that gives birth to sonship! It is as we truly fall fiercely and intensely in love with Christ, submitting to His Lordship, learning His ways, and knowing Him in intimacy of fellowship and vital union, that we receive the seed of God by which we can be birthed out of this relationship into the further and higher reality of sonship to God. The New Jerusalem city is prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, and it is from this union of life that the man-child is birthed. Yet we cannot truly separate between the city bride and the man-child who sits upon the throne, for the throne of God is in the city and it is from that throne that the river of life pours forth for all creation! These are great and eternal realities within each one of us as we follow on to know the Lord and fulfill His purpose in restoring creation to God. Oh, the wonder of it!

In speaking of that city which is the New Jerusalem the apostle says, "Behold! The tabernacle of God is with men." This is not the first time the tabernacle of God has been with men! The tabernacle of God was with men from the time of Moses, when he built the tabernacle of God in the wilderness. You see, precious friend of mine, John was seeing in vision the fulfillment of all that the tabernacle in the wilderness and the temple in Jerusalem represented — in the elect. IN the body of Christ THE TABERNACLE OF GOD IS WITH MEN! The tabernacle of God is with us now, for Christ is in us, and the glory of God is seen upon it! Ah, how there needs to be a great voice proclaiming this tabernacle of God in the midst of men (Rev. 21:3), because the whole world is looking up in the skies to see it coming down through the galaxies while all the time it is coming down from the high realm of the Spirit of God into the minds, hearts, lives, and bodies of men!

The name of the city of my God is New Jerusalem. Jerusalem is a compound Hebrew word meaning "founded peaceful." I will write upon you the name of the city — I will write upon you the establishment or kingdom of peace, the rule of peace that comes through the government of God. For God to write upon us the name of the city of God, the New Jerusalem, means that He inscribes in our very nature the peaceful and governmental characteristics represented by this glorious city of God!

The New Jerusalem coming down from the heavens of God's Spirit is revealed to be a city four-square, that is, a universal city that reigns over and blesses all men unto the four corners of the earth! The best way to come to an understanding of the true meaning of the New Jerusalem is to go back and consider its shadow, the Old Jerusalem. Jerusalem of old was the capital city of the national Israel; and as that old order was but a type and shadow of the new, therefore the New Jerusalem must be the capital city, or the ruling element, in Israel today, which is Christ's kingdom and of which our Lord said, it "is not of this world." In other words, the New Jerusalem is the ruling class, the kings and priests unto God: those who have followed the Lamb whithersoever He goeth and have attained to the highest position of honor and might and true greatness in the Spirit. It comprises those who will reign with Christ upon His throne. God's called and chosen elect, therefore, who supremely love Christ, who are submitted completely to His Lordship, who are accounted worthy to suffer with Christ and through our trials, testings, and provings grow up into Him in all things, ARE the New

Jerusalem which shall rule over God's infinite realm forevermore, and all nations and peoples shall eventually walk in the light of this city!

Thus we see that the New Jerusalem, contrary to the driveling childishness that is taught in the church systems, is not a fanciful monstrosity some fifteen hundred miles high which some day will come crashing down out of the clouds to rest upon the earth, throwing it out of balance and off its course. God made this earth complete and as it should be long, long ago. He created it a perfectly functioning reality, and "nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it." (Eccl. 3:14) Truly, unspiritual men can invent many fairy tales, and alas, all seem intent upon calculating the expanse of the city in cubic miles or cubic feet as though it were nothing more than a huge metropolis slightly more wonderful than those at present on earth! One speaker waxed eloquent about the size of the mansion each inhabitant would possess, replete with a golden bathtub and fountains and other such nonsense. Until our spiritual minds are able to grasp the great truth that the body of Christ is the temple of God and that every room or mansion in that temple is a living son of God, a literal habitation of God through the Spirit, we have understood nothing at all. Only the Spirit of God can make this a living truth in the hearts of His people!

When the glorious city of living stones is unveiled in all of its unspeakable majesty and glory, then will the Spirit and the Bride say, "Come," and the nations of earth will enter through its spiritual gates that they may partake of the leaves of its spiritual tree (the Word of God) that are for the healing of the nations. From His exalted throne of sons of God (Rev. 3:21; 21:7) in its midst the water of Life will flow and the ever green tree of Life, bearing its twelve manner of fruits, will flourish on either side of the river for the healing of all nations who hitherto walked in darkness and the shadow of death. Then shall its twelve gates be open, and never shall they be closed by day, and there shall be no more night.

In the book of Hebrews the writer's spirit is enraptured with glory, his heart exulting in praise, as he beholds in spirit the transcendent glory of the spiritual mount Zion in contrast with the indescribable dreadfulness of the earthly mount Sinai. From his mouth pours forth the prophetic pronouncement: "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: for they could not endure that which was commanded, and if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake: but ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of messengers, and to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." (Heb. 12:18-24)

There are beautiful pictures here of God's dealings with His people on all levels of spiritual growth, development, and understanding. Some people get the idea that we think we are the only true people of God on earth, and that we have no love, appreciation, or concern for the Lord's people in the church systems. Such is not the case! We seek to fellowship with all the Lord's precious people, regardless of what level they are on. They are all HIS, and if we can bless them in any way, that is our joy. However — we cannot, dare not, fellowship the false religious systems of Mystery Babylon! We do need to draw a distinction between the Lord's people and the system so many are involved in. We can and will fellowship anyone — but we will not fellowship their carnal, man-made systems. This means that much of our fellowship with the believers about us is limited to a "one-on-one" basis, after we get past those who won't fellowship us at all because they perceive us to be heretics!

Let us go back to the Old Testament and consider the types and shadows of God's economy among His people. Israel of old was God's chosen nation, His peculiar treasure above all the people of the earth. Israel was the visible expression of God's kingdom upon earth. Israel was the whole nation composed of all who were born there, irrespective of their stature, position, station, attainments, wealth, poverty, intelligence, sickness, health — all who were born there, from the blind beggar by the road to the king upon the throne, were citizens of God's nation and came under the care, order, and provision of Yahweh. All who were born of

the flesh in Israel were citizens of the kingdom simply by virtue of birth. In this more glorious dispensation of the Spirit, each and every son of Adam's race, who has been born again by the Spirit through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, are alike citizens of that kingdom which is no longer a dusty little country thronging with peasants and cattle who inhabit houses of clay and stone and wood, but an eternal land, a heavenly country of a spiritual order, the inhabitants of which have been born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever. In type the fleshly Israel represents all who, under the new covenant, are born into the family of God by spiritual birth!

Let us UNDERSTAND! Israel was the whole nation, but Jerusalem was the capital city. All who lived in Jerusalem were citizens of the kingdom, but not all who were citizens of the kingdom lived in Jerusalem! And as that old order of the flesh was but a type and shadow of the new order of the Spirit, therefore the New Jerusalem is the capital city, transcendent in glory, upon the mountain of His holiness, beautiful for situation, upon the sides of the north, the city of the great King! The New Jerusalem is the capital city of Israel today, which is Christ's kingdom of blood-bought, quickened men and women of all stages of development in Life. The New Jerusalem is a city of redeemed persons, but persons who have not only been born as citizens of a heavenly country, but have moved onward to dwell in the capital city of that country, a realm of surpassing beauty and glory, the inhabitants of which are the embodiment of the glory of God, holding in their hands the priesthood, temple, kingship, and government of the kingdom, and are the light thereof.

The apostle Paul makes it abundantly clear that there are two Jerusalems. "For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Hagar. For this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage (to the law) with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." (Gal. 4:22-26)

Paul has here been drawing a comparison or contrast between Hagar and Sarah, the children of the bondwoman and the children of the freewoman, which allegorically represent two covenants and the two Jerusalems. He states that there is a Jerusalem from below, which is here on this planet, the Jerusalem which now is and is in bondage with her children; which answers to Hagar and is fleshly, natural Israel under the law. There is, moreover, a Jerusalem which is above, which exists in a higher realm, in the Spirit; and the Jerusalem which is above, being free, answers to Sarah and is the children of God through the new covenant, born from above by the Spirit. This Jerusalem is the mother of the heavenly Israel after which the earthly Israel is patterned, and this is shown in the book of Revelation in the twelve gates bearing the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.

We become citizens of the New Jerusalem by being born of the Spirit and brought into a responsible place in the family of God, by the workings of His Spirit within us. The spiritual New Jerusalem is a glorious realm in God, far more glorious and spectacular than anything of this earth has ever been. It is the free city, free from all of religion's traditions, regulations, creeds, methods, systems, and bondages of men. And when the New Jerusalem realm has come from God out of heaven to be manifested in all its fullness, with all her glorious kingdom parts fully established and spiritually fulfilled, she shall indeed be, in truth and in fact, "the joy of the whole earth."

All of Jerusalem's children are born of the Spirit, and led by the Spirit! And now in this heavenly light, power, and spirit they come to be the heavenly Jerusalem's children that are, born from above, without the law and the bondages of religion, and in the Spirit. And is not this the city that Abraham sought for, which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God? Is not this the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God that he sought for? Is it not from among this people, born of the Spirit, filled with the Spirit, led by the Spirit, and grown up in the Spirit, that the Melchizedek Priesthood is revealed? Ah, little wonder that the apostle declared that in relation to this Melchizedekian Order there are "many things to say and hard to be understood" by those unspiritual ears that remain unquickened and uncircumcised by the Spirit of Truth. Jerusalem is not itself kingship and priesthood — but God's king-priests occupy the high places of Jerusalem! Oh, the mystery of it!

One of the chief errors made by believers of almost all persuasions is the common notion that all saved people belong to the same company, order, or rank in the kingdom of God. Men like to imagine that all are going to the same place in God, that all are the bride of Christ, all have the mind of Christ, all are sons of God, all will rule and reign with Christ, and so on. To assume this is to frustrate the purpose of God in the lives of His people! Do not be deceived by the senseless prattle of carnal minded teachers and preachers, nor by the childish understanding of baby Christians. There are many justified believers who have not been filled with the Spirit of God. There are many Spirit-baptized believers who have not grown up into the maturity of the knowledge, wisdom, nature, power, and stature of Christ. And nearly all believers fit somewhere in between those who are merely "saved by grace" and those who have been completely CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF THE SON OF GOD.

It should be clear to all that have eyes to see that the Jerusalem people dwell in a brighter glory than do the Israel people, even as the Spirit-filled people dwell in a brighter glory than do the justified people. The New Jerusalem is the bride of Christ. A bride is one who is no longer a babe, but has reached a degree of maturity, and has fallen so intensely in love that her only wish is to yield herself to the high desires of her husband, giving herself completely and unreservedly to him as her lover, submitting her whole life to him as her head and lord. Oh! So many of the Lord's people know so little of what it means to be the bride of Christ! But I tell you that most people who are pressing on into sonship to God started out earlier in their experience in a "brideship" relationship to Christ, intensely in love with Christ, submitted to His Lordship, and seeking only to fulfill His high desires.

There is more! Not only have we come by our walk in the Spirit to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, not only have we come to the heavenly Jerusalem, but we have also come unto mount Zion. Again we go back to consider the shadow. Israel was the whole nation; Jerusalem, the capital city. All Israelites were alike citizens of the kingdom, but not all Israelites dwelt in Jerusalem, the city of the great King, where stood the magnificent temple of God, the priesthood, the kingship, and the glory. And while Jerusalem comprised a people of surpassing honor and glory and relationship with God, yet in all Jerusalem there was only one who, with his household, dwelt on mount Zion. He was the king! Zion is the name of the ancient citadel of Jerusalem. It was captured from the Jebusites by David after he became king. From that hill David and the kings of Israel reigned gloriously, and the ark of God rested there all through the reign of David which was forty years. Mount Zion was the highest pinnacle of glory and power attainable in Israel!

That Zion, however, was only a faint shadow of THE ZION TO WHICH WE ARE COME! David was king over natural Israel. Christ is King over the Israel of the new covenant! David dwelt on the natural mount Zion. Therefore Christ dwells upon the spiritual mount Zion! And this spiritual mount Zion is composed of those who reach the very highest pinnacle attainable in Jerusalem: those who, like king David of old, are "a man (man-child) after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will." This Mount Zion Company is the ruling class, the overcomers who sit with Christ in His throne. They are the throne in the New Jerusalem! These are the kings and priests unto God, after the order of Melchizedek, those who have attained to the highest position of honor and might and true greatness in the kingdom of God. It comprises those who are such as have gone all the way with their Lord and shall now rule with Christ upon His throne over God's infinite realm for evermore. Isn't it wonderful!

MY NEW NAME

"Him that overcometh...I will write upon him my new name." (Rev. 3:12)

The name of the Son of God who came in human flesh is Jesus. That is His complete name. That is His correct name. That is His full name. The name of the eternal Word of God who stepped across the stars to planet earth to be born in the little village of Bethlehem, is Jesus. That is His complete, proper, full name. His name is Jesus! The angelic messenger appeared to Mary and announced, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." (Mat. 1:21) Someone may object with the contention that His name was Yahshua, not Jesus. But we cannot be certain that the angel spoke to Mary in Hebrew! You see, Aramaic was the common language of the people in Nazareth when Jesus came. Therefore, it is just as

possible, in fact, more probable that the angel spoke to Mary in Aramaic! In any event, Jesus is the English form of the name and is exactly the same as the Old Testament name Joshua. Joshua or Jesus — it's the same name. And Joshua or Jesus or Yahshua means "salvation of Yahweh." So when the mighty angel Gabriel appeared, he said, "Call the child that which will be descriptive or characteristic of what He is going to be and do." The messenger said, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, or, thou shalt call His name SAVIOUR, FOR He shall save His people from their sins!" Call Him Saviour because He is going to save!

Why is so much promised through the name of Jesus the Christ? The name is the value of the person it represents. When I hear or mention a name it calls up before me the whole man or woman, what I know of him or her, and the impression the person has made on me. For example, if someone says, "Althea," I do not react, or if they call out the name "Fiona" still there is nothing. I have no close friends or acquaintances with those names. But when they say, "Lorain," immediately there is a response — for there is the image, the love, and all the personality of my wife. That is the name of the one I love! The name "Lorain" is not any prettier or any more meaningful than Angelica or Nicole, but what the name implies to me is different. When someone says, "Billy the Kid," I see an image of a wild and murderous youth who once rode the old West and was sentenced to be hung sixty miles from our home. When someone says, "Billy Sunday," an altogether different image is presented — I think of a great evangelist of yesteryear.

There is progression in the name of our Lord. We all know His name Jesus! But now the Lord announces, "And I will write upon him my new name." So few people know that Jesus now has a new name! Now we do not mean that He is no longer called Jesus, for His Saviourhood extends unto the ages of the ages. At the conclusion of all the ages the promise shall be fulfilled that "at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess, to the glory of God the Father." "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved!" Oh, yes! His name is still Jesus. But — He also has a NEW NAME! When He speaks to us here of His new name, He is not speaking of the handle or the word by which He is called. He is speaking of the nature and character — a new and higher nature and character than He had on earth as a man, higher even than His Saviourhood by which we are reconciled unto God.

The new name of the Son of God is a name that is descriptive of what He is now within Himself. It is a name that is high above every name! A new identity, the greatness and glory thereof is still to be revealed unto the sons of God, and with that revelation shall come a glory in us that shall deliver creation from the bondage of corruption. Therefore, the closer we come to spiritual maturity, with the unveiling of the sons of God in manifestation; there is a new name to be disclosed. HE WILL DECLARE IT UNTO HIS BRETHREN. In bringing many sons to glory, it was an act worthy of God, "To make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I WILL DECLARE THY NAME unto my brethren." (Heb. 2:10-12)

We can go back and remember all the names whereby He has revealed Himself to this date, and rejoice in all the revelation this brings, but it is not any of those names, but HIS NEW NAME that He will write on the overcomers! What an honor, and what a reward! Think of the implication involved in this! This new name is not any name we have heard Him called, for it was after He had submitted to the death of the cross that the Father raised Him up and highly exalted Him to the right hand of His throne, and gave Him a new name that is above every name. We can only learn that name and attain to that name by becoming all that He is! And thus it is said of Christ, "His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself." (Rev. 19:12) This mysterious, uncommunicated name or nature shall be imparted to every overcomer! An entirely new revelation of Christ will then be made in them.

When Jesus was upon earth He had one nature and character. For three and a half years the disciples walked with Jesus. They saw Him feed the multitudes, calm the violent sea with a word, heal the sick and oppressed, and raise the dead even from the tomb of foul corruption. Three of them had been with Jesus on the holy mount and had seen the transcendent glory of His transfiguration. They fell down afraid, dumbfounded by the glory that was manifest, as they beheld the face of Christ shining with a brightness exceeding the noontday sun, and heard the voice of God out of the glory saying, "This is my beloved Son!" Yet — in all this He was

clothed in human flesh; he ate, drank, grew weary, used the bathroom, took a bath, slept, wept, was angered, and expressed all the other physical, emotional, and psychological limitations of a human nature.

Few people understand that Jesus was not yet perfect or perfected when he was here upon earth. Now I am not saying He was not perfectly sinless. Of course He was! I am saying He was not yet perfect or perfected. If you want the letter of the Word for that, then read Luke 13:32 where some people came to Jesus and said to Him, "Herod is seeking to kill thee." Jesus replied, "Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected." If you need further proof, you can read in the book of Hebrews where the scripture says that "it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." (Heb. 2:10) And again, "And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him." (Heb. 5:9) Someone asks in what sense was He not yet perfect while He was here on earth? The Bible says, in that "He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." (Heb. 4:15) While He was here in the flesh, He still had the imperfect nature in that sin could still be a temptation to Him.

Through His death, burial, and resurrection Jesus attained to a new nature and character!

Through His death, burial, and resurrection He came to His perfect state, His new nature whereby nothing could ever be a temptation to Him, He knew no limitation, and death was forever swallowed up in victory. This was His new name, the resurrected nature of Christ! When Jesus says, "To him that overcometh...I will write upon him my new name," He is saying, "I will give him the resurrected nature of Christ, I will raise him up in the power of my resurrection in spirit, soul, and body!" "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." Someone says, "All believers have already been quickened, made alive in Christ, and received His resurrection life." That is true, my friend, in our inner man, the spirit; but there is a promise of fullness, of all that His new name entails, reserved for "him that overcometh." If all believers had already experienced this there would be no such promise to the overcomer!

On that morning of the first day of the week, when there was but the slightest shimmering of dawn on the horizon, unseen by human eyes, there descended the omnipotent and supernatural hand of God, right through that stone, and touched the body of the beloved Son. Life poured into that body and it was quickened by the immeasurable and illimitable power of God. In the silent darkness of that tomb a mighty metamorphosis took place — the body that rose was no longer a natural body — it was a spiritual body! It was a body pulsating with incorruptible power and immortal vitality! It shimmered with a splendiferous glow and vibrated at a frequency thousands of times higher than the body that was laid there three days before. Suddenly out of the blackness of the tomb, the first human body in the history of the world that could not be tempted and that could not die, nor be affected by any earthly power, stood and quietly passed through the rock walls like sunshine through a window pane, disappearing into the morning mist. Christ came out, not to the roar of hundreds of thousands, not to great parades or waiting hands, but He came out alone, having conquered death itself within Himself. He arose with a nature beyond temptation, beyond weakness, beyond sickness, beyond discouragement, beyond limitation, beyond any carnal influence or power — beyond the whole dreadful realm of sin, sorrow, and death! This, my beloved, is HIS NEW NAME — His new nature, character, and being. And this is what is promised to the overcomer!

As a man groping in the black and fearful darkness of a deep cave beholds in the distance the glimmer of glorious sunlight, and takes courage to continue his way in the one direction of that light spot, assured that there lies his deliverance, so the sons of God groping in the darkness of the shadow of this mortal realm, beholding in the Spirit the glory of the risen firstborn Son, know that there is a way out of death into the glorious liberty of the sons of God! For, mark you well, He is not merely risen: He is the firstborn from the dead! And the firstborn is He that "openeth the womb" and prepares the way for all His brethren, who are His body. Thus Christ was in the womb of death, was born from death, opening the womb of death for all those whom the Father hath given Him. And it is He, standing in that spot of glorious light, whom you see from your present darkness, who calls to you, "Because I live, ye shall live also!" "To Him that overcometh will I give the crown of life." "Him that overcometh...I will write upon him my new name (resurrection life and nature)." It is true, wondrously and gloriously true — "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed!"

Christ's new name is not a series of letters of the alphabet phonetically pronounced. It is a nature! There is a great difference between the Lord naming or "naturing" us, and the naming after natural-minded fashion. A sister told me that one time she was visiting in a place where they were talking about "getting their new names." One man said that he had received his new name, and it was Myrtle. Lord, help us!

The key to receiving His new name is overcoming. The starting point in overcoming is with the little things, the little foxes that spoil the vine. You will be defeated if you start with the giants! You must first kill your bear and slay your lion before you take on Goliath. Start overcoming the little things, those little quirks and idiosyncrasies in your personality — those things you think, those words you speak, those attitudes you manifest from time to time, facial expressions, body movements, gestures, slothfulness, worry, sins of omission — these little things that fall short and miss the mark of the nature of Christ. God wants us to be changed! We will never be changed just by hearing the message and giving assent to it. We must take on — appropriate — a whole new nature that is absolutely contrary to the human nature. I'm not talking about warring with the "old man" or wrestling with the "devil." I'm talking about so putting on a new nature until all that is contrary to that nature is put to death. I'm talking about so putting on a new nature until it becomes natural to be supernatural!

HE must increase, WE must decrease — and it must be in that order! We do not die in order to live, we live in order to die! By accentuating the positive we eliminate the negative. By turning on the light we dispel the darkness. By the infusion of life we abolish death. Truth destroys error. Reality negates fantasy. That is the law of conformation into the image of Christ! To fill our mind with the truth of Christ, we flood our life with the word of God, and "at the name (nature) of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue confess." As we partake of the nature of Christ out of our spirit, every knee within us must bow before that nature and every tongue, every voice within us, must confess that Jesus Christ is LORD to the glory of God the Father!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 57

THE CHURCH IN LAODICEA [continued]

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART FIFTY-SEVEN

LUKEWARM

I WILL SPEW YOU OUT OF MY MOUTH

"And by the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write..." (Rev. 3:14)

The seventh and final church is the church in Laodicea. It is the most deplorable of the seven, representing the very worst spiritual condition a church can come to. Therefore, it also presents the greatest challenges to the overcoming elect, for the spiritual conditions within the churches are the very things we are called upon to overcome! The promise to the overcomer in this church is the greatest of all the promises! Therefore Laodicea represents both the lowest and the highest realms of experience in the Lord's people. Both of these are in manifestation in the earth today! While the church world in general exudes the very spirit of the Laodiceans, the called and chosen elect of God is overcoming all these things and ascending to the throne of Christ to rule and reign in the Kingdom of God.

It is interesting to note that the name Laodicea is composed of lao and dika, meaning "the people's judgment" or "consensus of opinion as to what is right!" Other variations of rendering are: "power of the laity," "the voice of the people," "the people's rights," or "justice of the peoples." Its name designates it as the democratic church, in which everything is swayed and decided by popular opinion, clamor, and voting, either within the church, or by adapting to the opinions, standards, and pressures of society without. Hence, Laodicea is a carnal, compromising, pusillanimous, self-righteous, and self-sufficient church!

The typical church in Laodicea was filled with carnal believers, just as the church systems today in the LAODICEAN CONDITION are also filled with carnal believers. Some people have trouble putting these two terms together — carnal and believer. How can a believer in Christ be carnal? Well, you've probably already met a great number of them, for I tell you the truth when I say that the vast majority of churches in this day is overflowing with them! You can have two extremes — sinners on one side, Christians on the other, and Christians can often be worse than sinners. You haven't been truly "ripped off" until you have been ripped off by a Christian. Someone who says, "Praise God, Hallelujah!" and then socks it to you and takes you for a ride, lying, cheating, and confiscating your money is worse than an infidel. Don't trust every business with a fish on the front door! That doesn't necessarily mean this is a great company. It may be run by carnal Christians, and carnal Christians are often more deceptive, devious, and unreliable than sinners who are good business people. I do not hesitate to say that I do not seek to do business with the Christians in the church systems. I try to stay away from them! I have learned by years of experience that it is usually easier to deal with men of the world who are good business men. Listen to me — the most miserable people on earth are carnal Christians! Carnal Christians may be the worst people on earth, but God's new creation people who have been processed and transformed into the image of Christ are the finest people on the face of the earth!

We have seen that the Laodicean church is a democratic church, controlled by the will of the people. We Americans have been told that "government of the people, by the people, and for the people" is a divine form of government, given by the mind of the Lord to our founding Fathers. Where do you find that in the Word of God? Nowhere! The issue is one of authority: is it from God, or from man? If God is the sovereign authority over all things and Christ is head over all things to the church, which is His body, then His Spirit, mind, and will, alone can govern all things. If the ultimate authority is man, then all things must serve man and bow down to man. When the will of the people rules man assumes the posture of sovereign — and that is humanism, pure and simple. It is the rule of the flesh! There is even a church organization called the "Congregationalist Church" which glories in the fact that it is ruled by the people! It is a branch of the church in Laodicea.

I believe in the rule of God, by God, and for God! He is the almighty Creator of all things, for out of Him, and for Him, and unto Him are all things. His omniscient mind arranged the spheres and ordained the ages, and His infinite wisdom and immutable purpose established the end from the beginning. Nothing else has any potential beyond the dismal realm of sin, death, and the grave. If it had not been that God ruled me I would have gone to the devil long ago. I know just a little of my own heart, though it is abundantly true that the Adamic heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, and the wise man wisely asked, "Who can know it?" Yet I know just a little of my own heart and I have seen enough of the little I know to realize that I would have shipwrecked on some benighted shoals of sin, shame, delusion, or death were it not for the rule of God in my life by the Spirit. Thank God, He has taken His great power and has reigned! This is precisely why the kingdom of God has to be within.

It is true — you may have good government under democracy if you have all good people. You may have saintly government under democracy if you have all saintly people. If the people were all ruled by God and for God, and the Voice was the voice of an awakened, renewed, and transformed spirit within, then God would rule. But it is not so. It was not so in Laodicea, for the people were carnal, and the vast majority of Christians today are no less carnal! With carnal people you get carnal government, and all democracies in the end are government of carnality, by carnality, and for carnality.

I tell you today that I do not believe in democracy — I believe in Theocracy. Theocracy is the rule of God. It is the DIVINE GOVERNMENT OF THE SPIRIT. It is not the rule by votes or by any contribution of the carnal mind. It is not even the rule of believers over other believers — the rule of apostles, bishops, prophets, evangelists, pastors, or teachers. God does not rule His sons through other people! This is not an independent spirit — it is the rule of the SPIRIT! God must rule you, my beloved, out of His throne in your spirit, or you can never know the power of sonship to God. We praise God for all the precious ministries in the body of Christ, and esteem them highly for their ministry to the Lord's elect, yet all ministries in the body of Christ, including ourselves, are servants, not lords. I seek not to gather men around me or under me, but to point all men to the omnipotent power of the Christ within! Democracy cannot be the kingdom of God or even a simile of the kingdom of God, because those in the kingdom of God are born of God, led by God, and controlled by God. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Rom. 8:14) I no longer fit in the church in Laodicea, I have nothing in common with it, I cannot function there, it is abhorrence to me. Furthermore, every one of God's apprehended sons has been brought out of the church in Laodicea, for the conditions there have been part of the things we have been called to overcome! Oh, yes! We were there once upon a time, for had we not been there, we could not have overcome it.

"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ." (Rev. 12:10) Read those words carefully and you will see that the kingdom of God is the authority of His Christ. The God who sits upon the throne is Christ! Christ is in our spirit! The Theocracy has become a Christocracy. Christ Himself is reigning! I may have a Christocracy today right here within my soul. I may acknowledge the Lordship of the Christ within that He may reign in my life, in my heart, in my will, in my mind, in my nature, and then as He reigns through me, a member of the Christ-body, I become a part of that Christocracy. This is sonship! This is such a beautiful form of government: God reigning in and through His chosen. His love, power, wisdom, righteousness, peace, and judgments all flow through the priesthood that He has called and ordained. As we experience this within ourselves in a greater way in this hour we are forming the very government of God for the new age now dawning, and for the ages to come! What makes this order so different from a democracy is that the heads are not voted in, therefore they cannot be manipulated by the voters. The government of God is raised up within every son by the POWER OF GOD WITHIN!

The business of the sons of God is to establish the Theocracy — the rule of God in the midst of men. Only with the mind of the Spirit can we discern the rule of God. Paul speaks of it in **Philippians 3:20** wherein he says, "For our conversation is in heaven." The Greek word here translated "conversation" is politeuma — POLITICS! Plainly he says, "Our politics are in heaven." Our politics are not out of the Democratic party or the Republican party, or out of church organization or the church board, or any other fleshly system. Our politics are right out of the realm of the Spirit, out of the mind of Christ, out of the power of God! Our politics are the RULE OF GOD BY THE SPIRIT. In all our life and relationships the sons of God have no other agenda, no other authority, no other source of blessing to humanity.

Since the church is a part of the kingdom of God it also was intended to function in the Theocratic Order. We see this so powerfully in the beginning, before man's hand was put to it, in the book of Acts. Notice how things were done by the Holy Ghost, by Theocratic principles. "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them...they...being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed." (Acts 13:2-4) "And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand upon him, that he might receive his sight. Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God." (Acts 9:10-20)

All ministry in the house of God is by divine appointment, on whatever level it may be. Only the Holy Ghost can do these things! The ministers of the Church in Laodicea who are called and appointed by the votes of the people are not the ministers of Christ! There is no such thing in the kingdom of God as appointment to ministry by human authority or hierarchy. Neither is there such a thing as a self-constituted ministry of a man's choosing. None but God can make or appoint a ministry of any sort or description. Even in Old Testament times Yahweh called Moses and appointed Aaron and his sons to the priesthood; and if a stranger presumed to meddle with the functions of those so appointed, he was put to death. Such was the solemn result — the awful consequence of moving outside of God's theocratic order. Spiritually it means that all who move in ministry apart from the appointment of the Spirit are spiritually dead, for God does not anoint such ministry with His life! "Every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God...and no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." (Heb. 5:1-4) "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased Him." "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." (I Cor. 12:4-6)

The "church voting" is all nonsense. I should just as soon ask a flock of sheep to vote where the shepherd should lead them! I should just as soon expect an army to vote as to what general should lead them, or whether they should go into battle or not. I should have no fear of an army that was controlled by the vote of the soldiers! The devil does not give a snap for the man-made and man-run church systems of this world where the ministers have to preach to please the people, or else have the people butt them out of the pasture. Nice kind of thing that is it not? Treating ministers as if they were cooks! If they do not happen to season the doctrinal soup to the people's satisfaction, they say, "Go!" And they have to go. Nonsense!

In that harlot system which calls itself the church, they have been applying democratic principles to what is supposed to be a theocratic institution! Every honest man must admit that the so-called church cannot be the church of God if it is the church of the people. That would be the people's church, not God's. And that is exactly what it is! It cannot be the church of God, because those in the church of God are born of God, called of God, led by God, positioned by God, nurtured by God, empowered by God, and controlled by God. That is why God has called His elect out of the church systems of man! He has called us out that we may truly come to know Him, that we may hear His voice, be taught of Him, learn His ways, be processed by Him and brought to maturity by the power of Christ in us. Only those who truly know the Lord for themselves and have learned to be led by His Spirit alone are equipped to reign with Christ in His kingdom!

I have been there — I have lived and walked and ministered in the church in Laodicea. Not the one in Asia, but the one in America! I know, and you know, that self-pleasing, pride, fleshly zeal, political manipulations, financial interests, clout of those who have money and control the purse-strings of the church, and a great number of other carnal considerations are always involved where the people call the preachers and the carnal-minded control the ministry. The ministers of Babylon are hirelings, one and all, and the people and hierarchies the usurpers of the Holy Ghost. I have found that the rule of man in church affairs is a curse unutterable; that

the minister loses his ability to walk in the Spirit, loses his sense of being the messenger of God, loses his capacity to function in the government of God, and becomes the mere mouthpiece of some wretched committee or faction representing some miserable party that has attained supremacy in the church. Democracy and man-made hierarchies will always produce, sooner or later, "man's man" and "man's plan" rather than "God's man" and "God's plan."

All who have received the call to sonship and the kingdom have been taught of God by the Spirit and have now exchanged the rule of themselves, by themselves, and for themselves, with the rule of themselves by God and for God. This is the route of sonship pure and simple! All who shall rule and reign with Christ as kings and priests sooner or later become thoroughly undeceived by the carnal church system and flee from it as a plague, for it has the horns of a lamb, appearing harmless and good, but it has the voice of a dragon (Rev. 13:1). It is the mind of Christ that will govern the world in the kingdom of God! Every son is being imbued with the mind of Christ and from those holy omniscient minds the life and light and love and authority and glory of the Lord will flow forth with a power that will encompass the earth with transforming grace and fill it to overflowing with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. Thus it is that the Lord says to the overcomer out of the church in Laodicea, "To him that overcometh (the Laodicean condition) will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame (the religion of the scribes and Pharisees), and am set down with my Father in His throne." With great earnestness I pray that God will open the understanding of all who read these lines, for it is of perfect truth that I tell you that no man can ever hope to reign in the kingdom of Christ until his will has become one with the will of the Father. Were it possible for one man to reign in the kingdom while still possessing his own will in opposition to the will of the Father, it would mean the destruction of the kingdom with confusion, strife, and rebellion.

The mark of the sons of God is that they are led by the Spirit (Rom. 8:14). Those who overcome the LAODICEAN CONDITION by the power and leadership of the Holy Spirit shall reign with Christ in His kingdom! One night a group of men were sitting around the fireside of a Swiss hotel, discussing the difficulties of climbing a nearby Alpine mountain. After listening for a while, one man said, "I am not afraid of that mountain. Tomorrow morning I am going to climb it alone." The other men said, "No, it's too dangerous. You must employ a guide." But the man said, "No, I am going to climb it without a guide." The next morning, when the other men arose, they learned that this man had gone out alone. All day they watched for him and he didn't return. The night came on and still he didn't return. The next morning a party started out to look for him. Halfway up the mountainside they came to a post to which every successful climber attached his card. They found this man's card there with the notation on it, "Without a guide." He had come that far in safety, but where was he now? The men climbed a little farther and came to a deep crevice. There they found the body of the stranger. He had decided to climb without a guide and had lost his life. You and I, beloved, are climbing the heights of mount Zion! We are scaling the heights in God! This can only be accomplished — we can only reach the top where is situated the throne zone — as we are lead by the one and only great and glorious guide, the Spirit of Truth. He knows the way! He led the firstborn Son of God to the pinnacle of power and glory, to the heavenly throne of the universe! And now He is leading all the holy sons of God to sit with Christ in His throne. It is indeed wonderful!

LUKEWARM

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would that thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth." (Rev. 3:15-16)

What does it mean to be lukewarm? The word described the water supply of Laodicea. Because the city lacked an adequate supply of good water, it had to be piped through a system of aqueducts from the cool springs of Colosse and the hot springs of Hierapolis. By the time the water reached Laodicea it was lukewarm, tepid to the taste, and unfit to drink.

What does that mean? We know that John received this revelation in figurative or symbolic language, so this imagery represents something spiritual! To understand this, we go back to the Old Testament, to the time of Moses and Israel in the wilderness. Aaron was anointed high priest and upon the breastplate of his priestly vestments was the Urim and the Thummim. When the high priest sought an answer from the Lord, he would consult the Urim and the Thummim. The scripture record is not explicit about what they were, what they looked

like, or how they were used. It is believed that they were special stones, and that when Aaron went into the presence of the Lord to ascertain the will of God in a matter one of the stones would light up, typifying that the will of God is revealed to His holy kingdom of priests by the Holy Spirit through inner illumination.

Urim and Thummim mean "lights and perfections." These signified the light and perfection of understanding and judgment. When Aaron appeared before the Lord with a question there were only two possible answers, namely, "Yes" or "No." There wasn't anything between; there was no maybe. In the counsels of God there is only truth and error, life or death! Humanity wants gray areas, a compromise, something that is not clearly defined. This enables them to stand on the fence, accommodate, mix and mingle, prostitute, vacillating in their judgment according to what is convenient in a particular situation. Today this is called "situation ethics." There is no right or wrong, no good or bad, no truth or error — it just depends on the situation! However there are no half-truths! Anything that has a lie concealed in a garment of truth is still a lie! Some people are afraid to declare what God has given them, afraid to commit to the word of the kingdom, afraid to proclaim the truth of the reconciliation of all men to God, afraid to leave the church system to follow Christ in His sonship, because it may not agree with popular belief or friends or family members. If we have heard the testimony of Christ it is imperative that we embrace it fully and unreservedly! More will be given to him who has; and he who has not, that which he thinks he has will be taken away. We must be either cold or hot!

The Lord offered no praise for the church in Laodicea. His evaluation resulted in total rebuke. Christ's language indicates that being lukewarm is worse than being totally cold! On the surface, this contrast seems strange. Certainly being lukewarm in relationship to Christ is worse than being totally hot, but wouldn't a mixture of at least some hot and cold be better than being totally cold? That is how the natural mind judges! But spiritual insight into what our Lord meant by hot, cold, and lukewarm indicates that this is not the case.

Three spiritual conditions are brought to view in this message — the cold, the lukewarm, and the hot. It is important to discern by the spirit what condition they each denote, in order not to reach a wrong conclusion. Three spiritual conditions which pertain to the people of God, not to the world, are indicated. This is important! What the term "hot" means is not difficult to conceive. The mind at once calls up a state of intense fervor, when all the affections, raised to the highest pitch, are drawn out for God and His purposes, and manifest themselves in corresponding works. The word "lukewarm" has traditionally meant a Christian that held one foot in the world and one foot in Christ. To be lukewarm, however, is to lack this fervor, to be in a state in which love, commitment, and obedience are lacking, in which there is no self-denial that costs anything, no valiant pursuit of Christ, His will, and His kingdom. Worst of all, it implies entire satisfaction with that condition!

But to be "cold" — what is that? Does it denote a state of corruption, wickedness, sin, such as characterizes the world of unbelievers? We cannot so regard it! It would be absurd and repulsive to represent the Lord as wishing under any circumstances that persons should be in such a condition, preferable to at least some knowledge and experience of Christ. Yet He says, "I would thou wert cold or hot." No state can be more offensive to the Spirit of holiness than that of the sinner in open rebellion, unbelief, and a heart filled with every evil. David said of the Lord, "For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee." What David was declaring is that sinners will never be "tasty" to the Lord! Nor will they ever be in His mouth to be cold, lukewarm, or hot, for evil will not dwell with Him in any way. What about believers who have had experiences with the Lord but left Him for the pleasures of sin? Can this be the cold that could be a tasty drink to the Lord? The writer to the Hebrews stated that "the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." It is therefore incorrect to represent the Lord as preferring that condition to any position which His people can occupy while they are still counted as His. Furthermore, the threat of rejection is because they are neither cold nor hot! It is as much as to say that if they were either cold or hot, they would be accepted of Him in a place of blessing and honor. But if by cold is meant a state of open worldly unbelief or wickedness, they certainly would not be welcomed into the highest purposes of the kingdom! Hence such cannot be its meaning.

It is my deep conviction that by this language our Lord has no reference whatever to those outside His body, but that He refers to three spiritual planes or conditions, two of which are more acceptable to Him than the third. Heat and cold are preferable to lukewarmness! But what kind of spiritual state is denoted by the term "cold"? The Lord points out that cold and hot drinks have a tastiness to them. Cold and hot drinks are something we prefer much more than something lukewarm! Cold and hot, to be true to the Spirit's analogy,

must both be something "tasty" to the Lord and something to be desired. Obviously a saint cannot be both at the same time! But, as a drink of tea may be cold in summer time and hot in winter, so can a child of God be cold or hot at different points in their walk in Christ! A person can be hungry or full, but not at the same time; yet, he can be both, and both are commended by the Lord! A tree may be covered with leaves and loaded with fruit in the summer season, and then be barren, stark, and cold in the winter; but in either season the tree has life in it and is faithfully fulfilling its necessary role in the cycles of its purpose. The owner of the orchard is just as pleased with the barren tree in winter as he is with the fruitful tree in summer!

Let us meditate further on the tree at winter time. The cold tree does not have much value or outward fruitfulness in this season. It cannot serve even as a break against the cold north winds! It offers no shade from the sun, nor any fruit to the hungry. It is the very picture of bleakness, leanness, and desolation as it faces the tribulations of winter. Its life has sunk very deep within as it is buffeted by the cold winds, rain, ice, and snow. And yet, this state is necessary to the survival of the tree! It is like sleep for a human, a time of rest, recuperation, strengthening, and preparation for the season of fruit bearing when it shall become bread to the hungry, shade to the distressed, moisture to the atmosphere, and the joy of the whole earth!

Thus, the cold relates to those seasons of testing, trial, tribulation, stripping, purging, pruning, and chastening under the hand of our Father. Just as the tree stands enduring the winter, so we stand enduring our winter times. In these cold or winter experiences we feel sometimes as though God has forsaken us, the heavens become brass, and joy and blessing flee the soul. This is what the mystics have referred to as "the dark night of the soul." It is a time of dryness, leanness, testing, and darkness in which we learn what it means to walk by faith and not by sight. Eventually we discover that there is great purpose in these distressing seasons, and great and wonderful lessons are learned there that can be learned in no other way! The very hand of God leads us through this valley of the shadow of death until there is raised up in us the understanding, wisdom, faith, power, and nature of the Lord. Then we are able to appreciate all the more the greatness of our God and His faithfulness, power, and purpose in all things! THIS, MY BELOVED, IS THE COLD IN WHICH OUR FATHER REJOICES! Either cold or hot, stripped and tested or blessed and fruitful, He delights in our way. It is only the tepid lukewarm that He loathes!

God led Israel through a great and terrible wilderness on their journey to the land flowing with milk and honey. He brought them into the wilderness to test them and prove them in preparation for their entrance into the fruitful land. The drier and more barren the wilderness, the hotter the testings and harder the path over which one goes, the deeper the work of God to bring forth His glory! Thus did the Spirit "drive" the firstborn Son forth into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. For forty days He ate not and drank not, amidst the desolation, the howling winds and blowing dust; the vipers and scorpions were His only companions as He endured the inner struggles and wrestlings with the adversary sent to try Him, to prove the life of sonship within Him. When the temptations were finished, Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee; and a fame went out concerning Him throughout all the region around.

Every son will be so tried! God brings us to a desert place where everybody and everything fails us; where we must stand upon the air, as it were, with nothing under our feet. We can look nowhere but up to God, and He leaves us hanging there upon the thread of faith, clinging and looking to Him, believing Him. He moves upon the clouds of the carnal mind, He moves upon all that hides the truth from our vision, He moves upon the fog of man's theories and self-righteousness, He comes with conviction and purging power, showing us our shortage and the vanity of all things of the flesh; He blasts all our self-esteem and self-confidence, and sweeps away every carnal ambition, all our own plans and desires, our religious activities and multiplied works, our religious pride and fleshly motives, and every secret sin. As all of this falls off, we are left apparently stripped and bare, like the cold, bleak tree of winter; but, in reality, we are in a better condition to bring forth blossoms and fruit to His glory than ever before! He brings us low in the dust of humiliation and brokenness, that He may then clear the spiritual atmosphere about us, shining the splendor of the light of God into our lives, wooing us onward and revealing our destiny in Christ, raising up His life within us and bringing us out of the wilderness in the power of the Spirit as manifest sons of God that we may bear much fruit of His kingdom.

Just as the Lord Jesus endured the cross, despising the shame, for the joy that was set before Him, we endure the individual cross set before each of us. The tree endures the winter and flourishes in summer. We endure the cold times, for they are appointed of the Lord that we may flourish in the hot seasons that God sets to give

fruit. The tree, Jesus, and all the trees — His many brethren, the manifest sons of God — who are, or have been, in the cold times stand in faith trusting and waiting. Each of us must trust that summer will come, and wait for it! We must trust that the Lord will take us through the winter and also wait for it. How precious and dear to the heart of God is the cold of our lives as well as the hot! He wishes us to be either cold or hot. Those are the two conditions that are acceptable to Him!

A. W. Tozer penned an article titled THE MINISTRY OF THE NIGHT. How skillfully he describes the condition of the COLD of our experience in Christ! He says, "If God has singled you out to be a 'special object' of His grace, you may expect Him to honor you with stricter discipline and greater suffering than less favored ones are called upon to endure...and right here, let me anticipate the objection someone is sure to raise, viz, that God has no 'specials' among His children. The Holy Scriptures and church history agree to show that He has! Star differs from star in glory among the saints on earth as well as the glorified in heaven. If God sets out to make you an unusual saint, He is not likely to be so gentle as He is usually pictured to be by the popular teachers. A sculptor does not use a manicure set to reduce the rude, unshapely marble to a thing of beauty. The saw, the hammer, and the chisel are crude tools, but without them the rough stone must remain forever formless and un-beautified.

"To do His supreme work of grace within you He will take from your heart everything you love most. Everything you trust in will go from you. Piles of ashes will lie where your most precious treasures used to be. This is not to teach the sanctifying power of poverty. If to be poor made men holy, every tramp on a park bench would be a saint! But God knows the secret of removing 'things' from our hearts while they still remain to us. What He does is to restrain us from enjoying them. He may let us have them, but makes us psychologically unable to let our hearts go out to them. Thus they are useful without being harmful. All this God will accomplish at the expense of the common pleasures that have, up to that time, supported your life and made it zestful. Now, under the careful treatment of the Holy Spirit, your life may become dry, tasteless, and to some degree a burden to you.

"While in this state, you will exist by a kind of blind will to live; you will find none of the inward sweetness you enjoyed before. The smile of God will for the time be withdrawn, or at least hidden from your eyes. Then you will learn what faith is; you will find out the hard way, but the only way open to you, that true faith lies in the will, that the joy unspeakable of which the apostle spoke is not itself faith, but a slow-ripening fruit of faith; and you will learn that present spiritual joys may come and go as they will without altering your spiritual status or in any way affecting your position as a true son of the heavenly Father. And you will learn also, probably to your astonishment, that it is possible to live in all good conscience before God and men and still feel nothing of the 'peace and joy' you hear talked about so much by immature Christians.

"How long you may continue in this night of the soul will depend upon a number of factors, some of which you may be later able to identify, while others will remain with God, completely hidden from you. The words 'the day is Thine, the night also is Thine' will now be interpreted for you by the best of all teachers, the Holy Spirit; and you will know by personal experience what a blessed thing is the ministry of the night! But there is a limit to a man's ability to live without joy. Even Christ could endure the cross only because of the joy set before Him! The strongest steel breaks if kept too long under unrelieved tension. God knows exactly how much pressure a life can stand! He knows how long we can endure the night, so He gives the soul relief, first by welcome glimpses of the morning star and then by the fuller light that harbingers the morning.

"Slowly you will discover God's love in your suffering! Your heart will begin to approve the whole thing! You will learn for yourself what all the schools in the world cannot teach you — the healing action of faith without supporting pleasure. You will feel and understand the ministry of the night; its power to purify, to detach, to humble, to destroy the fear of death and, what is more important to you at the moment, the fear of life! And you will learn that sometimes rain can do what even joy cannot, such as exposing the vanity of earth's trifles and filling your heart with the peace of heaven" — end quote.

There is yet another application of the three spiritual conditions of cold, hot, and lukewarm. It could be read this way: "Because thou art neither cold (Outer Court, feast of Passover) nor hot (Most Holy Place, feast of Tabernacles) you are stuck in the middle (Holy Place, feast of Pentecost), you've got enough of both realms to make you comfortable — lukewarm!" Listen — there's nothing wrong with being in the Holy Place and the feast

of Pentecost, but when you've been there for twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty years and never move on, the Lord says, "I'm about ready to spit you out!" Pentecost is the feast of transition. The candlestick realm (Holy Place) is the compartment of transition. Each is a temporary stopping point on the way from one realm to another realm. Neither is designed to be a permanent arrangement or an ultimate experience!

There is a great lukewarmness in that Pentecostal realm today. Oh, how rich people think they are as, like little children, they "play" with the "gifts" of the Spirit and imagine that they have the full gospel and that they are full grown and accomplishing mighty things in the kingdom of God! At present among the crowd in the candlestick realm there is much information coming forth in the way of books, tapes, and seminars concerning the gifts of the Spirit, healing, miracles, prophecy, casting out devils, deliverance, dancing in the Spirit, and many other things. By reading these books, listening to the tapes, or attending a training school one can pick up the "HOW TO'S" and quickly learn the techniques employed by those who are experienced in such sensational ministries. From such sources one can supposedly learn in a relatively short period of time how to move in a dynamic prophetic ministry with signs, wonders, and miracles!

Though some may disbelieve it, I would be remiss if I failed to exhort you that if, by reading a series of lessons, or sitting through a seminar, a man can "learn" to prophesy, "learn" to perform miracles, "learn" to dance in the Spirit, or be "taught" how to perform any other spiritual feat, then he is indeed THE DECEIVED who will be among the astonished of whom Jesus spoke when He said, "**Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you (intimately, as a husband knows his wife): depart from me, ye that work iniquity (lawlessness, that which was not at my word).**" (Mat. 7:22-23) Who can dispute that the land is filled today with lying signs and wonders that are done in the name of Christ!

The mighty acts and manifestations of the Spirit of God are not learned in seven easy lessons — they are supernaturally bestowed by the lovely and wonderful Christ as a result of intimacy of fellowship, personal association, and vital union with HIM. How to do the works of God is not contained in a formula or in any set of methods or techniques understood by the carnal mind. The understanding of such high and holy things comes by revelation born of an inner work, in earnest seeking and holy brokenness and a deep relationship with the Lord Himself. The wonderful works of God are the result, not of repeating certain phrases, or stepping out in faith on mental impressions or imaginations, or the employment of certain techniques, but of the SOVEREIGN POWER OF ALMIGHTY GOD.

After years of a ministry of transcending greatness our beloved brother Paul wrote of the true source of all spiritual ministry, saying, "**For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. But when it pleased God...to reveal His Son in me...immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia (a desert place), and returned again to Damascus. Then, after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter...**" (Gal. 1:12-24) Three years in Arabia waiting on God! Three years alone in the desert receiving the revelation of Jesus Christ! Ah, that was Paul's cold experience! He came out from Arabia in the power of the Spirit, just as Jesus came out of the wilderness in the power of the Spirit. That was Paul's hot experience! Let me tell you something. Paul read no books on "Soul winning made easy" or "How to prophesy" or "How to heal the sick and cast out devils." Oh, no! If, like Paul, we will take the time to bow low in humility and holy waiting upon the presence of God, and listen intently for His voice, we will become strangely acquainted with the secret of His will, not only for the ages to come, but for the present age and the high purposes of God for those called to sonship in this new Day of the Lord! When we live in the Spirit we will walk in the Spirit. When we walk in the Spirit we will be led by the Spirit. And when we are led by the Spirit we are THE SONS OF GOD.

I WILL SPEW YOU OUT OF MY MOUTH

"So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth." (Rev. 3:16)

When the Lord warns those in the lukewarm state that He is going to spew them out of His mouth it doesn't mean they are lost and He is going to send them to hell. It is not a word to unbelievers or unconverted, but to the people of God! God says that this is His attitude toward a carnal church! Just like lukewarm water, tea, or coffee, a carnal Christian is not good for anything. God cannot stand the taste. Lukewarm is a sickening

combination of hot and cold water. He just wants to get it out of His mouth! Oft times I feel the same way myself. The Greek brings out the idea of ad nauseam more realistically, for it says, "I will vomit you out of my mouth." This sense of loathsomeness on the part of the Lord of the church is undoubtedly the saddest and most lamentable appraisal of God's professed people in all of the scriptures.

David Wilkerson wrote the following words a number of years ago, which have stood the test of time, and with which I heartily concur. "Jesus said of the Laodicean church, 'It will say...I am rich, increasing with goods (wealthy), and am in need of nothing...' (Rev. 3:17) How sad that this particular church, arrogant and boastful, is being heralded by so many undiscerning Christians as the glorious last days church of power and dominion which will subdue the world and bring King Jesus back. It is the Laodicean lie! One dear soul wrote the following: 'Don't you realize, sir, that our next president will be a tongues-speaking, Spirit-filled man? Don't you know that all these great building projects by evangelists are ordained of God? The Lord is training leaders, rising up huge projects so they can move into government positions — having learned all about high finances and building. The church is going to take over the government — Spirit-filled leaders are going to make the laws, doing away with abortion, pornography, and crime. God has raised up a powerful church to take dominion now.'

"God is not at all impressed with this church's bloated estimate of itself! The Laodicean lukewarm church is not destined to dominion, power, and authority of any kind. It is destined to judgment! It is the worst kind of spiritual blindness to line up with those who boast that the modern American church, Charismatic or otherwise, faces its finest hour. What an incredible lack of spiritual discernment! Jesus rips off the façade and exposes the truth about the Laodicean church. It is not what it thinks it is — it is not what it says it is. It is not rich — it is poor! It is not on the increase — it is wretched and is about to be cut off! It is not strong and in need of nothing — but rather, it is naked, shameful! It is not a church with new revelation and deep spiritual insights — Jesus said IT IS BLIND! It is not going to be the vehicle of Christ's dominion on earth, but rather the object of His wrath and abhorrence.

"You can be sure God has a people for Himself in these days, but they are a despised, holy, and separated remnant. This holy remnant people will walk in the light and enjoy great discernment. They see the modern Laodicean church through the eyes of Jesus and they will not be deceived by the pomp, bigness, and outward grandeur of popular religion. The true church is invisible; it is repentant; it yearns for Christ, the beloved One" — end quote.

There is still a deeper meaning to the words, "I will spew you out of my mouth." What is the Lord's "mouth"? It is the vehicle speaking the word of God! "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." (I Pet. 4:11) "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (II Pet. 1:21) "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; but hath in due times manifested His word through preaching." (Tit. 1:2-3) The man who speaks the very words of God is the Lord's mouth upon earth! God also speaks mind to mind or spirit to spirit and that is how we hear the voice of God within ourselves. But when the Lord wishes to speak to men through men He chooses a vessel as His mouth, His medium of conveying His word.

So — what happens to these saints in the LAODICEAN CONDITION? The Lord says, "You will no longer be my mouthpiece, you will no longer speak my word! I am going to speak, all right. Yes, I am speaking to those who have ears to hear! But the living word I speak to men will not proceed from out of you!" Such was, and is, the condition of Laodicea as discerned by Christ; these are speaking words that the Lord has spoken, but they are not speaking the living words He is now speaking!. That is the condition of all who refuse to move forward in God! They continue to live in yesterday's revelation, in yesterday's move of the Spirit, little realizing that God has moved on and is doing a new thing in the earth. Sometimes they are not even speaking the old, stale words of God, but just their own word out of the imaginations of their hearts; and it is nauseous to Him; He abhors it, and therefore declares irrevocably that He will spew them out of His mouth!

The meaning is that He will totally reject these people as His prophetic voice, His responsible light-bearer in the world. I do not hesitate to say that the old order church systems today are no longer the mouthpiece of God! They are their own mouthpiece, speaking their own carnal message. God has already spewed them out of His mouth! That doesn't mean they are no longer the Lord's people, or that they cannot fulfill some function

in His purposes on earth. It means, my beloved, that they are no longer SPEAKING FOR GOD! The true message of the hour is not coming out of their mouths! Whatever you hear from them is something other than the living word of God for this new kingdom Day!

The Lord goes on to say, "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing..." Because thou sayest..." See, they are speaking! They are talking as the mouthpiece of God. This confirms what we just pointed out. But though they say it, that does not make it the words of God! They say one thing, but the Spirit says another!

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit sayeth unto the churches!" God is speaking to His elect in this hour, my beloved, and those who hear His voice are living in His sight. Great and mighty things lie before us. The sons of God are now arising to possess the kingdom. It will be MORE than revival this time — IT WILL BE THE KINGDOM OF GOD WITH POWER! There is a fresh move of the Spirit, a new feast of His fullness, a new ministry from the Holiest of all, a new work of God in the earth that transcends by far anything that has ever been seen or known. We are nearing the hour of the full manifestation of the sons of God. The long awaited liberation of planet earth is near at hand. The greater works that Jesus told us of are ready to begin. We have not passed this way before. But God is speaking, and all that He speaks shall come to pass. Isn't it wonderful!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 58

THE CHURCH IN LAODICEA

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART FIFTY-EIGHT

THE WORD MADE FLESH THE INTERFACE OF GOD AND CREATION

"And by the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; these things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." (Rev. 3:14)

John the beloved had learned from Jesus, his Master, the truth of the priority of God — the truth that before everything is God. And now in holy vision this great truth is driven home to him again, from the lips of the glorified Lord. Some truths, when we have learned them, are to us like precious jewels which we keep in a jewel-box, hidden most of the time from sight, our great satisfaction regarding them being simply their possession — simply that they are ours. Other truths, when we have learned them, are like new countries into which our lives have entered, and in which they thenceforth constantly live. There is a new heaven over our head and a new earth under our feet. They fold themselves about us and touch every thought and action. Everything which we think, or do, or are, is different because of them.

As we reverently, with head bowed and shoes removed from off our feet, consider this great truth of Him who is "the beginning of the creation of God," I would draw your pure mind to consider the processes of the creative word of God by which all things visible and invisible in all dimensions of time and space, and beyond time and space, are brought forth and exist. Before all things and behind all things and beyond all things standeth God, eternal, omniscient, and omnipotent. God is spirit! The reality of God exists in the eternal dimension of spirit, the dimension that is unique, special, and particular to His identity. All that God is exists in that eternal realm of spirit. And the testimony of scripture is that He is "before all things."

Let us not conceive of God existing "before all things" in a linear way. The notion that God for many ages and incomprehensible measures of time — countless trillions of earth years — remained inactive and then at a comparatively recent date created the universe and our world is both illogical and fallacious. This view presumes that eternity preceded time, that time began from several thousand to several billion years ago, and God was within the eternity before that uncreative and unproductive. Here, in the picture people have of God first contemplating the idea of a creation and then resolving to bring it into existence, we have God suddenly becoming something (Creator) in recent history that He had never been before!

There are two sublime statements in the written word of God concerning "the beginning." The Bible opens with the assertion, "In the beginning God created..." (Gen. 1:1) Then in the New Testament the fourth Gospel begins with the declaration, "In the beginning was the Word..." (Jn. 1:1) There is a deep mystery here! You see, in that long ago beginning where we meet time and where we meet creation, we also meet "the Word." In the beginning God created, and in that same beginning there was the Word. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." (Jn. 1:1-3)

Here we have two items, but we are not talking about two persons! We have God and we have the Word. The Word was in the beginning. And all things were made by the Word! Yet it was God who did the creating. And the Word was God! That is the mystery.

The Greek word Logos, or Word in English, was common in New Testament days. This Word is presented as One "in the beginning." Note the contrast between "in the beginning" and the expression "from the beginning," which is common in John's writings. Satan was a murderer "from the beginning," but the Logos was "in the beginning." This beginning antedates the very first words in the Bible, "In the beginning God created the

heavens and the earth," for of this One it is stated, "The same was (already) in the beginning with God." (Jn. 1:2)

That beginning — when God created the heavens and the earth — can be dated, although I doubt that anyone has yet dated it accurately. It stretches back into the mists of antiquity, beyond recorded history. Whether it was thousands or millions or billions of years matters little, but when you go back to that creation the Logos, the Word, was already there, and that is exactly the way this is used — "In the beginning was the Word." Notice it is not that He is from the beginning, but in the beginning He was. It was not in the beginning that the Word started out or was begotten. WAS is known as a durative imperfect, meaning continued action. It means that the Word was in the beginning. What beginning? Just as far back as you want to go! The Bible says, "IN the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Does that begin God? No! Just keep going back billions and trillions and "squillions" of years as man reckons time — before creation. God already was, and the Logos already was; He comes out of eternity to meet us. He did not begin. "In the beginning God." "In the beginning was the Word" — He was already there when the beginning was!

"Well," someone says, "there has to be a beginning somewhere." All right, wherever you begin, He is there. "In the beginning was the Word" — five words in the original language, and there is not a man on the topside of this earth who can put a date on it or understand it or fathom it. This first tremendous statement starts us off in eternity, you see! Far away in the depths of my spirit I see that from all eternity God has been creating. That never-begun existence of the Word has eternally been the out-ricing of the Father's nature. To deny the eternal existence of the Word is to deny the eternal ability of God to speak! How could God speak apart from His Word? The reason the Word was already there in the beginning, before creation, is because He is the CREATIVE WORD! And to say that God never created anything before this present material creation in Genesis is to deny God His own being, nature, and expression from eternity.

If God never until recent times created anything, then God eternally never spoke, for His Word is creative. When God speaks things happen! If God ever spoke before Genesis 1:1, then He created! These truths are self-evident. There has never been a time when there was nothingness and only God in existence. The scripture says that He is "before all things," but that doesn't mean that He eternally existed alone and inactive, only that He is the origin, the source, the cause of all things, as it is written, "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things — for all things originate with Him and come from Him..." (Rom. 11:36) When you see something existing, whether now, or in some creation previous to this present one, or in another creation after this present one, you can be assured that behind that thing, yea, before that thing, there was God for He is the source and origin of it all! That is what Paul meant when he penned those remarkable words declaring of God, and of His Word, "He is before all things!"

Like all other names, THE LOGOS has its own meaning — a meaning which does not appear in the English translation, "the Word." Logos carries with it the idea of a word spoken, speech, eloquence, reason, thought, intent, and concept. It refers not only to the word that is spoken, expressed, and manifested, but also to the purpose, thought, intent, and will of God behind that which is expressed. "For the word of God is quick, and powerful." (Heb. 4:12) The word of God is quick. That doesn't mean fast; rather the word is LIVING! That's how it is in the Greek. You see, a word is the expression of a thought, a purpose, an intent, a will. In order to have a word, you need a Thinker. The Father is a great Thinker! The Father thought, and then the Father spoke. And from the bosom of the Father, the Word came forth and that Word was LIVING and POWERFUL! That Word was, in fact, the LIVING CREATIVE ENERGY OF GOD. A word is spoken by forcing air or breathe out through the mouth. Shhiiish! The Hebrew word for spirit is ruwach meaning "breath" or "wind." God speaks by His Spirit! His Word is formed by His Spirit or Breath, just as our words are formed by our breath. Can you not see the mystery? The Spirit is Life! Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." He meant that His words originated out of the action of God's Spirit, just as our words originate out of the action of our breath. And therefore they are a Living Word for they are formed and proceed out of His Living Spirit! It was by God's Word that all things were created, for the Word flowed forth from the eternal wisdom by which God declared the purposes of His infinite mind, and it came forth in the power of His Spirit. The Word flowed forth from divine omnipotence by which He brought all the starry heavens and all the hosts of them into existence. Consider the divisions of matter: energy, motion, phenomena. ENERGY: "In the beginning

was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" — that's energy! And how was that energy released? God SPOKE! "And God said, Let there be...and there was!"

Every rational person has to confront this problem of how the universe began. That is the reason evolution has been popular — it offers to the natural man an explanation for the origin of the universe. Of course, it does not offer him an explanation for the origin of energy or matter! You must have an explanation for it, if you do any thinking at all. Where did it come from? Well, here is the answer, "In the beginning was the Word." God spoke. That is the first thing that happened. When God speaks, when the Word goes forth, energy is translated into matter. That is all matter is — it is energy slowed down in its vibration until it changes form, becoming tangible and visible. What is atomic fission? It is matter translated back into energy — poof! it disappears. Creation began with energy. In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God, the Word was God. The Word came out of God by the power of His Spirit. The plans and purposes of God for the ages were conceived in His mind and spoken forth in an omnipotent decree through THE WORD, the SPEAKING, LIVING, POWERFUL, CREATIVE WORD that was with God in the beginning.

Creation having been brought forth, the Word then stood in unique relationship between God and His creation. Logos means not only the inward thought and purpose of God, but the utterance, expression, or manifestation of that thought. The eminent Greek scholar, Dr. M. R. Vincent, comments on this word, "Logos therefore signifies both the outward form by which the inward thought is expressed, and the inward thought itself. The idea is of God, who is in His own nature hidden, revealing Himself in creation."

Every person is revealed by his word! The word is the expression of the one speaking the word, as it is written, "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh." One may speak beautiful words of compassion and love, or stinging words of malice and hate. When these words spill out of one's mouth we know what manner of person He is! He has indeed birthed a part of himself and nothing around him is ever the same again, for his words are powerful and creative, reproducing in others out of himself. Christ is indeed the Word, for He was birthed right from the heart-center of God. That which was expressed by Him in thought, word, and deed, was the very essence and character of His Father. When this Word became flesh and dwelt among us, the glory of the Father could for the first time be seen in the world as a personality. He is the manifest declaration of the Father. **"He that has seen me, has seen the Father; for I and the Father are one."** **"He is the sole expression of the glory of God, the Light-being, the out-raying or the radiance of the divine, and He is the perfect imprint and very image of God's nature, upholding and maintaining and guiding the universe by His mighty word of power."** **(Heb. 1:3) (Amplified)**

We sometimes try to comprehend the God that is not of this natural realm, this material dimension, by looking at ourselves and thinking God looks like us. The truth is, God doesn't look like us! As beautiful and noble as mankind is, God doesn't in any way resemble man. There is no "old man" with a long flowing white beard sitting on a throne up in the heavens! The Word was made flesh in the person of Jesus Christ, but the man Christ Jesus was not sitting there with God upon a throne from eternity. The nature, the function of the Word, was there with God in the beginning, and this nature, this expression of God as Word was God. All the faculties and attributes of God were eternally with God and were God. All that God is in spirit, character, and substance are eternal realities in God, unchangeable and invariable. The Word, the Logos, was in God from eternity.

God always possessed the ability of speech! That's what "the Word" is — God's expression in speech, the emanation of His thought. God purposed to make His Word visible, just as we do when we write our thoughts in a book or present them in a stage play or a movie. What was God's original language? Was it English? Was it Aramaic? Was it Chinese? Someone says, "Hebrew was the original pure and divine language." Was it? It really doesn't matter, because when God decided to speak clearly and definitively to man He spoke in the person of His Son, Jesus the Christ. Jesus Himself is the language of God! Jesus spoke Aramaic — that was the common language in Galilee in the days of Christ. God did not speak to humanity in Aramaic, however. God spoke in His Son! It was not what Jesus said or the language He spoke that made Him the Logos, the Word — it was who and what He was! Jesus didn't just speak the words of God, He was and is the Word of God! In order to come down into a world of darkness and reveal Himself unto men God made His Word flesh. The Word was not made Hebrew. The Word was not made a book. The Word was made flesh! The Word did

not become a language, the Word became a man and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the uniquely begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

We have already shown that God is before all things. This shows that He exists in the realm of nothingness, that is, no-thing-ness, a dimension far removed from our conception of "things" or "matter." So what was the first thing God did out of His nothingness — His no-thing-ness? He made words. He spoke! The inception of all creation is just this: "And God said, Let there be." Isn't it interesting that that is the first activity of God recorded? Why did He not create first, and then speak? Why did He not first play a harp, and at the sound of the music stars were born? The mystery is just this — when God spoke HE EMANATED OUT OF NOTHING INTO SOMETHING! His first emanation was in the form of words. The Word is God. The Word is not something God created; the Word is God Himself in emanation, expression, revelation.

God didn't speak in English or Hebrew when He said, "Let there be light!" Had you been there you wouldn't have heard anything! We are not to suppose that a voice was heard in the chaos, for His speech was the very creative energy of His thought and flowed forth as spirit and life. His speech was the putting forth of His power, which was the emanation of Himself. Here we are dealing not with a power as such, but with a personality. That which God put forth is Himself. God is not a reservoir of power. He IS power! The putting forth of His power is the putting forth out of Himself of Himself. The Word is not another person, a second God, a second person of the Godhead, but GOD HIMSELF IN EMANATION.

Yet — when the Word of God is communicated to man it takes a form that man can understand. Language is a miracle and a gift of God. Jesus Himself is called the Word, so it's no surprise that words are what join us to God and to our neighbors. Words are so bound up with what we call "thought" that it's sometimes hard to distinguish the two. The French philosopher Rene Descartes said, "I think, therefore I am." That is true, but he needed more than just thought to prove he existed; he also needed the words! I don't know that he lived, or what manner of man he was, because of his thoughts — I know because of his words. Understand this and you will understand a great mystery: God's Word is the connecting link between God and His creation!

So we conclude that the "Word" as it has been revealed to man has been the visible expression of the invisible God. In other words, the invisible God embodied Himself in a visible form that could be seen, heard, touched, handled, understood, and comprehended on the earth plane. The Bible declares that "God is a spirit" and since God is spirit He is invisible and unknowable unless He chooses to manifest Himself in some form visible to man. God told Moses, "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live." "No man hath seen God at any time." Not only has no man ever seen God, but no man can see God (I Tim. 6:16). Several times the Bible describes God as invisible (Col. 1:15; I Tim. 1:17; Heb. 11:27). Although man can see God when He appears in various forms, no man can see directly the invisible Spirit of God. The physical eyes of man have never beheld a spirit; all he sees is the form that spirit manifests itself in.

Since God is an invisible spirit and is also omnipresent, He does not have a body as we know it. Every time God wanted to talk personally to someone or manifest Himself, He had to borrow, as it were, a body to manifest Himself in. All through the Old Testament God revealed Himself and dealt with man on man's level through the use of what theology calls theophanies. A theophany is a visible manifestation of God, and we usually think of it as temporary in nature. To make Himself visible, to communicate Himself on the material plane, He manifested Himself in a physical form. Even though no one can see the Spirit of God, he can see a symbol or a representation of God. The Logos, or the Christ, is God revealed! It is God in His Self-revealings. The Logos is God expressed, God uttering Himself, God's means of Self-disclosure.

God often appeared to men through the manifestation of "the angel (messenger; word) of the Lord." (**Jud. 6:20; II Sam. 24:16; I Kings 19:5-7**) This "angel" of the Lord appeared to Hagar, spoke as though he were God, and was called God by her (Gen. 16:7-13). The Bible says that the angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in a burning bush, but then says God Himself talked to Moses out of the bush (Ex. 3; Acts 7:30-38). The angel of the Lord appeared to Israel in Judges 2:1-5 and spoke as God. Judges 6:11-24 describes the appearance of the angel of the Lord to Gideon and then says the Lord looked on Gideon. Again the angel of the Lord appeared to Manoah and his wife, and they believed they had seen God (Jud. 13:2-23). The deity of this unique "angel" is proved by the fact that he is (1) identified as God (Gen. 16:7-13; 18:2-13; 22:1-18; Ex. 3:2-28;

Jud. 2:1-5; 6:11-16). (2) is recognized as God (Gen. 16:9-13; 18:2-13; 22:1-18; Ex. 3:2-18; Jud. 2:1-5; 6:11-16). (3) is also described in terms befitting the Deity alone (Ex. 3:5-14; Josh. 5:15). (4) calls Himself God (Gen. 31:11-13; Ex. 3:2-14). (5) receives worship (Josh. 5:14; Jud. 2:4). (6) and finally speaks with divine authority (Jud. 2:1-5).

God appeared to Abraham as a smoking furnace and burning lamp, and as a man (Gen. 15:1,17; 18:1-33). In this last instance, God and two angels appeared in the form of three men (Gen. 18:2) and ate food provided by Abraham. Two of the angels left to go to Sodom while God remained to talk to Abraham (Gen. 18:22; 19:1). God appeared to Jacob in a dream and as a man (Gen. 28:12-16; 32:24-32). On the latter occasion Jacob wrestled with the man and proclaimed, "I have seen God face to face." The Bible also describes this appearance as "the angel" (Hos. 12:4). God appeared to Moses and to all Israel as a cloud of glory and a pillar of fire and spoke to Moses "face to face" in the tabernacle out of the cloud (Ex. 13:21; 33:9-10).

When God brought Israel out of Egypt and into the wilderness, they had one very distinctive sign. They had the cloudy pillar by day and the pillar of fire by night over the encampment. These told all of the surrounding nations that Israel belonged to Yahweh, that their God was in their midst in power and glory, and they were under God's protection day and night. The cloud and the fire were visible both day and night and no enemy could come into the camp even by night, for the fire made it as light as day. I do not believe that Christians today have any real conception of the marvelous and great work which God did in delivering the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt! We have seen pictures painted by some of the great artists supposedly to illustrate this, and we have seen Moses striking the rock with some half-dozen people around him drinking from a stream little larger than a finger, with a cow or two and a few sheep standing near. What a crude conception of the majesty and glory by which the mighty Yahweh delivered His people!

It is estimated, on the basis of the biblical record, that there were at least two to three million Israelites that came up out of Egypt. God did a wonderful and mighty work in that Exodus! It was not a little handful of people that left Egypt, but it was millions that God brought out. Little wonder that some of the people asked if God could set a table in the wilderness! For this was a great multitude and God was taking them into a desert place where there was little food for man or beast. There was no water, and God had the Israelites take no supplies or provisions with them. GOD WAS THEIR SUPPLY and OUT OF HIMSELF He would feed them!

God further manifested Himself in the sight of all Israel through thunder, lightnings, a voice of a trumpet, smoke, fire, and earthquakes (Ex. 19:11-19; Deut. 5:4-5,22-27). He also showed His glory and sent fire from His presence in the sight of all Israel (Lev. 9:23-24; 10:1-2). Job saw God in a whirlwind (Job 38:1; 42:5). Various prophets saw visions of God. To Ezekiel He appeared in the form of a man, enveloped in fire. To Daniel He appeared as the Ancient of Days. Many other verses of scripture tell us that God appeared to someone but do not describe in what manner He did so. For example, God appeared to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Samuel (Gen. 12:7; 17:1; 26:2,24; 35:9-15; I Sam. 3:21). Similarly, God descended on Mount Sinai and stood with Moses, revealed Himself to seventy-four elders of Israel, and came at night to Balaam, and met Balaam on two other occasions.

All of these were the Logos, the Word! The Word was not a separate person from Yahwey or a separate God any more than a man's word is a separate person from him. Thus, the Logos, the expression, manifestation, and revelation of God appeared in many forms. The burning lamp, the smoking furnace, the burning bush, the tempest, the angel, the cloud, the pillar of fire, the form of a man — each had its ministry, all in turn served the one grand purpose, like the ray that is broken into many prismatic hues, each revealed something of the nature, power, wisdom, purpose, will, and glory of God. We find that in the phrase "and the word was with God" that this word "with" is the Greek pros meaning TOWARD. All that the manifestation of the Word of God was, all that He said, all that He showed, all that He did, was pointing TOWARD THE FATHER. Hence He is rightly called THE WORD OF GOD. The Word revealed God, led Him forth into view and caused men to turn toward Him, to understand Him, to know Him.

THE WORD MADE FLESH

The apostle Paul frequently spoke of the vast mysteries of God and, in speaking of them, he left no shadow of doubt that naught but the revelation of the Lord could unfold those eternal mysteries. One of the grandest of those mysteries is set forth by the apostle John in these wonderful words: "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." (Jn. 1:14) Concerning Jesus Christ, whom the scripture discloses as "the Word made flesh," it is written, "who is the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15; II Cor. 4:4); "the express image of His person" or "the very image of His person." (Heb. 1:3) And we note that this word "person" is actually from the Greek word *hypostasis* meaning THE SUBSTANCE, or the substratum, what lies under. All the character and inner nature of the Divine was expressed through our Lord Jesus Christ! All the motive, the purpose, the heart and intent of God toward His creation was revealed to us through Jesus, "to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." (II Cor. 5:19) The seed of our new creation life is this same Logos, the Word is again being made flesh in us, and through our union with Christ Jesus in and by the Spirit we are to be "as He is."

God no longer needs to "borrow" or materialize Himself into a "body" in which to express and reveal Himself, no more does He send the burning bush, or the fire, or the cloud, or the angel, or the form of a man. For the first time Yahweh has a permanent, eternal body in which to walk and talk and show forth Himself to mankind — THE CHRIST, Head and body, His house of sons! In the Old Testament manifestations the revelation of Himself was in fragments. No one manifestation could speak all truth, each was but one or two syllables in the mighty sentences of God's speech. At the best the view caught of God was partial and limited. But in Jesus there is nothing of the piece-meal revelation! "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." (Col. 2:9) He has fully revealed the Father! Whosoever hath seen Him hath seen God; and to hear His words and behold His glory is to get the full-orbed revelation of the infinite.

The question follows: How could the Word become flesh? How could God become a man? The Greek text has it, not that the Word "was made" flesh, but that the Word "became" flesh. There is a vast difference between these two propositions! If I say, "The wood was made into a chair," it denotes an action upon, an action from without; some person or force beyond the wood acted upon the wood and the wood, by no involvement on its own part, was made into a chair. If, on the other hand, I say, "The young man became a doctor," it denotes an action on the part of the subject. Nobody outside of the young man forced him and somehow "made" him a doctor, but he himself went to medical school, studied, burned the midnight oil, passed the exams, fulfilled his internship, and thus he became a doctor." "Was made" bespeaks of an action upon an object from without; "became" bespeaks of a personal accomplishment from within!

"Let his mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him(self) the form of a servant, and (thus) was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. 2:5-8) In all this He did it Himself! God Himself, through the power of His Word, brought forth Himself as a man. Oh, the mystery of it! When we think of Christ's humiliation we think of Him being born in a stable in Bethlehem and dying upon a cross. But that is nothing at all compared to the humiliation of God becoming a man, as man is in corruptible flesh — that's humiliation! And this Word of God, the very creative energy of God spoke Himself into flesh! It was no more difficult to transmute Himself into flesh than to create any other thing. He became what He had created back in the beginning. He created man — now He Himself became a man. He became flesh. When you say "flesh" the word in the Greek doesn't mean meat — a body and blood. It means the total personality. He became a real man — not something different!

THE WORD B-E-C-A-M-E F-L-E-S-H! The language of God is His Word. God and His Word are inseparable. The same eternal Word that spoke the worlds into existence became flesh and dwelt among us! The Father spoke and from the bosom of the Father the Word came forth and was made flesh and tabernacled among men. GOD was manifest in the FLESH (I Tim. 3:16). The Speech of God became the Son of God in human form. Here comes God out of eternity, He comes to Bethlehem, a little baby that made a woman cry. And notice now, "And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the ONLY BEGOTTEN OF THE FATHER, full of grace and truth." (Jn. 1:14) Now He is saying something else! This Word made flesh is the SON OF GOD — full of grace and truth. The word "full" means that you just could not have any more! He brought all the Deity with Him, and He was full of grace and full of truth when He came down here as the SON OF GOD.

Surely these are simple truths that even a child can understand! The Word was made flesh. The Word made flesh was the only begotten of the Father. The Word made flesh was the Son of God. But note well, my brother, my sister, it does not say that the eternal Word was the Son, nor does it say that the Son was made flesh. Oh, no! The Word made flesh was the Son! Can you not see the mystery? The Word has now become the Son and the Son is now the Word. There is no truth in all the scriptures set forth, and greater emphasized, than that Jesus was the Son of the Father. God Himself dispatched the mighty angel Gabriel from heaven to first declare it! As the hour approached for Jesus to be conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary, Gabriel announced to the astonished Galilean maiden, **"The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."** (Lk. 1:35)

When Jesus had been baptized by John in the river Jordan, God spoke from heaven and said, **"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."** (Lk. 3:22) Again, when Jesus had taken Peter, James, and John up into the mount, and was transfigured before them, a voice came from heaven and said the same thing, **"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him."** (Mat. 17:5) There is neither time nor space to even begin to quote the vast multitude of scriptures that declare Jesus to be the Son of God. Even the devils that possessed some people recognized Him as God's Son. The Roman Centurion, when he had witnessed the things that happened when Jesus was crucified, with astonished wonder cried out, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

It seems, from the writings of the apostles, that it is very important that we believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Not that He was GOD THE SON, as popular religion tells us, but that He was GOD'S SON. "God the Son" is not a scriptural term. You will not find it anywhere in the Bible! "The blessed second person of the Godhead" is not a scriptural term. It is not in the Bible! "Jesus is in the Godhead" is not a scriptural term. The Bible, in fact, says just the opposite! Here is what the scripture really says: **"For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."** (Col. 2:9) If the reader will earnestly consider these words he will surely see that the scripture does not say that JESUS IS IN THE GODHEAD; rather, it says that THE GODHEAD IS IN JESUS! Is there not a world of difference between Jesus being in the Godhead and the Godhead being in Jesus? THE MAN CHRIST JESUS CONTAINED WITHIN HIMSELF ALL THE FULLNESS OF GOD! And He still does! "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily," but it doesn't stop there, for it goes on to say, "And ye are complete in Him." Can we not see by these words that the body of Christ is the completion of God's Christ, the fullness of God is revealed in God's called and chosen elect, and only in that blessed and awe-inspiring fact is fulfilled the words, "For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." YOU ARE THE BODY IN WHICH THE FULLNESS OF THE GODHEAD DWELLS! You are the body of Christ! The fullness of God dwells in the Christ bodily! That is the mystery! It is God dwelling in us that makes us sons of God, just as it was God dwelling in Jesus that made Him the son of God.

The Son of God did not become the Word; it was the Word who was made flesh and became the Son. Jesus knew that the Word in Him was God. He was actually living and acting and speaking the Word which was God — not the word that God had spoken! It wasn't teaching the scriptures that made Him the Word of God, but the revealing of the mind, heart, and will of the Father. That is why He was able to still the sea, raise the dead, change the elements, discern the thoughts and hearts of all men, and do all the other tremendous things He did! **"The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works."** (Jn. 14:10) The Deity in Jesus was not God the Son; the Deity in Jesus was THE FATHER! Jesus was the Father speaking! He constantly acknowledged that of Himself He could do nothing, it was the Father dwelling in Him that did the works. Would that not be a strange thing for the "second person of the Godhead" to say — "I can do nothing of myself, the Father in me doeth the works?" One God is impotent, while the other God is mighty! The work of Jesus, the Son, however, was the extension of the Father's work. This extension did not only occur through Jesus, but it also occurs through us! That is what sonship is! We are not "God the sons," but we are "the sons of God" and it is the Father dwelling in us that makes us sons and who does the works.

This brings us back to the Logos, the Word. The clear and unmistakable testimony of scripture is that "In the beginning was the Word." In the beginning the Word already was. He comes out of eternity to meet us. He was already there when the beginning was. But nowhere do we find the scripture that says, "In the beginning was

the SON, and the SON was with God, and the SON was God." Oh, how men misquote the scripture! You see, my beloved, the eternal WORD was MADE FLESH and so BECAME THE SON, the Son of God, full of grace and truth. Jesus was and is the Word, and the Word existed as long as God existed, but the Son was that eternal Word made flesh, and we in Him are the Word made flesh, for God is finding expression in us as we are born of His Spirit, conformed to His image, matured in His nature, filled with His mind, the revelation of the Father in the Son here in the earth realm. The Son was that eternal Word made a man, yea, a God-man, dwelling among us, resurrected, glorified, ascended, coming again in His many-membered body of God-men, the very sons of God, who are as He is in this world, Emmanuel, God with us forevermore!

The Christ is the Word of God and the words that He speaks are spirit and they are life! As the Word, Jesus could say, **"Before Abraham was, I AM." (Jn. 8:58)** But as the Son He receives the witness of the Father, **"Thou art my Son, THIS DAY HAVE I BEGOTTEN THEE." (Heb. 1:5)** The mystery is that God in the spirit of every man is the Word of God! Deep within every man is the testimony of God, even that Word which from the beginning was the life of men, and which now enlightens every man coming into the world (Jn. 1:4,9). That is why all men are "religious" by nature and are seeking after God in one way or another. For a man to believe in God, and the spiritual world and to desire God is just as natural as it is for a dog to bark. The dog barks because it is inherent in his nature to bark. In the same way there is a "word" in each of us from the moment we enter this world, the voice of God in our spirit! That voice, however, is muffled and distorted by the outer flesh, the carnal mind, and the manipulation of the spirit of the world. That is why we must be regenerated, our spirit quickened by God's Spirit, bringing the release of the Voice of God within us! Then as that Word within us is made flesh, made substance within us, raised up by the quickening power of the Spirit of God (our salvation) to find expression in the totality in of our being — WE BECOME THE SONS OF GOD!

THE INTERFACE OF GOD AND CREATION

We stated earlier that in that long ago beginning where we meet time, where we meet creation, we also meet the Word. In this fact lies the great and eternal truth of God's creative processes. Creation will become very meaningful to us once we understand that it is at the borderline of eternity and time that we meet the Word. Where time and eternity junction is where we find the Word! Where spirit and matter meet is where we encounter the Word! Where God and creation interface is where we confront the Word! Now, why is that? It's because in creation God, the eternal Spirit, is PROJECTING HIMSELF OUT OF HIMSELF TO BRING FORTH HIMSELF IN ANOTHER DIMENSION. And He does this by His Word!

Creation begins with this simple action, "And God said." The projection of God out of Himself is His Word! "And God said, let there be." In that blessed moment the thought of God, the intent of God, the will of God, the energy of God, the creative force of God, the authority and power of God issued out of Himself and produced on another plane the form of that which He spoke. And that's why the scripture says, **"We are aware that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God except One. For even if so be that there are those being termed gods, whether in heaven or on earth, even as there are many gods and many lords, nevertheless to us there is but one God, the Father (not the "Holy Trinity!"), O-U-T OF WHOM ALL IS, and we for Him." (I Cor. 8:4-7)** Again, **"O, the depth of the riches and of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How inscrutable are His judgments, and untraceable His ways! For who knew the mind of the Lord? or who became His adviser? or who gives to Him first, and will be repaid by Him? seeing that ALL is OUT of Him and through Him and for Him: to Him be glory for the ages! Amen!" (Rom. 11:33-36)**

Our God and Father has been pleased to leave us in no doubt or uncertainty as to how or where all things began, but in clear, unequivocal language stated the source and goal of all things for our assurance and joy. All originated IN HIM, came forth OUT OF HIM, created from the substance of His own divine energy and being! Agnostics, atheists, and evolutionists are the most careless and unscientific of all thinkers and reasoners. The fact is that for every effect there must be a cause. The order, harmony, laws, complexity, power and beauty of creation demand a cause, indeed a great mind and a vast source. To have an effect without a cause is the most ludicrous concept imaginable! All "things" came out of God in and by His Word!

Let me put it this way. Suppose you are the creator and you are spirit. Beside you there are no things. You are all there is! But your desire, your intent, is to make some things. You can't reach outside of yourself because

there is nothing there — no material of any kind out of which to construct any thing. You can't latch on to something that exists apart from or beyond yourself. So you must make it out of yourself! That is what it means, "For of Him, and out of Him, and through Him are all things!"

The agency of this change from the invisible to the visible, from spirit to matter, from God to creation is THE WORD! God projects Himself out of Himself to bring forth Himself in another dimension. This process is accomplished by THE CREATIVE WORD OF GOD! The word is the seed that comes out of God's mouth, and it has the energy to perform everything that it is sent to produce. When God's Word is heard and received by us it produces God's purpose in us by the energy of that word. When the Word of God goes forth it goes forth in the power of God's life and spirit and is able to make the conversion from pure spirit to things visible and tangible. It happens through the Word which is the seed. The seed of a man is called sperm and comes forth through the sex organ to produce another life. The seed of God comes forth out of His mouth and is called His Word, and just as a seed planted in the dark soil of a garden springs forth into the world of light and is raised up into another form, the form of wonderful plants, so the seed of God brings forth God on another dimension. There is contained here another revelation of the Creator of the universe. Universe is a compound word, uni meaning "one," and verse meaning "spoken word." One spoken word! God's Word! He didn't need anything more than that. It was a very short uni-verse, simply "let there be" and there was! That is the greatest moment of history. It is the story of creation. What we call the "universe" is the manifestation out of one spoken word of God! Oh, the mystery of it!

When God projects Himself out of Himself to bring forth Himself on another dimension there is an intersecting or interfacing of dimensions! That junction is the Word! That is where time and eternity, spirit and matter, God and creation, and the Father and His sons all meet — at the Word. The Word is the crossroads, the star-gate, if you please, where two dimensions connect. To pass from one dimension to the other you must go through the interface or stargate. The Word is the passageway from eternity to time, from spirit to matter, from invisible God to visible creation!

Today God is bringing forth a NEW CREATION! He is not producing this new creation by any method different than all other creations. Only His intent and purpose is different — therefore what He speaks is different! The new human-spiritual or God-man creation is being formed by the seed — the Word of God! **"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever." (1 Pet. 1:23)** I think the following beautiful chorus was written by Charlotte Torango:

**I'm created by the Word
Resurrected I stand;
Brought forth in the likeness
Of the great I AM;
Unveiling the mystery
Of God's great plan —
I in thee, Thee in me, and we in Him!**

Oh, yes! The Word of God is a seed. When the Lord Jesus taught the multitudes the awesome principles of the kingdom of God, He told them and us that the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that goes out and sows seed in a field. He spoke several parables which embody different aspects of this great truth, the parable of the seed that fell into different kinds of soil; the tiny mustard seed that became a great tree; the seed that produced different percentages of harvest, and so on. The seed is the word of the kingdom, Jesus said. The life, the power, and the substance is in the seed! The Word is God! The invisible power of God in His Word results in a visible manifestation on another plane! When the Word of God, the Word of the kingdom, or the Word of any purpose of God in your life comes to you, my brother, my sister, eternity comes to you. That which is formed in your life is transmitted out of God, through the Word, and into you. The Word is the connection, the crossroads, the intersection, the junction, the stargate, the interface between God and your destiny as a manifest son of God!

The power to change you, transform you, and make you everything that God has apprehended you to be is in that Word, for the Word is a creative seed with power. God is even now changing His called and chosen elect

into the image and likeness of Himself, and He shall change even our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto Christ's body of resurrection and glory. Yea, our Father shall change all things in this world and bring about a new order. How shall He do this? By speaking forth His Word! By the simplicity of His Word God created the sun, moon, stars, and all the hosts of the universe in the beginning! By His Word He created the heavens and the earth and everything in them! By His Word our omniscient and omnipotent Father put the animals, the birds, the fish, and all creeping things on this earth. By His Word God formed man and placed him in the paradise of Eden. Also by His Word our sovereign Father birthed the church age and all the accomplishment of it.

Now, also by His Word, our creative Father has ushered in a new age, a new feast, a new day, a new manifestation and glory, a higher order of the kingdom of God on earth! Those who are walking in the Spirit know of a certainty that this new age and order has begun. It has been birthed and has now begun in the hearts and lives of God's sons! And it has come to us by His Word! When we catch a vision of that realm where eternity and time converge, where spirit and matter meet, where God and creation intersect, where the Father and His sons connect, we will understand how it is that all the purposes of God are fulfilled by the simplicity of the Word! We know that as we proclaim the Word of the kingdom the Father has sent forth into our hearts, that it shall bring forth a creative harvest in all the earth until all peoples and tongues and nations are brought under the righteous dominion of the sons of God. It has already brought forth a mighty harvest of sons throughout the whole world who are maturing into the stature of God's Christ!

Faith is not rooted in the word of a man, but in an eternal utterance. God's Word cannot be divorced from Himself! If you hear the Word, you hear God. The Word of God is just as fresh and vigorous as when He stood on creation morn commanding chaos to loose its hold and let order come forth. The Word falling upon our inner spiritual ear is as powerful and life-giving as when Jesus was here speaking to the tumultuous sea, commanding, "Peace! Be still!" or "Ought not this woman, whom Satan hath bound, be loosed from her infirmity?" or to the impotent man by the pool of Bethesda, "Arise, take up thy bed and walk!" or to Lazarus in the dankness of his tomb, "Lazarus, come forth!" or when he spoke to the demons but two words of authority, "Come out!" There is no long cajoling, hoping, straining, but His Word is final and divinely effective. All must bow. He is Master. He rules sovereign. Elements, disease, sin, demons, and death all give sway to His Word. FOR HE IS THE WORD! That is the secret for every son of God. We are becoming the Word, the Word made flesh in us, so that the Word is more than something we speak — it is what we are!

**In the dawning of the ages,
Stands the Logos all supreme;
The beginning of creation,
Time begins and ends in Him.**

**Of creation, He's the Alpha,
Time and timelessness doth span;
Of salvation, He's Omega,
Mediates 'tween God and man.**

**In beginning is the Logos,
The projection of God's Word;
Heads, both old and new creation,
Beginning both to one accord;**

**At first in time the Logos stands,
Radiation of God's grace;
As the vital, living Word,
Integrates the human race.**

**Towards the Father is the Logos,
The expression of His mind;
Generation of God's essence,**

Breath of Life to all mankind.

First He stands in God's own image,
Representing God in man;
For the Father is the Logos,
A trajectory of His plan.

The Logos spans both first and last;
Alpha and Omega — He,
Proceeding from the Father's heart,
Permeates humanity.

Reflecting God's effulgent love,
The glory of the Father, we —
Stand completed in the Logos,
Actually His Word to be.

For the Logos stands in Christed,
Bridging time and eternity;
And the e'er expanding Word,
Brings to man Christ's liberty.

Man united in the Logos,
Speaking all things into one;
Bringing forth the consummation —
Rise and shine — Ye Blessed Son!

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 59

THE CHURCH IN LAODICEA (continued)

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART FIFTY-NINE

THE RICH WOMEN GOLD TRIED IN THE FIRE FIRES FOR GLORY – POEM

"Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked..." (Rev. 3:17)

Laodicea was a notably wealthy city. It was the center of the banking interests of Asia Minor. Twice Laodicea had suffered severely from the ravages of earthquakes. In AD 17 it had been devastated by the same earthquake which laid waste Sardis and Philadelphia. At that time it received the same kindness and aid from Tiberius, the Roman Emperor, as these other cities had received. But in AD 60 it was again laid waste, and this time, although all aid and assistance was offered, Laodicea completely refused them, and preferred to rebuild its shattered city out of its own resources. Laodicea was too rich to accept help from anyone! Tacitus, the Roman historian, tells us, "Laodicea rose from the ruins by the strength of her own resources, and with no help from us." The Laodiceans were people who were so well off that they needed help neither from man nor from God! They were people who believed that money could buy anything; and they had so much of it they could very well manage without God — so they thought. But the omniscient Lord of the church said to them in effect, "You are rich and prosperous, and are proud of your riches, and trust in them; but in the things that matter, the truly spiritual things, you are poverty-stricken — and you do not know it!

It seemed everything this city did resulted in wealth and the church itself was taken in by the spirit of materialism. There is no doubt about it — they preached the "prosperity doctrine"! A lot of very wealthy and influential people belonged to the church. Apparently these wealthy people gave liberally to the church and the church had everything. You talk about a beautiful building — they had it! They had the most beautiful stained-glass windows, the plushiest pews, the most exquisite draperies and carpet, the finest musical instruments, the most polished speakers, and a choir that attracted people from miles around. In this super-wealthy city everything was the greatest! When the church members came to the Sunday morning meeting they drove up in a Rolls Royce chariot, or a Mercedes chariot, or some other expensive chariot.

The pastors of these people could come to church and not even trust God! All they had to do was pull a little harder and all the rich people would give more. They were able to finance all kinds of pageants and programs and so-called ministries. They weren't really trusting God at all, they were smug in their own ability and using the deceptive methods of the world. I have been in meetings where the offerings were a circus! Preachers have made offering taking into an art, they pride themselves in what kind of an offering they can take, and how they can push the right button, say the right thing, and the finances will come rolling in. The easiest way to do this is to convince people that the primary evidence of God's blessing is in financial prosperity, having all their carnal and material needs and wants met, and the secret to this blessing is, of course, in their giving to them! God, they are told, will then restore their "seed" to them a hundred-fold! There is some truth in that, but I do not hesitate to tell you that material prosperity is not the primary evidence of God's blessing and favor! The true riches are the spiritual, heavenly things of the Spirit of God!

What is spiritual? What are spiritual things? What are treasures in heaven? What are the true riches? Let me simplify this for you. If sinners can have it or do it without God — it's not spiritual! Someone says, "I'm spiritual because I fast." Witches fast! Another says, "I'm spiritual because I prosper and give vast sums of money to this ministry and that." Indeed! Mafia king-pins also prosper and give large amounts of money to all kinds of worthy causes that help and bless people, and the good they do is often more than the churches do with their

money. You see, precious friend of mine, human nature is wont to equate spirituality with what we do, or with what we possess. No! A thousand times no!

Even the term "spiritual" indicates that it requires the power and ability of the SPIRIT, or that it is an expression of the SPIRIT. Therefore, when we walk in the Spirit and are led by the Spirit, what flows out of us is a dispensation of the life and glory and power and wisdom and nature and will of God Himself — that is spiritual! Sinners can't do that! The carnal mind can't produce that! The fleshly nature can't generate that! Self-effort is eternally and completely unable to perform that! Answered prayer — that's spiritual. Deliverance and transformation — that's spiritual. Speaking the words of God — that's spiritual. Loving your enemies — that's spiritual. Blessing them that curse you — that's spiritual. The peace that passeth understanding — that's spiritual. Laying down your life for creation — that's spiritual. Putting on the mind of Christ — that's spiritual. Being led by the Spirit of God — that's spiritual. Money can't buy these things. The natural man can't mimic these things. These are the true riches!

George Hawtin described the LAODICEAN CONDITION in these words: "It is hard to tell a rich man that he is poverty stricken. It is almost impossible to disturb the composure of one who thinks he has need of nothing, who never surmises for a moment that he is miserable and wretched, poor and blind and naked. Yet such is the condition throughout the world and the entire realm of professing Christendom. I well remember a precious old lady who, having grown hard of hearing, imagined that her family intentionally spoke in subdued tones so that she would not hear their conversation, but, when after much difficulty she was persuaded to go to the doctor to have her ears washed out, then she wondered why everyone in the house was shouting so. That is just the way God's people are in this the hour of Laodicea! They are blind but think they can see perfectly. They have grown deaf to the true voice of God, yet they are positive there is nothing wrong with their hearing. They are full of religion and talk loudly of signs and wonders, but do not know that they are lukewarm in their love and relationship to God. Their works abound on every hand, but they are unaware that God has neither sent them nor required these labors of them. It is time, oh child of God, to seek the quiet of the wilderness where every voice of man is hushed and no one has opportunity to speak but God" — end quote.

A great deception has circulated among the Lord's people for many years now, and that is the deception of abundant prosperity. Evangelists, television and radio hucksters, as well as other pulpiteers have encouraged the Lord's people to believe God for wealth and prosperity and to seek for it earnestly. With great enthusiasm these preachers of "another gospel" have encouraged the Lord's people to indulge themselves in the lust and greed for temporal things and for money and great wealth. The apostle Paul wrote of a similar condition which prevailed in his day, and warned the people of God with these words, "He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about...perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself. But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us therewith be content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." (I Tim. 6:4-11)

The modern "faith" message of health, wealth, and prosperity is the cardinal doctrine of the church of the Laodiceans! I do not mean by this that the Lord has not promised to heal, bless, and meet all of our needs. Of course He has! It is a matter of focus. The "faith" message, as preached today, would have us believe that salvation's greatest benefits are physical, earthly, material, and temporal. Untold thousands of commitments to Christ have been motivated by the expectation of the "good life" to be had by all who follow Jesus! We hear exclusively of the wonderful, exciting, and miraculous "abundant life" that God is just waiting to bestow upon those who only believe — and send in their "seed faith" offering! It will be a great blessing to your spiritual life to realize, however, that the substance of true commitment to Christ is that "He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf." (II Cor. 5:15) Jesus did not instruct His disciples to count their blessings, but to count the cost of their commitment to follow Him, for the route to mount Zion where we reign with Him first passes over mount Calvary where we lay down our life with Him. When one is delivered from the flesh appeal of the things of this world and finds Christ Himself as

the substance and reality of life, it then matters not whether we drive a shiny new Lexus or a rusted old Ford Escort. The mark of our spirituality will not be whether we clear \$100,000 after taxes or subsist on \$600 a month Social Security, for when CHRIST HIMSELF IS OUR LIFE AND ALL WE NEED, WE HAVE NEED OF NOTHING! When Christ becomes our only measure, value, and goal we are then an overcomer out of the church of the Laodiceans! Then we are truly rich!

The church of the Laodiceans loves our national hymn, but they prefer to sing it thus:

**Oh beautiful for dividends
Of twenty-five percent
On oil and technology
On money freely lent
Oh blessed land of bumper crops
May riches be our fate!
Increase our wealth and save our health
American, the Great!**

A brother wrote me, saying, "Someone sent me a videotape of a convention sponsored by a well-known prosperity preacher. I was so appalled by what was being taught I could hardly contain myself. It was blasphemy! One preacher boasted, 'I spent \$15,000 for a dog. This ring on my finger cost \$32,000. I live in an 8,000 square-foot house, but I'm going to build a bigger one — one Solomon would be proud of! When the people of my town see my big house and my Rolls Royce in the driveway, they know there is a God in heaven!' I wanted to weep because the entire time he spoke; people were running on stage and stuffing money in his pockets. They all claimed to be rich men. The tragedy was, the people loved it! They were being exploited by a perverted gospel." Beloved, do not listen to this false gospel. It is satanic. It comes from the heart of men who are earthly minded, carnal, sensual, frivolous, jokesters, greedy for more. Isaiah the prophet has their number: **"Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter."** (Isa. 56:11)

If God has blessed you with the riches of this world, dear reader, humbly give Him thanks and use it wisely and for His glory. Oh, yes! God will meet your needs! He will bring you into true life and immortality! But do not make money and things the indicator of divine approval or the barometer of spirituality! To do so will cause your spiritual goals to be redirected into the senseless futility of human avarice. The pursuit of temporal treasures is a counterfeit gospel, cunningly designed to make you miss the truth and life of sonship. The daily pursuit of earthly riches is a pill of spiritual poison! Material prosperity is certainly enjoyable to the outer man, and I will not refuse any blessing God sends, but it is not godliness nor is it the sign of any spiritual attribute, grace, or power. The greatest blessing God can give you is the mind of Christ and the nature of the Father! The sons of God are not measured by what they have, but by what they are!

It is a sad fact that the vast majority of busy, Laodicean Christians today have positively no understanding of what the Father is doing. While they sing and clap hands, dance and play with their gifts, and earnestly talk about the rapture and the far-away heaven of golden streets and mansions, where they will strum harps and shout throughout endless ages, they know nothing of God's will, nor of His word, nor of His ways, nor of His wonderful plan of the ages, nor of His great purpose in His sons and the restitution of the world and all creation. While they delight in propagating the grievous deception that the Lord wants nothing but prosperity for His saints, that they should seek and have the best of everything this world has to offer, together with the complete absence of problems, trouble, or tribulation of any kind, bringing God's people into bondage to the world and its transient and empty glory, thus hindering the development of many a saint — they know nothing of humility, brokenness, suffering, stripping, chastisement, purging, cleansing, refining, processing, and the resultant transformation and conformation into the image of the Son of God.

They know nothing of sonship! They know nothing of the groaning creation, and its hope of deliverance from the bondage of corruption! They know nothing of the Father's great and wonderful plan in bringing many sons to glory! They know nothing of reigning with Christ upon His throne in the heavens of God's Spirit! They know nothing of the heavenly mount Zion to which we are come, and where we now commune with our Father! They

know nothing of the spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus! They know nothing of God's merciful purpose for the government of the world by saints who have His mind, know His ways, and are acquainted with those purposes which were ordained in Christ our Lord before the world began and before the spirit of life was breathed into the clay we call Adam. They are having a hallelujah big time with their spiritual toys, completely oblivious to the great and important issues that really matter in this new and greater day of the kingdom of God upon earth. One of the sure marks of maturity is the ability to UNDERSTAND WHAT'S GOING ON!

Those who pursue the riches of this world and all earthly things as the sign of God's blessing and favor will awaken in the day of the manifestation of the sons of God with the same sense of emptiness and loss as the young man in a story I read. There was this girl who was very ugly — her face was her misfortune — and since she wanted to marry, she found that she must fascinate. She gave out that her father was very wealthy. A young fish bit at the bait. He took her out for a Sunday afternoon lunch and drive. As they drove across town she pointed to a large office building and said, "That belongs to my father." "Indeed," said the fish, swallowing. "And that," again she waved her fair hand toward a large department store, "that too belongs to my father." Again the fish gulped. "And this," she indicated, as they passed a huge factory, "this is also the property of my father." This was almost too good to be true. The carp shut his eyes and popped the question. He was quickly landed; they were married; and then, as often happens, he woke up! Her face was not only her misfortune, it was her sole fortune! Those whose god is the riches of this world will likewise awaken in the day of the manifestation of the sons of God to discover that the ashes of all temporal things are the sum of their investment and the substance of their inheritance — their sole fortune! That's all they get! What unutterable loss! All the wealth of this earth is for those who belong to this earth, but if your treasures are in the heavens of God's Spirit then set not your affections on things on the earth, but seek those things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God!

Only God gives durable riches! True riches don't start with possessions — true riches begin in the heart. There are precious saints who don't have one copper penny to rub against another, but they are people possessing great and eternal wealth within themselves. They are rich in faith, love, wisdom, revelation, patience, righteousness, joy, peace, contentment, goodness, kindness, mercy, prayer, intercession, worship, discernment, and life. The true riches are set forth by the Holy Spirit throughout the scriptures. They are called the "riches of His grace," the "riches of His glory," the "riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God," the "riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints," the "unsearchable riches of Christ," and many other wonderful titles.

THE RICH WOMAN

The conditions within the seven churches of Asia are the "seed-plot" for the rest of the book of Revelation. All that follows the messages to the churches embodies the growth and development of those conditions, both positive and negative, and the Lord's dealings with them throughout the age. These conditions existed in those literal churches to whom John wrote, but they have also existed in the whole church throughout the entire church age — only they have grown and developed into established doctrines, time-honored traditions, methods, movements, and great organizations with vast numbers and powerful influence in the earth.

Here in Laodicea we find the "seed" of a deplorable spiritual condition in which believers adopt the attitude, "We are rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing!" That represents the condition of self-sufficiency, self-satisfaction, self-righteousness, self-deception, and spiritual complacency and stagnation. "We have it all! We have everything we need! We now possess all God has promised! We have the purest doctrine! We have the most ancient traditions! We have the full gospel! We have the apostolic New Testament order! We have the nine gifts of the Spirit, the five-fold ministry, and spiritual worship! We have the complete revelation! We have the deepest truth! We are the one hundred and forty- four thousand! Our little group are the sons of God! We don't need anything more! We have all the answers, all the truth; no one can add anything to us — we have need of nothing!" This, my beloved, is a spirit. It is the spirit of Babylon! You will find this spirit in the Roman Catholic Church, you will find this spirit in the Protestant denominations, you will find this spirit in the cults, and you will find this spirit in the sonship message! In whatever realm or on whatever level you find it, my beloved, it is still Babylon!

The full development of this tiny seed in the church at Laodicea finally grows into a great whore who is also a great city called Mystery Babylon "with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication...for all nations have drunk of the wine and the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." (Rev. 17:2,4; 18:3,7)

Our Lord said the church would say, "We're rich! We're rich! We're rich!" In due time the whole church system began to build cathedrals with pillars, domes, and altars overlaid with gold; it gathered the greatest collection of the arts, with paintings and statues lining the corridors which are the envy of the world's greatest museums; it amassed fortunes of billions of dollars in real estate and businesses of all kinds, and owns its own banks, possessing vast storehouses of money; it is rich in political power, and is able to lobby in all quarters of the political arena, and the politicians, because of its votes, will acquiesce; furthermore, it has its adherents entrenched in the highest positions of the greatest governments of the world! "We are rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing!" But when the Lord hears it, He says, "You are poor, you are poor, you are very poor, so poor that you are poverty stricken! Your gold and silver is but dust of the earth, and you know not; you have no idea what the true riches are!"

There is a truth beyond all this. Mystery Babylon is like Israel of old who was rich in covenants and promises, rich in the word that was brought to her, rich in scriptures and revelations, rich in prophets and teachers who were raised up in her midst to speak the truth under the anointings of God, rich in revivals and movings and manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Oh, yes! Babylon is, indeed, a very RICH WOMAN. As a friend has pointed out (and I am indebted to this friend for many of the thoughts in the next couple pages), she is rich by the hand of God, and is not merely pretending to be rich, as is seen in Hosea 2:8 where the Lord Himself affirms that He is the source of her wealth. Babylon is not, however, aware that He is her supply, and therein lies her ultimate undoing, for the Lord said, "She did not know that I (the Lord) gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold...therefore will I return and take away my corn in the time thereof and my vine in the season thereof and will take away my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness, and now will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers and none shall deliver her out of my hand."

Babylon is a rich woman — but it is with these very riches from the hand of God that she has prepared her own idols, having held the truth in unrighteousness and changed those riches and truths of God into a lie. This is what the Lord says in this passage, "She did not know that I gave her corn (spiritual truth) and wine (joy and rejoicing) and oil (anointing and power)...which THEY PREPARED FOR BAAL." Another translation renders it, "Wherewith they prepared Baal." The living truth God gave has been perverted and turned into a static creed and dead doctrine, an empty ceremony, a lifeless ritual; the joy has been orchestrated by man into pageantry, feasting, sports, programs, and pleasures; and the anointing by which God raised up life-giving ministries in the body of Christ has been institutionalized into a system of man-made organization and hierarchy. All has become a lifeless idol, an image of man's making, bowed down to and worshipped in place of the living God! Ah, they have taken what God gave and have prepared Baal!

Deceived by the very riches that were given to bring her to God, Babylon exalts herself because of that which she possesses, saying within herself, "I sit as a queen." Now, I am well aware that the highest meaning of Babylon does not mean the organized church system but is, rather, a condition in the mind and heart of man, which means that we have all, at one time or another, and perhaps even until now, been partakers of her. But on the visible plane, in its outworking by actions, it does refer to the organized church systems of man. All that the church system possesses was given her out of the anointing of God, imparted to her through anointed men, through those who walked the paths of the Spirit — and these men of bygone generations she admires! Nothing has changed, however, since the days of Jesus when He said to the religious leaders, "You garnish the sepulchers of the dead prophets — but kill the living ones!"

The anointed Word has been set in concrete in the church system, and like the rephaim — the physicians of no value who embalmed Israel (Gen. 50:2) — so has the church system EMBALMED THE CHRIST — fixed Him
FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, Part 59, The Church in Laodicea [J. Preston Eby] ~ BIBLE STUDY 5

in a static position so that He can move no further. Holding the very form of truth, the church system denies the essence and life of that truth...and yet boasts of her wealth! But the Lord says, "Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods (doctrines and forms and ritual and eschatology charts) and have need of nothing (not even the anointing) and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked..." Because of all this, "I will spew you out of my mouth!"

Let me reiterate again, it is important to realize that her confession is not made of a lie: it is based on truth. She is not pretending to be rich — she is rich — rich in covenants and promises, rich in oil and wine, rich in doctrines about Christ and salvation, rich in word, rich in a history of holy men, rich in revivals and movings of God. But even in her wealth she is poor and wretched and naked and blind because she holds the husks which have long ago been emptied of the corn! She treasures the alabaster box, little realizing that the essence has dissipated into the air long before this time.

As prophesied in Hosea, however, because "she did not know" that there was the need for the constant renewal of her riches, God stripped her naked as the day she was born and has set her in a wilderness. "So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast...and upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." (Rev. 17:3-5) Babylon dwells, spiritually, in an arid, parched, desert land! There is little life there! But God did not send her into the wilderness without first saving the living water by pouring it into His called and chosen remnant!

Paul had this to say about God's people of old, and the same principle is applicable to the Lord's people of today: "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for: BUT THE ELECTION (REMNANT) HATH OBTAINED IT, and the rest WERE BLINDED. According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear until this day. And David saith, Let their table (the table God spread for them) BE MADE A SNARE and a trap and a stumblingblock and a recompense to them..." (Rom. 11:7-9) The message is clear — the very riches which the Lord's people in Babylon received from the hand of God becomes her downfall, for her own perverted form of truth blinds her vision so that she cannot recognize THE ANOINTED when He comes! Isn't that what happened when the firstborn Son, Christ the Head, came into the world? Reasoning, always reasoning, from their intellectual grasp of scripture, as to what manner of Messiah should appear, as to what God expected from men — so that when the fulfillment of all that God required appeared in human form, when the Son of God appeared before them in the flesh, their eyes were blinded to Him by the very scriptures that had promised His coming! Because they held that truth in the unrighteousness of a carnal-minded interpretation. How dreadful is the thought! And yet, the Babylon of this great day will likewise not recognize the COMING OF CHRIST AND THE REVELATION OF GOD IN HIS SONS!

A careful examination of the Greek that surrounds the passage in Romans concerning "holding the truth in unrighteousness" reveals that it means "to fail to come into union with that truth." They held the truth, all right, but they held it independently of the Spirit! They exercised it apart from the presence of God — and walked in their own limited carnal understanding. Jesus said, "Everyone that hath learned from my Father will come unto me." Ah, that is the key! They had learned the truth, that is, the scriptures — but they had not learned it from the Father, else they would have recognized and come to Jesus. They had learned it from their fathers, but not from THE FATHER! When a man is taught by the Father, side by side with the teaching of doctrine, God cripples him so that he may learn not to hold the doctrine independent from God Himself. In fact, truth is not really truth at all when separated from the anointing, for it is the Spirit, John says, that beareth witness, and the Spirit is truth — not the form of doctrine. Doctrine spoken apart from the anointing and life of God, and spoken apart from the inworking of that into the man, is not truth at all, though its facts may be quite accurate. The Spirit is truth! But the Pharisees had no such knowledge. They walked in the spirit of Babylon, the great whore who arose from the tiny little seed in Laodicea, which says, "I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." Oh, how I thank God that He has delivered all who truly walk with Christ in His sonship from that spirit! Thank God, a remnant is being saved!

I mentioned earlier that this spirit of "I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing" is found not only in the Babylon of the church system, but can also be found in those who profess to walk in the truths

of reconciliation, sonship, and the kingdom. Paul Mueller hit the nail right on the head when he wrote, "God has an elect remnant in the earth at this time who have grown spiritually beyond the Lord's assessment of the Laodicean church. They are truly and sincerely living and doing only and always the pure and perfect will of their Father in heaven. But it appears that many others, who claim to be sons of God, continue to live and walk in the old order of the past. They are all the Lord said they were in this passage. They are lukewarm, spiritually speaking, regarding the will and purpose of their Father. They will also speak in glowing terms, telling us of all the spiritual gifts they have within themselves. Their testimony really is, 'I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.'

"Some claim to have great spiritual riches and treasures within them. Their boastings are abundant and constant; it is as if some of them are trying to outdo the others in making their empty claims. Truly the name-it-and-claim-it crowd is alive and active today! I have heard some of them say, 'I am walking and living in Tabernacles!' But their lives reveal the truth that they are really walking and living in the old order of Pentecost, for they continue to do all the old things of the past that pertain to the obsolete church order. Others might tell us that they are living and walking in the kingdom; yet they still manifest and show forth the impure traits of their bodies and minds. Some may say that they have all the fullness of God within them, or that God's work within them is finished, and they have need of nothing more. But are they not all saying, 'I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing,' just as our Lord said they would?" — end quote

GOLD TRIED IN THE FIRE

"Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich." (Rev. 3:17-18)

"Buy of me gold" means to pay the price for the divine nature of our Father to be brought forth in our lives! "Tried in the fire" means that His nature has become an experiential reality within us. It speaks of an intimate, direct encounter with God that causes all that is contrary to His nature to be consumed by the all-consuming fire of His Spirit, resulting in our spiritual growth and maturity in Christ. Our Lord has called upon His elect to buy of Him this gold tried in the fire, that we may be rich! Now we know what the true riches are! The riches of which He speaks are not the riches of the world, either of money, material things, or of stature, position, fame, or self-glory. The riches of this world corrupt the spiritual man and prevent a manifestation of the true Life of God. The gold that we are to buy of Him represents a life that has been tried and tested, even as gold is refined, to bring forth the qualities of the Christ life within all who are His called and chosen ones.

The gold of which our Lord speaks is symbolic of the divine nature and the divine life of those who put on the Lord Jesus Christ. The gold of the realm of the Spirit represents the spiritual riches of the saints, for Christ said that we should buy this gold tried in the fire, "that thou mayest be rich." Therefore gold represents our true wealth! Jesus pointed out to the multitude gathered at His teaching, "**A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth.**" (Lk. 12:15) The gold of the realm of the Spirit is the true riches! The man who lives and walks in the attributes of God is a rich man indeed!

Bill and Elaine Cook published a dream that the Lord had given to Martin Paulet. He wrote, "I looked and I saw something coming down from heaven. The Lord said he was giving this to me. It appeared to be a large block of gold coming down to me. The size was seven by five feet by three feet high. As it came down, I discovered it shone like it had light in it. It reminded me of the transparent gold, '**...and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.**' (Rev. 21:21) It was impressed upon me that this was very valuable, so I chipped off a piece about one inch by one inch by ¼ inch, and called some jewelers together for an evaluation. The jewelers offered me a million dollars for this small chip of gold. I replied, 'Oh, that's not enough,' for I knew the value was greater than that. They then offered me ten million for it and I went home without selling it and knowing the true worth. As I pondered this before the Lord, He made me to know the gold block He was giving me was none other than His nature. This is such a valuable thing He is giving us. It is more precious than gold! His nature in us is more valuable than all the gifts and miracles He has given us. It is greater than any gift He has ever given us!" — end quote.

Speaking of the day when He would bring His kingdom and show forth His glory in the earth the Lord said through the prophet Isaiah, "I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a MAN than the golden wedge of Ophir." (Isa. 13:12) The MAN the prophet speaks of is God's Christ, Head and body, the new creation man in the image and likeness of God! A man is growing to maturity in this day; it is the manchild company, the sons of God, or the body of Christ. This corporate man will be made more precious than fine gold by the Lord Himself, for He dwells within them in all the fullness of His divine life and glory. The reference to the "golden wedge of Ophir" is to the source of the finest gold available in that day, which was the gold of Ophir. From the mines of the land of Ophir in Arabia the Israelites obtained the most precious and highly refined gold in the days of Solomon. This gold was for the temple of God! The temple of God today is a living temple of living stones, raised up a spiritual house, the dwelling place of God from which He rules in kingdom authority and ministers to creation through His king-priests after the order of Melchizedek. The temple of God is the same as the body of Christ, the sons of God, the MAN who is made more precious than fine gold! When the Lord completely delivers us from the old fleshly nature of sin and mortality we shall then fully become that MAN that is more precious than the finest gold of Ophir. That MAN, totally delivered from the bondage of corruption, shall then be the deliverer of creation! He shall show forth the spirit and power of reconciliation, restoration, and transformation to all mankind, bringing deliverance to the whole, groaning creation.

Even as gold is purified by fire, so are we purified by the fiery trials the Lord sends into our lives. Like the intense heat that causes the impurities to rise to the top of the molten gold, so the many tribulations we face in life, and the blazing fire of God's dealings that accompany them, draw from us those things that pollute the pure nature of God within our spirit. One pass through the furnace is never sufficient to remove all the impurities in gold, neither can we become pure in one season of testing. God allows us to be tested and tried by the Holy Ghost and fire for however long it takes because He wants us to be pure vessels to manifest His glory. Those who hunger and thirst for Him will not be devastated by this fire, but purified. They are those who heed the apostle Paul's warning to examine the materials with which we are building as the temple of God is raised up within us, for "every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." (I Cor. 3:13)

Gold fully tried in the fire is pure gold. The gold of the tabernacle in the wilderness was required by the Lord to be pure gold. The gold in Solomon's temple was also pure gold. The gold of the New Jerusalem is likewise described as pure gold. (Rev. 21:18,21) That is what God is after! To be "pure" means to be "unmixed, single, free of anything that adulterates or taints; containing nothing but its own reality." Pure water is water without any contaminants; pure air is air free from any pollutants; pure gold is refined until it contains no tinge of alloy, no trace of impurities, no residue of dross. Under the law of Moses people were not permitted to wear garments of wool mingled with linen. Not that there is wrong in either one, but the type is meaningful, for wool is derived from animals while linen comes from a plant. They were not to plow with an ox and an ass in the same yoke, for an ox is a clean animal, but an ass is unclean. God was showing that there are things that are not to be mixed! Flesh must not be mixed with spirit. Truth must not be mixed with error. Righteousness must not be mixed with unrighteousness. The will of our Father must not be mixed with the will of man. The activities of the people of God must not be mixed with the methods and ways of the world and of Mystery Babylon. The ministry of the Outer Court and the Holy Place must not be mixed with the ministry of the Holiest of all! Purity of heart means that the old Adamic heart is put off; the old religious heart is put off as well! There is singleness of vision, purpose, hope, and motive; the mind of Christ which is the nature of the Father is its only reality. This is what sonship is all about!

The Lord has promised to purge, refine, and remove all mixture from the lives of those who become His kingdom of priests, called and chosen to restore creation unto God. The word is sure, "The Lord...shall suddenly come to His temple...and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi (His priesthood), and purge them as gold and silver..." (Mal. 3:1-3)

In this wonderful process of refining the miner first mines the ore out of the darkest depth. The miner has it in his mind that he will go after the ore. Now, it's not easy to obtain the ore. The ore is in inaccessible places, and it requires great effort and endeavor for the miner to obtain the precious ore. The refiner then goes after the ore. The ore doesn't go after the refiner! I have never heard of an ore searching for a refiner! You never will. It's the refiner who goes after the ore. Someone says, "I sought the Lord." Well, that's how it appeared to you,

my friend, but the truth of the matter is the Lord sought you! He sought you in the darkest depths of the flesh and the bestial system of this world, and He brought you forth and made you His. It was HE who did it!

The ore is now the property of the miner who mined it, but the mixture is there. Both gold and silver are found in nature, but not in their pure form. They come mixed with, or imbedded in, various kinds of rock, minerals, and metals. No jeweler would want to work with natural gold with bits of rock or sand in it. Nor could such impure stuff be beaten into thin sheets. And no one likes a ring that turns their finger green! No, silver and gold as they are found in nature do not have, in themselves, much usefulness. They must first be separated from all the impurities that naturally accompany them. And the process for doing that is called refining. Our lives, dear ones, are like that! We are spirit, soul, and body — and within our spirit, which is the offspring of God, there is so much that is worthwhile in us, but in our outer life of the flesh and the carnal mind there is so much that is worthless. There is so much that is of God, and so much that is of self. There is part of us that is out of heaven, and part of us is of the earth, earthy.

So what does the great and eternal Miner have on His hands? He has a mixture! And that is why there has to be a furnace of fire. The ore which we are, in that mixed, raw, unrefined state, brings no pleasure at all to the Refiner, nor does it fulfill any useful purpose in His plans. Of these He says, "With them I am not well pleased." Our Father in His sovereign purpose sees us, but He cannot use all that He sees. The ore is wonderful relative to its pure precious metal content, but it is disgusting relative to the impurities that are mingled therein. He is unable to use us in that condition of mixture, so He comes to us as a refiner's fire. And immediately we wonder what is happening! What is happening is that HE is appearing, and I might add, He is showing up in a form that we did not expect. Yes, 'tis the same Jesus, the lovely Saviour who so graciously saved us by His grace, dug us out of the darkness and depth of the earth, but He comes now, not to forgive and bless and coddle and wink at our carnality, but He comes as a refining fire, to purify the sons of Levi. He comes now because He has a great purpose for us!

The Lord, when He comes to His temple of living stones and purges the sons of Levi, or His kingly priesthood, He first of all purges out one man — old Adam! He comes to cleanse us from the carnal, Adamic mind, nature, and ways. He comes as a consuming fire to burn out of us all that is contrary to the righteousness and wisdom and purposes of the Lord. He is coming to each one of us in this new day of the kingdom of God and is purging the old fleshly nature and worldly ways out of us. On a corporate level He is also coming to those who have received the call to sonship and is separating out all who talk the kingdom but do not walk the kingdom. Only the ones who have completely surrendered to His will, and have walked in His ways, and have obeyed each sound of His voice, who have clean hands and pure hearts, will remain to reign with Him.

How can anyone be placed in a position of authority and power in the kingdom who has not come to the place of exhibiting only His nature? He will purge the sons of Levi, the kings and priests of His kingdom, disqualifying those He cannot trust to do His will and cooperate completely in the administration of His kingdom. The ways of Babylon and all the soul-possessing demands of the insipid church systems must be purged, the attributes of the carnal mind must be cleansed, all self-hood must be burned out, and all desire to make a name for ourselves and to gather men around ourselves rather than to Christ must be consumed. Thank God, HE IS DOING IT!

Ray Prinzing has written, "Kenneth Wuest, in his translation, calls the fiery trial 'the smelting process.' A fiery ordeal, a smelting process — why? Because it will both purify us, as well as reveal what degree of quality has been attained therein. We become so involved with the exterior happenings of the trial, how our flesh hurts, etc., that we forget the actual purpose is for the inner processing, until we are of a pure spirit before Him. When suddenly we become aware of 'what spirit we are of' in some of these happenings, it sends us back to our knees in repentance and beseeching God to purge out these unholy traits. HE already knows what is in us, but the fires certainly expose us to ourselves! Sometimes we bow low in praise because we see what He has wrought, and are amazed at our own reaction to a situation — of the calm, the peace, the rest we have in it all. Then we also have those other times when the agitation of our spirit reveals that there are vast areas within that still need to be dealt with, purified and cleansed, until 'ALL that is within me (can) bless His holy name.' (Ps. 103:1) Yet in all this working, praise God, we find in Him NO CONDEMNATION — just that continual

drawing upward and onward, being assured that HE who hath begun in us this good work, will also bring it to a successful conclusion in His own time" — end quote. What a word!

"He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver..." He sits — this is a process that requires time, this is something that is important to Him, something He must patiently sit and preoccupy Himself with, not a work to be rushed or accomplished in one grand sweep of His hand. To us it becomes very monotonous, for it seems the process will never end. He SITS! From the moment you were sovereignly apprehended by the Spirit of God to be a part of His specific workings in this new kingdom day, the Lord Jesus Christ has been obsessively preoccupied with purifying and refining what you are as His kingdom instrument in the earth. He examines the ore, ugly, shapeless, not representative at all of that beautiful vessel He has in mind; but there it is, just a hunk of jagged, dirty ore, with too much alloy. He moves to change that, and under the crucible you go!

How long will this continue? I would like to promise you some respite, but I dare not. The inspired Psalmist declared, "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, PURIFIED SEVEN TIMES." (Ps. 12:6) Seven is the number of spiritual completion and perfection. It reveals the great truth that God's own nature will be produced in the fire. He will heat up the furnace until you have been perfectly cleansed and purified, nothing remaining but HIMSELF. That which the Lord is receiving unto Himself cannot be of an inferior quality to Himself. The gold — ah, it is HIM! That is the value of your spirit, my beloved! How marvelous is the grace by which He has birthed us out of His own Spirit — making us "partakers of the divine nature." (II Pet. 1:4) It is like the grades in school, the farther along you go the harder the lessons become.

In olden times, the refiner of gold and silver would sit over the burning crucible until the dross and impurities in these metals were completely consumed. Not until he could see his face mirrored in the molten metals did he declare them to be pure. So too with the Lord's called and chosen elect! The Holy Spirit brings to light and deals with every aspect of our lives, consuming all that is alien and opposed to God's nature and character, until the image of His Son Jesus is formed and mirrored in us. Only then will we be able to offer Him those offerings and render Him that service which is pleasing and acceptable in His sight. The Lord never removes or destroys something without replacing it with something better. The better, in this case, is THE PRICELESS VALUE OF THE GOLD ONCE IT IS TRIED IN THE FIRE!

FIRES FOR GLORY

In the fires of our affliction,
All predestined for our good,
We can see the fourth man walking,
Forming now a son of God.

Lest our souls fall in that furnace,
Be consumed by sorrow sore,
He has sent the Holy Spirit,
Our deliverance to insure.

He knows what will purify us,
Knows the way, has gone before,
And He planned this fiery furnace,
Not an end — but as the DOOR.

For our body, soul, and spirit,
As a substance to refine,
From these fiery trials and sorrows,
Shall emerge, with glory shine.

Not a golden, evil image,
As some heathen king did mold,
But a precious Holy Image,

A reflected son of God.

So wait my soul, wait on His workings,
Wait my spirit, patiently,
Wait my body, for the changing,
Rising up triumphantly.

In the ages yet unrolling,
We shall still His glories share,
For the plan of God is ceaseless,
His salvation making bare.

Mortal minds cannot receive it,
This supernal plan so great,
One that covers all the ages,
Ending sin, and fear, and hate.

So we give Him all the glory,
Knowing fiery trials now,
Will present us in His likeness,
All is well, that He allows.

Irene Lindsay

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 60

THE CHURCH IN LAODICEA (continued)

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART SIXTY

ANOINT THINE EYES WITH EYESALVE

"I counsel thee to buy of me...white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." (Rev. 3:18)

The great truth of being spiritually "clothed upon" appears early in the revelation of God to mankind. As soon as man sinned, God made them garments, the Bible declares. Some say that the "skins" with which God clothed Adam and Eve were the outer covering of a mortal body, the "skin" of the flesh. It is my conviction, however, that the sinning couple needed a covering just because they were flesh — for suddenly they "saw that they were naked" and commenced to sew together aprons of fig leaves. It is obvious that in their sense of guilt they perceived that their flesh was exposed! The slain lamb is the figure all through scripture for God's gracious provision of "atonement," and the word atonement in Hebrew simply means "to cover." Was it not, therefore, the "skins" of the slain Lamb with which the Lord, in a figure, clothed father Adam and mother Eve? These are beautiful word pictures with which the Holy Spirit conveys to our understanding eternal and heavenly truths!

Let us then stand assured of this marvelous fact: the skins with which God clothed Adam and Eve in Eden were the product of the life of God's precious Lamb. When they received these blessed garments upon them, they received something borne out of HIS LIFE, a very part of HIMSELF, the form and appearance of Himself generated by His life. Sweeter than the dews of Hermon descending upon the mountains of Zion is the wonderful revelation with which He now fills our hearts, showing that He now clothes us with THE LAMB'S SKIN, the Lamb's own image, likeness, and identity. Our Lord Jesus Christ is truly the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world, and all the holy sons of God have now "put on Christ." Is this not why, on the spiritual and heavenly mount Zion, we see standing with the Lamb 144,000 lambs! (Rev. 14:1-5). It does not say that standing with the Lamb is 144,000 men. Oh, no! They all are lambs! They all bear the mind and the nature of the Father and in their mouth (word) is found no guile, and they are without fault before the throne of God. Oh, the mystery of it!

"And they were both naked, the man and his wife...and the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked." (Gen. 2:25; 3:7) It seems to the unenlightened mind that this little statement could have been omitted. Of what importance is it whether Adam and Eve moved about in Paradise naked or clothed? Yet it is an important and necessary little statement; it uses a rather insignificant fact, as it appears to the natural mind, to show forth something wondrous in the whole economy of God. Ah, beloved, the story of Adam and Eve in Eden is far too intricate and wonderful for my little mind to fully grasp, but I am able to see that the Holy Spirit has been very faithful and remarkably specific in recording the exact state of being of man in the beginning...and of us in our beginning!

Adam and Eve were both...NAKED! Among all the creatures which God made, man stands out unique...stark naked...which means devoid of true wisdom and knowledge, with his inner nature revealed, opened up, exhibited, and made bare. Oh, that God may give us understanding to see that to be naked means to have THE FLESH UNCOVERED AND EXPOSED! In the typology of scripture "the flesh" is the name by which the Holy Spirit designates our outer life of soul and body, our earthly and carnal human nature, literally speaking of that nature which is earthly minded, with its lusts and self-centeredness, its ego and I-will which are in rebellion to the spirit. Thus, the flesh is not the outward, visible man of meat, muscle, and bones, but the nature of the soulical and bodily man. This nature was in man from the beginning, else Eve (who was of the man) could not have been tempted, nor could they have sinned! This nature could be seen to be in them from the time God lowered them out of their pure spirit existence, in the image and likeness of God, investing them with a body of

earth so that man became a living soul. But as long as man was caught up in God he was not aware of it — for he was naked and was not ashamed. (Gen. 2:25) Have we not all experienced the same thing? In seasons when we are caught up in the Spirit of God, flooded with His presence, sin is far from our minds. It is easy to be holy standing in the ecstasy of God's glory! The flesh nature is still there, but in that blessed moment we are not ashamed, for we are unaware.

Then suddenly "they knew that they were naked" — they became conscious that their flesh lay bare and exposed — sad fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil! No sooner does a man discover his nakedness than this knowledge gives birth to the impulse to make an effort to cover the nakedness. Thus, in the case of Adam and Eve, the discovery of their nakedness was immediately followed by an effort of their own to cover it — "they sewed fig-leaves together and made themselves aprons." (Gen. 3:7) This is the first record we have of man's attempt to remedy, by his own device, his condition, but this was not the single act of Adam of old, it is truly the act of each of us, yes, OUR VERY OWN! The Spirit would make very real to our hearts, dear reader, that Adam's effort to cover his nakedness was not a mere physical or moral act, it was a RELIGIOUS ACT. The nakedness in Eden bespeaks a spiritual state of being, and the attempt to cover that nakedness was indeed an expression of religiousness!

In an effort to appear other than he is man sews together very wide leaves of the fig tree; that is, he tries every device he can, including multiplied religious works and observances, to gloss over his true condition. But all the garments which men devise to hide their nakedness become mere "spider's webs" when the dazzling light of God's revelation shines upon them. There is nothing more obvious than the fact that leaves quickly wither, turn brown and brittle, and fall off and, indeed, clothed in all the dead works of religion man's flesh soon shows through and it becomes manifest that his covering is pitifully insufficient.

The first thing God does is strip away all the artificial, man-made coverings, and presents His own glorious covering, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world! "For Adam also and for his wife the Lord God made long coats (tunics) of skins, and clothed them." (Gen. 3:21) (Amplified) In the symbolism of the Garden of Eden story Adam and Eve silently watched as the Lord God selected a lamb and slew it there, fastening it to a tree before their wondering eyes, the victim then being made naked, and stripped of its skin that a covering might be provided for the naked ones. Thus, with this one wondrous act does the God of heaven introduce the cross, the atonement, and the Christ as man's covering! When God clothed Adam and Eve in the skins of the slain Lamb, yet dripping with the precious blood, He showed that they were COVERED WITH THE LIFE OF THE LAMB! When God covers a man with the covering of His own Lamb the covering is so complete that no flesh will be seen — only Christ! This is not merely a reference to our initial salvation, but speaks further of the finality of our perfection as the sons of God! It was a prophecy of the Lord's ultimate purpose for the man in the image and likeness of God. Fully clothed in the life of the Lamb, we bear the Lamb's own image, likeness, and identity. Now we see how 144,000 lambs appear on mount Zion! And this corporate Lamb appears throughout the book of Revelation!

God is calling a people in this hour beyond profession to possession. It is easy to embrace the message of sonship and the kingdom of God, and presume that by the very revelation of it we have somehow attained, but to be a son of God one must truly and fully put on the Lord Jesus Christ. It should be clear to all who have eyes to see that when the scripture makes such statements as, "put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ," "put on the whole armor of God," "put on the armor of light," "put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem," "be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven," these cannot be put on the outer physical body, they must be put on in a spiritual way over the nature of the natural man. Those who have put on Christ bear the image, likeness, and identity of Christ! They are truly and sincerely living and doing always the pure and perfect will of their Father in heaven, just as the firstborn Son of God did. Any who claim to be sons of God but continue to walk after the flesh, exhibiting the impure traits of the outer man of flesh, and continue to walk and live in the old carnal religious orders of the past, reveal that they are clothed in a false covering which in no way conceals their flesh.

Let me tell you about those who profess, but do not possess. It reminds me of one of my favorite childhood stories. An emperor was prepared to ascend the throne in a far distant country. He announced a search for the finest fabric and the finest tailor to weave an inaugural gown unlike any other. The gown would demonstrate

that his regime was different than any other. The plea for help went out throughout the land. Finally, a tailor convinced the emperor that he had obtained the finest fabric ever woven. So fine that it could not even be seen by the human eye! He persuaded the emperor to hire him. For weeks he worked on this garment day and night until it was finished.

Again, word spread throughout the kingdom announcing that on the day of the inauguration the emperor would appear robed in the finest robe ever worn in human history. When the day came, throngs of people gathered at the palace. The emperor stepped out on his balcony. There was loud sustained laughter throughout the crowd. But it took a little child in the far distant crowd to point out the truth. Once the applause waned, the child stood up and pointed. "Look," he said, "the emperor has no clothes!" He was right. The emperor stood stark naked. All the claims were empty. They were not true. And so it is today! I do not hesitate to tell you that in this day of kingdom manifestation, when the sons of God step forth upon the balcony of kingdom authority and dominion, any who have clothed themselves in wishful thinking, presumptuousness, self-assurance, self-righteousness, overconfidence, or the withering fig-leaves of past moves of God and the obsolete and dying church orders, will stand there stark naked before all men and the day shall declare who are truly manifest sons of God.

There is a condition worse even than this! "Thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Blind and naked! Now it naturally follows that, if you're blind, it really doesn't matter that you're also naked. What difference could it make to a group of blind people if they were naked? They would be unable to see whether anyone had clothes on or not. If we were all sitting around blind we couldn't see anything anyway! It would make no difference. And that, precious friend of mine, is where vast multitudes of the Lord's people are today — those who have not put on Christ — they're all blind and naked! They have no covering, but they haven't a clue that they have no covering. They are busily running hither and thither, engaged with multiplied religious activities — all in their nakedness! And they are unaware that the called and chosen elect of God who have a vision given by the Lord can clearly see that! Because they are blind they suppose that no one else can see. But God has a people who walk with Him in the Spirit in this hour who can see! They behold transcendent realities in the Spirit and they can also see the nakedness of the carnal man.

ANOINT THINE EYES WITH EYESALVE

"I counsel thee to...anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." (Rev. 3:18)

Laodicea had a famous medical school; and in particular it was famous for two kinds of medicine. It was famous for a certain ointment made of nard which was used to cure ear-aches. But above all it was famous for a certain eye-powder. The tephra phrygia, the eye-powder of Laodicea, was world-famous. It was exported in tablet form; and the tablets were ground down and applied to the eyes. This powder was held to be a sure cure for weak and ailing eyes.

One of the last counsels the Lord gave to His people in His messages to the seven churches is that we should ask Him to anoint our eyes with eye-salve that we may see. This eye-salve is the same thing Paul prayed for us to receive: "(May) the eyes of your understanding be enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." (Eph. 1:18) Every true son of God has come to the realization that we cannot comprehend the things of God with our carnal mind or our own understanding. We are commanded to anoint our eyes with eye-salve that we may see or understand the high and holy things of the Spirit! That denotes an action on our part, and means that we must seek God's knowledge and wisdom, asking Him to reveal to us His understanding. This was the purpose for the scales that fell from the eyes of the apostle Paul when Ananias came to pray for him. (Acts 9:17-18) Paul had to get rid of his old religious laws of righteousness and carnal understanding of the word of God before he could see the true righteousness of God and the things of the Spirit of God. Paul himself by his experience told us that the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the (spiritual) law of God, neither indeed can be (Rom. 8:7). We cannot figure out what the Lord meant when He inspired the writers of the scriptures. God Himself, through the presence of His indwelling Spirit, must reveal to us the meaning of His Word. This is why the church has seen such a proliferation of denominations. Man has intertwined his own natural and carnal thinking with God's Word and created doctrines. Therefore all those who truly walk in the Spirit have now

heeded the Lord's counsel and have anointed their eyes with eye-salve by asking Him for the understanding that comes only from above. The Lord has given us the seven spirits of God, which are the seven eyes of perfect perception, and the seven lamps of fire which burn before the throne, which enlighten us to the heavenly authority and dominion of the governmental realm of God. By these we are able to see and understand all that He reveals to us, even Himself!

The following words by Ray Prinzing are spiritually instructive. "The word eye-salve literally means a poultice, a plaster, bespeaking that which is placed upon the eyes to draw out all the infection or impurities that cause blurred vision, etc. How we need the eyes of our understanding anointed with that which would draw out all foreign material which affects our vision, so that we might see clearly. Christendom has had such a distorted vision, not only by reason of the motes and beams, but also because of the many carnal creeds and traditions of men, self-opinionated ideas, viewing through pre-conceived concepts. How grateful we are for the 'removal' of all the things which cloud our vision! Blurred, distorted, confused — until the Holy Spirit cleanses and removes the debris. The process of this purging is not always easy, often it is painful, but as one songwriter so beautifully expressed it, 'He washed my eyes with tears that I might see...' Our attitudes are changed, our priorities brought into balance, and we focus more clearly on the goal that is set before us" — end quote.

Bill Britton also aptly wrote on this point: "You would not want a blind cook in a restaurant preparing the food for your body. He might accidentally dump rat poison into the pot instead of baking soda. He certainly would not be able to balance the ingredients properly. So much more should we avoid having a blind man feed us spiritual food! It is tragic how many blind cooks we have feeding the bread of God today! They can remember the size, shape, and feel of the products (moves of God) of yesteryear when they had their vision. But when a new product (move and revelation of God) comes along, they are in immediate confusion. Their only action is to throw out the new truth, because they are not familiar with it. The problem is that some poisons come in the same size and shape packages as old familiar truths! Saints whose sight is being restored are escaping from such ministries. If you cannot see the present truth God is unveiling today, then you are disqualified to feed the people of God. Go to the Healer and have your eyesight restored! 'Awake, thou that sleepest... and Christ shall give thee light'" — end quote.

To be blind means simply to have no vision of what the Father desires. The natural mind is very dark and without understanding. Only the Holy Spirit can awaken it! Human efforts to enlighten men to the deep spiritual things of God will always fail. There is a time to speak, when the Father bids us speak as the oracle of God, but **ONLY TO CHRIST IS POWER GIVEN TO OPEN THE EYES OF THE BLIND!** This explains why the Bible remains to a great degree a closed book to the most educated but unconverted or unanointed man, while it is an open book to many of the most ignorant of believers. This explains why a man may be educated and trained to hold all the theological degrees that all the theological seminaries in the world can bestow upon him, and yet be utterly blind to the great spiritual revelations of the Word of God, while a poor, simple, uneducated saint will see truths and revelations of infinite depth and eternal glory which are absolutely unintelligible to others. This explains why carnally minded men who have read the Bible and studied it through and through, and know the Hebrew and Greek, will yet fail to find the living Christ or the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, or the glories of the kingdom of God, or the wonderful hope of sonship to God, or the blessed truth of the restoration of the whole creation to life and freedom from the curse. Spiritual truths are for spiritual people and must be spiritually discerned. Therefore, without the enlightening of the spiritual eyes of understanding men are spiritually as blind as bats and it is impossible for the unquickened man to behold the wonders of the heavenly world. At the same time, the most humble and unlearned saint who has been sovereignly apprehended of God has no difficulty in seeing all these glorious truths, and a thousand more, as plain as the noonday sun! I would rather spend my whole day with an illiterate grandmother who has spiritual eyes to see the mysteries of God than ten minutes with a blind churchman.

I once read a story about a missionary who saw this fellow sitting on a porch. He spoke to this man, and said, "Are you lost?" The man replied, "Why, no, I have lived here for forty years." The missionary said, "I mean, have you found Jesus?" "I did not know He was lost," the man responded. "I am here to find out if you are a Christian man," the exasperated missionary tried again. The man answered again, "There is a Bill Christian who lives three or four miles over the ridge." The missionary, being flustered, said again, "I mean, are you ready for the judgment day?" "When is it?" asked the man. The missionary replied, "Well, it may be today, or

tomorrow, or next week, or next month, we do not know those things." "Well," the man answered, "When you know about them things, let me know."

True, a bit of humor in that story, but the plain truth is that the understanding of the holy truths and the deep mysteries of the Spirit of God are just as misunderstood and darkened by the natural mind of the unspiritual man, as were the simple questions of the missionary by the poor ignorant and unchurched man rocking away on his porch. The vast majority of the teachings of the churches with their time-honored traditions, static creeds, and empty ceremonies have no more to do with the kingdom of God and the life of the spirit than do the incoherent babblings of a mad man with the scientific formulas of an Einstein. I pity the Christian who walks through life having no understanding of what the spirit is saying. The fresh air of revelation never breaths upon his soul, but he stumbles along through life attending his church, listening to insipid sermons from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, singing of a beautiful land on a far away strand, mistaking the myriad traditions of the elders for the sublime truths of God, but never being able to grasp the truth the Spirit is unfolding right now for those who follow on to know the Lord in deeper measures. And yet, the truth remains — ONLY CHRIST CAN OPEN THE EYES OF THE BLIND!

Whenever Christ comes, whenever God bestows mercy, the light of His countenance is our light, His appearing is our vision, and His presence is our heaven. If we just touch Him, we see light! In the midst of great adversity Job cried out, "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: whom I shall SEE FOR MYSELF, AND MINE EYES SHALL BEHOLD, and not another." (Job 19:25-27) Job believed deeply within his heart that in some future distant day he would see God, but what he failed to understand was that at that very moment God was working mightily within him to bring that very reality to pass in his experience. It was only a short time until this same Job cried out in ecstatic wonder, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but NOW mine eye seeth Thee!" (Job 42:5) God was unveiled to Job in the crucible of his testing and proving. First he had declared that he would see God in the latter day, but his confession became changed to NOW!

Could it not be that the Spirit is revealing to us that the "latter day" is not a date on the calendar, but a dimension of our own experiencing of Christ? The apostles referred again and again to "these last days" as they were moving from the old covenant to the new, from Moses to Christ, from law to grace, from a carnal understanding of the Word to a spiritual, and from shadow to reality. For them it was truly the last days of one order and the dawning of another within themselves! It is easy to shove the purposes of God in us off to some distant time or age, but God would have us enter them now! Our latter day becomes the time of transition in our own experience, whereby we move out of one understanding and experience into another. Methinks that I have passed through a number of "latter day" periods in my walk in the Spirit as I have moved from realm to realm and from glory to glory in the heavens of God! It is always in the last days that we begin to see God in a greater way and in a higher dimension of the revelation of Himself. It is indeed wonderful!

The Lord tells us to "anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see," and yet, is not the eye-salve something of Himself — for truly Christ is the only Healer! We are instructed to buy the eye-salve of Him! No matter how much we strive for light, it is of no use; regardless how much we struggle, it is in vain. It is not that you are a little carnal, so you cannot see light, and that I am a little pious, therefore light comes; or that you are a little lazy, so you cannot see light, and I am a little diligent, therefore I see light. Enlightening the eyes of our understanding does not depend on the self-effort of our striving and struggling, but on the purpose and power of God! Alas, how many there are today who make their own light by lighting lamps and kindling fires. When darkness comes, they do not wait till dawn, till the sun rises, till God moves afresh by His Spirit; they themselves go to kindle a fire, to stir up something soulish by self-effort, to make light themselves. God says that all those who kindle a fire to enlighten themselves shall end in sorrow. That is God's decree!

Some in this very hour are not willing to wait for the inworkings of God to bring the true manifestation of the sons of God, so they are out claiming to be manifest sons, walking in a light that God has not kindled. And what a poor light it is! A brother said recently, "We have been declaring manifest sonship for fifty years and have not seen any manifest sons. It is time to stop talking and come out from behind the veil and manifest." And I suppose he is out there "manifesting." But I can guarantee you that he is not manifesting anything

beyond what we have had for the past two thousand years! And that, my beloved, has not gotten the job done! More of the same will never bring the nations into the kingdom of God or deliver creation from the bondage of corruption. I would rather believe that the fresh word of sonship and the kingdom and the sovereign move of the Spirit that has come progressively over the past fifty years, and which is now bearing kingdom fruit in a called and chosen remnant, has within it greater potential to bring us to the fullness of our sonship than any word or move of God that has been in the earth for two thousand years and still hasn't brought us to the full revelation of Christ! If I had planted bananas here in El Paso every year for the past two thousand years and never got even one bunch of bananas, I think I would have the wisdom to understand that bananas aren't going to grow here and it is time to move on to something else. GOD HIMSELF is moving us onward into this new day of the kingdom, it is His work, and it is marvelous in our eyes! We have now passed through the "last days" of the church age within ourselves and are seeing the form of the Son of God appearing in a people prepared for the new age of the kingdom we are entering. If you are not able to see this, my friend, I counsel you to "anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see."

The scripture is clear that "where there is no vision, the people perish." (Prov. 29:18) Ray Prinzing once pointed out that translated literally, the people are "naked," for our vision is our covering until we are swallowed up into the reality of its fulfillment. We perish, or fall away, naked and ashamed, unless we have received of the Lord a vision. There is no doubt that this reveals clearly why so many past moves of God have gone into apostasy. There can be no stagnation in the kingdom of God, no status quo, for God's purposes are progressive, on-going, and ever advancing from glory to glory! The moment we receive no new vision even the light we have begins to burn out and turn to darkness. Still, it is not enough to have a vision — we must progress onward to become the very fulfillment of the vision within ourselves! My deepest prayer is that all who read these lines may have open eyes to see as God sees, to understand and comprehend all that God is speaking in this great day of the Lord, all that God has prepared for His called and chosen ones, and follow on to be progressively developed and prepared for its consummation.

You do not understand a thing by memorizing it. You may memorize the whole Constitution of the United States of America or the whole Bible and not understand any of it. I have met people who prided themselves that they had read the Bible through "from cover to cover" numerous times and had put to memory whole chapters and books of it — yet it was obvious that they were utterly blind to the great spiritual truths and eternal glory within the pages of this blessed Book of Books. You do not understand a thing by hearing it, by seeing it, by reading it, or by any representation that can be made of it. You only understand by knowing, the knowing that comes by the spirit of revelation. "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened" is knowledge — personal, real, conscious possession. That insight into a thing that gives the true knowledge of it is what it means to "see." What depths this gives to the words of Jesus to His disciples: "And I'll tell you something else and this is the truth, that there are some of you standing right here in front of me who will not die before you have had a dramatic insight into the kingdom of God and how it comes with power (Mat. 16:28; Mk. 1:9; Lk. 9:27) It is not to see it outwardly with the eyes; it is to see it inwardly with the understanding. It is not merely to repeat, or be able to tell about it, but to know it. It means a dramatic insight! The dramatic insight reveals how the kingdom of God comes with power; that is, it releases the power within to bring into fruition that which we have seen!

The purpose of seeing looks toward becoming. Until we have experienced that mysterious transformation that is the result of dramatic insight the work of God is incomplete. And becoming is not for our benefit or glory, but to fulfill the high purposes of our Father in the earth! We are not curiosity seekers, or thrill seekers, nor do we have any desire to go out to "meet needs" on the level we have in the past. There are plenty of believers to meet needs on those levels! God has shown us a vision of something greater, higher, grander, with kingdom dynamics, to raise all creation to higher realms in God. The veil has been drawn back, and we have caught a glimpse of the glory of sonship and what it means for creation! This vision is now working in us, purging, purifying, quickening, changing, and preparing to be revealed in us. How we groan as we find this heaviness of the veil of flesh still upon us, to blur and make hazy that which we would behold more clearly. The carnal mind cannot see God! But oh! There is eye-salve from the hand of the Master and our vision is increasing daily with the increase of God. Aren't you glad!

My heart leaps within me as I contemplate this wonderful reality — being CHANGED! From the distant mountain peaks of faith comes a sound as clear as morning chimes. It is the voice of the inspired apostle
FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, Part 60, The Church in Laodicea [J. Preston Eby] ~ BIBLE STUDY 6

sounding out from centuries past, "Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (II Cor. 3:18) Beholding — we are changed! How important are our seeing eyes! It is the same message — "We shall be changed...in the twinkling of an eye!" We are changed by a beholding, by a looking, by a look, often necessitating a turning. Sometimes it takes a lot to turn us! The Psalmist cries out, "Turn us, O Lord. Cause Thy face to shine and we shall be saved" (Ps. 80:3,7,19) It is only as we turn in the direction of the present glory that we can know transformation! You can read the history of revivals, you can study the exploits of men of faith in centuries past, you can reminisce about the great visitations of God of yesteryear. There is not enough power in such things to transform you! And there is no need to cry, "Lord, do it again!" for God will not do it again. You can count on it, for our God is ever progressive in the outworking of His purposes, and He doesn't retrogress to "do it again." That is the vainest of hopes! This is a new day and God is doing a new thing! Transformation comes only in the light of the present glory and revelation of Jesus Christ. We must turn, to behold Him as He is, to behold Him in what He is doing, not in what He has done. If you can only tell me what God did two thousand years ago, or fifty years ago, or five years ago, or yesterday, it is TURNING TIME!

It will take more than sermons on sonship and exhortations on the great purposes of God to conform us to the image of the Son of God. We must see Him to be changed into His likeness! The elect of the Lord are now seeing Him as He is! We have come beyond the chorus singing, hands clapping, shouting Amens and Hallelujahs, prophesying and preaching to one another about the deep mysteries of God so that we can be changed. Thank God for all those things, but they do not change us! It is only in meeting Him as Thomas and Paul and John met Him. That is the truth of the book of Revelation! Christ must be revealed to us, and, praise His name, He is being revealed to all who have eyes to see. We are now hearing His voice speaking to us out of the deepest recesses of our spirits. We are communing with Him upon the heavenly mount Zion in the glory of God that radiates from the face of Jesus Christ. Sonship is being established in our lives by personal association with Christ Himself!

I am willing to stake all that I have and all that I am on this one bold assertion: No man or woman can ever be changed into the image of God or put on incorruptibility or be changed into the glorification of immortality to be a manifest son of God until he has cast off the yoke of the carnal mind and the bondages of human tradition and religion, and the clinging to any and all former visitations, movings, and workings of God, in order to MEET THE FIRSTBORN SON PERSONALLY, COMMUNE WITH HIM INTIMATELY, BE JOINED VITALLY WITH HIM IN THE UNION OF HIS MIND, NATURE, AND LIFE, and then continues to walk in the light and glory of what he sees.

The promise of this vision assures us of the perfecting of the powers of our spiritual life. "Anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see!" When Moses desired the vision of the glory of God, he was warned that no man can see God's face and live. No man can stand in the full blaze of divine glory until he himself corresponds in nature to that glory. The glare of the eastern sun on desert sands has dazed men's eyes; the fierce, gleaming radiance of sunlight on the snowclad hills has blinded human sight, and none can, with naked eye, behold the sun in the sky. How, then, can our mortal vision turn its gaze upon the glory that is ineffable? When John on Patmos saw the glory of God's Christ he "fell as dead" in the overwhelming presence. Our nature is not constituted to bear the blaze of uncreated light. But this restricted nature is not for ever. For the burning radiance of His holy light shining upon us releases us as we are exposed to it from the obstructiveness of our own impaired senses, and then with purged heart, renewed mind, and quickened life we perceive Him. In this world if a man stares at the sun he will be blinded. But in the higher world of the spirit to gaze upon the countenance of the Son of Righteousness is to be CHANGED! It is indeed wonderful!

We enter this world with five senses: sight, hearing, smelling, taste, and touch. These are natural physiological and soulful senses, and feed information to our natural mind. Peter writes about our new birth, explaining that we are "being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." (I Pet. 1:23) This new birth is by an incorruptible seed, by the Word of God, even that Word which was from the beginning, which is also the true light and the life of men, and which "lighteth every man coming into the world." (Jn. 1:1-4,9) When we are born of the Spirit, we receive these same senses on the higher plane of spirit, in the inner-man body. In the natural no one has ever been able to see in this world unless they have been born. So it is in the spiritual realm! Jesus speaks of this spiritual sight in His

conversation with Nicodemus, saying, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom (realm) of God." (Jn. 3:3)

The question follows — what is meant by the term "born again"? Jesus tells us that "that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (Jn. 3:6) Birth is not the beginning of human existence, but it does mark the beginning of human identity. Though we already exist, we have no name, no birth certificate, no legal identity, no citizenship, no civil rights, no ability to inherit — until we are born! The baby that is born already existed in the womb, and even before that its life existed in the sperm of the father and the egg of the mother. Some say that human life begins at conception, but that is not entirely true. The writer to the Hebrews clearly tells us that Levi (the son of Aaron, the high priest) existed in the loins of his father Abraham FOUR HUNDRED YEARS BEFORE HE WAS BORN! Not only did his life exist in the loins of Abraham, but he paid tithes to Melchizedek while he was in the loins of Abraham! "And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, paid tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father (Abraham), when Melchizedek met him." (Heb. 7:9-10) So, when did Levi's life begin? You see, if Abraham would have died before Isaac was born, there never would have been a Levi! Levi would have died with Abraham, yea, in Abraham. To murder Abraham would be to murder not just one man, but to also murder all his progeny. None of us began at the moment of our conception, just as none of us began at the moment of our birth!

That which is born of the flesh is flesh. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit. That is the mystery. The flesh child is flesh before it is born, else it could not be said that that which is born of the flesh is flesh. Likewise, the spirit child is spirit before it is born; otherwise we could not say that that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Spirit is born of Spirit, just as flesh is born of flesh. But flesh has to be flesh before it is born. And spirit has to be spirit before it is born. Therefore the birth is not its beginning! The birth merely brings the babe, which already existed, flesh or spirit, into a new realm, into an awakened consciousness, into a new awareness, a new dimension, into a new standing, into new rights and privileges and inheritance — but the birth is not the beginning of its existence! Can you not see the mystery? If mankind were not already spirit beings in the womb of the Father they could not be born into the kingdom of God by the Spirit! It's just as simple as that.

God is the Father of spirits. But let us remember, a father does not father his offspring at the time of the offspring's birth. Oh, no! The father fathers his child in one sense at the time of conception, but in God's estimation, as we have seen in the case of Levi, the father is the father of every child who is contained in his life. Abraham was the "father" of Levi, the record plainly states, four hundred years before Levi was born! Now we read of God, "Besides this, we have had earthly fathers to discipline us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject unto the Father of spirits and live?" (Heb. 12:9) Someone says, "Oh, yes, God is the Father of every born again person who is now a child of God." But let us see what the scripture says about this. "O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh." (Num. 16:22) That we might better comprehend, I must follow this instructive passage with some pertinent questions. Does every flesh man have a spirit? Is every man, saved or unsaved, composed of spirit, soul, and body, or do only believers have a spirit? If every man has a spirit, where did his spirit come from? Did it come from God? Did it come from his parents? Did it come from the devil? Was your spirit, when you were born, already "fallen"? When did your spirit originate? Did it originate at the moment of your physical birth? Did it originate at the moment of your conception in the womb? Did it originate before your conception? Was it already a "fallen" spirit before you were born? If not, when did it "fall"? Is God actively in the business of begetting "fallen" or "dead" spirits? Is God really the Father of the spirits of ALL FLESH?

There is another passage of scripture which will greatly aid our understanding. "But there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding." (Job. 32:8) It is something great in man, as the speaker, Elihu, conceives that he is spirit, and, as being such, is capable of being inspired. For he is not, as many teachers suppose, referring to the historical fact that the Almighty breathed into Adam, in the beginning, the breath of life; but, speaking in the present tense, he magnifies man as being able to be inspired, because he is spirit, and it is God who inspires him!

It is important that we get the connection between "spirit" and "inspiration." The only reason man can be "inspired" is because there is within him a "spirit." The word "inspiration" denotes the act of in-breathing, that is, man can "breathe in" or be "breathed into" only because there is within him a spirit! It means to be visited

internally, to be raised in consciousness, understanding, and intelligence. In this sense Bezaleel, when working on the tabernacle in the wilderness, was inspired as he was "filled with the Spirit of God, in wisdom and in understanding, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber." (Ex. 31:1-5) A man is in-spired when he is raised internally, in consciousness, thought, feeling, understanding, perception, ability, or action by a divine movement within! It is God's Spirit quickening our spirit, and thus bringing a change, a release, a quickening, a raising so that our spirit may function as it was designed to function. This is what Jesus described as "born again," the spirit that already existed as the offspring of God being brought forth, just as a flesh baby is brought forth into the world, into a new realm, a new level of identity, a new consciousness, a new expression, a new ability, a new standing, new rights and privileges and inheritance! That which is thus "born" of the Spirit is spirit!

Just as it is the distinction of a crystal, that it is transparent, able to let the light into and through its close flinty body, and be irradiated by it in the whole mass of its substance, thus obtaining and expressing a glory it does not possess apart from the entrance of light, without being at all more or less than a crystal, so it is the grand distinction of all humanity that it is penetrable by the Spirit of God, able to receive, entemple, and radiate the Holy Spirit; to be energized by Him and filled with His glory, in every faculty, feeling, and power. Thus "the Spirit beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children (offspring) of God!" (Rom. 8:16) And "because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts (spirit), crying, Abba, Father!" (Gal. 4:6) "There is a spirit in man, and the inbreathing of the Almighty giveth them understanding."

The seed of God is in every man, and that seed is the spirit of man. But you meet the drunk on the street, you see your unconverted neighbor, you rub shoulders with the people of the world, you watch the evening news on television, and you don't see God in anybody! That is because God in every man is a seed. A seed doesn't do anything. It just is. It can lie on the shelf for fifty years and never express a thing! Seeds have been found in the tombs of Egypt that are more than three thousand years old, and they look today just as they did when they were placed there, but they have never produced a harvest. You see, my beloved, just as the seed (sperm) of a man and the seed (egg) of a woman must conceive in order to change, grow, be born, and express and accomplish, so must a seed of the vegetable kingdom be germinated in order to be productive. The life is hid in the seed, but it is covered by the outer shell and abides in a state of dormancy, inactivity, or death. It must be planted in the earth, then subjected to two things: heat and moisture. The rain falls upon it, the sun shines upon it, and suddenly there comes a mighty release! There is a stirring of that life that is restrained on the inside, the shell that conceals that life bursts open, and the life within springs forth, puts down roots, and grows upward; it breaks through the earth and is "born" into a new world, a new realm, a new expression, a new form, and a new ability. It rises high enough to draw its life from new dimensions.

Can we not see by this that the spirit of man is indeed the seed of God but it is buried in, encased by, the outer man of the flesh, the carnal understanding, and the natural consciousness. Just as a credit card or a cell phone must be activated, the spirit of man must be activated! Until it is activated it is not a living, pulsating, energizing, ruling, growing power in man. It must be germinated, quickened by the power of the invigorating rain of God's Word and the warm sunshine of God's Spirit! Once our spirit is quickened by God's Spirit, it springs forth into birth. And that which is born of the Spirit is spirit — if it were not spirit, the offspring of God, it would not be quickened into God-like-ness by the act of re-generation!

Once the spirit of man is birthed into the kingdom realm of God, just as a flesh and blood baby is birthed into the world, he then becomes aware of his five spiritual senses in the spiritual realm. The five senses of the outer man are able to see, hear, taste, touch, and smell natural things; but these same five senses in the world of the spirit are able to see, hear, taste, touch, and smell all spiritual and heavenly things which are invisible and incorruptible, as the apostle explains, "...eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him — but God HATH REVEALED THEM UNTO US BY THE SPIRIT; for the spirit searcheth (out) all things, yea the deep things of God." (I Cor. 2:9-14) When we are born (quickened) from above the FIVE SENSES OF THE SPIRIT WORLD are released and become operative in the inner-man body, which is Christ. Gradually, as this inner man grows and increases we discover and become aware of these senses, the eyes of our understanding being enlightened, becoming wider and wider to the things not seen by the natural eye of understanding; by degrees the hearing of faith increases until every good promise of God is established as truth within; in time we come into touch with the

Lord and His invisible presence, glory, and powers; little by little we taste and see that the Lord is very gracious, finding our food and sustenance out of the spirit realm rather than the outer world; after a time we come to appreciate those attributes of love, mercy, grace, and goodness and those sacrifices and incense-prayers and praises which are a sweet odor unto the Lord, and a fragrance of life unto men. As the natural senses can be cultivated, so can the spiritual; and the cultivation of these spiritual senses constitutes marks indicating our growth in grace, our development as sons of God, to the completeness of our new selves in the glory, honor, and immortality of the divine nature.

The scriptures are plain. We can have eyes and not see, ears and not hear — so we must have two sets of eyes and two sets of ears — we have ears within that can hear on a level that is not heard by the outer ear, and eyes on a plane that can see into a realm that is not seen by the outer eye. "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places..." (Eph. 1:18-20)

The sons of God have eyes within them that see on a level that is not seen by the eyes of the outer-man body. You can have 20/20 vision with your physical eyes and never see what you see with the "eyes of your understanding." It must forever be settled in our hearts that there is no true reality in any of the things that are seen by the outer eye, for how can we say that things which are always changing and passing away are realities? The only abiding things in the whole universe are the things which are not seen by the outer eye, and yet it is not that they are really invisible, for they are merely invisible to the kinds of eyes we have in our outer-man body. The Holy Spirit has faithfully recorded of Moses, that grand hero of faith and spiritual vision, that "by faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured as SEEING HIM WHO IS INVISIBLE." (Heb. 11:27)

Here is the mighty power of man's regenerated spirit: it sees what others cannot see! It sees, amid the thousand things natural men see and are guided by, something infinitely greater and more real — it SEES GOD! No wonder it leads a man to think and act differently from other men. On everything it looks at, the bright light of eternity is shining! No wonder that under the inspiration of that vision it can do mighty deeds, for it sees God its life and power. Let me here say to every saint of God that just as, in any pursuit, the eye can be trained to see what others cannot see, so the spiritual eyes of the new creation inner-man body can be trained to see God everywhere. Abide in His presence until the heart is filled with it. You will begin to recognize HIM in everything that happens! Seek to walk in the light of His countenance. Seeing the invisible will make it easy to forsake this world and do the will of God! Then you will see all things as they really are! The heavenly world is shut up from the natural man. He cannot see eternal things! He sees only natural things of the lower world.

"Anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see!"

Ah, God has called out a people in this day, even out of lukewarm, self-satisfied, self-sufficient Laodicea, to know Him and walk with Him as king-priests in His kingdom. And may I with all reverence add that if your eyes do see the precious truths and special calling of God for this hour, then lift up holy hands in praise and thanksgiving and worship to HIM who has called and chosen you by His grace. "Blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear." (Mat. 13:16) While we recognize the blindness of the church systems of man, and admonish the Lord's elect to purify themselves from all the Babylonish spirit and ways of the old dying church order, yet — we cannot rail upon those precious believers who are now blind to these wonderful things — they are our brethren, fellow members of the great household of God, though they stand not with the Lamb upon mount Zion. Let us not puff up with pride because of what we see, as though our light is brighter than any other, but with all humility of mind make our calling and election sure. The words of the following poem are pertinent to all who think themselves to be something higher than they are:

**The Spring blew trumpets of color;
Her green sang in my brain —
I heard a blind man groping
"Tap—tap" with his cane.**

I pitied him his blindness;
But can I boast, "I see?"
Perhaps there walks a spirit
Close by, who pities me —

A spirit who hears me tapping
The five-sensed cane of mind
Amid such unguessed glories —
Of a realm where I may be blind!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 61

THE CHURCH IN LAODICEA (continued)

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART SIXTY-ONE

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent." (Rev. 3:19)

The trials and testings which are the daily experience of those apprehended of God in this hour are designed to develop a character worthy of one called to reign with Christ in His kingdom. Our Father rules and overrules in each of these for our good. Sometimes they take the form of chastening, as we read, **"If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?" (Heb. 12:7)** Ordinarily we think of the word "chastisement" as signifying correcting for wrongdoing. But in the scriptures it is especially used to convey the idea of education or instruction in righteousness. The word in Greek which is translated chasten is paideia, and comes from the word paideia, which means child. The verb is paiduo, and has the meaning of "to train, to educate, to instruct, to teach." Chastisement is, therefore, the training, education, instruction, and correction of ignorance for the child's learning. Those chosen to reign with Christ in the authority and power of the kingdom of God need to have practical lessons in character development — lessons of a very high order! Consequently we receive chastening such as no other creatures in the universe have been subject to, aside from our Lord. We must receive the training necessary to fully conform us to our Father's mind, will, and ways in every instance and under all circumstances.

God is chastening His sons, training them as a father trains his child. He is educating us and bringing us under discipline. He is not punishing us because we have done wrong, but He does correct us that we may learn His ways. Discipline is much more than punishment. Discipline is something you do for your child, not to your child. Discipline is part of the character you build into your child that will give him a way of life. Correction is necessary for children! A baby is an innocent little thief. It takes everything it can lay its hands on, and constantly misappropriates unless watched. It has not any notion of what is right. It understands nothing of wisdom. We have to teach children everything! One of the greatest curses of this country is that children are not lovingly, but firmly, corrected, restrained, and taught righteousness. They are permitted to be their own masters and do their own thing when they ought to be under government. Armed with the understanding that chastisement is more than punishing for wrong doing, it is clear that if a man is always beating his child, but never blessing; always grumbling, complaining, and criticizing, but never praising; always discouraging and putting down, but never encouraging and inspiring, he will destroy the child. God is a loving Father and does not want to punish us at all! Yet, it is better to correct and teach us that we may obey Him, than for us to end up as spiritual delinquents! Spiritually spoiled brats, who only receive blessings and benefits from the Father, as many Christians seek, especially those in the "faith" movement, will not reign with Christ in His kingdom!

Bennie Skinner once shared this wise counsel: "You need to know God in all the sides of His nature; if you knew all the sides of God's nature, you would understand how a God of love can allow bad things to happen to good people, and not only allow it, but bring it to pass. When you know God in all the sides of His nature you do not think of Him as an indulgent old granddaddy who lets everybody do anything they want to, and He still loves them anyhow — 'it's alright darling, everything will be wonderful in the end.' Ah, yes, it will be wonderful in the end — but let me tell you something, beloved; before you get to that end you are going to discover another side to God's nature. When I had children born to me I loved those children unconditionally. There were no reservations to my love, for I am a father. Regardless of what they did, how they acted, or what they didn't do, I still loved them the same. But suppose I had said to them, 'I love you — I don't care what you do,' and just let it go at that. Do you know what kind of un-holy terrorists I would have raised? Do you know what kind of juvenile delinquents I would have reared if I would have said, 'Anything goes, everything goes, I love you darling, it's all right, it's O.K.,' and never taught them a thing about life or responsibility. Can you imagine how they would have lived?"

"There are multitudes of people today who think of God in this way and so they think of themselves like that as parents. They don't want to bear the responsibility of showing another side to their nature! They equate love with permissiveness. They invest nothing into their children to teach them and train them. Consequently the children grow up to be delinquents. The real problem is parental delinquency! If you know and understand God and the different sides of His nature it will put a balance in your life that will be reflected in your home, in the way you treat your wife, in the way you treat your husband, the way you treat your children. Each of us, though we are one person, has various relationships and offices. I am a father. I am also a son. I am a husband. Furthermore, I am a citizen of Palm Beach County. I am a member of the human race. I am a neighbor. I am a pastor. I am all these things and more — and yet I am but one person. I do not act as a father in the same way I act as a husband. I do not act as a husband in the same way I act as a son. I do not act as a son in the same way I act as a neighbor. I do not act as a neighbor in the same way I act as a pastor. I have all these different sides to my nature, yet I am but one person. GOD HAS MANY SIDES TO HIS NATURE, BUT HE IS ONLY ONE GOD. These sides of God's nature are revealed through His names. For instance, the name Yahweh reveals the Father side of God. Yahweh is the stern One. Yahweh is the Law-giver. Yahweh is the Head. Yahweh does not deal with us in the same way that Jesus deals with us as Saviour! The Saviour is gracious in all ways, but there is awesome responsibility with being a Father. It requires wisdom, knowledge, and backbone!" — end quote.

Our heavenly Father is a wise parent! He it was who inspired the words, "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him." We are not to despise this correction, no matter how severe or painful, and we are not to faint when we are rebuked or admonished of Him. We have come to realize that this is for our good and is part of our training as sons of God! How full of truth are the words of the wise man, "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes" (Prov. 13:24). If the parent spares the rod, or does not correct the son, then the Bible says that such a parent hates his son! But the parent that loves his son chastens him betimes. The word "betimes" carries a special significance also, for it figuratively means "be up early at any task" with the implication of earnestness.

This definition takes chastening out of the realm of emotion and puts it in the realm of what is best for the son. The emotional reaction of the parent to the misdeed of the son is not allowed in the act of chastening at all. It is entirely upon the basis of what must be done to train, educate, instruct, teach, and develop the character of the son. It is a necessary action to bring the son into line with the ideal of the father for him. This is an exact picture of God's love for His family of sons! It is God's business to chasten us and He does it with an earnestness and perseverance that we know nothing of!

This love that we are under today is a chastening love! It is a love that prunes, that shakes, that molds us and makes us to be just what our Father purposes for us to be. We have heard parents say again and again, "I don't want my children to go through what I had to go through." So they work and struggle and sacrifice to give their children something better than they had. In many instances those parents are only indulging their children, handing everything to them on a silver platter, making life easy for them. These children do not learn the lessons, the principles of hard work, thriftiness, vision, perseverance, integrity, and purpose that the parents learned "through the things they suffered." So the children grow up thinking the world "owes" them something, and they are not a credit to their parents. It is the ones who come up the "hard way," the University of Hard Knocks, if you please, who generally are the ones who impart something to the uplifting of the world.

God is not that foolish! The love of God is a love that chastens. The book of Proverbs is a book of wisdom that teaches many beautiful principles of just and righteous living. In many cases these are written in the natural to parents, but God is doing this very thing today in the spiritual! It is this love of God that is doing it. One proverb says, "Chasten thy son, and let not thy soul spare for his crying." (Prov. 19:18) In plain language, if your child is crying and wailing because he is being spanked, or because he can't get his way or do what he wants to do, don't let up the pressure just because of his crying. I remember when I was a child; my father had a razor strap, for he had at one time been a barber. That razor strap was one of the instruments applied to my "seat of learning." I well remember my favorite scream while he was spanking me — "Stop! You're killing me! You're killing me!" I would wail this over and over again, but my father was a wise man. He knew he wasn't killing me, so my crying had no affect at all on the punishment! Should he have had pity and stopped, the effect of the chastisement would have been lost. Sometimes we get to the place where we cry to the Lord, saying, "Lord, I

cannot take any more of this. I'll die if you put any more upon me." But like my father, the Lord just keeps pouring it on and pays no attention at all to us, though we cry loudly.

Was it not the Lord Himself who taught us this wisdom, "**Withhold not correction from the child, for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die.**" (Prov. 23:13) If our heavenly Father pitied us every time we whimper and cry when He is correcting us, and left off the correction, we would never amount to anything. We might spend eternity playing a harp on a golden street, but we would never rule the nations or deliver creation from the bondage of corruption! If God gave us everything we want, and answered every prayer we pray, and kept us from all the things we don't want to face, He would have nothing but a family of spoiled children on His hands. We would be no good for the age and the ages to come, nor qualified in any way to judge the world and angels!

How we praise God that He chastens us while there is yet hope, and He does not spare when we begin to cry. He goes right on, because He knows the end that He wants. He is training sons to govern the world when the time is ripe for it, and to reveal His nature, glory, and power to all creation! God knows what He wants to do in us, and we can groan and cry and wail all we want, but our Father will go on with the chastising. That is the kind of love and wisdom that will produce a son that the Father will be proud of, unto whom He can commit the reins of His government, and be willing to be glorified in!

We all know that a horse must be broken, that is, its will must be broken before it is of any practical use to man. God put that will in the horse, but it must be broken and made to conform to the will of man. Just as surely did God put the will in man, and just as surely the self-will of man must be broken and made to conform to the will of God! What a credit we will be to our Father, and what a benefit we will be to creation when HIS WILL has fully become OUR WILL! We do not like chastening and we had just as well admit it. No chastening for the present seems to be pleasant. But chastening will pay rich dividends in us when we have matured into the full measure of the stature of Christ. So we are truly thankful that God's chastening is just as it is and we would not have it any other way. I read the story of a man who told how his grandfather used to make him kiss the paddle after every whipping that he gave him. And if he didn't, he would get another whipping until he did! He told it in a humorous way, and on the surface it may sound comical to some, or cruel to others, but there is a great lesson in it. We can either resist God's instruction and get another whipping, or learn to thank Him, and kiss the paddle He is using on us, realizing that it is part of the process to mold us and make us what He wants us to be!

Stacy Wood told a story that a young man in the Marine Corp. had related to him. He said, "One morning during boot camp training, our Drill Instructor took us out to a field where he ordered us to dig a long, deep trench. Furthermore, he told us we could not stop to eat or rest until we had completed the task. It took all day in the hot sun to complete our assignment. As the sun began to set in the west, we began to take comfort in looking forward to a good hot shower, a meal, and a full night of rest. Our Drill Instructor returned to check on us just before the chore was completed. As he approached, we could not believe what we heard. He appeared full of anger and was shouting, cursing, and fussing at the top of his voice. He said, 'Who told you to dig this hole in my field!' Someone said, 'You did, Sergeant!' He said, 'Who told you that?!' No one dared to argue with him. He then said, 'Fill that hole up!' It took nearly the whole night to complete the job and no one got any rest, or food, until we completed it.

"This young Marine went on to say, "I did not understand this discipline until I went to Vietnam. There I learned that such training often made the difference between life and death! On the battlefield I experienced the necessity of going without sleep for days at a time. Yet, it was critically important to remain not only awake, but alert, even when our physical bodies needed rest."

This discipline was a hardship on those young recruits while in boot camp, and to them appeared absolutely meaningless and un-called-for! It probably made some of them angry. It certainly was not a pleasant experience at the time! However, it yielded the intended result on the field of battle where that training was so very, very important. In like manner, the Lord faithfully tutors and trains those who are to serve in the Lord's army which shall fight in the trenches in battle with the forces of sin and death, defeat the kingdom of darkness, and bring the kingdom of God to pass in the earth! We must learn to endure hardness as a good soldier of

Jesus Christ. Everyone who fills a position of trust and responsibility in the kingdom undergoes discipline. Every son undergoes discipline, for if we are without chastisement, the apostle tells us, then are we bastards, and not sons. God disciplines us that we may share in His holiness. Thus, all who are called to sonship have learned to submit to the Father of spirits and live! There is great and eternal purpose in all the severity of our Father's dealings, and we have learned to love and appreciate this wonderful Father who would so fashion us and make us that which we could never become in any other way.

Oh wondrous love of God! Not a love that allows us to be indulged by God and gives us the privilege of doing just what we want, but a love that will "beat us within an inch of our lives" and then raise us up in the image and likeness of God. Remember the words of Jude. "Keep yourselves in the love of God." Do not foolishly ask God to slacken His hand of chastisement, but keep yourself in the love of God, always looking at the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. This will bring us into the life of the ages! This is the only way there. We used to have the idea that because Jesus died on the cross, everything was paid and finished and there was nothing but love, joy, peace, and prosperity forever. The death of Jesus, however, WON'T KEEP US FROM LEARNING OBEDIENCE THROUGH THE THINGS WE SUFFER. It is the suffering under the Father's hand of chastening that will bring us to perfection and show us the path of life! All this is going on in Christ Jesus, for we are His workmanship, created unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Our Father will do what is best for us until we become a credit to Him. Then shall the voice come from heaven, proclaiming, "These are my beloved sons, in whom I am well pleased!" Then shall our revealing and showing forth unto the world begin, and the fame of us and our glory shall spread abroad throughout all the world and unto the extremities of the unbounded heavens!

These words by Brother Paul Mueller beautifully express the depth of this blessed truth: "There is another rod of God that concerns us: it is the Lord's rod of discipline and correction. Job referred to this rod when he said, *"Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power? Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them."* (Job 21:7-9) As we look about us in the world today, we can see that the wicked live just as Job said they did, without the rod of God in their lives. The wicked enjoy wealth and the power which that wealth brings. They live the so-called 'good life,' for their lives are free of the Lord's rod of discipline and correction. But it is not so with the chosen saints of the Lord! Our lives are wondrously and strangely predestined of our Father to attain to the fullness of sonship in Christ through the discipline of our trials.

"Throughout our journey in this life, with every step we take, we will see the rod of God in our lives. At times, our lives will be interrupted by a strange set of circumstances that are unique and unexplainable. But we must know that our loving Father predestined us to the adoption of sons, and His rod is that set of disciplinary circumstances in our lives designed to lead us to the fullness of the life of Christ (Rom. 8:29). Others may live in abundant prosperity and health, enjoying the things of this world, but we are being disciplined by the rod of the Lord, and are separated unto Him for His holy purposes. If we are truly called and chosen of our Father to become manifest sons of God at this time, we must experience His strange and unique rods, including the rod of selection and separation as well as His rod of discipline.

"The chastisement of Father's rod is unique to true sons. All the sons of God are now going through some form of chastisement, or will soon experience it. The prophet declared, *"The Lord's voice crieth unto the city (the heavenly Jerusalem): hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it."* (Mic. 6:9) When the Lord applies His rod of correction to our lives, it is an indication that He wants to teach us something wonderful and important. The Lord's rod brings a message to us, therefore we should hear the message of the rod. In every trial, He is doing something wonderful in our lives! When a strange form of discipline unto correction comes our way, we will then reply to our Father, 'Abba, Father, what lesson do you want me to learn through this experience?' Father has a rich, new message for us in every application of the rod, a message we could not receive in any other circumstance, so we are admonished to 'hear ye the rod.'

"Furthermore, we should not only hear the message of the rod, but we also should understand 'who hath appointed it.' The rod of correction that must come into the life of every true son is that experience that will perfect us and bring us into the fullness of the life of Christ. By the wisdom of the mind of Christ we will recognize the chastisements in our lives as the rod of God, and not Satan's works. The devil would rather keep

us living in constant ecstasy, and our minds thus dulled to the voice of the Lord. Satan does not want us to be perfected and would not send these tests and trials into our lives! But God is applying His rod to our lives to keep us alert and aware of His voice and leadings, and to perfect us and conform us to His image and likeness. We have grown spiritually beyond the doctrines of the old order. Now, we no longer see the devil in our lives. The Lord has taken the devil out of our minds, out of our doctrines, and out of our lives. Now we know the truth! Now we know 'It is GOD which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure'" — end quote.

A strange but wonderful statement from the inspired pen of the prophet Isaiah says, "When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done. Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the fires, even the name of the Lord God of Israel" (Isa. 24:13,15) Those of God's elect who walk in the dealings of the Lord in this hour have truly learned to glorify God in the fires! We glorify God in the fire when we bear it patiently. We glorify God in the fire also, when we are really and fully persuaded God will not put us in the fire except for our good, and His own glory. We glorify God in the fire when we say, "Lord, don't let the fire go out until it has purged away all the dross. Then we glorify God when we wish for the good of the fire, and not to have it extinguished; when the soul can say, "Here I am, my God, do with me as seemeth good in Thy sight."

We glorify God in the fire when we are not grumbling and complaining, but humbly submitting to His will, content to walk by faith and not by sight. We glorify God in the fire, when in the midst of the fire we can sing God's high praises. Years ago we learned to sing the high praises of God in the assembly of the saints, in great joy and rejoicing. But now, praise God, we have learned to glorify God in the fire! Thus the children of Israel glorified the Lord; the song of the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace is a sweet song! as are all songs that are made in the fire. Then we glorify God in the fire when we can bless God for not letting us alone; but we glory in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh patience. Blessed are you that have gotten into Christ's fire! Blessed are you that have found His fire in your souls, in whatever fires He has been pleased to send you, and into whatever furnaces He has been pleased to cast you!

Our hearts and souls are the workshop of God. It is there that He is changing us and bringing us into union with Himself in the spirit. And what a mighty work it is that He is doing there! The change comes not by a wonderful spiritual experience with waves of joy and glory. Oh, no! It is the blow of His hammer that breaks our hard heart! It is the stroke of His ax that strikes at the root of our life! It is the plunge of His pruning knife that cuts away the natural, worldly, and religious things that sap our spiritual strength! It is the furnace heated seven times hot that consumes our dross! It is an overthrow, a shipwreck, utter desolation that He brings to our carnal mind and our old religious ways! It is His bitter cup of suffering that mellows our self-confident spirit! And without ceasing God works — the everlasting God, He neither slumbers nor sleeps, sang David in one of his sublime psalms. Absolutely without sleeping He works. He visits us in our dreams, He searches our reins and instructs us in the night seasons, as if He had no other man's perfection on His hands but ours! We see, we hear, we taste, we feel Him and His work in us every day and night, and every hour and moment of the day and night! This is the experience of every son of God who walks with Christ in the spirit and is being changed into His image and likeness!

One of the most interesting places in the world to see, I have been told, is the Royal Palace in Tehran, Iran. One of the things that makes it so interesting is that it has been recognized as one of the most beautiful buildings ever to have been constructed. And yet, when they were building it, a catastrophe occurred. The main entrance hall was going to be lined with mirrors. The architect had ordered the mirrors to be shipped from across the ocean. When the shipment had finally arrived, the mirrors were uncrated ever so carefully. But to the astonishment of the architect, many of the mirrors had been shattered en route. And what wasn't broken would never cover the designated area. They were useless.

As the crew was preparing to haul the splintered glass to the dump, the architect suddenly had an idea. "Stop!" he ordered. "Don't throw them away." Then he ordered that the mirrors that were still intact be broken into fragments as well. And so, every last mirror was shattered into fragments. Then they hauled the small pieces to the worksite and began piecing them together again into what became an exquisite mirrored mosaic. They used this innovative technique to cover pillars and to cover the dome and some of the different hallways. The

effect was phenomenal! The mirrors pick up light, like a prism, reflecting rainbows of color throughout the rooms. They were broken to be made beautiful. And that is what happens with us as well! God breaks us to make us the revelation of His glory!

The deep mystery of our Father's chastening is that He is not punishing us for not being what we should be, but He is making us what He has purposed for us to be! When He is chastening us He is making us chaste, pure, clean, undefiled, and bringing us into His likeness. He not only chastens us, He also "scourges every son whom He receiveth." (Heb. 12:6) Scourge is a pretty strong word! Scourging is the word used for the beating that was given with a whip called the "cat of nine tails." It was a whip with nine lashes, with little balls of lead tied to the end of the lashes to give them greater force when brought down on the bare back of the victim. The victim would be tied to a post, his back made bare, and when the beating was over his back would be cut to shreds.

This is what Jesus suffered just before His crucifixion. Our English word "scourge" literally means to strip the hide off, and when the scourging is over there is little hide left on the victim's back. It is instructive to note that the first five letters of the word spell "scour". When something has a residue or coat of dirt, grease, or other undesirable substance on the surface of it that spoils its appearance or usefulness, then we scour it to remove the film, or the covering that should not be there. Usually an abrasive material is used to remove this film, such as Comet or Brillo pads. When the scouring is finished, and the film removed, the vessel shines forth in all of its beauty!

That which the Lord has to get rid of in us is the covering of the old fleshly nature and carnal mind which conceal and mar the beauty of the Christ within. What our Father is doing when chastening and scourging us, is stripping away our old self-nature which obstructs the glory of the divine life within. This covering of the old flesh must be removed to let the glory of the Christ shine forth! This God is doing with His chastening rod and His scourging whip; removing the filthy film of our old fleshly nature and religious ways, taking the hide of carnality off, until our vessel shines with the beauty and glory of Christ and is made useful in the kingdom of our Father.

When receiving chastening and scourging from the hand of God there is nothing pleasant about it; it is not an occasion for great shouting and rejoicing. The words of the apostle Peter are fulfilled in us, for he speaks of our being "in heaviness through manifold testings" (I Pet. 1:6). Yet, when we consider the end of the chastening we can rejoice and praise and thank our Father for what He is producing in our lives, for truly "the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, be found unto praise and honor and glory at the unveiling of Jesus Christ." (I Pet. 1:7) As we submit to the testings and trials, which are the instruments of the Lord's rod and of His whip, and endure them patiently, they bring forth in our lives His righteousness, beauty, and perfection. We will be holy as He is holy and perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect. The old fleshly self-nature will be gone, and Christ will be all in all within us. We will be like Him! We will do only those things we see our Father do, and speak only those words which we hear from Him. If we are to be king-priests in His kingdom, working with Him in the restoration of the suffering creation, bringing the dominion of the kingdom of God into the life of every man and nation on the face of the earth, there can be no interference in us that would keep us from doing wholly and always the perfect will of our Father. The old carnal nature and the old religious mind can never do this! Only Christ in us can be this submissive to the Father's voice and the Father's will — there is no way we can be. There has to be a complete stripping away of the tough hide of the outer man, so we can come into the formation of Christ, to be the revelation of the Father upon earth. As we presently endure the chastening of the Lord, let us remember the words of the writer to the Hebrews, who tells us that in all these trials, "GOD DEALETH WITH YOU AS WITH SONS." (Heb. 12:7)

This indeed is the pathway to sonship! Sad to say, there are many who glibly mouth the truths of sonship but who are not walking under the Father's disciplines which are common to all the sons of God. To use the very words of scripture, these then are "bastards, and not sons." We would do well to remember at all times that sonship is a WALK. It is not just a "message," a "revelation," a "doctrine," or even a "truth" to be put to memory and repeated. IT IS A LIFE TO BE LIVED AND WALKED OUT. Sonship involves training and discipline, and all who are apprehended of the Lord for sonship must be seen passing through the disciplines, instructions, corrections, trials, testings, provings, chastisements, and scourgings of the Lord. Let us therefore walk through

this time of intense preparation with faith and confidence, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, keeping our eyes on the goal set before us: to live in His life and partake of His holiness. This is the best and most sound advice anyone can give to the sons of God who are passing through the fiery trials and severe dealings of this present hour, along with the inspired words spoken to Job, "ACQUAINT NOW THYSELF WITH GOD, AND BE AT PEACE."

Yes, I was living to myself — was dead:
Self — with its hopes and dreams was all I had;
But soon the Lord fulfilled my prayer to know
The power of His cross — 'twas death below.

I asked contrition — He sent me pain;
For purity — but anguish came again;
I asked I might be meek — He broke my heart;
I asked — I knew not what — the better part.

I asked to know what death was to the world,
And quickly all my living hopes were spoiled;
I asked to be like Him — His image bear —
He placed me in a furnace, sitting there

Like one refining silver, till He see
The reflex of His image bright in me.
I asked that I the daily cross might bear,
It lacerated me — the wounds I wear;

I blindly prayed, not knowing how, nor what,
He took me at my word — it mattered not.
Then I began to shrink from following near
And well-nigh prayed Him to depart through fear.

To suffer was not pleasing to the flesh,
I feared to pray lest suffering come afresh;
But I had gone too far — on I must go —
The virtues of His cross had pierced me through.

In me His promise now fulfilled must be —
"Suffer with me, and you will reign with me!"
Ah, I had only heard of love — but now
I feel it, Oh! I feel its living glow.

He fastened on me such a look of love,
Withering to self — tender, all words above;
Follow I must, whatever may betide;
I love the cross — I shelter in His side!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 62

THE CHURCH IN LAODICEA (continued)

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART SIXTY-TWO

I WILL SUP WITH HIM AND HE WITH ME

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." (Rev. 3:20)

The book of Revelation furnishes us with a sequential overview of the comings of the Lord. Its inspired title is found in the first verse — "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." The Greek word for "revelation" is apokalupsis meaning "unveiling, uncovering," and hence, "revealing." This is expressed in Revelation 1:7, "Every eye shall see Him..." The error of the unspiritual and unenlightened mind is that it immediately assumes that every eye must see Him at the same time and in the same manner. But the multitudinous ways in which the Lord comes and comes and continues to come throughout the illuminating pages of this wonderful book indicates to us the progressive revelation of Jesus Christ, the many-faceted and many-splendored appearing of the Lord from one degree of glory to another until, when all is finished, every creature in heaven, earth, and hell shall have had a revelation of the Son of God! (Rev. 5:13).

With what divine genius does the Holy Spirit on the pages of God's Word portray the living Son of God coming and standing in the midst of the seven churches! This is an earthly scene. The risen and glorified Christ was present in and among the churches. Jesus had promised to come back, and according to chapters two and three of the Revelation He had come back! Then follows swiftly the tragic scene of Jesus Christ, the blessed Head of the church, standing completely outside the Laodicean church!

It is not my purpose here to explore the present condition of the church systems, but when Jesus sent His message to the wealthy church of Laodicea, which boasted that she was rich and increased with goods and had need of nothing, He portrayed Himself as One standing outside the door. He was not within, as He should have been, but on the outside. Behind the doors that were locked against Him they were preaching about Him, and singing about Him, and working and building for Him, but He Himself they had left outside. The membership of the church of Laodicea is large and prestigious, its seats all engaged, its income assured, its organization perfected. Men of good business judgment manage its affairs, in the same shrewd way that they manage their business affairs. The services are made impressive with eloquence and music and well-appointed ritual. Its Sunday School prides itself on its thorough, up-to-date organization and large attendance. It may support some missionaries in the foreign field, for that is the modern thing to do.

Never in the history of the world has there been so much preaching and so much human effort, or so many multi-million dollar church buildings, Christian programs and concerts, so much church membership, or so many outreaches to convert the world; but the living Christ, locked out of their grandiose schemes, stands outside! The whole church system of our day is built on flesh-appeal programs and promotions rather than the power and glory of the Holy Spirit. In spite of all the glib mention of His name, the truth is that Christ stands outside the church system and His Holy Spirit is not in its works. The thundering message of Christ to the Laodicean church will not even penetrate in to fall upon the already occupied ears of the masses who assemble there, but will be heard only by individual believers. Notice what He says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: IF A-N-Y M-A-N hear my voice, and open the door, I will come IN TO HIM, and will sup with HIM, and HE with me." "If ANY MAN will hear!" "If any man WILL HEAR!"

You meet one that is religious, awed by the crowds, the buildings, the great meetings, the charismatic speakers, the beautiful television programs, the professional music, and the wonderful works supposedly being done. They exude the spirit that they are indeed "rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing."

They can talk much of the milk of the Word, their spiritual gifts, and religious toys. But they know nothing of the present truth of Him gathering to Himself a remnant to bring them into His perfections. They are well versed in the traditional doctrines about the devil and the antichrist and the so-called rapture, but they know naught about the mighty move of God in the earth today to bring many sons to glory, a vast company of manifest sons to bring the kingdom of God in power upon all men and nations. You cannot begin to speak of the deep mysteries of the kingdom, of God's grand purpose to restore all men and the whole creation into God again, or of those divine quickenings which the Holy Spirit of truth has whispered into your being, for they have no ears to hear them. Were you to declare them in the churches of our day, they would cast you out! Their eyes are closed against the bright vision of that which lies before us at the manifestation of the sons of God and the consummation of God's great plan of the ages. They are dull to the keen-edge of the Spirit's working. Yet, blessed be God, there is a people whose ears have been touched by the finger of God, a holy race of king-priests who have been quickened to hear the voice of the great High Priest who speaks from the MELCHIZEDEK REALM. There is a man, yes, a many-membered man, who has heard His voice, and has opened the door, and He has come in to them, and today sups with them, and they with Him!

Christ, the Spirit, is completely without the camp! He is outside the camp of the systems of this world, including the political, economic, and religious systems of man; He is outside the camp of the denominations, churches, and fellowships; He is outside the camp of those who continue in the old ways of the dead, church order of the past; He is also outside the camp of anything that is of man, or that man's works have created. No longer is He dealing with the apostate systems of man, but knocking, knocking, knocking at the heart's door of individual men and women, saying to them, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." This passage can only refer to the spiritual presence of Christ coming to any individual, to any man or woman who will open their heart's door to intimacy of fellowship and vital union with Christ.

As one has written concerning this significant passage, "The message is to 'any man,' a message that abandons the multitude to their religious play, to their church creeds and their church Christs. This is the church of the individual. It is the individual believer with a personal relationship to Christ. For the man who will forsake all else and sup with Christ this an age of glory, an hour of preparation such as we have never known. This is a time when the Spirit of God is speaking to you as an individual. He seeks to sup and dine and feast with you apart from all the religious confusion about us. It is a glorious day when we see the promise that is ours in this hour."

To sup with Christ is to commune vitally with Him; it is to fellowship intimately with Him and freely partake of all that is proffered by His Spirit. He comes in to dine! It is there, deep within — in the inner union of soul and spirit — as nowhere else, privately and alone, that spiritual edification and understanding and participation in heavenly things begins and continues and consummates. Multitudes of believers are weak and sickly in their spiritual lives simply because they depend only on external things — meetings, sermons, singing, ministry, public prayers, programs — and never come to truly know and experience the Lord FOR THEMSELVES. But all who have received the call to sonship have obtained this glorious experience of Christ within, it is now happening for others, and it shall yet happen for more who "hear His voice." It is, first and foremost, an individual experiencing of Christ within ourselves.

Not many of the teeming millions of earth who profess to know the Lord are ready at this time for this high and holy calling! They still fill the pews of the church in Laodicea, and have failed to hear the Lord's voice calling from without. But those who have heard His voice, and have opened the door, are feasting with the Lord in the third feast, the feast of Tabernacles! It is a blessed fact that the feast of Tabernacles is taking place now, but only those with spiritual understanding know it. The rest are busy "star gazing" — watching the clouds — waiting to go to a banquet in the sky. While they wait, snug and smug in their denominational beds, the Lord is calling a people to feast with Him. The Lord stands knocking at their door — but they sleep on.

The awesome scene is portrayed in the beautiful Song of Songs, the Song of Solomon. The believer (Shulamite, type of the church) speaks first and says, "I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled

with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.” (S. of S. 5:2-6) The word “voice” means “sound.” We have the same construction here as in Revelation 3:20. In both cases the terms “knock” and “voice” are synonymous in meaning — “I stand at the door and knock,” “If any man hear my voice.” This reveals that the knock by which the Lord announces His presence is in reality His voice, and throughout the scriptures a voice is used to symbolize a message. The Lord’s voice is the Lord’s message, His present truth which He desires to convey to His people. The message goes out to many, just as the seed of the kingdom is sown in all kinds of soil, and the kingdom net catches a multitude of many kinds of fish. It is the sound of her Beloved that knocks at the door! Her Beloved (Christ, the Spirit) knocks, not only once, but He continues to knock; He calls her to arise and shake off the slumber that locks her in its embrace.

The sleeping believer replies, “I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?” How often when our Lord is calling us to a deeper revelation of Himself, He finds us asleep! We have washed our feet of all the dust of the day, we have cleansed our walk in all those areas He has dealt with previously, we have put off our garment, we have prepared a soft bed of ease, and we have said to our souls, “A little sleep, a little slumber, no need to press on any further at this time, let us rest in the experiences we have had and the truths we have learned.” You see, dear ones, she was not only His love and His dove, she was still His undefiled! This is one who has walked intimately with the Lord and experienced deep cleansings, separations, and dealings. This shows that her greatest failure was in lying down to rest and not watching with wide-open eyes for His coming and the further revelation of Himself! And when He came, she was slow to rise and let Him in; she had kept Him waiting throughout the night. She had not gone off into spiritual fornication with the systems of man, she had not mingled with the world, she had committed no gross sins of the flesh, she had not been flirting with those who hated Him, as many who are called by His name are doing today; she had not lost her chastity. She was just spiritually lazy; she simply did not seem to have the stamina to go further. She felt that she had reached a plateau; she had attained to a high place in Christ; but now she deserved to lie down and rest, but not to go to sleep; but she was soon lulled into a half-slumber.

In desperate ardor her Beloved endeavors to enter her room, but the door is locked. She had not only closed, but had locked and bolted the door! When she locked the door, she did not mean to lock HIM out; she only desired that her rest might be undisturbed. She had no thought of refusing to get up and let HIM in, nor did she deliberately lock the door so HE could not get in. She only wanted a little rest! This is always the way slumber steals in upon those who have received the call to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth! Those who hear the call, but fall short of following on all the way — it is not their set purpose to reach the place of stagnation and loss where they finally find themselves. They just forget that it is through the avenue of sleep — indifference — that spiritual poverty comes and robs them of the glory of the fullness of Christ within themselves! Slumber does not prepare us for great attainment, it only paves the way for us to be defeated and robbed.

Then we read, “My Beloved put His hand in the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for Him. I rose up to open for my Beloved...but my Beloved had withdrawn Himself, and was gone: my soul failed when He spake: I sought Him, but could not find Him; I called Him but He gave me no answer.” While she was sleeping, He had knocked; while she was refusing, He had called; but by the time He had finally aroused her from her momentary lethargy, He had withdrawn. She little realized the gravity of her sleepy refusal to arise and open to Him! She thought He would wait until she had stirred herself. He had continued calling and knocking through the night, though she had treated Him as a stranger; though she had snuggled more deeply into her bed of ease, and left Him out in the darkness until His head was wet with the night dew, and His locks with the drops of the night.

Beloved reader of this message, have you heard your Lord’s voice calling you to enter into a deeper relationship with Him? Have you heard Him bid you come apart with Him, to leave everything and everyone that hindered you and enter into a higher realm of revelation, separation, and reality in Him? Have you kept your Lord waiting while you pampered your flesh, or while you did something you wanted to do, or while you lingered in the old religious ways that could never lead you into the fullness of Himself? Did you have some “religious work” which you felt was very important? Did you have some association you felt you could not break? Did you tell the Lord to wait until you could leave them, or finish what you were doing? Have you heard Him chide you because you neglected Him, because you were not putting Him and His high purposes

above all else, because you would not scale the heights with Him in the Spirit, to commune with Him in the secret place of His presence and glory, because you were not following on to know Him in deeper measures? Oh, yes! There are many in this hour who think to respond and obey, who desire to come out and go away with Him, who want to arise and commune with Him in the heights of mount Zion, and sup with Him in the feast of Tabernacles, who are going to explore the deeper measures of His wisdom, His love, His power, and His glory which He waits to disclose — but not until some propitious moment when they have finished what they are doing!

How glorious is the walk in the Spirit with Christ in this great day of His unveiling in His elect! I cannot imagine what life would be like in this fear-filled maniacal world of today if we knew nothing of God's great plan of the ages. How dark and uncertain everything would be! It is the truth, the truth of Christ's coming in us, the truth of sonship the hope of creation, the truth of the kingdom of God coming in power and great glory, the truth of the deliverance of creation from the bondage of corruption, the truth of the restoration of all men to God, the truth of His glory revealed in the manifest sons of God, the TRUTH THAT CHRIST HAS REVEALED TO US AND WITHIN US AS WE HAVE SUPPED WITH HIM AND HE WITH US — this truth gives us hope for today and for tomorrow. What anticipation it stirs in our hearts!

Ah, the believer so accurately described in this moving drama had closed the door and locked it. In her snug bed of religious myths, folklore, and fairy tales and personal indifference she had disrobed and gone to sleep. Her Lover was up and had come to commune with her and ravish her heart with His love, revealing Himself to her on yet a higher plane, and to call her away with Him to the mountains of Bether (separation), to the top of Amana and Shenir (the high places), and to the heights of Hermon (the mount of transfiguration). He came knocking and calling her to great and mighty things in the kingdom realm of God. When she, at her own time, opened the door, lo! He was gone. The hour of her visitation had passed!

In this midnight hour the lukewarm church of Laodicea has no room for Christ and His glory and has their door closed against Him. He has been standing outside and knocking at the door! He is not within, as He should be, but on the outside. Behind the door that is locked against Him they are loudly preaching about Him, earnestly working for Him, but He Himself they have left outside. We hear much about the great "revival" that is in the world today. But methinks that the revival is but the stirring of the Shulamite upon her bed as she endeavors to awaken herself out of her stupor to the call of her Beloved. I assure you that He will not remain in the place of a beggar at the door of His people forever! His voice will cease and you will be left in your bed of fairy tales and dreams and delusions! You can go on dreaming about a banquet beyond the stars, and continue to ignore His knocking at the door of your heart for entrance and love and union today. Many individuals have heard His voice and have opened their door, and He has come in, and is supping with them, and they with Him. The feast is now spread! A new kingdom day has dawned! Throughout this "evening time" as the kingdom of God has dawned in the hearts of His called and chosen elect, the Lord has been standing at the door of the church in Laodicea knocking, and those who have had hearing ears have recognized His voice, have opened to Him, and together with Him they have been enjoying the great feast of truth and reality which has been spread before them. And now, now! He is turning from the door, His head is wet with the dew of the night, His locks are dripping with the night drops, and sadly He is departing from all the church systems of man, leaving them with their cherished traditions and the vanity of their fleshly pursuits. But for those who have opened the door and let HIM in, great and glorious things are prepared!

It is true that Christ stands outside the church systems of man, knocking, that he who hears may open the door. That is the sense of the meaning of Christ's message in its corporate application. There is, however, a further and deeper sense in this message on the individual and personal level. The Christ who knocks at the door of our individual heart is on the inside of each of us, in our spirit! There is a pure realm within man, an inner sanctum, an eternal dimension — the Holiest of all. Christ is in our spirit, and though we hear His voice as part of the corporate body of Christ, yet, is it not from Christ within our spirit that His voice comes to us? You see, my beloved, Christ is in our spirit, knocking on the door of our soul! He is in our spirit, knocking on the door of our body! He is saying, "If any (outer) man hear my voice, and open the door, I will not only be joined to your spirit and be one with you in spirit, but I will come into your soul and sup with you there, I will come into your soul and be fused with your soul; I will come into your body and sup with you there, I will come

into your body and be fused with your body, and you will know in the totality of your being the fullness of my perfection, wisdom, power, life, and incorruptibility!”

It is in this experience that the soul is truly saved and this corruptible puts on incorruption and this mortal puts on immortality, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. So you see, dear one, while we are believing into and entering into Christ in one dimension of our experience, He is entering into us FROM WITHIN! In the typology of the tabernacle in the wilderness we begin our journey into Christ in the outer court, at the brazen altar, where the lamb is slain to take away our sins; that is the order in which the priest, in his redemptive ministry enters into the tabernacle. Then we progress onward through the holy place where we are filled with the oil of the Holy Spirit, feast upon the bread of the body of Christ, and worship at the golden altar where we are transformed by the fire upon the altar from a cold, hard substance (incense), into a spiritual fragrance that wafts its way through the veil into the very glory and majesty of God; finally, we awaken into the consciousness of the most holy place of His fullness! But in the outworking of Christ in our lives, He begins in the inner sanctuary (most holy place) of our spirit, breaks forth from behind the veil to live, walk, express and manifest Himself in our soul (holy place), and finally to show forth His life in our body (outer court) realm. As we go in, He comes out, and there is effected a perfect union, for in this commingling there is the formation of the God Man — Christ, Head and body. It is He in us, and we in Him! Herein lies the power and glory of sonship!

You can never in a million years transform your soul by imposing laws or demanding reformation. And there is nothing that you can do for the body that will deliver it from the law of sin and death and bestow immortality. The Holy Spirit could not have used a more descriptive term than “dust” in describing the natural man! **“Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.” (Gen. 3:19)** A chemical analysis of the human body reveals that twenty of the ninety-six elements that comprise the universe are present in man — substances such as carbon, nitrogen, calcium, phosphorous, sulfur, chlorine, fluorine, potassium, sodium, magnesium, iron, etc. All the elements are those found on the surface of the earth! Health foods, vitamins, herbs, exercise — at best these can only slow down the process of corruption and disintegration, postponing for a little season the inevitable catastrophe. You can eat bean sprouts and yogurt and drink teas and swallow supplements by the hands full, all of which are themselves but corruptible substances of earth, and have not one whit of power to administer eternal life to a corruptible organism. It is merely adding corruption to corruption!

Immortality does not come through any natural, earthly, material, physical, or temporal element that can be added to the body. So Jesus says — “If you want a transformed soul and an immortal body — Behold, I stand at the door and knock! I’m knocking from the inside, at the door of your soul and your body; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in!” When He marches triumphantly through the corridors of your soul, and steps into the territory of your body; when His Lordship and the power of His Life are established there; when the Bridegroom (Christ, the Spirit) marries and is joined in union with the Bride (soul), and in this union of Life they fully and completely occupy their home (the body), there will be manifest the full and complete salvation and perfection of the WHOLE MAN! Aren’t you glad!

This is the Lord who has come to the door of your life and mine today. This is the Lord who claims the right to reign, and from whose patient, haunting pursuit we can never get free! Behold, He stands at the door and knocks. While the sands of time are running out and the hurrying days mold our destiny, He stands at the door and knocks. While the purposes of His kingdom march onward, and the hour for the manifestation of the sons of God draws nigh, He stands at the door and knocks. Tenderer than the kiss of a little child, mightier than the flashing lightnings of heaven, He stands at the door and knocks. The moment any man opens the door and permits the Christ of glory to emerge from his spirit to enter into soul and body, to sit down there, to take up residence there, to sup there, to be Himself, all that He is, there, that man enters an entirely new realm. He has passed from the limited knowledge of a distant Christ to CHRIST AS HIS LIFE. He has turned from the temples of carnal zeal and fleshly prosperity. Christ no longer stands at the door of a vast multitude gathered within the Laodicean church of this Dark Age. He comes now to that “little flock” of footstep followers who have been set aside of the Lord for the most intimate and personal visitation. How wonderful it is when the Christ comes IN to sup with us and we with Him! How blessed we are to have that intimate and sacred communion with the Lord!

The very next words of the Lord, after saying that He stands at the door and knocks, beseeching an entrance to sup with us and we with Him, are these, **“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne.” (Rev. 3:21)** The great truth in this hour is that God is bringing us into union with Christ as sons of God. The wonderful work He is doing in us is part of that glorious purpose! The overcomer is the one who leaves the congregation of the Laodicean church to enter into union with Christ within himself. “I will come in to Him, and sup with him.” Father’s creative work within us is being fulfilled as He draws us out of the old and from all that relates to the past order of things. He may separate us from all outward fellowship until we learn to fellowship only with Him! **“Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.” (I Jn. 1:3)** He also may confine us and close all other doors to us, shutting us up to Himself, and silencing all other voices but His. We may feel lonely and restricted, but the real purpose of our loving Father is to continue His grand work of making us His kingdom firstfruits, a people in whom He has established His Life to be revealed to all creation in authority and power.

As we continue to sup with Him and walk with Him in this strange time, we are making a significant transition. The Laodicean church is not admitting Him, nor are they eating and communing with Him, nor are they listening to His voice that they might learn His will and do it in this great hour. But in those who hear His voice, and sup with Him, He is establishing His kingdom — His new administrative order for the new kingdom day we are now entering. Just as there is a change of ages, so is there a change of orders! The first step is to let go of the old, for God can not establish the new in people who cling to the old. Without a doubt, many who read these lines have already been dealt with by Father and have left the old church order, coming out to wait in Father’s presence to hear and learn the truths and principles and realities He would teach us and raise up in our lives in the power of Christ. We have progressed beyond the spiritual nakedness, lukewarmness, blindness, self-satisfaction, and spiritual poverty of the Laodicean church order. The Lord rebuked and chastened us so that we repented of our former ways. When the Lord knocked on the “door” of our hearts and lives and began to speak to us, we heard His still, small voice and invited Him in to sup and commune with us. And now we follow on to truly be an overcomer in the fullness of all that means!

I WILL SUP WITH HIM AND HE WITH ME

“If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” (Rev. 3:20)

I speak the truth when I say that the hour has come, and now is, when all the elect of the Lord have begun to KNOW THE LORD FOR THEMSELVES. All who have received the call to sonship have come out from all the promotions of man to seek God, walk with God, hear His voice, know God intimately and powerfully, that God Himself might be our Father and sup with us and we with Him. We opened the door reverently and joyfully, and before we realized it we found ourselves digging deep in the storehouse of God’s treasures of wisdom and knowledge and sitting with Him at His banqueting table. He has spread a table before us in the presence of our enemies, He has led us through green pastures, He has revealed to us fountains of living water flowing unceasingly from within; He has caused us to rest beside cool, still streams; and HE, the Great Shepherd of the sheep and Bishop of our souls has come to abide with us and our cup overflows with the unspeakable riches of His grace and the wonder of His glorious and eternal reality. Isn’t it wonderful!

How precious the knowledge that we have a God who hungers, thirsts, deeply desires, to feast with His people — a God who from the beginning has tried to show us that His greatest delight is not in showing His authority, but in enjoying intimate and close fellowship with His own. He set a feast of fruits before Adam and Eve, the likes of which man has never been able to reproduce, and then He walked with them in the garden in the spirit of the day and communed with them face to face. He ate with Abraham in his tent at noonday. He spread a table in the wilderness for the entire nation of His chosen, and He gave them the very bread of heaven. Jesus performed His first miracle at a wedding feast. He fed five thousand on a hillside. He did not hesitate to attend feasts, and ate and drank with men until He was called a glutton and a wine-bibber. He went up to Jerusalem to celebrate the feasts of Yahweh. And He has established the new covenant with a feast, the great spiritual feast, wherein He has given the redeemed His own body (word) for their meat and His own blood (spirit) for their drink, that death might be swallowed up of life. He has promised through the prophet Isaiah that in the latter days He will make a great feast of spiritual blessings and benefits for all nations upon His holy Mount

(Isa. 25:6). And the greatest feast of all — the marriage supper of the Lamb — ushers a people into the most intimate relationship with their Lord! It is not in meetings, preachings, teachings, prophesyings, singing, or any outward exercise that we enjoy the marriage supper of the Lamb; it is at the marriage union of our “soul bride” with our “spirit bridegroom” that we discover within ourselves the glorious marriage feast provided by our Father!

We are commanded to feed upon Christ, to eat His flesh and drink His blood, “for my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.” (Jn. 6:55) No longer are we to feed off the husks of man’s sustenance, no more are we to feed off the putrefaction spread upon Babylon’s polluted tables, but we are invited to feast on the bounties of the fullness of Christ in an exceedingly rich and intimate manner, thereby drawing our sustenance from Him. “As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.” (Jn. 6:57) “I am the bread of life...” (Jn. 6:35)

There is an old song of the church that has a profound meaning. It says, “Jesus has a table spread, where the saints of God are fed; He invites His chosen people, Come and dine!” That table is in the heavens of God’s Spirit and in the Spirit and by the Spirit we are seated there. Paul confirms that we have been “raised up, and made to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” (Eph. 2:6) There is a table of the Lord spread for us in the heavenlies! Jesus said to His disciples, “I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father has appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom.” (Lk. 22:29-30) Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and the elders of Israel ate at the Lord’s Table on Mount Sinai. “And they saw the God of Israel: and there were under His feet as it were a paved work as a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And...the nobles of the children of Israel...saw God, and did eat and drink.” (Ex. 24:9-11)

What an awesome picture! Seventy-four men of God, seated with Him in the height of a mountain peak, eating and drinking! What a supernatural table! What glory was there! It seems from the record that it was so overwhelming that none but Moses could take it in. Can we not see by this that the one thing the Lord seeks above all else from His chosen ones is COMMUNION AT HIS TABLE! Oneness around His heavenly table! A continual abiding in Him as our food, our strength, our enjoyment, and our life!

A sister in the Lord sent us the following beautiful testimony. “I had a marvelous vision while alone in a secluded cabin atop the mountains by Lake Arrowhead. It was in this very place that I stayed for seven days, snowbound in 1981, when God began this miracle transformation in me. The flood gates were opened; scripture has come alive; I hear the voice clearly now from God Himself and all things are being made known to me from the Word who became flesh and now dwells among men, including me. On this occasion, however, it was a balmy day atop the mountains as I watched the squirrels scampering across the balcony and the sassy blue jays compete for the corn and nuts on the railing. My husband had gone for a hike in the woods and I felt a strange kind of listlessness that one often experiences in saying final farewells to things they know shall never return. Somehow I knew that every stage of my walk with Christ and the experiences of my life in general, were being buried in the past forever. I wasn’t sad about it, but I was certain about the finality of it all, and I wondered what was happening to me and where it all would lead.

“I began to talk with the Lord about it, and I do mean talk with, for I hear His voice now whenever I take the time to converse with Him personally and I no longer pray ‘at’ Him or sort of hope I will ‘hit’ something out there that hears and answers; but I have conversations and hear Him as clearly as any human on this earth. I don’t remember the first part of our conversation, for it was only the Father talking with me by His Spirit. Then I looked at where we were. We were sitting at a table! At first it seemed like it was just a cozy little table where we were about to sup together. There were wine goblets in front of us, and I had a flash of, ‘What would the church world think if they knew Jesus drank wine!’ But, He read my thoughts and only smiled at the foolish ideas and values of humans in their doctrinal treadmill. There was a loaf of bread on the table and meat, a roasted fowl of some kind, a platter of fish, and huge bowls of fresh juicy fruit.

“Then I looked around and realized there was no floor under me. I mean — no floor at all! Nothing. I was suspended, yet my feet were on something that felt solid, but I saw nothing there. I was sort of up in the sky; yet when I looked directly at Jesus, it was more like I was in a romantic little private café with just Him and me there. I had a strange feeling of a very, very personal, but totally pure and holy love between Jesus and me

that is unlike any love or any relationship I have ever had. I can compare this with nothing I have known before. Deep and pure and wonderful beyond words and His face, that face so very kind and so penetrating with healing in His very glance as if His eyes were able to look deep into my soul and love away every disappointment and sorrow and tear I've ever shed. He seemed to convey to me that He was there with me through all those and He had taken them all upon Himself back into the past to that tree at Calvary and they were buried there. All I was experiencing were phantoms, lies that haunt and torment when one doesn't know they are not real and have been buried in the tomb with the crucified Christ.

"After this I noticed that we really were not in a tiny room together, but as I looked around in the heavens, more light was shed on the table and I saw that it was instead a very, very long table. In fact, it was extended as far as the eye could see, and only then disappeared because of distance. It was simply in space, suspended in the heavens, though I did not see the earth below, at least not at first, and then not the earth I've always known. It was very exciting and a wonderfully breathtaking view.

"I was aware that I was sitting at the head of the table as if I was being treated like a queen, and Jesus was there to serve me. That embarrassed me, and I did not think it was right; but I didn't want to offend Him. So I asked, 'Who prepared all this food!' He said that He had done it Himself...that He had prepared it just for me, even in the presence of my enemies. But I didn't see anyone around, and didn't have any personal enemies anyway, though I grieved at the enemies of the cross that I knew about. He smiled. I was getting more and more uncomfortable sitting at the head of the table though, and He said, 'Say what you are thinking, N——, because I can see your thoughts anyway, you know.' 'Well,' I said, 'since you know what I am thinking, I must say that I do not feel right about sitting at the head of the table. I will stay here if it is what you want, Lord, but I really believe I would feel better if you sat in the head seat and I sat at the side.' He agreed and we traded seats. He seemed pleased with that and said that it was an act of proving I no longer wanted to control my life but had come to prefer HIS headship to my own, or anyone else's. I didn't know about all that; but I did feel better with HIM at the head of the table and me at the side!

"During our meal, we did eat. While we ate, famous men came up to the table and without really noticing the Lord or myself, grabbed a platter of food from off the table and disappeared with it. I recognized Jimmy Swaggart, and Billy Graham as a young man with galoshes and an overcoat, and some others still in public ministry today, including Oral Roberts, and some others I did not know. I asked, 'Who are these men?' The Lord said, 'They are ones who were given a heaping serving of Truth at one time, but they settled for just that and never returned for more, or to sit with me and sup until I bade them go back out and serve others.' 'Then don't they know they need to do that?' I asked. 'No,' said Jesus, 'they have had that food devoured long ago, and now they pass around an empty plate, too busy still taking glory for that first meal that they don't even know they no longer have anything of value to offer.' He seemed very sad at this, and I wanted to comfort Him for a change. Isn't that a strange thought! He said, 'All those characteristics, even of divine compassion, are from the heart of the Father, which is why we are getting to look more alike all the time.'

"Jesus smiled even more broadly at me. 'After all,' He confirmed, 'we are family now. We have the same Father, don't we?' His eyes twinkled with merriment and I quickly forgot His sad look as I took a big bite of the drumstick in front of me. In fact, I had plenty of everything which was, by far, the most delicious food I had ever tasted and I was quite satisfied. But even after I was full and content with the enormous feast set before me, I looked down and it was all still there as though I had never touched it! I was very puzzled by this. The Lord answered my thoughts and told me, 'No matter how much you eat, and how tasty and nourishing, it is beyond compare; it will always still be there for more and more and more.' I knew He was talking to me about the Word of God! No matter how much I feast, it is always a gigantic banquet and we still haven't even made a dent in it. I have come to feed off of it as a source of very real life, and it continues to feed me as it unfolds within me and I get my fill; yet I never get my fill! I am always satisfied, yet I continue to look forward to more of my daily bread.

"What a banqueting table the Lord Jesus sets before me, and I praise Him for this miracle food. I cannot do justice or rightly describe to anyone what has happened inside me, but it is a glorious and never-ending supper with the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, that is exactly what it is — THE LORD'S SUPPER! It is the Lord's Supper in the final, heavenly way that He has told us about in the Word and now by His precious loving Spirit, 'I will not

drink wine again until I can drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.' He drank wine with me that day, and ate with me, and I with Him, and He said, 'I HAVE BEEN KNOCKING ON THE DOOR FOR SO LONG, and I continue to knock on the doors of other's hearts, and if they will open the door, I will go in and sup with them as well.' But the chairs at that endless table were empty at that hour.

"I remember that the practical side of me arose within and I wondered if the food might not spoil awaiting the arrival of the wedding guests; for I realized this intimate loving meal with my Jesus was the marriage supper. He said, 'It won't spoil. It will wait till they arrive.' Then I wondered if I couldn't take (are you ready for this awful humanness) a doggie bag of some of the food back with me. I knew it was of the Spirit and thought perhaps it might give others a taste of the Truth of this wondrous living meal. But Jesus smiled again and said to me, 'You have been taking great heapings of my Word to others in the prophetic revelations I have given you for them; but as you well know, it hasn't triggered anyone's taste buds for more of the Truth thus far!' We both were grieved at this dreadful fact. 'But then, child, it is not yet time. Be not dismayed. No matter what you do, it is the work of my Spirit that alone can enable others to see Truth even as you now see it.' So I didn't feel like such a failure after that. He was pleased with me, in our supping together, so I wanted to rest in that.

"Then I became aware that crumbs fell off both His plate and mine, yet there was no floor to pick them off of, and I was concerned about cluttering (the practical me again). Jesus said to let them go for the dogs. 'Dogs?' 'Yes,' said the Lord, 'these are morsels of Truth that they clamor for and yet settle for on earth and believe they have the full course dinner! They have nothing to compare it with, so they believe they have it all.' 'How sad,' I replied. 'Only the crumbs I now spill are available to the weak and hungry lambs, for the famine grows worse and worse in this terrible time.' That is why I was saying, 'I'm starving to death in this place!' referring to church meetings before God dragged me out of them to be taught by Him. 'You were hungry,' the Lord replied, 'so I feed you now myself.'" — end quote.

There is a great law of life revealed in the Lord's invitation for us to sup with Him. It is in the fellowship, the communion of supping intimately with the Lord that His life, His mind, His nature, His will, His ways, His very self is communicated to us, yea, imparted to us. Let me give you an illustration. All the communications of men with one another lie as it were in two strata — two stories with a floor between them; one story is deeper than the other. In the upper, superficial story, men tell each other what they know. All schools, all books, belong in this superficial realm of companionship. In the deeper story men give each other what they are. All true communion, all merging of wills and lives, belong in the profounder realm. Do you know the difference? You go to a man's school, or read his book, and there are great and precious things that pass from him to you. The facts which he has gathered in his industrious study, the ideas that have come forth like stars out of the darkness of his concentrated thought — these he can give you and he does, and you are richer for them. He has only to teach; you have only to attend and understand. But by and by you come to know the man, to fellowship intimately with him, to love him, and to count his will better than your own. You absorb his spirit into your life. Then, is there not a new kind of communication birthed between your life and his? Does he not give you things that he could not give before — not only facts, ideas, and information — but motives, hopes, fears, loves, emotions, inspirations? You have passed from the upper to the deeper story of communication, and the passage took place when you passed over from listening and learning to loving and communing!

There are many today who have met Christ in the upper, superficial story. We once met Him there in meetings, sermons, teachings, prophesyings, scriptures, programs, activities, and as we listened, He told us things we never could have known without Him. The teachers we met were inChristed men called apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Our classroom was the church. The lessons we learned were truths, precepts, and principles of the kingdom of God. But now, thank God! We have met the Christ in the deeper chamber where, as we sup with Him, and He with us, He reveals to us His heart and the very secret of His being and in the union of our life He makes us like Himself!

Oh, the blessedness of private, personal, intimate communion with Christ! I would rather spend one day alone in communion with Christ, than a whole week with all the precious ministers I know in this word of the kingdom. Yea, I would rather spend a day in communion with Christ alone, than in the company of the twelve apostles even, were it possible for them to pay me a visit. If we have the joy of intimate fellowship and vital communion with Christ the Lord, what can add to it? It is Christ who constitutes heaven! The presence of Him, the flame

of His love, the rays of His glory are heaven indeed! If there is any other heaven beside the glorious presence of Christ, I shall not covet it. If I have Christ, Christ is enough for me, as says the Psalmist when he makes Christ his habitation, his portion, his strength, his life, and the ultimate end of all his desire. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul. And again, "Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations." And, "When I awake with Thy likeness, I shall be satisfied." "For me to live, is Christ."

Though we find deep satisfaction in the sweet communion we have with Christ, the secret converse we have together as He journeys with us through this wilderness, how oft our hearts yearn for HIS FULLNESS, when all veils and limitations of earth shall forever pass away! There are times when He makes Himself so real that our small capacity can hardly stand the strain of such revelations. It is as though we were bringing a pint cup to receive the waters of Niagara; even the earthen vessel is almost carried away! But the day is coming when our capacity shall be so enlarged, that we can receive the full unveiling of our Lord and the glories that are His; and He will give us such revelations of the Father that we shall enter into His joy and glory, for all that is His is ours in Him. Then we shall see Him as He is, and shall behold all things clearly, with nothing between to obscure the vision. This corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality. The Father's name shall be written in our forehead. The nations shall walk in the light of that city which we are where the Lamb is the Light and the throne of God is in the midst of her.

We come to know Christ in His presence and fellowship when there is fulfilled within us the words of the prophet: "The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him." (Hab. 2:20) It is not the earth of mountains and valleys, of streams and forests, but THIS EARTH WHICH WE ARE that must learn to keep silence before God, for it is this earth of our body which is the temple of God, bought with His precious blood and consecrated to be the habitation of God through the spirit. This earth, with all its carnal desires and ambitions, with all its fleshly wisdom and zeal, must be brought to holy silence and reverence before the King of Glory; and we must come to know Him, not in the abundance of words by which we constantly clatter in prayers, entreating God for this thing, and that blessing; but in waiting patiently before Him and listening until He speaks to us. It is in holy quietness before God that the deepest witness of the Spirit comes, testifying to our spirits that we are the sons of God, and there the Father draws nigh and delights in us and we enter into the full enjoyment of the Father's love.

It was at the commencement of Jesus' public ministry that an event happened which so attracted the attention of His disciples that they wrote it down. After a day full of wonders and works at Capernaum, the crowd in the evening became still greater. The whole town was before the door; sick were healed, devils were cast out. It was late before they got to sleep and in the throng there had been little time for quiet or for secret prayer and communion. And lo, when they rose early in the morning they found the Master gone! "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed." (Mk. 1:35) In the silence of the night He had gone out to seek a place of solitude in the wilderness; and when they found Him there, He was still communing with the Father.

Oh, my beloved! If you and I would be manifest sons of God, we must especially contemplate Jesus praying alone in the wilderness. There is the secret of His marvelous life! What He did and spoke to man, was first SPOKEN AND LIVED THROUGH WITH THE FATHER. He who would be like Him in His walk with the Father in sonship may simply begin here — to follow Jesus into solitude. Even though it cost the sacrifice of night rest, of business, of intercourse with friends, or ministry to desperate needs, the time must be found to be alone with the Father. This is the path of sonship! The sermon on the mount was not a message to babes teaching them how to act to be good little children of God; it is the very essence of the principles of the kingdom of God and the life of sonship, teaching sons of God how to be sons of their Father, in what nature to live and reign in the kingdom. And in that wonderful kingdom teaching the firstborn Son of God reveals the great truth that it is in the closet, in the secret chamber, with closed door, or in the solitude of the wilderness, that the Father must be fellowshiped every day in the communion of His life. If Jesus, the firstborn among many brethren, needed it, how much more we! What it was to Him it will be for us. While we greatly appreciate the blessed fellowship with other saints of like mind and spirit, and there is a time for that, yet it is quickened to our hearts that it is from heaven alone that the power to walk in a heavenly life can come!

I have known saints who were embarrassed because of the frustrating failure of being able to pray in public. Now, while there is an occasional place for public prayer, the God-ordained place of prayer is in the enclosed privacy where there is no other motivational influence than the fellowship of a son with his Father. I do not hesitate to tell you that I do not enjoy public prayer. I would rather never pray in public! It is unnatural to me. Why do others need to hear the words that are addressed to my Father alone? I cannot pour out my deepest heart or express my most intimate thoughts, desires, concerns, and confessions in the ears of the listening multitude, or even in the hearing of my most intimate friend, or even my beloved wife. Not one word of my prayer is meant for any but my Father, not one word of my prayer is directed toward any but my God. It is this being with the Father, and the Father alone that is the essence of sonship prayer. And that brings to mind again the solitary nights of clear starlight which Jesus spent on the hills of Galilee, when the holiest events that ever occurred in a human soul took place in His, when marvelous discourse with the Father unfolded within His consciousness the reality of His sonship to God, when it must have seemed as if a quite unique tone released itself from our earth and made its way to the farthest expanses of the heavenlies above. And now — in the secret place of the Most High His younger brethren, the sons of God, are bidden to live this over again!

The life of sonship is a hidden, inner life, having to do with the spiritual and invisible One who sees in secret. It is a secluded life, hid with Christ in God. The life in Christ neither strives nor shouts, nor does one hear its voice in the streets. It shrinks from all outward displays, whether showy public almsgiving, conspicuous religious exercises, oratorical prayers, ceremonious fastings, broadened phylacteries, processional parades, clerical costume, titles, or degrees, or holy tones. Like a planet around the sun, it rolls in its orbit of obedience to the Father without fanfare or advertisement; like the sun itself, it shines without noise.

We live in a Laodicean day of much feverish running to and fro, and Martha-like preoccupation about much serving; a day of organizations, conventions, gatherings, seminars, television shows, public meetings, and programs of all sorts. It has almost come to be understood, even in “sonship” and “kingdom” circles that we can do nothing for God unless we organize, promote, and hold a public meeting. The secret life of aloneness with God has largely given way to the public life of gatherings, meetings, and activities. The closet has given way to the synagogue. And that is not sonship! There is indeed a time for corporate expression, but first and foremost let our watchword be: Alone with God. We need to hide ourselves with God before we show ourselves for God. And many who call themselves sons of God have not hidden themselves with God long enough to have much to show for God! That is the truth. All true sons are coming to intimately and fully know the Father in the secret place, to be prepared and equipped by Him there, before they are shown to the world in the long-awaited manifestation of the sons of God!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 63

THE CHURCH IN LAODICEA (continued)

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART SIXTY-THREE

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me." (Rev. 3:20)

Many wonderful things are said to those who hear the voice of the Lord! In the days of His flesh the Lord Jesus said, **"The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live."** (Jn. 5:25) To John on Patmos the Lord said, "If any man hear my voice, and open the door..." If any man hears His voice and knows that He seeks entrance, if He allows Christ to come in, the promise is, "I will come in to him, and will dine with him." This has to happen spiritually, for no one can come into us as a physical person! The door has to be the entrance into our consciousness, into the avenues of our life. Christ longs to dine with us! He wants to eat with us, and we with Him. He wants to share His life with us, that we might become the bread of God to the famishing creation about us. So the wisdom, knowledge, life, nature, power, glory, and spiritual realization that is in the life of Christ comes to us as we eat together! "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." The food of every son of God is the Word of God — not the letter of the Bible, but the living Word which Christ our life is!

Listen now, with bowed head and contrite spirit, to the heart-cry of the lovely Shulamite as she, possessed by the godly desire to enter into a closer relationship with her Beloved, and to know Him in deeper measures of intimacy and union, which is also the deepest desire of the Lord's elect in this new kingdom day, implores, **"Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest, where Thou makest Thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be a veiled one straying beside the flocks of Thy companions?" (S. of S. 1:7)** All that the world or any creature can give is as ashes to that hungry soul that is longing for a revelation of his Lord. Nothing else can satisfy, neither the Lord's people (companions), nor the food of any other field. All other love is as husks, to the love and companionship of Christ, who alone is imperishable reality. The lovely Shulamite maiden in the Song of Solomon represents the elect of God! Truly those who are the called and chosen of the Lord long to be fed by Him, and by Him alone. They would know where He is feeding His flock, that they may join that company which follows the Lamb to Zion's holy hill and feasts with Him upon the mountain of His holiness.

It is absolutely amazing, the miracle of the ages, to see how God is drawing those who are willing to pay the price to go all the way with God in this momentous hour. His hand is upon every one of them, and He is drawing them to Himself in increasingly deeper measures. There is no self-satisfaction with those whom God is drawing, in whom He has created the hunger after reality. Though we are always satisfied with Christ, on whatever level we have experienced Him, it seems that the more we feed upon Him and the more fulfilled we become in our relationship with Him, the hungrier we are for Him! The more we drink of the living waters of His spirit and truth, the more satisfied we become and yet the thirstier we are! The cry of the Psalmist has become our very own, "As the hart pants after the waterbrooks, so pants my soul after Thee, O God!" The closer we draw to God, the more Christ is revealed to us, the more satisfied we are, and yet the more fervently our hearts pant for Him. This is because a portion of our being has been satisfied, and the portion that remains desires Him all the more! The reason many of God's people are not hungering and thirsting after Him, to know Him in a greater way, is because they are not feeding at all, or are eating the unappetizing, impure, contaminated food of the carnal doctrines and childish programs of the church systems, and drinking lukewarm muddy water from the polluted streams of Laodicea!

Those who have received the call to sonship have been melted down by the dealings of the Lord, that they might cry to the Lord with a voice that would go right up into His heart, "O Thou, whom my soul loveth, tell me where Thou art feeding Thy flock, that I may ever keep step with Thee and not be lingering over food that is dried, withered, and untimely, even though it may once, in some revival or experience of the past, been fresh.

Guide me, that I may walk in every ray of light, that I may feed upon every morsel of present truth, which is the fresh revelation of Thyself, that I may derive the quickening power to be all that you have called me to be and fulfill all of my Father's will." "Tell me where Thou feedest Thy flock," is the fervent cry in the hearts of all the sons of God! We do know and thoroughly understand that only to the degree that we eat of Him are we able to be what He is.

There was a time when doctrine was the passion of my life. I was an avid student of theology and meticulously examined various doctrinal systems. Some of them I rejected, and others I embraced. I thought it was most important to search the scriptures and, from the letter of the Word, to determine what is the truth about a great number of things. Then I got into the gifts of the Spirit and for a season miracles were happening and wonderful healings and deliverances, and the gift of prophecy gushed forth like rushing streams from the mountain tops. Then God began to open the realm of sonship to my wondering spirit, and He has brought me to the place over the past many years where my one and only desire is to SEE HIM, KNOW HIM, and PARTAKE OF HIM who is the living reality. Many of the doctrines we have learned may or may not be true, and whatever you or I believe about them, I have discovered that the Lord is not nearly concerned about them as we are. In fact, when the Lord reaches out to touch people and move in their lives, He pays no attention at all to what they believe about the Godhead, water baptism, sacred names, soul sleep, Sabbath days, and a thousand other issues men quibble about. I am telling you that the living substance of Jesus Christ is exciting me more than anything else that I have ever found in the scriptures or in the realm of experience! The food for sons of God is the "living bread" which if a man eats of it he shall never die; and the drink for sons of God is the "living water" which if a man drinks of it he shall never thirst. The words of the hymn writer have become gloriously alive in my heart:

**Break Thou the bread of life,
Dear Lord to me —
As Thou didst break the loaves
Beside the sea;**

**Beyond the sacred page
I seek Thee Lord —
My spirit pants for Thee,
O Living Word!**

The law of the New Creation demands a change, a transformation — everything God puts within us WE MUST BECOME, until we are what we contain. The transition is from mere possession to a state of being. We have quoted the scripture, "Christ is made unto us righteousness," and we have confessed, "Christ is my righteousness!" We have talked about imputed righteousness, imparted righteousness, and how Christ within us is the righteous One. That is a great and blessed truth! But if you never get beyond that you are like a baseball player who hits the ball and only gets to first base. For you see, the scripture also says, "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that WE MIGHT BE MADE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM." (II Cor. 5:21) You will discover a great truth when you understand the difference between Christ made righteousness unto us, and we made the righteousness of God in Him! In the first I seek the Lord and find Him as my righteousness. In the second I press my way into the fullness of God and discover that all He is, which has been credited to my account by grace, I MAY NOW EXPERIENTIALLY BECOME! Entrance into Him takes me out of the realm of imputed righteousness and places me into the reality of realized righteousness. This brings transformation into the image of God! It is union with God in His personality, and participation with God in His nature and ability.

Let me illustrate. In the process of a chicken being formed the egg must first be fertilized. In the moment the egg is fertilized the new little chick comes into existence in the egg. A tiny little speck of blood appears in the yoke of the egg. That speck is the embryonic life of the chick formed in the egg. You still have the egg — the white, the yoke, the shell — and within the egg is that little germ of life living and growing. But the egg is still the egg and the chick is the chick. Each is separate and distinct from the other. The marvel of it is that as the chick develops the Creator has wonderfully provided for the chick to live off the egg. Both the yoke and the white of the egg are drawn upon by that life, consumed by that life, absorbed into that life, completely

swallowed up by that life. Once the chick was in the egg. But now the egg has become the chick! The life of the chick in the egg consumes the egg, and when that little chicken finally pecks his way out of the egg — where is the egg? It's walking on two feet! There it goes! Isn't it cute! Why, the egg now has feathers! The egg is the chicken, whereas before the chicken was in the egg. The egg has been changed — metamorphosed — transmuted — and has become the chicken. Can you not see the mystery?

One of the laws of nature is that what you eat becomes you. It has been said that you become what you eat, but that is not quite correct. What you eat becomes you! Over the years I have gained and lost weight from time to time — sometimes in significant amounts! When I weighed fifty pounds more than I do now, every one of those pounds was me. They were one and all J. Preston Eby. They came from eating steak and potatoes, and, of course, many other things. The steak and potatoes became Preston Eby! The beef that once grazed contentedly in the pasture was now raised up into the human family. Out from the vegetable kingdom, the lowly potato had now by transformation been raised up into the kingdom of man. That beef and potato had truly BECOME A HUMAN BEING. They no longer existed as steak and potato — now they were — me!

When I waddled down the street no one exclaimed, “Look at that 180 pounds of steak and potatoes!” It wasn't steak and potatoes walking — it was me. You could examine that paunch around my middle under a microscope, by Xray, or any other sophisticated medical test, and you would not find one microgram of steak, nor one molecule of potato. What I eat becomes me! What I drink becomes me! What I take into me to contain, becomes me! I take it in and contain it to this great end — that it become me. What a beautiful figure this is of that which is spiritually transpiring in the lives of God's sons in this day of the Lord! God puts Himself into us, His righteousness, His peace, His joy, His nature, His power, His wisdom — and HE IS MADE UNTO US ALL THAT HE IS! But we are not content, as are others, to just contain this life. Oh, no! As we live by His life Christ is raised up in us — AS US. The Word is made flesh in us, the heavenly is transmuted into the earthly, and we become what we contain. No longer is Christ made something unto us, but we now BECOME ALL THAT HE IS! It is not any more Christ in me the hope of glory — now it is only THE GLORY! Christ and I are one. There is no difference. That is the glory of sonship. Oh, the mystery of it!

Go with me now to the land of Israel, almost two millennia ago. It is the month of Nisan, and a prettier spring one could hardly remember. This “beginning of months” in the Hebrew calendar corresponded roughly to the latter part of our March and the first part of April and marked the end of Jesus' three and a half years of sonship ministry. Sometime during the day Jesus was asked by His disciples, “Where would you like to take the Passover this year?” (Mk. 14:12) Always before, Jesus had seemed to know where they would observe the Passover together, but this time His instructions were rather strange, even to those disciples who again and again were surprised by the things Jesus would say and do. He told Peter and John, “I want you to go and get a place ready for us to partake of the Passover.” They replied, “Where do you want us to prepare this place?” “Go into Jerusalem,” Jesus replied, “and you're going to see a man carrying a pitcher of water on his shoulder. I want you to follow him, and whichever house it is he shall enter, you ask for the owner of the house, and tell him, ‘My Master asks, Where is the best room where I can keep the Passover with my disciples?’ He will show you a large upper room at the rear of his home, completely furnished. I want you to stay there and make all the necessary preparations.”

For about a month now the entire city had been in preparation for this important feast. Bridges were repaired, walls whitewashed, sidewalks and drains cleaned and repaired, decorative friezes painted, as the whole city took on an expectant, excited pace. Thousands of lambs were brought in from all parts of the countryside, and ceremonial preparations were under way in all homes for days in advance. The priests would carefully select lambs “without spot or blemish” out of the herds on the tenth day of the month — three days before Jesus sent Peter and John into Jerusalem to find their guest chamber. The lambs were brought into the slaughtering houses in the city.

There is one important point we must notice carefully. As we examine the biblical record it becomes clear that Jesus intended sitting down to a paschal lamb supper about 20 to 21 hours before all the rest of the Jewish homes would be doing the same thing. This truly was to be, then, a special supper! After they had all taken their seats around the table, Jesus, having led them in prayer and pronouncing a blessing on the food in a particularly moving manner, told them, “I have had the deepest desire to eat this Passover with you before I

suffer (that explains why He was celebrating it early!). Because I'm telling you, this is the last time I will eat it with you until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." (Lk. 22:16) The disciples were undoubtedly puzzled. They knew they were sitting down to a Passover supper with the roasted lamb, bitter herbs, unleavened bread, the cups of wine; they knew that Jesus was particularly heavy in His spirit and unusually serious and saddened. And so the supper commenced.

Then, a new phase of the supper seemed to develop. They had all eaten when Jesus took a loaf of the flat unleavened bread, began to break it, and again blessed it, gave it to them, and said, "Take and eat of this, because this is my body which is given for you." As Jesus broke this bread into pieces He knew that in only a few hours His very flesh would be broken open in great wounds — that He would be fulfilling His role in this fleshly life as a great sacrifice on behalf of the whole human race, for and unto whom He would give His "body" in a spiritual dimension, which body is His "Living Word," for it was the "Word" which had been made "flesh"! Later, He took the vessel of wine and blessed it, then poured it saying, "Drink, all of you, because this cup is the New Covenant in my blood which is shed for many. Because I'm telling you that I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the day that I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. Whenever you drink this cup, I want you to do it in remembrance of me, because whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you will be proclaiming the Lord's death until He comes." His blood is His Life, or His Spirit, for "the life of the flesh is in the blood."

There are many things to learn from types and anti-types, for by them truth is taught with greater force than any uttered words. I would like to point out that the Last Supper was a memorial. "And He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me." (Lk. 22:19) Paul also referred to this event when he wrote, "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus in the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take eat: this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." (I Cor. 11:23-25)

I don't know how Christians came to the conclusion that the "Last Supper" was in fact the "first" of a new ritual supper! This wasn't something that Jesus did uniquely on that night. This meal, the Passover meal, was something that was done annually at that time of year as a memorial to the first Passover in Egypt when the firstborn of Israel was saved by the blood of the slain lamb. The Passover meal was always concluded with bread and wine. By this the children of Israel had memorialized the death of God's Lamb for fifteen hundred years! They memorialized it with a type and shadow — bread and wine. In type, the flesh of the lamb and the blood of the lamb were the same as the bread and the wine — two different figures of the same thing. And so we read that "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." (I Cor. 5:7)

For all those years they had, in symbol, been partaking of His body and blood as bread and wine. So the Last Supper was but one of many hundreds that figured the offering up of Christ for the life of the world. He was not doing something new! He was not instituting something different! He was doing the same thing Israel had done every year for fifteen hundred years which symbolized what our Lord was about to bring to completion and fulfillment on the night when He ate the supper with His disciples. The bread Jesus blessed and served to His disciples that night represented His body, while the cup of wine represented His blood of the New Covenant, which was shed for many for the remission of sins. It is His life that takes away our sins! It all represented our salvation. When Jesus blessed the bread and wine, and told His disciples to partake of it, He was illustrating the wonderful truth that their salvation was now being accomplished and fulfilled. As Jesus spoke those words, Father was arranging the events that would fulfill His eternal purposes for the salvation of all mankind. All that was required at that time was for Jesus to have His body broken and His blood poured out, releasing into humanity the living Word and the incorruptible Life that was in Him. He gave it not only for us, but He gave it to us. TAKE, EAT! That is where our salvation is, eating and drinking of Him in the power He has made available through His death, releasing all that was true in Him to become our very substance and life! Isn't it wonderful!

No one realizes better than I the difficulties faced when declaring the things I am teaching here. But I must emphasize again that when the Lord Jesus said, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do"

show the Lord's death till He come," THE LORD WAS SPEAKING FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE ISRAELITE WHO KEPT THE PASSOVER FEAST! He was not instituting a new ritual, a new ceremony, or a new ordinance, for Jesus did not come to establish more types and shadows and outward observances. Oh, no! He came to fulfill all the types and shadows within Himself, He came as the fulfillment of all the law and the prophets, He stepped upon the scene as the reality of everything that the natural and literal and outward feasts of Israel pointed to! So — why would He set up a new ritual to memorialize a reality that had already come? The very thought is absurd! You see, precious friend of mine, Jesus wasn't telling them to eat bread and drink wine as a new ritual observance. It was not a command! All He said was, "As oft as ye eat this (Passover) bread, and drink this (Passover) cup, ye DO show forth the Lord's death till He comes." It was just a statement of fact in reference to the annual Passover meal.

On the night of the Last Supper the Lord had not died yet, the Lamb had not been killed, Christ our Passover had not yet been slain for us. More than three years before this hallowed night John the Baptist had declared, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (Jn. 1:29) Jesus was the Lamb of God! He had been separated from the flock as a pure and spotless Lamb qualified to be offered up in sacrifice. But the Lamb had to be slain at the time of the Passover to take away the sins of the world! At the Passover meal the Lord said, "As oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show forth (typify, signify, point to) the Lord's death till He comes." The great soul-gripping truth is this. Jesus was not referring in these words to a new ordinance they were to observe under the New Covenant — He was speaking of the Passover meal they were right then eating, which the children of Israel had been eating for fifteen hundred years, and which many of them, including these disciples, would continue to observe for some time (Acts 21:20; 18:21; 21:18-26) until the new order of spiritual reality had been completely established in the Lord's New Covenant people (1 Cor. 5:8; Heb. 9:8-11). It was a time of transition, and only gradually did the Lord's people grasp the truth that since Christ had fulfilled all the Old Testament outward feasts and ceremonies, it was no longer necessary to perform external rituals. It was the higher revelation of the apostle Paul which finally established the great truth that the feast of Passover is now fulfilled spiritually within us, and weaned the saints away from those outward observances. "For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven...but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (1 Cor. 5:8) Sincerity means purity, that which is unmixed with the old; truth means reality, not the shadow, but the substance! That's how we keep the feast!

Therefore, indicating the old, natural, ritual Passover meal, we read, "And He took bread, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me." Let me say it again — these words do not, by any stretch of the imagination, establish a new "Christian ordinance"! The Lord is telling His disciples, "Take this bread that I now give you and eat it with enlightened understanding — this Passover bread which you have eaten for fifteen hundred years means my body which is broken for you. Now eat it tonight, and on any future occasion when you may keep this Passover feast, not as a memorial to the lamb in Egypt those long centuries ago, but eat it in the full comprehension that it memorializes ME! I am the Lamb to which all other Passover lambs have pointed — and tomorrow I will die for you!" That, my beloved, is why this meal is rightly called the "Last Supper" — it brought the end of the shadow — the true Lamb was now coming into view! Therefore, "As oft as ye have eaten, do eat, or continue to eat this bread, and drink this cup (of the Passover meal), ye do show forth (signify, typify, point to) the Lord's death till He (the true Lamb) comes (and is slain for you)." It should be clear to every thinking mind that the Lord is not talking at all about a new ordinance the church was to keep for two thousand more years; rather, He was speaking of the Passover meal He was eating with His disciples that very night! The true Lamb was even then "coming" to be slain; He was that night on His way to the slaughter!

How quick the Lord's people are to take something the Lord does and make a ritual, ceremony, or tradition out of it! Thus it is that the Lord declares, "Your tradition has made the word of God of no effect." By our tradition of continuing the symbol of eating bread and drinking wine to show forth the Lord's death till He comes, we make His coming as the Lamb of God, our Passover slain for us, of no effect! Hear me, my beloved, HE HAS COME! The Lord has come! The Lamb has come! The literal Passover meal is ended! There is no more shadow or type, no more memorial to His death, for the REALITY is here! The life of God's Lamb is now realized within us spiritually by the power of the living Christ!

It is my deep conviction that the New Covenant is a spiritual covenant of reality and life, not containing within it any Old Testament style external rituals or outward ceremonies. It was the Old Covenant that stood in "meats
FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, Part 63, The Church in Laodicea [J. Preston Eby] ~ BIBLE STUDY 5

and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation change.” (Heb. 9:10) In celebrating the fulfilling of the Old Testament feast of Passover Jesus said, “I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new (in the New Covenant, spiritually) with you in my Father’s kingdom.” (Mat. 26:29) Luke records it thus: “I will not anymore eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” (Lk. 22:16) In my spirit I hear the words of Paul explaining this mystery, “Who hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.” (Col. 1:13) And, “The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” (Rom. 14:17)

According to Jesus there was coming a day when He would drink a new wine with His disciples in the kingdom of God that would be of superior quality. That new wine represents a new life and spirit of which His chosen ones would partake; it is superior wine for it speaks of the fullness of the Spirit. That new wine, when we have truly drunk it with Him as we sit at His table and sup with Him and He with us, will provide full and complete salvation for the entire Christ body, who are all sons of God. To drink this new wine of superior quality, with Christ in our Father’s kingdom, shows that we have been transformed into His image and likeness. It also shows that we have inherited the kingdom prepared for us from the foundation of the world. THIS IS TAKING PLACE WITHIN US NOW AS WE SUP WITH HIM, AND HE WITH US! The old wine of external observances represents in a figure the transforming power of His life, but the new wine of superior, kingdom quality contains within it the power of the Spirit and will complete the process of our full salvation, making us kings and priests in the kingdom of God after the order of Melchizedek. To drink this new, kingdom wine, we must become new wine vessels. Our Father is now making us new wine vessels that we may fully drink of the new and superior wine of the incorruptible glory and life of the kingdom of God!

That the bread and wine of this new superior kingdom quality is not physical, natural wafers and wine is clear from Paul’s teaching about “communion.” Hear what he says! “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the COMMUNION OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST? The bread which we break, is it not the COMMUNION OF THE BODY OF CHRIST?” (I Cor. 10:16) Then, that we may clearly understand what elements he is talking about Paul adds, “For we being many are (the) one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread (Christ).” (I Cor. 10:17) The word “communion” is from the Greek *koinonia* meaning “partnership, participation, intercourse.” Can we not see by this that WE ARE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE BODY OF CHRIST! WE ARE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE BLOOD OF CHRIST! This is not fulfilled by wafers and wine, but in our union with Christ where we drink living blood, the wine of Christ’s Spirit that flows through His corporate body. We are also eating His flesh, the living Word of His substance made flesh in us.

Jesus said, “I am the bread that is come down from heaven.” He certainly did not mean that He was a wafer you could pop in your mouth on Sunday morning! As we partake of Him, not in a wafer, but in spirit and in truth, by the power of the Holy Ghost, we eat of that bread and become that one bread. As He is broken among us, His life shared, His word communicated from member to member, we are partakers of that one bread and satisfy our souls by being filled with all the goodness of God. We have all hungered for fellowship with those of like precious faith, yet this too is a haunting shadow of the past. There is a communion beyond a mere assembling of bodies in one place — there is a communion of kindred spirits in the secret place of the Most High. As we enter into union with God we have a fellowship divine through the transmitting power of the Father of spirits; spirit conversing with spirit: this is truly the communion beyond the outward and external. This communion is known only in the kingdom of the Spirit, which is the kingdom of our Father! This is the assembly of the heavenly mount Zion and the Jerusalem which is above; this is the communion of the assembly of the first-born-out-from the Father! This is being one with the Father, and with the Son, and with each other in the Spirit!

Paul says that the cup which we bless is the communion of the blood of Christ, and the bread which we bless is the communion of the body of Christ. The cup most churches bless is the cup of Mogan David wine or Welch’s grape juice, and the bread the vast majority of churches bless is communion wafers or soda crackers. That is not the cup the sons of God drink of, nor is it the bread the sons of God eat of! When we are unified together, one in Him, we become that one bread which is the bread of life. This bread is sweeter, more delicious, giving superior strength and substance above any of the cheap imitations of religion. What a remarkable people you are — the elect of God! You are in the world to unveil the presence and life of the Lord. You sit at the Father’s table eating and drinking in the kingdom of God as our Lord Himself prophesied

you would. Your calling is to give yourself to humanity that they might be quickened and caused to live in the presence of God. Therefore, the cup which WE BLESS IS the communion of the blood of Christ in the Spirit, and the bread which WE BLESS IS the communion of the Word made flesh in the body of Christ! Oh, the mystery of it!

We are that one bread, His life in us is that precious blood, praise His name! We do not bless the outward cup of the Old Covenant; we bless the cup of the New Covenant which is new in the kingdom of God. Here is a description of the most perfect and spiritual communion service you can ever attend: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." The church world has never discerned the body of Christ; they have not perceived that it is HE who dwells in the midst of His people and that it is there, in His body, that He lives as the bread and the blood from heaven. When we speak the words of His life, and minister in the power of His life — this is the Lord's Supper!

It all boils down to whether we understand the Word by the Spirit, or carnally; whether we believe that eating His flesh and drinking His blood can be done physically, or whether it must be done spiritually. It is an utter impossibility to eat or drink Christ with my physical mouth; therefore, I can only eat and drink of Him in the same spirit in which He spoke to the sinful woman of Samaria, "I have water to drink, which if a man drink of it, he will never thirst again." I so eat and drink in remembrance of what He accomplished for me at Calvary! I so eat and drink in participation with Him in what He is to me and in me right now! I can say with assurance that once you eat and drink this superior bread and wine with Him in the heavenly and spiritual kingdom of the Father, the old-order carnal ordinances of the church systems will never satisfy!

There are natural foods that you can feed people and they will hunger again. The nutritious strength and life received from these foods are only temporary; they last only for a season. There are doctrines and creeds and rituals and words of men on the religious buffets of the church systems that have no life in them, that can neither support life nor sustain life. But there is a bread from heaven that if a man eat of it he shall never die and never hunger again! With the disciples of old our heart's cry is, "Lord, evermore give us this bread!" We desire this bread, and our Father is giving it to us as we yearn for Him.

God has purposed to reveal every aspect of His purpose through His Christ, Head and body. So we are living this very day in a progression. God is marching on! He wants to reveal Himself and unfold this glorious One that we call the Lord Jesus Christ. He is standing at the door knocking. Open the door and invite Him and He will come in to you and will sup with you on a plane where you have never before known Him. God is preparing a people at this very time who are yearning for a further revelation of the Lord. These apprehended ones are not looking back fondly on the "good old days" when God moved in mighty power, wishing that they could have continued to move in those days of glory. This people God is preparing today is not lamenting or trying to recapture or perpetuate the glory of the past. It is a true and wonderful fact that for every "day" in God there is fresh manna, there is that fresh unveiling of the glory of Jesus Christ. This is not a time for God's sons to try to recapture the past, or try to warm over the glories of yesterday. I heard a brother who teaches the message of sonship and the kingdom of God, just the other day say, "I'm looking for God to move again like He did in the great Latter Rain outpouring." Oh, no! I have no desire to see God move again as He did in 1948 or on any other date in history. This dear brother has missed the point altogether. None of those former moves of God, no matter how powerful and glorious they were, brought the kingdom of God to pass in all the earth, nor did they deliver creation from the bondage of corruption. They blessed a few of earth's people, and then went the way of all flesh.

There is something brand new for you and me today in the economy of God! The elect of God are now in a time of patient waiting as they are being prepared for the hour when the younger sons of God shall attain to the measure of the stature of the fullness of the firstborn Son. Some people don't like to wait. Some brethren say we have waited long enough, so let us step out from behind the veil and begin to evangelize and do all those things we have already done in Passover and Pentecost. Methinks they would not have tarried in the upper room either, they would have already left the hundred and twenty and gone out on the streets of Jerusalem passing out tracts! And they would have aborted their calling and missed the glory when it came! This is not a time for those who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship to get excited about doing exploits for God in the

waning anointing of yesterday or by the threadbare methods of the past, even if they do call it sonship. The glory that fills our expectant souls today is born of the knowledge imparted by the mind of Christ that the hour of His manifestation draweth nigh — the hour when Christ shall come in fullness to be revealed IN HIS SONS, and they shall reign over the earth.

From time to time the Lord speaks to me in dreams — usually at about six o'clock in the morning. Some years ago Larry and Betty Hodges were scheduled to be here in El Paso to share with the saints. That morning I awoke from a dream. In the dream I was in a large hall such as is used for meetings and functions of various kinds. At one side of the hall, against the wall, was a table. To the right of the table were a few people seated in chairs along the wall. Brother Hodges was standing before the table, facing the wall, ministering to the people seated against the wall. His back was to the large hall. He was ministering from a manuscript on the table — I could see that it was typewritten, with a number of pages, and double-spaced like a manuscript prepared for a publisher. He had reached the bottom of the first page and was speaking words that caused a great excitement in my spirit. I was thinking within myself, "Amen! That's right, brother! That's what the Lord has been teaching me!" It seemed it had something to do with death to self.

Then I noticed two long tables out in the center of the hall. And I noted that brother Hodges was facing the table and the people along the wall — his back to the hall and the tables. I was aware that a great number of people would soon be arriving. The tables, however, were cluttered with food and dirty dishes left over from a previous banquet. There were two place settings that had not been used at the head of one of the tables. Obviously, the banquet that had been held there had ended, and things were not ready for the people that would be coming. I thought, "We must clear all this away and make preparations for the arrival of the people." Someone began to help me and we cleared the tables. Then a folded map appeared in my hands. I laid the map on a shelf — and awoke from the dream.

In my meditations that morning the Spirit gave me understanding of the dream. Needless to say, I was very curious to see what brother Hodges would be ministering that day! I saw that the manuscript he was ministering from was like an unpublished manuscript — a fresh word, a new revelation for a new day — unknown to the masses of believers. It is that which can only be known by the Spirit and is witnessed to by those who are hearing from God in this hour. Those that receive this word are few in number — a "little flock," the "remnant" of the Lord. But there is coming a great change! God is soon to move in a new way, in the power and glory of the kingdom of God, and there shall be a great ingathering. Multitudes will flow into the kingdom of God, and many nations will say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for the law of the Lord shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Mic. 4:2) But things are not quite ready — there are yet preparations to be made!

The tables with the left-over food and dirty dishes speak of the previous move of God — the feast of Pentecost. It was a glorious feast with rich blessing for many — but the feast has ended. There were two tables — the early and the latter rain — but the meal is over! Only remnants of blessing and vessels remain. Those that were ordained to come and partake of that feast came and ate. Some that were bidden to the feast didn't make it, or refused the invitation, represented by the two place settings that had not been used. The truth that gripped my spirit was just this: the former feast is over and God is now speaking from an unpublished manuscript! We have not passed this way before, and God has not done in the past what He will do in this new kingdom day! What He has to say has only begun — for brother Hodges was still reading from the first page of the manuscript. He is dealing with His called and chosen elect about the price to be paid to participate in the new thing God will do — hence my impression that the portion of the manuscript being read from had something to do with death to self. The Lord is also dealing with His chosen ones about the preparations to be made for the next great move of God — the feast of Tabernacles! In the feast of Tabernacles the sons of God shall be revealed! There shall be a great ingathering, multitudes brought into the kingdom of God.

This is the hour of preparation. Let us prepare our hearts! Let us leave behind the feast that has ended. Let us not sit any longer at the table, eating the left-overs of what the Lord prepared for another day. Those who have heard the call of the Spirit have now set their sights and hearts upon the feast that is ready to dawn! In the dream brother Hodges had his back to the hall with the tables of left-over food and dirty dishes. In other

words, he represented that those called to sonship in this hour have renounced the feast that has ended, have turned away from that with which God is finished. He was ministering from a higher realm, speaking of a new day, and pressing into a new glory!

Finally, I saw that the map represents our present walk in the Spirit and our destiny in God. In this day God is raising a people into heights never known by man. He is ushering a people into a new place in God, into a realm in the Spirit, into an attainment, a ministry, and a glory never before experienced by any except our glorious Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. We are now preparing our hearts for the new and greater thing the Lord is doing and shall do in our day!

The Lord promises to sup with each one who opens the door and promises also that the one who does open the door will sup with Him. Let us look at the real meaning of this word “sup.” It is from the Greek *deipneo* meaning “to dine, i.e. take the principle or evening meal.” There is a point here that the English translation does not make. To many supper is not a main meal. The Greeks ate three meals in the day. Breakfast was only a slice of dry bread dipped in wine. Lunch was seldom eaten at home; it was a scratch meal eaten in a city square or wherever a man happened to be. But supper was the last and main meal of the day! This was the meal at which a man sat and talked for hours, for now there was time, for work was ended. There is something very lovely here! It is not a mere courtesy visit, paid in the passing, which the Lord Jesus offers us. It is supper! He desires to come in and sit long with us, and to wait as long as we wish Him to wait, until we have heard all His words, understood all His will, and until we are filled with all the fullness of this last and greatest feast!

Those overcomers who are called to sonship in this day have received a personal invitation from the Lord of glory to have supper with Him! He has ushered us in to the “marriage supper” of the Lamb! We have already eaten with the Lord at other times and on other levels, but now He has called us to come into union with Him and “sup” with Him. For some years we ate breakfast with the Lord in the Outer Court. It was the feast of Passover — bread and wine. Then we entered into the Holy Place and had lunch with Him. It was the feast of Pentecost. But now we have been invited to supper, the third meal of the day. This is also the third feast of the Lord, the feast of Tabernacles!

What sets the feast of Tabernacles apart from all the others is the abundance enjoyed during the feast. It’s the full harvest. At the celebration of Tabernacles, not only had the barley and wheat been harvested, but also all other grains, the fruit of trees, the olives, the grapes, all that could possibly serve as food or drink. The harvest was complete! On the spiritual plane this points to the fact that God has been using His people everywhere to whatever degree He has prepared the vessel for that revelation of the Christ. There has come a beautiful unfolding of His purpose, the outflow of His life and the manifestation of Himself throughout the church age, right up to the present time. But there shall yet come the ultimate, the total, and complete revelation of Jesus Christ — not a narrow, limited thing, not to get a number of people saved and filled with the Spirit, and healed and blessed and used — but the kingdom of God coming with power and great glory through manifest sons of God, as an expression and manifestation of God in His total capacity with no limitations, with all the power, with all the glory, all the might, all the majesty, all the authority, so that nations will be swept into the kingdom of God, creation delivered from the bondage of corruption, the last enemy, even death, destroyed from off the face of the earth, and all things made new. It is indeed wonderful!

Oh, what a grand and glorious realm lies before us in the feast of Ingathering! The day of the full fruit of the Spirit! The day of Perfection! The time of full and complete redemption, spirit, soul, and body! The full and complete experiencing of HIMSELF! The fullness of Strength and Power and Glory! The Feast of feasts! The strange part of the whole thing is this, that the whole purpose and plan of God for this new day of the kingdom of God is completely obscured and lost amidst the shout and euphoria over the “firstfruits” of the Spirit which we received in Pentecost. Those who glory in the “firstfruits of the Spirit” do not know what this day is about! They can see the healings, deliverances, miracles, prophecies, gifts...and so forth; and they understand not that it is God in His great mercy inviting His people to enter on in to their full inheritance. They do not realize that all this is but the foretaste and earnest of their heritage, and that God bids us arise and come away with Him to the great Feast that lies before!

One cannot explain to an unregenerated and unbelieving man what Passover means unless God causes him to see it. Passover is distinct from anything that an unbeliever has ever experienced! There are those who have experienced Passover, knowing the joy of sins forgiven, yet they have no comprehension at all of what it is to experience Pentecost. It is like trying to explain the world of man to a worm! Today, there are believers who have experienced both Passover and Pentecost and yet, they are as blind as bats to what the feast of Tabernacles is about. I am declaring to you that there is a third realm in God for us to experience! Some feel that they are already living and walking in the feast of Tabernacles, but I am sure they are walking in the assurance of the revelation of it more than in the reality and power of it. The truth is, there is a fullness that we do not yet have! This third dimension brings His Lordship with all the authority, power, and glory that brings. And this feast, being the last, brings perfection! It brings the consummation of our salvation in spirit, soul, and body.

This third dimension in God is the place where you and I, in the spirit, appropriate all the fullness of the Most Holy Place. Some are talking about coming out from behind the veil and manifesting sonship to creation, yet it is evident in their lives that they have not yet experientially appropriated the full glory, power, and dominion of that superlative of all realities in God. Coming out from that realm is premature! Blessed are they who are called to this great Feast, that which supersedes Pentecost, that which is the BALANCE OF THE MEAL of which Passover and Pentecost were merely the first courses! And the balance must therefore come, the remainder of the meal which will give strength to the laborers to go forth and accomplish great things for the Master. Aren't you glad!

J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 64

THE CHURCH IN LAODICEA (continued)

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART SIXTY-FOUR

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne." (Rev. 3:21)

The phrase "to him that overcometh" is very clear in the Greek. It is in the active voice in contrast to the passive voice. What that means is that it is participatory. The person is involved with the activity, rather than just permitting something to be done to him. Overcoming is an action verb. It implies that one has succeeded, is succeeding, and shall succeed in the endeavor. Now, the mood is a participle here in the Greek. What that means is that the verb "overcome" has, as it were, an i-n-g on the end of it. It shows a present tense action. Since we all live in the present, it implies overcoming — now. Therefore it should read, "To him that is overcoming will I grant..." The only place that any of us can be an overcomer is in the situation at the present moment! We can't go back and undo the past. Nor can we speculate about the future. All overcoming has to be accomplished in our NOW! This time that God has given us in His dealings is our opportunity to conquer and gain the victory in all situations and circumstances.

The seventh stage of our progressive journey to perfection is where we hear Jesus say, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne." It is significant to notice that our Lord says, "in my throne." We need to understand what this means! Paul tells us that through His death, resurrection, and ascension Jesus was raised up to sit at the right hand of God in the higher-than-all-heavens. This does not mean that Jesus has for the past two thousand years been sitting beside a physical God, or a God limited to some particular spot in the universe, on a physical throne. In the first place, God does not exist in a physical form! He is omnipresent spirit which fills this whole universe, of which our scientists tell us there are more galaxies out there than all the individual grains of sand on all the beaches of the world. And each of those hundreds of billions of galaxies contains billions of trillions of stars, suns, planets, and moons!

Therefore, you cannot limit a God who is the originator of all these marvels, the source of their flaming energy, who upholds all things by His power, and who fills all things with Himself. "Whither shall I go from Thy presence?" the Psalmist asks. There is nowhere to go! Should you travel a billion light years into space you would still be surrounded and overwhelmed by the presence of God. You cannot limit this God, or put Him in a physical form, for He is "the light which no man can approach unto" — the very source of all the energy of the universe! The expression, "raised up to sit at the right hand of God" is a figure of speech denoting Christ's spiritual position. In His glorified humanity He is the revelation and expression to creation of all the authority and power of the invisible God, yet He is not in His glorified humanity the invisible God. He, positionally, is at the right hand of God. The idea of God sitting on a throne and Jesus sitting on the throne beside Him ruling with Him denotes Jesus having been raised up in His glorified humanity to express within Himself the authority and power of the One whom our eyes cannot see.

When Jesus says, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne," that is what He means. Notice, He did not say, "I'll let him sit beside me on a throne." Rather, "I'll let him sit with me in my throne." This denotes us having been raised up to the same state of glorification and exaltation and co-rulership with Jesus. Everything He is, the sons of God are! Then He said, "Even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne." So when we see Jesus sitting in the Father's throne, we know that the Father's throne is His throne, and therefore our throne is likewise the Father's throne. At the last stage of our journey we also are raised up as the full expression and revelation of the authority and power of almighty God, our Father!

Perhaps this is too great for the faith of some to receive, but all who have truly received the call to sonship do embrace this truth in the full assurance of faith and know within themselves that it is the revealed plan of God for His called and chosen elect. Ah, “It is not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit saith the Lord!” This is not something that might happen or might not, for “He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love; having predestinated us unto placement as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.” (Eph. 1:4-5) That which God has predestined He will bring to pass! He appointed us to sonship before the foundation of the world. May your soul rejoice in this precious truth, my beloved, may it fill you with the godly determination and divine faith to hasten your journey toward that place which is prepared for you!

The seven messages to the seven churches close with these three great earthly figures of eternal truth — the door, the table, and the throne. This order none may reverse or alter! We must open the door, we must sit at His table and sup with Him, and He with us, and then we will be raised up to His throne!

Many years ago, amidst a great moving of the Spirit of God, the revelation of sonship fell with wonder upon our ears and burst with glory within our hearts. We sat enraptured for hours at a time, day after day, and were taught by the Spirit about the Father and His purposes and about that elect company He has called and chosen and apprehended to be His sons, ordained of God to rule with Him in His kingdom and restore all things into God. We learned that these sons would have unlimited power — power over everything — power over sin, power over sickness, power over the elements, power over demons, power over all the power of the enemy, power over Satan, and power over death. We were going to rule and reign in power, and our eyes sparkled like diamonds in the light and our hearts swelled with joy in expectation of the wonderful position and authority we would soon have in the kingdom. We could think and talk of nothing else but the power we would have, and in our glorying we tried to usurp and demonstrate this power. We were intoxicated with illusions of grandeur as we pressed our way into the kingdom and the exalted position of sitting on the throne with Jesus and ruling the world and the vastnesses of infinity forevermore.

It is true, wonderfully and gloriously true — the sons are destined to sit on the throne with the Lord, they are going to rule over the nations, and they are going to have power beyond our wildest dreams; power to bring salvation to the masses, power to reveal the secrets of men’s hearts, power to heal every manner of sickness and disease with a word, power to do great signs and wonders, power to speak to the rulers of the earth in every realm of politics, economics, education, business, entertainment, and environment with divine wisdom and omnipotent authority and demand their obedience to the word of Christ; power to raise the dead out of their coffins after they have been embalmed, and out of their dark graves in the cemetery, power to deliver the whole creation from the bondage of corruption into the liberty and glory of incorruptible life! That is the true revelation of manifest sonship. That is the original revelation of manifest sonship as birthed by the Spirit of God in the days of the moving of His power among the called and chosen of the Lord. Many today scoff at such a hope and seek to water down and dilute the revelation, applying it on a lower level, making manifest sonship nothing more than a spiritual believer under the old order of Pentecost, where it is impotent to accomplish all that we have spoken. But those are the words of bastard sons, who share not the mind, heart, and vision of the Father!

Yet — there was a truth that was withheld from us in the beginning, and later revealed by the Spirit, the truth that as the firstborn Son of God was made a priest after the order of Melchizedek, and as the Son reigns as a priest upon His throne, so the sons must also be. Christ is referred to in scripture as “a priest upon His throne.” It is not the kings who reign, but the priests! It is the fact of the priest being given ruling authority that makes the priest to also be a king. He is not a king who becomes a priest, but a priest who is given rule. And so we read, “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.” (Rev. 20:6) Ah, it is the priests that reign! Can you not see the mystery? A king without a priestly nature is no king at all — merely a despot. We have a dual role to fill in the government of the kingdom; we are not only to be kings with authority, power, and dominion; we are also to be priests with priestly hearts of mercy, love, compassion, and reconciliation.

It is a lofty position to which we are called, and for which we are being prepared. Sonship, yes! Kings and priests, yes! But why equipped with such power and glory? To SERVE! For it is written, “Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant, whom I have chosen.” (Isa. 43:10) As kings we reign and rule, as priests we serve and bless, for the ministry of the priest is that of a servant, and we REIGN BY SERVING! Little did we understand in those early days the processings that would be necessary to bring forth in us a kingly and priestly nature! We had no idea of what it would take to produce within us a priestly nature, the spirit of priesthood. We heard the part about “sitting in the throne” but we missed the full implication of what the “overcoming” would involve. We did not yet understand that the way up is down! The carnal mind would have us believe that the way up is up!

The way up is revealed for every son of God in the life of the firstborn Son, who is the example and pattern for us all. “Let this mind be in you,” the apostle Paul exhorts, “as it was also in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 2:5) What is that mind that was in Christ Jesus? Was it His mind of wisdom, His mind of discernment, His mind of holiness, His sense of Godhood? Oh, no! Here is what it is: “Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and...humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (Phil. 2:6-8) What a downward path that is! All the way from the glory of the Father’s bosom to the humiliation and death of the cross! And along the way He shared all of our sorrows, pains, difficulties, problems, doubts, fears, weaknesses, “made in the likeness of men.”

“Wherefore!” That is what Paul says next. “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Phil. 2:9-11) The way up is down. That is the eternal truth for every son of God as revealed in Jesus Christ! You see, my beloved, before we understood this great truth we pressed our way into the sonship ministry, we “stood on the promises,” demanded of God our sonship “rights,” and sought to seize the throne. It is true, precious elect of the Lord, that God wants to take us UP — high into the realms of God — UP to the throne — but our Father would teach us and have us thoroughly understand that the way UP is always DOWN!

Our Father wisely submits us to all that is common to man, He compasses us about and leads us down, down, down into trials, testings, difficulties, problems, sorrows, pain, suffering, misunderstandings, humiliations, reverses, and losses; for it is only by these that the compassion of priesthood can be worked into our lives. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if God could just pour divine compassion into us in some kind of instantaneous spiritual experience! But that is not how you get compassion. Jesus has shown us the way! “For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God...who may have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself is compassed about with infirmity.” (Heb. 5:1-2) “Compassed about with infirmity.” Compassion is worked into us through our partaking of the troubles of those to whom we are to minister! I personally have a special compassion for people restricted to wheelchairs, and it floods my heart every time I see one, because some years ago I came so very, very close to spending the rest of my life in a wheelchair. The Lord was merciful and wonderfully delivered me out of my trouble, but I tasted of what it would mean to be so limited and helpless. Oh, what compassion, what understanding, what pity, and what tenderness of heart that creates in us! Those who have suffered abuse, or illness, or habits, or problems of many kinds, once delivered out of it and transformed, are best suited to minister to others who are held captive there. No one else understands the problem, or the solution, as they! That, my beloved, is the way to priesthood. And priesthood is the way to kingship!

There are certain basic principles of the kingdom of God that must be a part of the frame of mind and experience of all who press forward into sonship to God. We are learning to think like God! We are learning how to RULE WITH CHRIST IN THIS LIFE. So many saints are weak, frustrated, and defeated. But those called to sonship God is blasting out of the lowlands of lethargy, discouragement, oppression and defeat, into a vibrant walk with Christ in the high places of peace, joy, and triumph of His kingdom. We are encouraged by the words of our brother Paul, “Strengthen yourselves in the Lord and in the power which His supreme might imparts. Put on the complete armor of God, so as to be able to stand firm against all the stratagems of the devil. For ours is not a conflict with mere flesh and blood, but with despotisms, the empires, the forces that

control and govern this dark world — the spiritual hosts of evil arrayed against us in the heavenly warfare. Wherefore put on the complete armor of God, so that you may be able to stand your ground in the evil day, and, having fought to the end, TO REMAIN VICTORS ON THE FIELD.” (Eph. 6:10-14) (Weymouth)

We are called to reign with Christ from the highest heaven! Such all-embracing majesty is too vast for my feeble understanding, yet I know by the Spirit that the body of Christ is in practical preparation for the explicit purpose of universal dominion. But how can a man rule over principalities and powers and universes if he is unable to rule his own spirit? “He that ruleth his own spirit is better than he that taketh a city.” (Prov. 16:32) The awful betrayal, trial, mocking, beating, and crucifixion of Jesus is the most shining example. It is difficult to imagine any humiliation more bitter than that! It is the worst indignity that anyone can be called upon to endure. Few have ever had to bear it. Never was dishonor less deserved, never was dishonor so bravely borne. Through that fierce and heated hour our Lord bore Himself with quiet dignity. Others were convulsed with uncontrolled passion, cursing, screaming, blaming, rebelling; He alone was calm and self-possessed. His victory over Himself was greater than His victory over His enemies! In such experiences of provocation, truly, “He that ruleth his own spirit is better than he that taketh a city.” God is a God of principle. He does not do anything by chance. It is my deep conviction that what happens in your life and mine is ordained of the Father to teach us the laws of the kingdom — the pathway to authority and the ways of dominion. Learn this, dear one, and you will know one of the fundamental principles of reigning with Christ: OUR AUTHORITY IS OVER SPIRITUAL WICKEDNESS FIRSTLY IN OURSELVES! “To him that overcometh will I (consequently) give power over the nations: and he shall rule them...” “To him that overcometh will I grant (consequently) to sit with me in my throne...”

As sons of the Most High, we have access to the same strength that enabled Jesus to live an overcoming life — and to conquer even death. He now gives us that same authority and power that gave Him victory over sin, death, hell, and the grave. Have you ever wondered what would happen if Jesus would come and transfer places with you? If suddenly He would come to dwell in your body! I have often wondered what He would do if He had my circumstances, my weaknesses, my lusts, my pressures, my problems. If the Master came to me and said, “Move over, I am coming to live in your house for a season!” I do not doubt that in a short period He would have all of my problems straightened out and all of my weaknesses and turmoil under control. He would overcome all of the things that I struggle with. But the wonderful truth is — HE HAS COME! HE DOES LIVE IN MY BODY! “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me...” (Gal. 2:20) “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.” (Rom. 8:9)

Do you feel overwhelmed with problems? Then let me show you how to discover the challenge that lies in every obstacle. I promise that if you look for the challenge, you will find it, and then you will be able to turn the stumbling-stone in your pathway into a stepping-stone to the throne! The divine principle of which I speak is found in the prophecy of Isaiah, “Out of the desert shall come streams of water.” (Isa. 35:6) What a challenge — to get streams out of the desert! Out of every obstacle comes a new challenge — an opportunity to overcome, to do the “impossible”. This is the point I want to make loud and clear! For if you want to overcome as Jesus overcame, you will need to tap into the dynamics of this principle. The only force that can cause weakness and failure is a challenge that is mistaken for a problem! But there will be no failure when we discover the challenge in the problem, grab hold of it, and use it for a stepping-stone to higher ground. On the other hand, we can never overcome anything as long as we allow some horrendous problem to blind us to the divine challenge that is inherent in every obstacle. In our Father’s great school of sonship, in His effective training program for the future rulers of the world and the universe, He knows just exactly which obstacles to place in our pathway for our development and processing. If we try to use our faith to “move the mountain out of the way,” such action will not bring us where faith can be perfected and overcome the mountain — scale its heights, climb over it, and conquer it!

Some of you who read these lines are facing severe problems today, seeming insurmountable obstacles, and are feeling frustrated, at this point, by my apparently trivial treatment of circumstances that tower so ominously and menacingly before you. You think I don’t understand just how bad your situation really is, or how many times you have failed. Listen! I would not make the solution so simple, if it were not simple. These are principles I have proven in my own experience through years of walking with God. The answer lies so near —

right there within you! The secret lies in whether you view your situation as a problem or a challenge. “What difference does it make,” you say, “whether I call it a problem or a challenge?” The difference is all-important!

Here’s why. If you perceive an obstacle in your path as a problem, you will nurture negative emotions in respect to it — frustration, fear, anger, hopelessness, despair, depression. These emotions are grave-diggers — they carve out the pit of failure and death in which to bury you! On the other hand, if somehow the Holy Spirit can give you the revelation of it, if you can see by the inspiration of the Almighty that the obstacle is God’s challenge — you have received the kingdom attitude in which spiritual (divine) emotions are released — faith, hope, confidence, peace, rest, encouragement, joy, thanksgiving, wisdom, knowledge, understanding, and power. These positive emotions, the fruit of the spirit, energize you and propel you through and over and out of and above the obstacle, issuing in strength and triumph! You see, precious friend of mine, the only problems in the world are problems that are perceived as problems. When the problem ceases (in your mind) to be a problem, then the problem is no longer a problem! Although the problem may still exist outwardly, yet, when the problem is no longer a problem to you, you have risen above it, scaled its heights, overcome it and conquered it! Who cares how high a mountain is if he has climbed over it or is flying above it!

A. E. Rowe, a great champion of faith in Christ, was reared as an atheist. For years he preached the gospel of grace and shared his experience of how he came from total unbelief to a true faith in the living Christ in these words: “I was reared as an infidel. My parents and all of my immediate relatives were proud of their unbelief. I was nourished on the vaunting skeptics of the ages. But I observed with what futile amazement all the skeptics from Celsus to Welles stood around the cradle of Christ, and I wondered how this helpless babe should have been thrust into the world in a time when Roman greed and Jewish hatred and Greek subtlety should combine to destroy it. Yet, this most impressive combination of forces the world has ever known served only to advance the cause of this infant, born in a stable. And I marveled that this poverty-stricken, uneducated plebeian from the remotest of villages in a despised province who exercised no authority, commanded no army, held no office, received no honors, wrote no books, and who died in early manhood, the most contemptible of deaths, a malefactor on a cross, between two criminals; and yet today His name is still the most esteemed on earth — I marveled at this!

“No unbeliever could tell me how it was that His word is still charged with the same power that it had nineteen hundred years ago and how He could reach down with pierced hands and pull human monsters out of a world of iniquity and transform them, overnight, into flaming evangelists and steadfast heroes of faith. They died in torturing flame, on crosses, and beheaded with the axe that others might know the love and mighty power of Christ that had brought deliverance to their souls. Nor could anyone tell me how this isolated Jew could utter words, at once so simple that any child could understand them, and yet at the same time so profound that the greatest intellects that the world has ever known have not been able to plumb their shining depths. The words, the life, the character, the power of this man, the greatest enigma of all history, and any naturalistic explanation only serves to deepen the mystery and make more puzzling the paradox. But I discovered that the paradox was made plain and the mystery was solved when I accepted Jesus Christ simply for what He claimed to be — the Son of God, come from heaven, the Saviour of men. But more than that, my Saviour, and my Lord. I learned to thrill at the angel’s words, ‘Behold, unto you is born a Saviour which is Christ the Lord.’ Even more than that, I learned the greater truth that though Christ, a thousand times, in Bethlehem be born, if He be not born in thee, then thy soul is still forlorn” — end quote.

I know another truth like unto this. Just as Jesus was a nobody in the eyes of the world and religion of His day, but His words and His acts and His life were freighted with such power that they changed the course of history, dethroned all the gods and goddesses of the pagans, and conquered the world empire that ruled the earth, SO IS IT WITH ALL WHO ARE CALLED TO SHARE HIS THRONE! Few, if any, of God’s called and chosen ones who are being prepared as overcomers destined to reign with Christ in His kingdom, are known in the halls of government, respected in the commercial empires of the nations, approved by the educational systems or schools of higher learning, or acclaimed by the vaunted religious systems of men.

These saints of the Most High to whom the kingdom shall be given are simple people, unknown, unlettered, unheralded, unrecognized, and unsung! The world knoweth them not, even as it knew Him not. They are all hidden away in their own little Nazareth, the place of no good thing; but it is there that the Father of glory has

appeared to them, proclaiming them His sons, revealing His heart, opening His word, teaching His ways, purifying their souls, transforming their lives, giving them His mind, His wisdom, and bringing them to maturity and perfection in His own divine family. At the appropriate moment these will be empowered with the fullness of His Spirit, just as Jesus was at the Jordan; their bodies clothed with the pure garments of the incorruptible Life of Christ, their mortality swallowed up of His Life, just as Jesus was in His resurrection; they shall enter upon the stage of history as unknown and unannounced as was Jesus when He strode into the wedding at Cana of Galilee on that day of His “showing forth unto Israel.”

In the Old Testament we read a most wonderful account of Hannah, the wife of Elkanah. Elkanah and Hannah lived in the days when Eli was the priest and the judge of Israel. Elkanah had two wives, Hannah and Peninah. Peninah had children, but Hannah was barren. This was a source of much sorrow to Hannah, for Peninah apparently ridiculed and scorned Hannah and caused her much distress because the Lord had shut up her womb from conceiving. Hannah wept and was grieved in her spirit because of her barren state. Every year Elkanah went up to worship at the house of the Lord in Shiloh, which was about fifteen miles from his home. At one of these visits Hannah prayed to the Lord in deep sorrow, with weeping and bitterness of soul, saying, “O Lord, if Thou wilt look upon me, and give me a son, he shall be given to the Lord as long as he lives.”

Eli the priest saw Hannah praying in the temple with such desperateness and thought perhaps she was drunk, but Hannah assured Eli that she was only in travail of spirit because of her barren state. Eli then blessed her and said, “Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of Him.” The Lord heard Hannah’s prayer and gave her a little boy; and she called his name Samuel, which means, “Asked of God,” because he had been given in answer to her prayer. While he was still a little child, Hannah brought Samuel to Eli, the priest, and said to him, “My Lord, I am the woman who stood here praying. I asked God for this child; and now I have promised that he shall be the Lord’s as long as he lives. Let him stay here with you and grow up in God’s house.” And we all know the story of Samuel, how he heard the voice and word of the Lord, how he became one of the greatest of the prophets, and how powerful was his prophetic ministry that it is written of him that not one word that he spoke fell to the ground. He did all the will of God and spoke only the words of God all the days of his life!

As we prayerfully meditate upon the experience of Hannah and her son, we are able to see that she is a type of the true church of Jesus Christ, the barren wife, in contrast to religious Babylon which claims to have many children. As the Lord caused the barren wife to bring forth a son of promise, even so the Lord is bringing to the birth a son company from His favored wife, the bride of Christ. We who are apprehended of the Father unto the calling of sonship are fulfilling the type shown in Samuel, for we are His manchild of promise and are to be considered the Lord’s possession, even as Hannah returned Samuel back to the Lord. And just as Samuel heard the voice of the Lord and spoke the words of the Lord, which words never failed, but brought forth the kingship in Israel, so are we hearing the voice of the Lord, and are appointed to speak the words of the Lord, and bring His authority and dominion to pass in the earth in this appointed day! As we endure the trials and testings of this present time, and await the fulfillment of our destiny in God, let us be aware continually of the fact that we belong to the Lord and have no right to direct our own lives.

Before we leave this point of our thought, I want to share another portion of Hannah’s prayer in the house of the Lord in Shiloh. She prayed in the spirit of prophecy, saying, “The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich; He bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the Lord’s, and He hath set the world upon them. He will keep the feet of His saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail. The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall He thunder upon them: the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth; and He shall give strength unto His king, and exalt the horn of His anointed (the power of His Christ).” (I Sam. 2:6-10)

Here in Hannah’s prophetic prayer we see many wonderful truths and divine principles which reveal the sovereign purpose of God to take those who are esteemed as nothing by the standards of this world and, through His processings unto perfection, to exalt them to a position of kingship and dominion over the earth. It is the Lord who takes a life out of the present realm of earthiness and death and raises it up into incorruption

and glory! You see, all is in HIS sovereign power and that is why the kingdom of darkness can never prevail in spite of all its cunning devices. There is a most amazing statement in Hannah's prophecy, for the word of the Lord declares, "The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich..." Our hope of the kingdom of God is rooted in our knowledge of God — the very truth that He is sovereign and that He controls the destiny of all men, including both the poor and the rich, on whatever level that is applied. We might think that the Lord controls only the destiny of those who are His predestinated people, but such is not the case. HE IS LORD OF ALL! ALL are in His hands and the steps of every man are ordered of the Lord. I do not presume to understand all the "whys" and "wherefores" in God's appointments in the lives of men, both evil and righteous; I simply believe His word and perceive that it is as He has declared it.

That "all things are of God" is declared over and over again in the scriptures. Did not the Lord say to Pharaoh, that wicked man of rebellion against all that was of God, "Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth." (Rom. 9:17) The infinite wisdom of God's mind cannot be ascertained by the carnal little heads of natural-minded men. We have God's own word for it — He is the sovereign Lord who controls all things! I would not be surprised if some of the compatriots of the prophet Amos may have thought he was speaking blasphemy when by the Holy Spirit he said, "Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" (Amos 3:6)

And again, "That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, THAT THERE IS NONE BESIDE ME. I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil. I the Lord do all of these things." (Isa. 45:7) It is completely impossible for any man to truly know God until his soul has been taught that before all things, through all things, in all things, and after all things standeth God, omnipotent, omniscient, immutable, eternal, purposeful, and filled with righteousness, love, kindness, and truth. He was before all things and by Him all things consist. There is no angel, principality, or power anywhere in all the endless vastnesses of infinity that does not hold his authority by direct appointment of God. In Him all men and angels and creatures live and move and have their being. By Him and for Him and to Him are all things. From Him everything comes, by Him everything exists, and in Him everything ends bringing glory to God forever and forever, Amen!

Armed with this understanding that God controls the destiny of all men and all events it is not difficult to see how the word of the Lord through Hannah is fulfilled. When we consider the word of the Lord further we see the great purpose and process of God in raising up the "nobodies" of this world to the very throne of His glory! We read, "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory..." What a word! Thus, we find God's stated purpose in making anyone poor, humble, and needy: that He might raise them up out of their poverty and abasement, and make them inherit His throne of glory! The Lord has given me a message of encouragement, consolation, understanding, and purpose for the poor nobodies of this present world who have received the call to sonship. That message is that God has made us poor for a glorious purpose: that He might raise us up again to inherit His throne! If ever you tend to doubt that you can attain to such a high and holy calling, remember this prophecy and assure yourself with the fact of God's sovereignty. Hannah's prayer stated further that God's ability to raise up the poor, and even the beggar (the needy ones), and make them inherit His glorious throne is based upon the fact that the pillars of the earth are His, and that He has set the world upon them. God lays all foundations and controls all things! He raises up, and He casts down, according to His own sovereign purpose and power. No one would have believed that an unknown itinerant preacher from Galilee could have conquered all the pagan gods of the civilized world. But He did! Neither Caesar nor Pharaoh nor the philosophers of Greece would have believed that a handful of ignorant fishermen from Galilee could have, in the space of thirty years, turned the world upside down. But they did! The same omnipotent God will stand up His unknown, unlettered, unheralded, unsung, unrecognized sons in the earth in this, our day, and by the revelation of His wisdom and power in them cause the kingdoms of this world to become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ. THE SAME GOD WILL DO THIS! You can count on it!

Jesus is the firstborn among many brethren, but the entire house of sons is, in the book of Hebrews, called the "church of the firstborn" — the body of that firstborn Son who is become the Head of the ORDER OF THE FIRSTBORN. Jesus was the firstborn and as such received the inheritance of the firstborn. By His love and

purpose we share with Him, counted as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ in the inheritance of the firstborn. That inheritance includes within it the very throne of God — His omnipotent authority, power, and dominion over all things!

Let me close with this illustration. At the performance of an opera, the first part of the evening is given over to the playing of the overture. As I understand it, the overture is made up of, or contains, parts of all the main numbers of the whole opera. The overture is an overall preview or glimpse of the opera throughout until the end. But following the overture, the action goes back again to the beginning, and the whole opera is performed in its detail until the finish. Thus the overture presents the plot in portions and points to the end, so that one who has never heard it, will have a view of the action and the climax of it. But, as I pointed out, following the overture the action returns to the beginning and the detail of the whole plot is played out. However, both the overture and the detailed action come to a common end or result.

Let all who read these lines grasp the great truth that THE MANIFEST SONS OF GOD ARE THE OVERTURE OF GOD'S WHOLE GREAT DRAMA OF SIN AND REDEMPTION. Jesus is the overture for the sons, while the sons are the overture for all creation. The working out of redemption and restoration into the image of God is revealed first in the man Christ Jesus. In the manger of Bethlehem He was born in weakness, a little child that made a woman cry. He took upon Himself our humanity in the ultimate weakness of it, a child raised by poor parents in a small dusty village in an out-of-the-way province of a despised land. He lived in weakness and was crucified in weakness. And against all odds — out of that weakness He overcame all things, including death, and has ascended to the throne of the universe! He is the first, and so far the only, perfected man. This gives us knowledge of two wonderful things. Through Jesus we have the knowledge of both the beginning and the end of God's great drama of sin and redemption — MAN IN THE IMAGE OF GOD! But we also have the knowledge of the dealings and processings by which man is brought to that end. And we are the overture, the preview, the firstfruit, the demonstration of all God's creative and redemptive plan, presenting upon the cosmic stage of the universe the final end that God has in mind for His whole vast creation!

“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne.” That is the wonderful climax of our journey through the seven churches, the glorious end of our progression into God!

To be continued ... J. PRESTON EBY

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 65 THE THRONE (Continued)

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART SIXTY-FIVE

THE FORERUNNER THE DOOR STANDING OPEN A VOICE AS A TRUMPET

"After this I looked, and behold, a door was opened in heaven..." (Rev. 4:1)

John the Revelator, as he entered upon the marvelous visions recorded in the book of Revelation, saw a door *opened in heaven* and heard a voice as of a trumpet speaking with him, saying, *"Come up hither, and I will show thee things..."* The *door opened in heaven* bespeaks of an entrance granted into a realm beyond the flesh, beyond the physical and psychical senses, into the realm of the Spirit. That is where John entered and that is the character of the things John saw. He beheld heavenly things — spiritual realities. He saw a throne set in heaven — he perceived the authority, power, and dominion of the Spirit. He saw living creatures in the throne, the principle of manifest life in the Spirit. He saw the four living creatures in the midst of the throne and twenty-four elders round about the throne, the King-Priest ministry of the Melchizedekian Order after the power of an endless life — the ministration of the redemptive power of the divine life unto creation. It is being seen by a vast company of people that hears the voice of the Lord in this hour that a door has opened in the heavenlies through which those who are obedient shall enter into a state of being and a ministry of unsurpassed and unimaginable glory — in the throne zone!

To the church in Philadelphia the Lord Jesus said, *"These things saith He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth."* (Rev. 3:7) And now a door is opened in heaven! Only *one* can open this door, even the one who openeth and no man shutteth. What kind of door would Christ open? It is the door of heaven, the entrance into the eternal realm of the Spirit where our mind, vision, and experience go beyond our human understanding. It is here that we enter into a heavenly understanding, into the divine perception of things, into the mind of God by the Spirit. Here we are raptured into a new glory, raised up into a higher dimension of life and reality.

What is this door? Jesus Himself has told us! Of all that Jesus said about the life of sonship and entrance into the glory and power of the kingdom of God, nothing is more significant than these words: *"I am the door — by me if any man enter in..."* And again, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."* What a strange but wonderful figure of speech — Jesus, the door! Now what does a door signify? One can judge the interior of a house by its door. Is the door shabby, paint peeling off, hanging on a single hinge? Then it opens into a house of the same character — run down, in disorder, unkempt. If, on the other hand the door be spacious, costly, ornamental, distinctive, one has a right to expect that the building into which it leads is splendid, spacious, beautiful.

Surely this figure of Christ as the door is enchanting! If Jesus is the door to the life of sonship, to immortality, glory and power, what must that life be like? It cannot be less than Christ! It must be as much as Jesus was to His disciples and the multitudes who followed Him — that much and more! If He spake as never man spake, if He proclaimed the kingdom of God with power, if He forgave and transformed the sinner, if He healed the sick, raised the dead, cast out devils, overcame all laws of nature, radiated the glory of the Father, and conquered death within Himself — if He is the door into the life of sonship, then we have only to follow His leading, obey His voice, cling to Him and walk by faith in His presence until we are changed in the light of the glory of His unveiled face and pass through the door into all He is!

Divine things are a matter of revelation. Man in his natural state cannot see heavenly realities. The beloved apostle found himself in a prophetic state in which the wonders and glories of heavenly things were perceived by him. The words point to the blinding limitation of our natural minds and state of being, in which the heavens have

no door open for us. For long millenniums man was debarred from a clear vision of the eternal, incapable of apprehending the spiritual and divine. At his first calling to the apostleship, Nathaniel received this promise from the Lord: *“Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.”* (Jn. 1:51) *To the Lord Jesus Himself the heavens were opened at His baptism, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him, and lo a voice from heaven saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”* (Mat. 3:16-17) This opening of the heavens to Christ was His public introduction as the SON of God! The opened heavens declared His sonship! It marks the beginning of that full revelation through Him, of the mystery of God revealed in sons! It is in that capacity from the throne of His exaltation in the heavens of God’s Spirit that Christ now reveals to His many brethren the power and glory of their sonship in Him! Have you heard the voice saying to you, “Come up hither”? I have heard that voice! All who are called to sonship have heard that voice! IT IS IN CHRIST THAT WE HEAR THE VOICE BIDDING US TO COME UP HITHER. IT IS IN CHRIST THAT THE HEAVENS ARE OPENED. IT IS IN CHRIST THAT WE ASCEND THE THRONE OF POWER AND GLORY TO RULE AND REIGN OVER ALL THINGS. Oh, yes, HE is the door!

The Spirit-led, spiritual-minded saints of the Lord are beholding in the Spirit the door that has been opened in the heavens! These are listening only to the Voice and the Word of their Father. They have been weaned from the mixture and weakness of the old order church ways of the past (the candlestick realm), and are hearing only His pure word from His pure mind. They obviously have those necessary hearing ears of the spirit, which have been given to them of their Father, and which enable them to hear His Word! They also have the necessary eyes of understanding that have been enlightened by their Father, which enable them to see into the heavenly realms of the Spirit! As they ascend the throne in the realm of the Spirit the new kingdom order expressed through them will begin to change things in this old world of man’s corruption, iniquity, and decay. These sons shall indeed reign with Christ in the power and authority of the Spirit, by which this new spiritual order shall be established in the earth.

When we read these meaningful words of a door opened in heaven, with our mind’s eye we can visualize a huge door creaking on its hinges, opening up in the sky. But that is not at all what John saw! The Greek word for door is *thura* meaning *a portal or an entrance*. A portal or an entrance is opened unto us! The word can also mean a *vestibule* and denotes the first awareness of entrance into something. It is the place of transition from the earthly to the heavenly. The Greek text indicates that the door is there and it’s *standing open*. This door is the invitation of the Father by the Spirit, for upon seeing the door John immediately *“became in the Spirit”* or passed through the door and found Himself standing in the throne room. A portal is a passage into another realm. The door is the spirit of Christ, and the spirit of His sonship is the “star gate” into the throne room of the heavens!

THE FORERUNNER

While Christ our Elder Brother and High Priest ministers this great calling to us we are possessed of a hope — *“which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.”* (Heb. 6:19-20) While manifested on this earth plane, Jesus Christ left us His personal example that we might follow in His footsteps. It is a way that leads *beyond the veil* into the glories of the Father. It was necessary that He tread all the course that we might be able to follow all the way into His divine fullness. He is the way unto the Father, and by our union in Him we find it is first a way of humiliation before it becomes a way of exaltation. There is both Patmos and the candlestick realm before we access the throne! Thus we humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, assured that in due time He will lift us up, and we shall live in His sight.

A forerunner is one who goes ahead of others. He goes ahead as a sample of those who are to follow. The forerunner is one who gives us hope of entering in! And the writer to the Hebrews says that it is this *hope* which we have as an *anchor* of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and it enters into that which is within the veil whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus. What wonderful words are these! The anchor is sure and the anchor is steadfast! Do you know what that means? Have you ever done some boating? When we were doing missionary work on an island off the coast of Honduras many years ago we became very familiar with boats, anchors, and dinghies. Sometimes you throw out an anchor and it slips. The writer knows that so he says, *“Which hope we have as an anchor, both sure (strong) and steadfast (unslippable).”* We have a hope that is sure because it is God who has called us, and we have a hope that is steadfast because Jesus is leading the way!

Who is the anchor of the soul? What is our hope of entering in to the Holiest of all, the throne room of God? Christ Jesus the Lord! “Who entereth into that within the veil.” The veil separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. The high priest would go into the throne room of Yahwey through the veil. The wonderful firstborn Son of God is the anchor of our soul! He is sure! He is steadfast! He is strong and cannot slip! He has overcome all things, conquered death, hell, and the grave, resurrected and ascended — He is the strong and mighty One who has blazed the trail for us! He is our forerunner!

There are many things to learn from types and anti-types, and nowhere more than in this meaningful term “forerunner”. The forerunner, in Bible times, was a little row boat, a forerunner went before the big ship. The forerunner was a little dinghy. The apostle already mentioned an anchor that is sure, an anchor that is steadfast, and an anchor that goes beyond the veil. All the typology here is *marine*. The imagery is of the Mediterranean where in the ancient world they had a lot of harbors, but many of the harbors were shallow water harbors. When the tide was low you often had a problem in that the larger ships could not get across the sand bar or the rocks, so they couldn’t make the entrance into the harbor. This was a problem for these ships, they were out in the main channel but were unable to get into the protective covering of the harbor because the tide was out or the sand bar was in the way or the rocks obstructed their path and they couldn’t pass over.

The big ship would then throw out an anchor and let it down into a forerunner — a dinghy or row boat — and a man in the row boat would row the row boat which could get across the sand bar and the rocks even at low tide. When the forerunner would get into the safety and serenity of the harbor, the man would then drop the anchor off the side of the row boat into the waters within the harbor. The ship would be out in the water, buffeted by the winds and the seas and the storm; but the anchor was inside the haven, sure and steadfast. Even so, we who have received the call to sonship have an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, Jesus Christ our forerunner! He is gone within the veil, He has ascended to the throne. He is not entered into the tabernacle made with hands which was the shadow, the type, the illustration, the object lesson. Our forerunner is gone into heaven itself — into the highest realms of the Spirit — seated on the throne of the majesty on high! We, in this present walk in the weakness and limitation of the flesh, in our outward life, are still out in the storms of life where the winds of adversity blow, the rains of trouble fall in torrents, where the fearful lightning flashes, the thunder roars, where the billows of trials and testings angrily toss our vessel; and we feel engulfed in a storm where everything seems to be closing in upon us. But we are connected to Christ in our spirit, one in Him, called and chosen and ordained by Him, and the anchor holds, praise His name, and we are secure until the storm abates and the tide comes in so that we may enter on in to the same harbor whither our forerunner has for us entered. Oh, yes! When all carnality, limitation and death have been swallowed up in body, soul, and spirit, we shall know the full power and glory of the throne zone. And today we have a strong consolation because of the hope that is set before us!

Jesus is our forerunner, which clearly indicates that others are expected to follow on into the same realms of glory. Christ entered in first, and where He went in the power of His resurrection and ascension, every son of God is destined to go. The forerunner blazed the trail all the way, and we rejoice in this fact, but then He also came back, by His Spirit, to escort us all the way into the glory beyond the veil. Full well He knows the route, for He has traveled it all the way through to victory and now is able to guide us down the same path into the glorious victory which He obtained. It is His daily enabling that gives us strength to carry on until the consummation is reached. THE FORERUNNER IS THE DOOR!

THE DOOR STANDING OPEN

“After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven!” (Rev. 4:1, Amplified Bible). The door is *standing open* — now! Heaven is accessible — now! Sonship is attainable — now! Immortality and glory are obtainable — now! The throne is reachable — now! The Voice is calling — now! The door is standing open! Aren’t you glad!

What is lacking is a people that are in consciousness so in the heavenly dimension now; so alive to the things that are eternal, the things that are spirit, that even without them speaking this explicitly, their very presence exudes the atmosphere of life and the fragrance of the heavenly. God is preparing a people, a heavenly and celestial race, set in time. *“...and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might show...” (Eph. 2:6-7)* This is meaningless prattle unless the Spirit opens our understanding! We have been warned by the carnal minded of this age about the danger of being so “heavenly minded” until we are “no earthly good.” That is what the world says, and what should you

expect from the world but to controvert and take the wisdom of God and so distort and pervert it until it appears ridiculous and absurd to have mankind believe exactly the reverse! But these words are being written to show that we have no choice, no option as to whether we will be heavenly minded or not, for we have heard the Voice calling, "Come up hither," and we stand in the blazing glory of the door opened in the heavens. The truth is, my beloved, IF WE ARE NOT HEAVENLY MINDED IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO BE OF ANY EARTHLY GOOD!

It is only as a power reaches down and touches earth that it can be raised and quickened, transformed from the image of the earthly into the image of the heavenly. And Paul, the apostle of apostles, through whom the sacred secrets of God were revealed by the grace of God, defying the empty and inane cavilings of men and their fruitless doctrines and hollow traditions, admonished those who would be the sons and daughters of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, *"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the HEAVENLY CALLING...if ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which ARE ABOVE, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things ABOVE, NOT ON THINGS ON THE EARTH. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."* (Heb. 3:1; Col. 3:1-3)

It is when we are quickened to the realm of spirit, to the heavenly and celestial, to that bright glory world where alone can be perceived eternal truth and reality, that we hear our heavenly Father speaking from the throne of eternity. Long before the ages were framed and before the cosmos appeared out of the wastes of chaos, there in the glory and wonder of His presence, from out of the depths of His omniscient mind, His purpose for the ages and the world and every creature was laid down upon the infinite blue-print, plan by plan, purpose by purpose, age by age, person by person, so that each eonian purpose and every divine decree shall be guided and controlled by His omnipotent hand to grow and mature from glory to glory until His vast family of beloved sons shall deliver up to Him all things in perfection that God Himself might be All-in-all.

The notion that one could in some way become so "heavenly minded" that he would be "no earthly good" reveals the incredible darkness and deluded stupidity of the carnal mind and its pitiful inability to comprehend things that belong to heavenly realms. Oh, that the wisdom of man which is *foolishness* with God might be torn from our hearts that we might see beyond the mists and theories of time and tradition right into the very heart of the eternal where is found the infinite wisdom that teaches us how it is that until one becomes truly HEAVENLY MINDED he CANNOT be of any EARTHLY GOOD! The fact is, the only reality in the universe is SPIRIT! The things which are *seen* are *temporal*, says the Lord, and the things which are *not seen* are *eternal*. There is the wisdom of God in a mystery! Until one learns how to live and have his being *out of spirit*, out of the invisible realm, out of his very innermost being, he will continue to be held captive by the corruption of the flesh and dwell in the shadow of death.

That wonderful prayer Jesus taught His disciples, which we call The Lord's Prayer, begins with the words, "*Our Father which art in heaven.*" Until men recognize by the illumination of the Spirit who their Father is they remain lost and dying in the dense darkness of the carnal mind. Spiritually, they are no different than the adopted child who has never been told he is adopted and has no concept of who his biological parents truly are or from where he came. Our Father in heaven is not the one who gave us our physical life in the womb of our earthly mother. The only reason Jesus could tell the vast throng gathered around Him, *"Call no man your father upon the earth, for ONE IS YOUR FATHER, which is in heaven,"* is that we all must recognize that our life did not begin with our physical birth. Our true Father is not a man upon earth, but our true Father is a spirit and He is in heaven! Can we not see by this that our life did not begin on earth — it began in heaven! Nothing could be plainer than this! Over and over again Jesus taught the multitudes about their "heavenly Father." Just look up the word "father" in Strong's Concordance and see how many times in the four Gospels Jesus told the people that God was *their Father!*

And these were not born again men under the New Covenant, they were natural men under the servitude of the law. Once we know who and where our Father is it is easy to understand where our life began and from whence we came. Our birth, our beginnings, were with God! God is our Father! Aren't you glad!

There is a passage in the book of Hebrews that speaks of those great heroes of faith under the Old Covenant, and it says, *"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a*

better country, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city.” (Heb. 11:13-16) These men of God were *strangers on the earth*. They were seeking a country — Abraham knew that the ground he walked on in the land of Canaan was not the true land of God, for “he looked for a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” He was searching for the City of God and knew that he was only a pilgrim and stranger in the land of Canaan, though God had led him thither. “If they had been mindful” — that is, if they had *remembered* that country from whence they came, that celestial realm, that heavenly kingdom, that spiritual reality from whence they were lowered into this earth-realm; if somehow the veil could have been removed from off their minds, from the limitations of their earthiness so that they could have remembered that country from whence they came — they might have had opportunity to have *returned*. But instead they died in faith — still looking for the city of God, the kingdom of God — spiritual reality!

Blessed be the name of the Lord! God has provided some *better thing* for us and now we can return — the way has been opened into the presence of God, into the life of God, into the glory of God, into the kingdom of God, into the Holiest of all, into the throne of God. That’s what this journey into God is all about — a return to the Lord! It is our return to the heavenly; our return to the spiritual; our return to the image of God; our return to Eden; our return to the kingdom; our return to the incorruptible; our return to *the throne!* In the words of the little chorus:

All God’s sons are coming home,
All God’s sons are coming home —
Home to the Father, home to the throne,
All God’s sons are coming home!

All creation is coming home,
All creation is coming home —
Home to the Father, home to the Son,
All creation is coming home!

Coming home, coming home,
Never more to roam;
Open wide thy arms of love,
Lord, I’m coming home!

There’s a call within us, and deep calleth unto deep. I tell you, my beloved, there is something within me, an inner compulsion, and I know that I have passed the point of no return. There is no turning back from this quest for God’s fullness. I can’t go back to the world — the world has nothing to offer me; it is all vanity and vexation of spirit. I can’t go back to religion — religion holds nothing for me anymore; it is an abomination. I can’t even go back to Pentecost, back to the Holy Place — for the veil has been rent, the heavens have been opened, I have heard the Voice bidding me to “Come up hither,” and I stand in the glory of the door opened in heaven and have tasted the powers of the world to come. There is no turning back because my heart has been awakened by the Father of glory! For some in this hour the veil has been rent, the door stands open, and we pause in the vestibule beholding the transcendent glories of that land from whence we came. By the blood of Jesus we have been granted the opportunity to return. We no longer feel strangers to our heavenly homeland! God has redeemed us, awakened us, renewed us, and in His Son made us to be again who we truly are! Christ the door is standing open in the heavens!

One of my many moments of being spiritually thrilled was upon examining the second statement of the Lord’s Prayer: “*Our Father which art in heaven.*” But to be correctly translated it should read, “*Which art in the heavens,*” for it is plural, not singular. So, contrary to popular thought, God dwells in more than one heaven. The great king Solomon cried out, “*Behold, I build a house to the name of the Lord my God, and the house which I build is great: for great is our God above all gods. But who is able to build Him an house, seeing the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him? who am I that I should build Him an house, save only to burn sacrifice before Him?*” (II Chron. 2:4-6)

Paul spoke of a man who was caught up into the third heaven, and God, our Father, is the God of all the heavens! God dwells in the heavens! He fills every heaven! He rules in every heaven! He is above every heaven, beyond every heaven, higher than all heavens and greater than the reality of each heaven! In our journey into God we pass through all these heavens! Jesus passed through all the heavens on His way into

the glory of the Father. How do we know this? *“He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.” (Eph. 4:10)* In His ascension to the throne of His Father He passed through — experienced — all the heavens. Not only did He pass through them, He has also *filled them all* so that God in Christ is the essence of every heaven. You will find Him on a different plane, in a different dimension, in a unique aspect of His life and purpose, in each heaven.

Heaven is not a place, not a planet somewhere out in the vastnesses of infinity — it is a sphere or a realm of *spiritual, divine reality*. It is a dimension of life. It is a level of God-consciousness. It is the invisible realm of Spirit that transcends this gross material realm. It is as omnipresent as God is omnipresent. It is an absurdity to say that heaven is a *place* somewhere beyond the blue where God dwells, and then say that God is *omnipresent*. The omnipresent spiritual dimension is co-existent and co-extensive with the physical universe, but on a different plane of reality and level of consciousness, on a different “frequency,” if I may use the term in an illustrative sense. It is the dimension of spirit reality, of spiritual being, where God is all that He is. God dwells in the heaven that is beyond the time-space continuum, and therefore undetectable by the natural senses of man or the probings of technology. Heaven can only be discerned, contacted, seen, entered, or experienced by spirit!

Heaven is also the realm where God is *revealed* by the Spirit. Heaven is the realm where God is *known* in the Spirit. Heaven is the realm where God may be *touched* in the Spirit. Heaven is the realm in which God can be *experienced* in the Spirit. God is the God of the heavens, and if ever you will see Him, if ever you will know Him, if ever you will touch Him, if ever you will experience Him — it will be in the heavens of His Spirit where He dwells, in the realms of His Being. Heaven means “height, eminence, elevation.” Heaven is the high and holy realm of the Spirit in which God exists. To be in heaven is to be in the Spirit! To experience God spiritually is to experience heaven! To be “caught up” in spirit is to be “raptured” to heaven. The heavens are the various realms or levels of *spiritual experience* where we meet and know God. When God and His realities are revealed to you by the Spirit, *heaven is opened* and you behold heavenly (spiritual) things! In the lower heavens, where most believers dwell, you know God in a more elementary way.

It is wonderful to know God in His heavens! Each heaven speaks of a plane of relationship with God by the Spirit. When the Lord reveals Himself to us on a higher plane, in deeper measures, in richer and fuller dimensions of His life, riches, wisdom, knowledge, glory, and power, and we experience Him in it, we ascend in Him to a higher heaven. As we pass through the heavens we come to know and experience God in greater and grander measures! It is indeed wonderful! The spiritual world is a world with which we have become familiar as we have walked in the Spirit of God and experienced more and more of our union with the Father; a world so wonderfully real that all who once have their eyes opened to it beg to remain in its celestial precincts, never more to return to the lowly estate and level of the natural man. And now I declare that not only the heavenly hosts, myriads of *spirits*, but heaven itself is all around you even as you read these lines, and, should the Lord but take away the veil of flesh from your sight, your spiritual eyes would behold the celestial realm and you would see that beings, incredible in glory and power, are all about us; for the Lord and the heavens in which He dwells are not far from any one of us. They are indeed closer to us than the air that we breathe, closer even than the blood coursing through our veins!

Those holy sons of God who sit with Christ upon His throne in the heaven of His throneship shall restore all creation into the love and glory of God. The one man Jesus, when on earth as a manifest Son of God, taught, saved, delivered, healed, and raised up His *thousands*; His many brethren raised up into the power of His resurrection and throneship shall teach, save, deliver, heal, and raise up their *billions*. Thus shall their ministry and their years roll on from age to age until that wonderful age of all ages, the dispensation of the fullness of times wherein everything in all heavens, and in the earth, and throughout all realms of the universe is gathered together into one in Christ and God becomes All-in-all. What glories lie beyond this, we cannot yet know. Of this we may be sure: we who are redeemed have entered a progressive institution, a kingdom in which stagnation shall never enter. We will ever go on “from glory to glory” for *“of the increase of His government... there shall be no end.” (Isa. 9:7)*

We will never come to the place where we can sit down with folded hands and say, “This is the end.” We, who are being raised up into the heavenly realm, have entered a stage of action; we have become active agents in the greatest development program ever conceived! A whole universe with planets, worlds, heavens, and hells awaits our touch and guiding hand. *“What is man that Thou art mindful of him? Thou hast put all things in*

subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left N-O-T-H-I-N-G that is not put under him! But we see not yet all things put under him (man). But we see Jesus crowned with glory and honor... (Heb. 2:6-9). Surely these words can mean nothing less than UNIVERSAL DOMINION! That belongs to “the man” in Christ!

Away out there in the blue is a kingdom of life and light and love for every son of God to explore and develop and perfect. And if ever, in all the countless ages to come, that kingdom should become too small or overcrowded for its citizens, let us remember that we, being as He is, are therefore, one and all, the very same kind of Beings as He who simply spoke the word, and lo! the present worlds appeared. Being like Him, sons of God upon the very throne of His glory, we will also be creators, one and all, and not destroyers, as in our Adamic state. WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM! Sonship to God does not entitle one to mere residence in God’s limitless and eternal domain, but to the ownership and rule of that domain, in proportion to our growth and stature in Christ. Being heavenly beings, we can inherit, by our obedience to the heavenly Father, heavenly riches which will not only be a place, but royal pomp and splendor and majesty and dominion beyond compare. Oh, that it were possible to lift men above the shadows, and give them just a glimpse of something higher! Mortal minds are so entirely inadequate; human eyes so dim; human ears so dull!

John saw a door opened in heaven. When he passed through the door he beheld a throne. God gives definitions in His Word. He tells us exactly what certain things are — if we have ears to hear. One of the definitions is found in **Acts 7:49**. *“Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool.”* HEAVEN IS MY THRONE! The Greek word for heaven is *ouranos*. It is a word appearing in the New Testament 275 times. And the meaning of the word is “elevation, height, exaltation, eminence.” Therefore we have exactly the same thought if we say, “My throne is elevation, height, exaltation, and eminence.” That, my beloved, is the central idea of heaven in the New Testament! “Ouranos” is not a *place*. It is the height, the very pinnacle of glory and eminence and exaltation and majesty and authority and power over all God’s limitless domain! This authority is in and by the Spirit, for God is Spirit, and does not sit upon a physical throne!

We will understand a great spiritual truth when clearly we see that the higher one goes in God’s heavens, the higher one ascends into the realms of the Spirit, the greater the intensity of the throne of power and glory! Those who dwell in the lower heavens of spiritual experience and union with God have a little spiritual authority and power. The higher the heaven, the more lofty and exalted the realm of the Spirit, the greater the power of God’s throne! Heaven is His throne! Heaven is height, elevation, exaltation, eminence. The higher the heavenly exaltation, the greater the power and authority of the throne. Can you not see the mystery? Christ has ascended to the *highest heaven* and therefore has been given *all power* and *all authority* in all the heavens and in all the earth! And this very Christ is now the door — the “star gate” into the throne zone! The door is *standing open*, dear one, and a mighty voice bids you to “come up hither” to the throne zone! Oh, the wonder of it!

Heaven is not a mansion over the hilltop, or the gratifying of the needs and desires of this vessel of clay. It is not that which will bring creature comfort. It is not a state of carnal creature enjoyment and rest. Get the idea of golden streets, gold bathtubs, and gurgling streams of water out of your mind! There is no such thing materially in heaven! The celestial realm is something infinitely higher. It is eminence, power, majesty, glory, righteousness, peace that passes understanding and joy unspeakable and full of glory! It is becoming the same kind of a Being as the One who made the worlds (Jn. 10:34-36; I Jn. 3:2), and will bring, not inactive rest with fluttering wings and strumming harps, which in a few short hours even becomes exceedingly tiresome, but activity and accomplishments far surpassing that of earth’s limitation! As Jesus said, *“My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.”* (Jn. 5:17) It includes kingship and priesthood over God’s eternal and infinite domain. It is dominion and power and redemptive and creative influence far above that which earth can contemplate or even imagine!

A VOICE AS A TRUMPET

“After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard (out of the heavenly realm) was as it were a trumpet talking with me...” (Rev. 4:1)

Everywhere in scripture the trumpet symbolizes the voice of the Lord. The beloved John had marched with Christ through all the blessed dealings of God in the candlestick realm, and now at the end of that wondrous

experience he heard the voice of Christ in a new way and out of a higher realm. Who among us could deny that it was *within himself* that John heard the Voice? Every man hears the voice of the Son of God within himself! Only on the rarest of occasions have men heard the voice of God as an external voice falling upon the outer ear. God dwells within us by the Spirit and when we hear that divine Voice as John heard it, it is from within the holy temple of our spirit that the Lord almighty speaks. At times I have heard this voice of God so clearly that indeed I looked around to see the Voice that spoke to me, yet I knew in my deepest heart of hearts that the Voice came not from without, but from within. Each of us must hear that Voice that is within us which opens our ability to walk into the fullness of the Spirit of God.

John said, *“I heard something — an unprecedented voice, a trumpet voice.”* As you trace God’s voice throughout the ages from Abraham to the present, it’s getting louder and clearer. Whenever you hear the shofar, the ram’s horn, God is saying something to His creation. He intends for His voice to be heard by those in whose presence it sounds. God’s elect is hearing the voice of the Lord in this very hour and the trumpet sound is becoming louder and louder and clearer and clearer from day to day! The marvelous reality of it is seen in the famous words Jesus spoke to the adversary when He said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that *proceedeth* out of the mouth of God.” The word “proceedeth” is in the present, continuous tense in the Greek — “is proceeding and continues to proceed.” Man does not live by a word that *has proceeded* out of the mouth of God in some past era. Praise God for His word that He sent to Noah, but it is not our word for today. I am not buying up lumber to build an ark! We rejoice in that word that God sent to Jacob in the long ago, but it is not a living word for us today. Wonderful were the words of the prophets to Israel, but we cannot live in the national message they preached. The word of the Lord to Martin Luther and John Wesley were mighty words for their time, but they are not sufficient for us in this hour. There is a *proceeding word*, a *right now word*, a *present truth*, and that *proceeding word* is going back and gathering up every *preceding word*, swallowing it up, and summing it up, into the fuller revelation for God’s people in this great New Day of the Lord. God is saying something now, and His word for today is greater than any word He has ever sent to His people!

God’s people are at various stages of hearing His voice. In **John, chapter twelve**, when Jesus declared that a grain of wheat must fall into the ground and die, and said, *“Father, glorify Thy name,”* suddenly heaven began to speak and the Father uttered His voice, saying, *“I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.” (Jn. 12:28)* The crowd of bystanders heard the sound and most of them thought it had thundered. How often people hear the word of the Lord and those who listen with spiritual ears get the message, while to those who hear only with carnal minds and natural understanding it sounds like so much thunder! They hear the message but are unable to decipher its significance. It is *meaningless* to them — just THUNDER! Others said, “An angel has spoken to Him.” To them it sounded like an *aggelos* — a messenger. These are those who enamored by oratory, and moved by the charisma of personality, become fixed on man, on the vessel, on the messenger delivering the message, and when they hear the word of the Lord through one of His angel-messengers they respond to the messenger instead of to the Lord. These are man-followers and man-worshippers who fail to get past the vessel to hear the voice of the Father. But some who had their ears opened and could distinguish between the sounds, said, “No, that was the voice of the Father!” Jesus perceived the deepest intent of the Father, for He had said, *“Father, glorify Thy name.”* The Father answered, *“I have glorified my name, my nature, in my firstborn Son, and once I get me a people to hear what my Son is saying, I will glorify it again in them!”*

The voice as of a trumpet is a word, a message of the living Christ! The voice commanded John, *“Come up hither, and I will show thee things.”* Thoughts, words, pictures, concepts — wondrous truths beyond his understanding blasted with the piercing of a trumpet’s sound into the consciousness of John. Come up hither and I will show you — you can’t see these things where you are! You cannot understand from your present perspective in the candlestick realm! You must arise, you must come up, you must be translated in consciousness to a new level of communication, to a new plane of reality. If your thinking is on the earth, you will not hear the heavenly Voice! Every man must know within himself what he wants to hear — are you satisfied to feed upon the vain clamor of earthly voices, religious voices, or do you seek to hear the quickening sound of the heavenly Voice?

God is raising up a people in this hour that is seeing things which must be *hereafter*. They have no desire to just keep doing the religious things they have always done. It is all a weariness to the spirit. They are hearing

the sound of a trumpet! Like the camp of Israel in the wilderness, these are hearing the blast of heaven's ram's horn, and they know the camp must be broken up, it is time to move on!

God has raised up a trumpet ministry in this hour! I am a small part of that trumpet ministry. I know this because the message God has put in my spirit and in my mouth and in my writing has raised even me up into a heavenly place! And those who hear are likewise lifted up into a new and higher realm and place in God! I am not alone, the trumpet is sounding all across the land and around the world! Something greater is about to take place. This is the word that shows us what must be *hereafter!* The next step in God — *after* the candlestick realm!

We want to hear the voice of God. I have heard the voice of God! I do not want to hear myself, I despise self, the self of me and the self of every man. God is always speaking, if only we have ears to hear. His sheep hear His voice. They also learn to *know* His voice! To know the voice is greater than to hear the voice. Every apprehended son of God is learning to both hear and know (recognize) the voice of the Lord! Mature sons are not fooled about what voice they are hearing! Sons know the voice of their Father and a strange voice they will not follow regardless of how smooth and appealing it may sound! And we care not one whit what channel the voice comes through. Sometimes we hear the voice of the Lord through a brother or sister in Christ, through writing, through a circumstance, through experience, sometimes through our own thoughts and hearts. At times I have heard the voice of the Lord through things and people that I would never have expected to hear God's voice from. However God speaks, only the one who truly knows the Father's voice will recognize the voice and "get" the message! We also recognize the voice of the stranger. There have been occasions when I have heard that "stranger's" voice through men reputed to be great men in God, sometimes through precious brethren I love and esteem, sometimes in sermons and writings and books that less discerning ones are charmed with and excited about as being great revelations of truth. There need be no question in the mind of any saint that only those who are able to hear the voice and know the voice are enabled to "come up hither" to the throne realm!

To be continued...
J. Preston Eby

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 66 THE THRONE (Continued)

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART SIXTY-SIX

COME UP HITHER

"After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter."
(Rev. 4:1)

This beautiful passage has been used by thousands of teachers and preachers to teach what is called "the pre-tribulation rapture." They say John was a type here of the church being caught up off the earth into heaven just prior to the wrath of God falling upon the world in the fury of the Great Tribulation. But it says no such thing! Many believers and teachers have anticipated most enthusiastically that at this point when "a door was opened in heaven" the "rapture" of the church would take place. Of course you can see that since most of them believe that heaven is a limited and physical "place" out in the blue somewhere, the only way one could get there would be by being spatially transported. Oh, what shame! What deliriums! Men, poor deluded and blind children who know precious little of the Christ life and spiritual realities parade themselves as angels of light and their carnal imaginings as revelation direct from God!

"Come up hither" is not a geographical term. It doesn't mean go up, it means grow up! Years ago I picked up a tabloid-size newspaper with these alarming headlines:

MILLIONS MISSING AROUND THE WORLD
MASS KIDNAPPING
STOCK MARKET FACES CRASH
THOUSANDS ATTEMPT SUICIDE

The articles in this paper sensationally described scenes of terror, fear, and anguish around the planet — planes crashing because the pilots disappeared, trains derailing when the conductors suddenly vanished, massive pileups on the highways as automobile drivers vanished into thin air, killer earthquakes, volcanoes erupting world-wide, tidal waves sweeping the continental coasts, mobs of looters roaming the city streets, thousands of persons dying of heart attacks triggered by stark fear, and on and on.

My response to this was something between a hearty laugh and disgust. This paper was merely a carnal-minded attempt to dramatize what millions of Christians have been led to believe will happen when Christ returns — the sudden, unannounced event that will cause the immediate disappearance of millions of believers from every city, town, countryside, and hamlet throughout the world. Some people publicize this theory with bumper stickers like the one that warns: IF DRIVER DISAPPEARS, GRAB THE WHEEL. The "any minute rapture" is preached today by many popular preachers and is called the believer's "Blessed Hope." It has been the subject of more gospel songs and hymns than anyone could number. Yet, there is no scripture in the whole Bible that plainly supports such a doctrine! It can be "read in" to the text in a couple places, but even then there are obvious problems with such an interpretation. Furthermore, they tell you that chapter four on through the book of Revelation is irrelevant to you, because you're not even going to be here! The question follows: Then why study it? If you're not going to be here — don't worry about it!

The marvelous reality of it is that the journey from the Holy Place into the Most Holy Place, and from the feast of Pentecost to the feast of Tabernacles, is not a matter of chronology of time or distance, but a chronology of experience! One does not get from the feast of Pentecost to the feast of Tabernacles by a date on the calendar or by a trip through space — you get there by an experience in God. Tabernacles follows Pentecost just as Pentecost follows Passover. The Most Holy Place follows the Holy Place just as the Holy Place follows the Outer Court — not by waiting for a particular day, or by being raptured to a planet called heaven. It is not a

sequence of times or locations, but a sequence of growth, experience, life, and reality! God's called and chosen elect is beginning to move into a new dimension in God, the veil is being drawn back and we are seeing that there is another whole realm of reality that we never knew about in the church systems. There is a whole other feast, an entirely other dimension of being in God, another vast realm of glory that we have never entered into!

Pentecost is wonderful! I have loved its power and its praise, its gifts and its graces, its life and its glory! If the firstfruits of the Spirit, the down payment of God's glory in the Candlestick realm, have been so glorious, the redemption of the fully purchased possession must be beyond anything we can even imagine! Pentecost has not delivered creation from the bondage of corruption, therefore creation still waits and groans and travails for the manifestation of the sons of God. Only the fully manifest sonship ministry can save this old world, demolish the systems of man, establish the rule of the Spirit, and deliver creation from the bondage of sin, sorrow, sickness, fear, torment, hatred, tyranny and death! Ah, my brother, my sister, we have only seen the edges of God's ways, the borders of His mind, and the fringes of His power, until the fullness of His great redemption is raised up within us!

If you are looking at outward things, the things you can see with your natural eyes, you are missing the point of meaning in the scriptures. When Paul spoke of our being "caught up in the air" he was not looking at the physical bodies of old Adam which are only temporal and return to the dust from whence they came, for the first man is of the earth, earthy. Should someone object that only a physical body could be caught up in the air, I would ask if Jesus was speaking literally and physically when He said, *"Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you."* (Jn. 6:53) Jesus wasn't teaching cannibalism there, my friend, for the spiritual mind discerns that He was speaking of spiritual realities! His flesh is His Word, for the Word was made flesh! His blood is His eternal, divine life, for the life of the flesh is in the blood! Jesus was speaking spiritually, and Paul was likewise speaking spiritually! Paul was looking at the inner man, the new creation, the heavenly body, the offspring of the flesh and blood of the Son of God, which is the real person, and which bears the image of the heavenly. It is this man that is "caught up" into a new place in the Spirit!

"COME UP HITHER!"

I have no desire to take away your "blessed hope," but would point you to a blessed reality for the here and now! As Christ in this hour comes to us in and by the Spirit to lift our inner-man nature up into the fullness of union in Him, we certainly do experience a rapture — believe me! While the word "rapture" is not to be found in scripture, there are other words and expressions that bear the same or similar meaning. Paul told the Ephesians, *"But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together... in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."* (Eph. 2:4-6) This passage says that God H-A-S RAISED US UP TOGETHER WITH CHRIST. Paul told the Thessalonians that the saints would be "caught up together" to meet the Lord in the air (I Thes. 4:16-17). It should not be difficult for any spiritual mind to see that in both cases the apostle is speaking of the same blessed experience! In both cases we are elevated to a higher plane in Christ, and with Him. There is a glorious company of these "caught up" ones! It is a wonderful place of rest, glory, revelation, wisdom, and power far above the beggarly elements of this world. Reba McMurry told of the little boy swimming in the pool who said to another, "Come on in, the water's fine." So I say to you who are dwelling in the earthlies, in the low lands of carnal mindedness, tossed by the storms of life, beset by problems, trials, difficulties, hindered by the flesh and the world, manipulated and controlled by the carnal religious systems of man, "Come on up higher — there is a wonderful realm above of peace, joy, victory, blessedness, power, and the mind of Christ!"

The preachers love to proclaim that Jesus is coming to "rapture the saints to heaven" or to "catch His waiting bride away." But the word of God never says that! When the Bible speaks of being "caught up" or invites us to "come up hither" it is not speaking in terms of miles or light-years away. Let us consider the experience of the apostle Paul's friend (this was not Paul Himself, as many erroneously assert!). Paul relates it this way. *"It is not expediate for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one CAUGHT UP TO THE THIRD HEAVEN. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) how that he was CAUGHT UP INTO PARADISE, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities."* (II Cor. 12:1-5)

Where did this friend of Paul's go? Physically, his body went nowhere! This was a spiritual experience! But he was "caught up" to the third heaven. And when he was caught up into God's glory, he was actually right here on the earth. He never left the ground for a minute! And thus it is in this hour for all of God's elect people! So completely overwhelmed was he, so utterly were his faculties under the control of the Holy Spirit, that he was not sure whether he was "in the body, or apart from the body." God carried him into that realm of life known as paradise, the third heaven. Heaven is not a location! Heaven is a realm of Spirit in which we touch, experience, and know God. The first heaven corresponds to the Outer Court of the Tabernacle and brings us to the brazen altar where Christ the Lamb is slain for us, giving to us His life. This is our initial "salvation" experience where we know the joy of sins forgiven and reconciliation to God. There is also the laver, representing the washing of the water of the word, or the word of God that begins to cleanse our walk upon earth. The second heaven corresponds to the second realm of the Tabernacle, the Holy Place, wherein dwells the candlestick, the table of showbread, and the golden altar of incense. We enter the door of this dimension through the baptism in the Holy Spirit which ushers us into this second supernatural heaven in Christ where the Holy Spirit fills us and becomes the light of our life, as the oil fills the candlestick and gives light to the Holy Place. Here we begin to be illuminated by the Spirit, as the Spirit reveals Christ to us and we become aware of heavenly and spiritual realities. It is there we truly partake of the bread of God, and the word begins to be made flesh within us. Then we are able to offer up the incense of spiritual prayer, praise, and worship unto God!

The man of whom Paul wrote had already ascended spiritually into the first two heavens in regeneration and the baptism in the Holy Spirit. But now "in spirit" the Lord carried him for a brief moment into that realm of life, that dimension of glory, that third heaven of HIS FULLNESS, typified by the Shekinah Glory of God beyond the veil in the Holiest of all. For this man it was but for a moment, yet this third heaven of God's fullness is the inheritance of every manifest son of God! Moffatt's translation says, "In the body or out of the body? I do not know. I simply know that in the body or out of the body (God knows which) this man was caught up into paradise and heard sacred secrets which no human lips can repeat." The glory, majesty, and power of the third heaven cannot be described by human lips! You cannot explain the glory of manifest sonship to sinful ears or to religious ears! It is not given to them to understand the mysteries of this kingdom! The third heaven must be experienced, for it cannot be told! In this marvelous experience it was not important for this man to know whether or not his body was caught up into that higher realm. He knew he was there! The real man, the inner man, the new man, the new creation, the Christ man, the spiritual body was there! He had entered into the realm of full sonship, the throne realm, the incorruptible, immortal, omniscient, omnipotent sphere of kingdom dominion! And he knew that in God's due time he would have an abundant and permanent entrance into that realm of glory, by the resurrection power of Christ within, CAUGHT UP. In the Outer Court we die with Christ at the brazen altar. In the Holy Place we are quickened together with Christ by the indwelling of His life. In the Holiest of all we ascend, are caught up with Him into all His glorious fullness and eternal reality!

When the eagle-eyed seer of Patmos, being in the Spirit, looked aloft into the heavens, he saw a throne. There is a throne whose dominion reaches from Adam in Paradise down to "the last man," whoever he may be. The natural man, in his blindness, looks, but he sees no throne; and therefore he cries, "I will live as I please, for there is no one to call me to account." But John, with illumined eye, saw beyond the outer world, and distinctly saw a throne and One who sat upon it. When our eye looks through the glass of revelation, it sees a throne too. The higher we go in God, the more powerful that throne! We feel more and more the influence of that throne and its dominion in our lives. It is the throne of God, the dominion of God by the might of His Spirit within and by the power of the mind of Christ. There is a throne whereon sitteth the King eternal, immortal, invisible; that throne is everywhere by the dominion of God in Christ, and it is experienced in our hearts where dwelleth the King.

"Come up Hither!" That is the cry in my heart for God's elect in this hour. It is the cry of the Father's heart for the people He loves. If only we can glimpse the wonder of what John experienced when those immortal words fell upon his ears! "I want to show you something, John — something special." John beheld with wonder the majesty of the throne of the God of the universe and in that blessed moment he was invited to enter and sit down in the throne room. He was ushered into celestial scenes of divine life, authority, power, and dominion. Today, my beloved, I hear the Lord saying to His chosen, "Come — I am calling you up into the secret place of my presence, into the unknown citadels of my splendor; and when I have finished with you it will be on earth as

it is in heaven. I am taking you on a journey into my glory, I am showing you things new and transcendental, I am raising you up into a dimension of union in me you've never known before; I am drawing you into the intimacy of the Father in the Son that John beheld, and I am meeting with you in the counsel of my eternal purpose."

Your mind and heart will be tremendously illuminated once you clearly see that the call to "Come up hither" is the call to leave the candlestick realm and ascend to the throne realm! A tremendous revelation was given to John on Patmos. He was shown in holy vision the seven candlesticks "*which are the seven churches.*" (**Rev. 1:20**) The seven churches represent THE WHOLE CHURCH REALM THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE CHURCH AGE. If you want to know what the church is like, look at the seven candlesticks! There you have the divinely inspired portrait of the church realm painted by the brush strokes of the Holy Spirit of revelation. Can any deny that they were imperfect, carnal, childish, idolatrous, heretical, rebuked again and again by the Lord — a realm of mixture and duality? The Lord commends and praises them on the one hand, while warning and rebuking them on the other hand. Some of the saints are praised for their works of faith and love, whereas others are warned of impending judgment if they fail to repent, and some are even threatened with extinction.

These seven churches reveal the true state and condition of the whole church throughout the age, and both history and personal experience testify unerringly that John was shown aright! The early church was a church of mixture and duality — flesh and spirit, truth and error, law and grace, spirituality and carnality. Even a casual perusal of the New Testament reveals this! And from that day to this, make no mistake about it — ALL CHURCHES HAVE BEEN THE SAME! Yours is no different, preacher friend of mine, no matter what lofty name you put to it. ALL churches are the same today! The church in El Paso is a carnal church. There are many denominations and groups here, but there is only one church in El Paso. It is composed of every believer in this city that trusts Jesus as Saviour and confesses the name of Christ. But whereas one says, "We are of Luther," and another says, "We are Baptists," and another says, "We are Pentecostal," while yet another says, "We are of Christ," are they not carnal and walk as men? There are indeed some spiritual people and some spiritually minded groups of saints in the church in El Paso, but the church in El Paso is a carnal church! And should the church age continue on for another thousand years the church would not have changed — the revelation of the seven candlesticks immutably declares it! The seven candlesticks are the seven churches, and the seven churches are the whole church throughout the entire church age!

As soon as this point is made abundantly plain John heard the voice saying, "*Come up hither and I will show you things that must be hereafter.*" After what? Why, bless your heart, after the candlestick realm! We're not dealing here with years or ages of time, but with realms of spiritual experience. The promises had already been given, not to the churches themselves, but to "him that overcometh" — a company out of the church. "Come up hither" the voice commanded. John is now shown another realm HIGHER THAN THE CANDLESTICK REALM! It is the realm of the overcomer, and only the overcomer is promised a place in the throne! It is the realm of the throne, of the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders. John is invited to leave the candlestick realm to ASCEND IN THE SPIRIT TO THIS HIGHER REALM where the Lamb is in the throne. This is what the brethren don't want to do! They don't want a change of order. How they cling to the candlestick realm with its five-fold ministry, its man-made systems, its carnal promotions and methods, its old order structure, its rituals, ceremonies, and ordinances, its weakness, limitation, mixture, and duality. This revelation was given to John about the year A.D. 96. The churches of his generation refused to leave the candlestick realm and rise to a higher place in God, and within only a few years the great apostasy set in, and by the third and fourth centuries the apostasy was complete, followed by an awful night of great and dreadful darkness. Even secular history refers to that time as "The Dark Ages." It was the great "falling away" that Paul prophesied in which the man of sin was revealed in the church, the temple of God, sitting in that temple ruling as God over the nations! I have traveled to the sites of the seven churches in Asia and I can tell you that today there is nothing there — not one church exists, not one saint can be found. The seven churches were in Asia which is the modern nation of Turkey. Within the whole country of Turkey there are only perhaps 1,000 Christian believers — all the rest are Moslem. There are no churches to be seen anywhere except as museums!

Today, my beloved, all who are truly overcomers, pressing into sonship, caught up to the throne, have heard and heeded the call to "Come up hither" and have forsaken the carnality, foolishness, and limitation of the candlestick realm to become related to Christ IN THAT PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WHERE HIS LORDSHIP

SWALLOWS UP OUR LIVES, WHERE HE IS ALL IN ALL, WHERE HIS SPIRIT, MIND, AND LIFE REPLACE THE OUTWARD STRUCTURE OF THE CHURCH SYSTEM. But do not forget, the Lord is still out there in the candlestick realm, for John saw in the midst of the candlesticks “One like unto a Son of man.” As long as there are candlesticks this glorious One will be in their midst! Oh yes, He is there, ministering on that level, blessing by His grace, dealing in His mercy, saving, healing, and helping. I have seen Him there in the midst of all the flesh, error and delusion, in fact I first met Him there in the little light that remains in Babylon. I’m sure most who read these lines also met Christ in the candlestick realm. Yes, He is there alright, sometimes even manifesting in marvelous moves of His Spirit and rich outpourings of His grace. What love! What wondrous love! What condescension! That Christ Jesus the Lord would “stand in the midst” of all the foolishness of creeds and doctrines, of rituals and ceremonies, of programs and promotions, of formality, fanaticism, and sectarianism, to minister something of life on whatever level it can be received in spite of all.

I would be remiss if I failed to warn every saint of God that He is NOT THERE taking men on to perfection, into incorruptible life, into the fullness of sonship. The “up hither” realm is where that experience is known! If any man can show me any church order, any revival, any move of God, including the early church and the original apostles and prophets, that has ever carried God’s people on to perfection and into the fullness of God I will recant and gladly join it. If such a church cannot be produced, then John’s revelation of the candlestick realm remains valid and I have no obligation to join myself to that which is impotent to bring me into the depths of Jesus Christ and to the glory of the throne. Hear me now! I am not opposed to gatherings, meetings, corporate praise, worship and ministry! But we must know that all we have done in those realms is still “in part” and not to be esteemed as the vehicle to carry us into manifest sonship in the fullness of God.

As I have been led by the Spirit and taught by the Spirit it has become clear to me that the “open door” in heaven and the command to “Come up hither” separates between the candlestick realm in the earthlies, which are the seven churches, which is the entire church age economy — and the higher realm of His fullness, the throne realm! I say to you today as the trumpet-voice said to John in that long ago, “Come up hither!” We have stood on the sidelines and said, “Come quickly, Lord Jesus, and save us from this old world.” And He has sat on His throne and said, “Come my people; enter into my gates, ascend into the heavens of my Spirit.” Nearly all Christians have said, “Come get us Lord Jesus,” but we who have heard His voice have been instructed, “Come up hither, my people; come up into the realm of my Spirit, into the glory of my presence, into the power and authority of my throne!” THE DOOR IS OPEN IN HEAVEN TODAY. You may live in the candlestick or the throne. You may be an earth-dweller or a heaven-dweller. You may be a “Christian” or you may be a SON!

As we ascend in the Spirit to reign with Christ in His throne it indicates a departure from the candlestick in the Holy Place, to follow our glorious and exalted forerunner beyond the veil into the throne room of the Holiest of all. It means entrance into a greater and deeper and higher relationship with Christ the Lord. The throne of this realm is the mercy seat — the throne of mercy! Thank God, the throne of the universe is the throne of mercy! All men may boldly approach the throne of grace. The understanding of this is very simple. If I were to say to any brother in a gathering, “Brother so-and-so, take us to the throne of grace,” in and by the Spirit the brother could take each and every one of us to the throne and we would never have to leave our seats. When Jesus says, “Come unto me,” He is not speaking geographically. He is speaking experientially! The journey to Christ and into Christ is not outward or physical, it is inward and spiritual. Sometimes an evangelist will say, “Twenty-five people came to Christ last night.” Does he mean twenty-five people were “raptured”? Does he mean twenty-five people were transported to Galilee and found Jesus walking the shores of the blue sea, and joined themselves unto Him there? Of course not! Chances are they did not move one inch physically. To say that “Come up hither” indicates a physical rapture reveals the innate stupidity of the natural mind which discerns not the things of the Spirit. Christ is Spirit, Christ is omnipresent Spirit, one does not change his physical location to ascend into His glory!

I would draw your reverent attention to the sequence of events outlined by the Holy Spirit in the last three verses of chapter three of the Revelation and the first three verses of chapter four. In the original there is no chapter division here, but there is continuity of thought and a flow of revelation. At the conclusion of the messages to the churches the Lord says, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock.” The same logic that invents the “rapture” would visualize Jesus standing at the wooden door of a church building on Main Street knocking to gain admittance. But Jesus has knocked on the door of the candlestick realm! Notice that Jesus does not

call this “a door” or “your door” or identify it as any particular door. He calls it THE DOOR. It is one specific door the identity of which is taken for granted. It is abundantly clear that the door He knocks upon is the door that separates between the candlestick realm and the throne room! This door is the same as the veil that separates the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place!

He has told us our need, He has told us there is another dimension in God beyond Passover and Pentecost, beyond the Outer Court and the Holy Place, He has told us there is something beyond the candlestick realm, and now, if you will hear my voice, and open the door, not only will I come into you, and sup with you and you with me, but there within yourself I will lead you up to heights never known by man! As you sup with me and overcome with me I will grant you to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne. Both of these propositions are spoken in two verses in Revelation 3:20-21. First the Lord says He stands knocking at the door. He follows this with the promise of raising us up to His throne as we overcome all things. Then only two verses later John says, *“After this I looked, and, behold, a door stood open in heaven.”* And through that door he saw the throne! Do you not see the mystery? Is it not clear that the “door” that was opened in heaven was the very same “door” that Jesus knocked upon? It is the gateway between the two realms, the gateway between the candlestick realm and the throne!

First Christ comes out of the heavens of His glory to enter into our lives by His Spirit. He descends through the door. For Him to come into us and sup with us we must open the door. Thank God, some of us have opened the door! Christ came to us to feed us His truth and life and He has fed us wonderful spiritual food that the candlestick realm knows nothing of! What a table He has spread as He has taught us of Himself, of His word, His ways, and His will. Oh, what a grand and glorious table the Lord has spread for us in this feast of Tabernacles! How our hearts have thrilled as He has revealed the mysteries of the kingdom, the path to perfection, the power to overcome, transformation into His image, the putting on of His mind and nature, the hope of full and complete redemption, spirit, soul, and body! How we have been illuminated, strengthened, and quickened by this heavenly meal! In the holy intimacy of this supping together He has brought us to a fuller and more complete knowing and experiencing of HIMSELF! What a feast it has been! And because we have opened the door... the door is still standing open in heaven! Oh, the wonder of it! Christ came through the door to sup with us, and now He arises from the meal, He bids us go through the door and enter with Him into His throne! It is indeed wonderful!

The voice as of a trumpet was not the voice of a naked cherub floating on a cloud, it was the voice of the Son of God out of a heavenly realm, the prophetic voice heard within the midst of the Lord's anointed. This prophetic voice is always saying to the Lord's people, “Come on up, come up higher, I want you to ascend from glory to glory, from victory to victory, from experience to experience, from realm to realm, from reality to reality.” As I was writing this message brother Paul Mueller's paper arrived in the mail in which he shares this inspiring thought: *“Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vine with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.”* (Song of Solomon 2:10-13) This anointed word may be premature as to Father's time and purpose, but we believe the time of its fulfillment is fast approaching. Who knows but what the new morning may break before us in great Glory and Life within just a few short years! Our WAITING PERIOD may soon be over! The time of the blooming of the flowers of spring and the singing of the summer song birds may very well be at hand! Are we beginning to hear the voice of the turtle? Is the fig tree yet putting forth her green figs? Are not the vines with their tender grapes giving forth a good smell, even the fragrance of fresh new growth? Ah, the time when our Father will say to us, ‘Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away,’ may soon be here! And where will we go when He speaks that Word of authority and power, calling upon us to ‘arise’? Not to any place of earth, of course, but to the heavenly, spiritual Zion, the dwelling place of God, in the Spirit! And when we mature spiritually, the Lord will then build up Zion, clothing us with all those precious new garments of the Life and Glory of Christ! Blessed be His great name!”

Even as you read these lines, precious elect child of God, there is a descending of the Lord into your life. He is descending out from your spirit into your soul and out of your soul into your body. That is how the redemption works! The mighty work of God begins in our spirit, then moves into the outer realms of our lives. There is a coming forth of the Lord out of the heavens of your spiritual life in Christ. As I have stressed, the heavens are not a geographical location, but a dimension of Spirit. When the trumpet sounds in your spiritual ear, and

understanding pours into you by the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God, there is a descending of the Lord into the lowest realms of your life and an ascending of your being into Him! Every trumpet that sounds will lift you up to a higher place, you will be “caught up” by each trumpet that blows its message of revelation into your reality. At last, when the last trump sounds within you, you will be caught up into the fullness of God and you will be totally changed in spirit, soul, and body! It is at the sound of the seventh trumpet, which is also the last trump, that the manchild is caught up to the throne of God to rule all nations with a rod of iron (Rev. 11:15 — 12:6). At the last trump there are also seven vials of blood poured out into the earth, and these are the revelation of the full redemptive power of the blood of Christ to bring the complete change in the land of our being in Christ. It is there that the carnal mind, the Adamic nature, the flesh, the seat of the beast, all that flows in that realm, with all the powers that generate the fleshly emotions, desires, and propensities of the natural man are forever swept away and brought to naught. THANK GOD FOR THE VIALS THAT BRINGS JUDGMENT UPON ALL THAT IS EARTHY WITHIN US!

A writer from the 1800's described conditions in Switzerland in his time thus: “In the valleys in Switzerland many of the inhabitants are deformed and dwarfish, and the whole of them wear a sickly appearance, for the atmosphere is charged with miasma, and is close to stagnant; you traverse them as rapidly as you can, and are glad to escape from them. Up yonder on the mountain you will find a hardy race, who breathe the clear fresh air as it blows from the virgin snows of the Alpine summits. It would be well for their frames if the dwellers in the valleys could frequently leave their abodes among the marshes and the fever mists, and get themselves up into the clear atmosphere above.”

It is to such an exploit of climbing that I invite you today! May the Spirit of God bear on eagle's wings all who read these lines, that we may leave the mists of religion and the fevers of the flesh, and all the ills of sin and death which beset us in this miasmatic valley of earth, the realm of the carnal mind, and get ourselves up to the mountain of the house of the Lord, the kingdom authority in the realm of the Spirit, where it is the delight of all sons of God to dwell in the rare atmosphere of truth and life and light! Oh, yes! God is disentangling us, cutting the cords that have kept us here below and permitting us to mount! We sit, some who cherish the hope of sonship, like chained eagles fastened to a rock, except that, unlike the eagle, we begin to love our chain, and would, perhaps, be loathe to have it snapped. Yet God is granting grace to all who have received the call to the kingdom to leave all the old orders of the religious systems and all the weakness, limitation, and bondage of an earth-centered life at the foot of the hill, so that our spirit may, like Abraham and Moses and Jesus, go to the top of the mountain and there speak with God and be transfigured in His glory.

His voice bids us come! “Come up hither!” And our heart responds with an earnest, Yes, Lord, we desire to ascend, to be with Thee, where Thou art.” Come! The Spirit saith it in invitation, yea, in command. Come up from the lowlands of the flesh, come up from the monotony of religion, come up from the emptiness of tradition, come up from the foolishness of the carnal mind, come up from the glitter of the world, come up from the curse of sin, sorrow, and death, come up from your graves, ye risen ones! Come up from the orders of man, ye consecrated ones! Come up to wear my crown, to sit with me upon my throne! Oh, that word has omnipotence lurking within it. That is where God is calling every person whose ears hear the cry, “Come up hither!” It shall be to you your everlasting joy to arise and “come.” I tell you that my soul has sometimes been so full of glory that I could hold no more when my beloved Lord has said, “Come,” to my soul; for He has taken me into His banqueting house, and His love-banner He waved over my head, and He has drawn me away from the doubts and fears and frustrations of mortal existence, up to “the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon” where He manifests Himself to me.

Ah, dear one, truly He declares to you that when this “Come up higher” shall captivate your ear and ravish your soul, there shall not be the flesh to drag you back, there shall be no sluggishness of spirit, no hesitation of will — you shall hasten to climb the mount of God and enter through the door into the throne room — you shall not mount to descend again, but mount on and on in one blessed ascension forevermore! “Come up hither!”

At this point I am compelled to share the following words from **Brother Carl Schwing**. *“I do not write to exalt us, the Father will do that in His perfect timing. I write to exhort us to lose ourselves in the depths of Jesus Christ. To encourage us to love and honor our aloneness with Him. To cherish our birthright and to always give all glory to the Father. To walk with our hearts and our heads up- lifted...following only and always our Beloved Christ. To gather often in His presence, thus partaking of fellowship with Him and with one another.*

OUR FELLOWSHIP IS WITH AND IN THE FATHER! Spirit fellowships with spirit, deep with deep. In the body, out of the body, in the light or in the darkness, in life or in death, we are one in Him. Hallelujah!

“Let us walk where others fear to walk. Let us live in the realm above the reach of mortal men. The Father bids us come up higher. Let us not tarry. He calls us to familiar grounds; to the house where only Sons can dwell. To a converse which only Sons can share. To a song that only Sons can sing, and to a place where only Sons can sit. We need not speak, we rest upon the bosom of the Father. We need not search, we ride upon the breath of God into the hollow of His heart. We draw life from the Source of all life. We shout as only Sons can do. And the heavens tremble at the beauty of our presence! All creation is quickened by the words we speak. And in the light of that glorious moment of manifestation, the Father will proclaim: ‘These are my Beloved Sons, hear ye them!’ With each sunrise the eyes and ears of our spirits are opened a little bit more...that we might see the unseen and hear the inaudible. Each sunset we walk deeper into the rising mist of His presence. And in the silence of the night hours we often hear His voice or feel His touch. We awake knowing that we are a little closer to home.

“Everything else becomes meaningless and lifeless in the beauty of His presence. The words that He speaks are pure and life-giving; unspotted by the idle chatter of religious reasoning. Each word He speaks is a drop of life to our hungry souls. He calls us ‘sons’... ‘all that I have is thine,’ are the words that He speaks to us. We are overwhelmed by such love and goodness; we fall before Him in adoration, only to be lifted higher into the excelling glory that the Father has prepared for us. We are realizing that there is nothing left of us, we are reaching the point where we are lost in Him. We are entering into union with God! The doors of eternity are opening to us and we are seeing and knowing even as the Father. Finally we shall love with His love, imparting grace and life to all that are brought before us. It will be the hour when the hope and longing of all creation is fulfilled...it will be the hour of their freedom from the curse. And it all began when He led us to the straight and narrow way” — end quote.

Well did **Paul Mueller** write: *“Many years ago the Lord got my attention through visions and other experiences with Him. One vision, in particular, was an urgent call to ascend the high places in God. In that vision, I saw a large mountain. It was the mount of the Lord’s presence. Many people were climbing that mountain, higher and upward toward the pinnacle of His presence. But few were reaching the heights. In that vision, the mount of His presence was like the literal mountains. The higher one goes, the fewer trees there are. And the higher we go in God, the fewer believers there are at that level. As I watched the people climb that mountain, they appeared on the spiritual level where they were when they died. Some of the people climbing that mountain of the Lord’s presence were loved ones and friends. One among them was a man whom I considered a man of God, a man I had known quite well. By the Spirit, I was taken up that mountain but close to the people who were on various levels ascending that mountain. As I passed by some friends and loved ones, they all cried out to me, ‘Go higher! Don’t stop now, but keep going higher and higher.’ That vision made a profound impact on my life. I shall never forget it! By His grace and His Spirit, I intend to keep climbing higher and higher in God!*

*“Those who have lived and died in Christ are now in a realm where they can see and understand more clearly. The true reality is in the realm of the Spirit, and they know it well now. They know what it means to walk with God toward perfection, and they appreciate it more now than when they were in this earthly realm. If the Lord would give us ears to hear the cries of those who have gone on before us, we would hear them crying unceasingly for us to ascend the very heights of the mount of the Lord. I heard them briefly. And the tone of their voices persuaded me to believe that our spiritual growth will also mean something significant and wonderful for them. Their call to keep going higher was almost a cry of desperation, but was one of hope as well. Without us they cannot be made perfect (**Heb. 11:40**). Therefore, the remnant of this hour must ascend in the Spirit to the heights of the mount of the Lord, where we shall be changed. And we shall also release many who died in Christ from their limited, static positions where they rest on the mount of the Lord.*

*“As we ascend the heights of the mount of the Lord, we will find that it is a lonely walk. To take a step higher in God may mean forsaking old friends and loved ones. When Moses made his seventh and last ascent up Mount Sinai, the Lord said to him, ‘**And be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me IN THE TOP OF THE MOUNT. And no man shall come up with thee...**’ (**Ex. 34:2-3**) Like Moses, some are invited of the Lord to ascend the mount of His presence and meet Him there.*

Half way up the mount will not do! Those who shall partake of His life and the fullness of His kingdom must go all the way up. God said to Moses, 'present thyself there to me IN THE TOP OF THE MOUNT.' The top of the mount was Moses' goal, and it is ours as well. And it is impossible for us to take anyone else with us. We must go alone! Spiritual progress is not based on fellowship with people, but on fellowship with God! A few others will also go alone to meet the Lord in the top of the mount, so that a remnant — all the remnant — shall ascend the mount to present themselves to Him in the top of the mount. No one member of that remnant company shall be missing, for the Lord will lead them all there by His Spirit." — end quote.

Scattered among earth's billions is a special species of people. They are in the world but not of it. These have known from the beginning that they were different. They have gone through the motions, tried to be a good Christian, held every office in the church and tried to live the way they were told. But in the midst of all the effort to belong, there has always been something that kept this people from blending in with the majority. There has been an emptiness and a knowing deep inside that this was not the reason they were here. There has always been something that separated them from all the external forms of religion they have passed through. This, precious friend of mine, is the day of RECOGNITION! This is your day of knowing and understanding where you came from and where you have been in order to arrive where you are right now, and where you are going. Something deep within has cried out, "I didn't come into this world just to get saved from hell." Deep has called unto deep and you knew you were born for a purpose. You knew that you were here by divine appointment. You knew there was something greater, more glorious, and transcendental in God. You knew you were born to unveil God's great plan, will, purpose, wisdom, nature, power, and glory in the earth!

You came into this world out of the bosom of the Father! Before the Creator formed you, He knew you. He didn't know you in your present physical form as Joe Smith or Sally Brown, but He knew you as spirit. God spoke to you about His plan for your life before ever you were formed as an embryo in the womb of your mother. Paul states it so clearly when he says, "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.*" (Eph. 1:3-4) The Amplified Bible reads, "*Even as He chose us (actually picked us out for Himself as His own) in Christ before the foundation of the world.*"

Never doubt this reality for a moment — the only way God could have loved you, chose you in Christ, and picked you out for His own before the foundation of the world is that you truly existed in and with Him before the appearing of the worlds. Nothing can be plainer than that! Yet we have supposed that we were just recently, in this life, apprehended of God to sonship. I thought the work of God began in my life sixty-five years ago. Now I find that the thing God is doing with humanity began in eternity! It didn't begin in time. It began before the ages were framed! God loved me, chose me, knew me, counseled with me, and picked me out for His unique purpose before the foundation of the world. My origin was in God! God begat me out of Himself as spirit before He exhaled me as spirit into a very unique body upon earth.

The "kingdom message" deals with the conformity, maturity, and inheritance of the sons of God — those called to share His throne and reign with Him over all things. This great plan was conceived and initiated in eternity, before time began. "*For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*" (Rom. 8:28-31) Now notice! These five verbs — foreknow, predestinate, called, justified, glorified — are all in the aorist tense. This denotes action at a given point in the past. All these things happened to us "before" the ages began! Some have stumbled over the fact that Paul says that those whom the Father foreknew, predestinated, called, and justified, He also GLORIFIED. They have questioned the meaning of "glorification," wondering how they could already be glorified in their present imperfect, mortal state. Let us understand — ALL of this is in the past! God foreknew us in the past — before the world began. This is also when He predestinated us, called us, justified us, and glorified us. Jesus, the firstborn of this company of sons selected before the world began, reveals the deep mystery of this when He prays, "*And now, O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.*" (John. 17:5) Oh, yes! Jesus was glorified, had a glory, with the Father before the world began. He left that glory when He was lowered into this earth realm, and now He prays for the Father to restore to Him that glory He had with Him before He came! And that is when every son of God was glorified! It is not something happening now, though it shall be manifested now, but it was given us in

Christ in that long ago before the world began. *“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”* (Eph. 2:10) Aren't you glad!

Clarity is coming to the sons of God. Understanding, perception, consciousness, expression, purpose, destiny. God is awakening all of this in us! We are called with an holy calling, called to ascend the mount of God, to ascend to the throne zone! He is awakening within us that reality we knew with the Father from before the foundation of the world. You are here by divine appointment! All your steps are ordered of the Lord. The body you were born with, the family you were born into, your parents, the town you were raised in, the school you attended, the friends you acquired, the mate you chose, the job you held, the life you've lived, the experiences you've had, the joys and sorrows, the tragedies and triumphs, the apparent mistakes and the victories, all that has taken place in your experience was mapped out in the council of God on that glorious day when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy! As we ascend into the heavens of God's Spirit to sit with Him in His throne we discover the truth of these words:

The throne room looks the same
As I ascend back to whence I came;
There's the scepter that was mine
Before I left there;
And there I sit with all the sages
I was enthroned with before the ages,
But most of all, my Father
Out of whom I came!

The cry of the book of Revelation is the call for us to “Come up hither” into a higher realm of life and glory. The important truth for us to understand now is that in the Revelation there is both a coming out and a coming up. *“And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her my people, that ye be not partaker of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”* (Rev. 18:4) That very word came to us in great power by the Spirit many years ago during the time of a sovereign move of God in our midst. We were obedient to the word we heard from heaven and hastened to come out of the old order church system, and out of the whole religious order of man. God began in us a process of complete and total restoration of His truth, His ways, His will, His purpose, His life, His mind, and the things of His Spirit!

Then, after He called us out of the religious systems of man, and had consumed the spirit and ways of those systems out of our minds and hearts, we heard another Voice as of a trumpet talking with us, inviting us to “Come up hither” to a higher spiritual realm. When we came up to a higher place in the Spirit, He then said to us, “I will show thee things which must be hereafter.” Then we were immediately in the Spirit and saw “a throne set in heaven (or in the realm of the Spirit), and One sat on the throne.” When, at our Father's invitation, we ascended in the Spirit into the throne zone, we beheld the Lord seated upon His throne of majesty and power. And what a revelation that was! Yet here is the wonder of it all — not just to see God in Christ seated upon His throne, but to comprehend the deep and eternal significance of His invitation to us to “Come up hither.” *“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne.”* (Rev. 3:21)

Not to every man, not to every believer, not to every preacher is the invitation given to “Come up hither.” Not all have ears to hear the Voice! Not all are willing to leave the candlestick realm! Not all have followed on to be overcomers! If we have really heard the Voice, if the Lord has indeed revealed these truths to us by His Spirit, if we have truly overcome the world, the flesh, the devil, and the false religious systems of man, He also invites us to sit with Him and in Him on that throne! The kingdom of God will be brought to pass in all the earth as we, the overcomers, reign in union with Christ in the Spirit and by His spiritual rod of iron exercise His spiritual authority and power over the nations to break the rule of sin, tyranny, error, flesh, and death. This work will be accomplished by the mighty administration of His throne operating in our lives in and by the Spirit. Isn't it wonderful! To be continued...J. Preston Eby

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 67 THE THRONE (Continued)

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART SIXTY-SEVEN

THE OMNIPRESENT THRONE THE ONE WHO SITS UPON THE THRONE

"Immediately I was in the Spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and One sat on the throne." (Rev. 4:2)

The exclamation, "Behold! A throne!" sets the mood and declares the scene which greets John's gaze as he passes through the open door into the heavenly court. There is much more to be seen, but the glory of the throne and He who sits upon it is of such fabulous radiance that all else seems dim beside. In this and the next chapter the word "throne" occurs seventeen times.

The scriptures continually speak of thrones in connection with the sovereignty and power of God. The throne of God is a developing throne, just as every purpose of God is *progressive* and *unfolding* from age to age, the body of Christ is *growing* and *being builded up* a spiritual temple, the bride of Christ is *being prepared* and is *making herself ready* for the marriage union, and the kingdom of God is *expanding* so that "of the *increase of His government... there shall be no end.*" Let us then see that this is not the throne of God in its eternalness, but a new and fresh and more glorious revelation of the throne in an advanced manifestation and administration. John sees it, not as long since fixed and settled in this locality and form, but just as it was taking up its rest in this place. It was *being set* as He was looking! That is the sense of the Greek text. The expression is in a tense which denotes unfinished action, reaching its completion at the time of the seeing.

"I saw a throne as *having just been set* in heaven!" This is truly marvelous, for it shows that this vision refers to a *new order of things*, which first comes into being at the time to which the vision refers. The apostle's language implies that the act of the placing of the throne where he saw it, was only being completed at the moment of his looking. That moment was the moment of him being called up out of the earthlies into the heavenlies! The prophet Daniel beheld this same scene and describes it thus, "*I beheld till the thrones were set (not cast down as the King James Bible has it), and the Ancient of days did sit, whose throne was like the fiery flame.*" (Dan. 7:9) Daniel's vision embraced the *placing* of the throne, as well as the throne itself.

When John, being in the Spirit, looked aloft into the heavens of God's Spirit, *he saw a throne* which is the seat of universal authority and dominion. But he saw that throne in a new and more glorious administration, to bring into view a new order of things. It is the same throne — but in a new dimension! Up until the vision of the open door in heaven only one man out of all humanity had access to the throne realm to capture the power, the glory, and the majesty of the throne realm, and then come back into the earth realm and reveal it. But now a many-membered man will have access to the throne realm, thousands of in-Christed ones to step forth from the mercy seat in the Holiest of all to express the life, light, love, goodness, deliverance, salvation, and power of God before the face of all nations and unto all the ends of the earth. This is the *manchild upon the throne!* These are the overcomers who are called to *sit with Christ in His throne!* These are God's called and chosen elect who rule the nations with a rod of iron! This is the new administration of the throne that John beholds, high above the limited ministry of the candlestick realm, bringing the new order of the kingdom of God through manifested sons!

In a little nursery rhyme that many who read these lines will remember from their childhood we have a picture of the pathetic shroud of darkness that hangs like a pall over the church's understanding of these deep and wonderful truths of God:

Pussy cat, pussy cat, where have you been?

I've been to London to see the Queen.
Pussy cat, pussy cat, what have you seen there?
I saw a mouse under her chair.

Pathetic as this picture is in the natural realm, it is even more sad in the spiritual realm. So many saints have visions of that bright glory world above, and instead of beholding the glory of sonship and the power of the throne, all they can see is golden streets, celestial streams, roses that never fade, mansions with gold bath tubs, harps, and fluttering angels. Like the pussy cat, they cannot see the queen in all her glory and dominion, they see only the mouse under her chair! The carnal mind simply cannot see the true realities and glorious significance of sonship to God. Instead it treasures the outer things of buildings, meetings, musicians, programs, rituals, ceremonies, ordinances, organization, efforts, and works. But God is calling a people to *come up hither* to the throne realm where all that God is may be touched, known, experienced, and manifested!

When one ascends high enough all he sees is the *throne* and *One sitting upon it!* That is all the high priest saw in the Most Holy Place, and that is what John the beloved beheld when the door was opened in heaven. The throne room is so grand and so flooded with reality and glory, yet the old order church has been chasing mice under the throne and perceives not the majesty of that realm. When Isaiah stood in the throne zone he cried out, "The whole earth is full of His glory!" The glory of God became ALL to him in the presence of the majesty on high. When we turn from the religious mice and behold the true wonders of the Spirit world we come to *know Him as He is*. It grieves me when people talk about heaven and miss the glory of God upon earth! My spirit is saddened when believers talk about heaven in terms of mansions over the hilltop or a cabin in the corner, while they live out their lives void of a true spiritual understanding of Christ raised up within His people in the glory of kingdom authority and power — the throne zone. Golden streets, gates of pearl, and walls of jasper are merely spiritual poetry expressing to us deep and profound *spiritual realities*. They are figures of speech employed by the Holy Spirit of truth to help us leap over the walls of our logic and capture that which is indescribable. Oh, that all men might see the awesome glory of God that dwells in these vessels of clay! The kingdom of God is *within you*, precious son and daughter of the heavenly Father!

My deepest prayer is that men may get their eyes off the mouse under the chair and *behold the throne*, the wisdom and glory and power of the kingdom of God within. You need not go anywhere to come up hither to the throne realm! It is closer to you than the air that you breathe. It's closer to you even than the blood that courses through your veins. In the power of the kingdom of God within you there is no limitation at all. All things are possible! All the wealth of divinity, all the riches of the mind of the Father, all the abundance of joy, peace, love, faith, and power is in your spirit, the throne room within Christ in you! All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge that are hidden in Him are in you today, in the Spirit of the living God which is in your spirit, that spirit which you are upon this earth! Discover that throne within today, my friend, draw from its wealth, suck from its life, receive from its power and you will walk as a new creation, transformed into the image of God. In the surpassing glory of sonship to God golden streets will have no importance at all! You won't even see the mouse under the chair! All the virtues and values of God, all the attributes of wisdom, righteousness, and power, are centered in the throne zone. All that God is and ever shall be and all that He does is in the throne zone. All of God's mercy, grace, and goodness radiate out from the throne zone. In the throne zone you can see all things as they really are.

"When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy messengers with Him, THEN SHALL HE SIT UPON THE THRONE OF HIS GLORY." (Matt. 25:31) When the Lord comes into His temple, which temple we are, and we are raised up into His glory and power in the Spirit, then He sits upon the throne of His glory! Darkened minds picture our Lord soaring down out of the skies on a great cumbersome throne, all dazzling white (Rev. 20:11), like a king arrayed in all his trappings in the natural. But we should remember that ***"the words I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." (John. 6:63)***; we should remember that prophecy is given in prophetic language, in highly figurative speech! A throne means dominion and power and authority. White denotes righteousness. So a white throne denotes *righteous dominion*. That is God's throne! His dominion is righteous, that is, it is *right*. It is *just*. It destroys evil and redeems men unto God. It destroys sin and death and quickens men unto righteousness and life. It is a throne of mercy and judgment, even corrective judgment that makes what is wrong, right. That is what is *right* or *righteous!* And that is the throne God is raising up within His sons! That is the spirit every son must have toward *all men* before we can reign upon the throne!

THE OMNIPRESENT THRONE

God is not a limited physical being that can sit on a tangible throne in one restricted locality somewhere out beyond the blue. God is spirit and God is everywhere and thus His throne is a spiritual throne and is everywhere. The one great truth that all theologians agree on is that God is *omnipresent spirit* who not only created, but upholds and *fills* the whole universe and all things! And our scientists tell us that in the universe there are more worlds than individual grains of sand on the beaches of all the earth. Astronomy informs us of the enormous distances that separate the stars of the physical universe. So remote are the nearest ones that four years are required for light traveling 186,000 miles a second to traverse the distance. Yet speaking astronomically, such stars are very near neighbors! Galaxies have been discovered which are billions of light years away.

You cannot put a God who is that great and everywhere present and bottle Him up on a physical throne in one limited spot. Oh, no! *He is everywhere and His throne is everywhere.* The throne of the God who is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent spirit is not a material one but bespeaks the REALM OF HIS SUPREME AND UNIVERSAL AUTHORITY AND RULERSHIP; and our Lord Jesus Christ has been exalted to the glory of that rulership. The throne of God is a sphere of power and authority, a position of eminence, a condition and a state of being. The reign of God's Christ is the assumption of the almighty power and universal dominion of the Father. It is the dispensing of HIS POSITIVE ENERGY FORCE into His creation in specific ways. Exalted to that high realm Jesus no longer walks in a limited physical body, but He now indwells the church, which is His body, the FULLNESS OF HIM THAT FILLETH ALL IN ALL (Eph. 1:22-23).

If heaven were a "place" out beyond the galaxies somewhere, can you imagine how long it would take for God to hear a prayer, how long it would take to *get* to heaven were we to travel there, how long it would have taken Jesus to get from heaven to earth when He descended to dwell among us? Why, bless your heart, after two thousand years Jesus would still be on His way back to the throne even if He traveled at the speed of light! And He would need billions of more years to get there! The angel Gabriel was dispatched from heaven *while Daniel was praying* and was able to reach the prophet Daniel *while he was yet in his prayer* (Dan. 9:20-23). Real distance is measured not in miles or light years, but rather in time required to reach a destination. Heaven, therefore, is not far away!

When we pause to think of the terrifying vastness of the universe, our human tendency is to think that God could never pay close attention to the tiny details of our lives. Our walk to the store, the streets we cross, the entrance we use, the groceries we select, the people we meet, the mood of the cashier, the price we pay at the checkout, the thousand and one little decisions we must make and challenges we face — does God care about these trivial details? The McDonald's restaurant chain says, "We do it all for you." But they don't. They can't. Larger crowds make for less personal attention. So how can God direct the whole vast universe and give us personal attention at the same time? Well, says Jesus, amazingly God does! *"Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered."* (Matt. 10:30) To God both small and big are beautiful and worthy of His loving attention. And I will tell you how He does this!

The scriptures use many terms that are suited to our understanding. When God speaks to us He uses terminology that is comprehensible to us, in order to convey concepts that are beyond us. These are called "terms of accommodation" or "anthropomorphic terms" if I might use that \$10.00 word. It means simply this — there are certain attributes that belong to us as human beings that are attributed to God and they are used of God in order that you and I might understand God better. For instance, the scripture says, "the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the earth." Now God doesn't have physical eyes! And frankly, I don't understand how you can see without eyes, and therefore the only way I can understand it is for God to say to us, "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the earth." And now I understand that God sees!

Not only do I understand that God sees, but I also understand that God sees everything, everywhere. Nothing is hid from His sight! The "eyes" of God are *spirit eyes*. God is omnipresent, that is, present everywhere at the same time. The spirit eyes of God, or His ability to see by Spirit, are as omnipresent as God is omnipresent! That is, the eyes of Spirit are not localized — God doesn't have two remarkable eyes somewhere in His head with wonderful X-ray vision that can pierce the vast distances of the universe and

see everything, everywhere at will. Oh, no! His eyes are omnipresent — He sees everything, everywhere at the same time and He sees it from right there where He is, not from some distant vantage point. His Spirit is right there present with you as you read these lines and He sees you there by His Spirit that is there. Because He “fills all things” His Spirit is at the same time in Moscow, Cairo, Beijing, Washington, Caracas, Johannesburg, and Paris and He sees everything there by His Spirit there. Omnipresent eyes! It is indeed wonderful! And yet they are not eyes as we know eyes, but just His *universal ability to see* by His Spirit. The One who made the eye can see without an eye! I don’t understand it — therefore the term “eye” is given to us as a symbol standing for the reality in God the Spirit.

Again the scriptures say that the heavens are the “handiwork” or “fingerwork” of God. God doesn’t have fingers like we have, but He can do the work of fingers, therefore the Holy Spirit speaks of the creation as the work of His fingers. So the One who made the fingers, the hand, and the arm can do the work of the fingers, the hand, and the arm, *by His Spirit*. The hand of the Lord is not localized, it does not exist in some specific spot somewhere in the universe from whence it moves out through time and space to perform some action. Oh, no! God is omnipresent Spirit — therefore the hand of God is as omnipresent as God Himself. His hand is a spirit hand and speaks of His great ability to act, perform, do, make, and create. God acts by His Spirit in every place at the same time. Therefore “His arm is not short that it cannot save.” God’s hand is right there in the room where you sit this very moment. And His hand is everywhere else in all the unbounded heavens at the same time!

Furthermore, Christ is now seated on the right hand of God — He is seated there on that right hand right there where you are, yea, even in the deepest depth of your being, so that the throne of God is nearer to you than the air that you breathe! Christ is seated at the right hand of power that is, in the position where God acts, does, works, and creates, so that all God does He does in and by and through the Son of God. And He does it right there where you are! Can we not see by this how simple yet profound is the knowledge that we have been raised up and made to sit in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus! The spiritual dimension of God’s abilities in Christ have been awakened and quickened within us, our spirit joined to His Spirit, so that we sit in that spiritual dimension by spiritual consciousness, and we haven’t moved one inch to get there! Somehow I understand that today and it makes the reality clear to my own dull human way of thinking.

The “ears” of the Lord are not huge elephant-like ears possessing such super-sensitivity that they can hear sounds from billions of light years away. Oh, no! The ears of the Lord are spirit ears, equally present in every place His Spirit is; He hears you not from a distance but from right where you stand in His presence. The ears of the Lord permeate all places and all things by His Spirit and they are all about you and within you. He hears every thought of your mind, every desire of your heart, every cry of your soul! And His wonderful omnipresent *spirit mind* is able to instantly and efficiently assimilate, process, compute, utilize and respond to all these untold trillions of bits of information with the same ease that you and I can drive our car while talking on the phone and be conscious of the weather all at the same time! God is all He is everywhere, and He can do all that He does everywhere. The mouth of the Lord is an omnipresent spirit mouth, His ability to speak in every place at the same time. Out of His Spirit He can speak within your own heart or ears, while at the same instant He is speaking to millions of other people around the world and to holy angels and creatures of all kinds in far distant worlds. He speaks to each by His Spirit present within them, not from some distant “place” where His “mouth” is! In like manner the creative power of God is an omnipresent power and God creates, not in one locale, but out of the infinity of Himself.

The dwelling place of God cannot be any smaller or more limited than He is! The whole vast realm of the heavens is His throne. The Lord spoke through His anointed prophet, declaring, *“Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool.” (Isa. 66:1)* He fills the entire immense extent of the heavens, which is the realm of the Spirit. The heavens are His throne, which means that He rules and reigns in the realm of the Spirit and by His Spirit. If we could measure the extent of the Spirit, from one end of the heavens to the other, we would then be able to estimate the extent or bounds of His throne. Just as scientists cannot discover the extremities of the physical universe, so is it impossible to know the expanse of the Spirit. Neither the heavens, nor the earth, nor the whole universe can contain Him. Solomon said that the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him. Our Father is greater than all! He and His throne are limitless and boundless! And He shall reign until all principalities and powers, all creatures and men, and all things of all orders everywhere throughout the unbounded heavens have acknowledged Him, and being reconciled in

their hearts come to love, adore, honor, and obey Him with willing hearts. He shall reign until all things everywhere both perceive and resonate with the glory that He is!

Truly the throne of God is a spiritual throne and is as omnipresent as God is! God is everywhere, and His throne is everywhere, for His throne is naught but THE REALM OF HIS ALMIGHTY AUTHORITY AND OMNIPOTENT POWER. There is no need to go anywhere physically to relate to God's throne. The journey is a spiritual one! The throne is all around you, within you, and present equally everywhere within the realm of Spirit in which God exists and dwells. You can either experience or ascend that throne within yourself through union with Christ and the release of His power. *"All authority in heaven and in earth is given unto me,"* Jesus said. The ascension of Jesus was the supreme event of world history. He ascended not to a place, but to an office in and by the Spirit. He departed from the arena of humiliation and limitation to enter into His glory. He, in one instant, vaulted from the status of despised Galilean teacher to the cosmic King of the universe, rising over the heads of Pilate, Herod, and Caesar Augustus. The ascension catapulted Jesus to the right hand of God where He was enthroned as King of kings and Lord of lords. The implication of this event for every son of God and for the world is staggering. He has invited us to share that throne! He has beckoned all who have received the call to sonship to ascend in Him to that place in the Spirit where all authority and power is accessed. That is the destiny of every manifest son of God. That authority is present everywhere by His Spirit! But it must become appropriated, embodied, and expressed through a people who attain to the FULLNESS OF CHRIST. *"Come up hither!"* That is the reality of His throne in and by the Spirit!

The following words by brother **Paul Mueller** speak profoundly to our hearts. *"Seeing that the throne of God is in the heavenlies, or in the realm of Spirit, there is no power anywhere that can withstand the power and authority of the throne of our Father. As His sons, we must ascend in the Spirit to the heavenlies, worship the Lord, and give Him all honor and praise. As we do this, we are establishing a vital link between heaven and earth by which the kingdom of God more fully comes to earth, thus unseating the powers of man. Each time we rise in the Spirit to worship our Father at His spiritual altar, the fire from His altar is cast into the earth to change the world (Rev. 8:1-5). That fire, which God is, also burns away the dross from our lives, and delivers us of this sinful, Adamic nature. This is the direct result of the reign of Christ, which shall continue to increase until all is changed!"*

"The Lord's greatest dominion at this time is in the lives of His elect and chosen ones. We are now being ruled and governed by the Lord totally and absolutely. He has extended the dominion of His kingdom to our hearts and lives, and now the Lord will rule us with complete and undisputed dominion. And He will continue to rule and reign in our lives until every enemy within us is made subject to Him. This is the present truth of the kingdom of God!" — **end quote.**

The Greek word *thronos* means "the place and seat of authority" and refers to all executive authority that is committed into the hands of God's Christ, Head and body. Understand that the throne is here now; here is infinity; here is eternity; here is omnipotence, waiting for you to enter into your heritage in God! Again and again in the Psalms and in the Prophets David and others make this beautiful and significant assertion: *'The Lord reigneth...'* The Lord reigneth over the heathen, the Lord reigneth over the nations, the Lord reigneth in Zion, the Lord reigneth in the midst of His people! It is always present tense. The Lord reigns now! That doesn't mean that He has purposed to deal with every thing and everybody now, but He has assumed the dominion of the world and all things, and all is safe in His care and all will experience His sovereign purpose in His timing and according to His program and will. It brings joy and victory to know that the Lord reigneth! His throne is established forever. The scepter of His kingdom is a right scepter. He is clothed with strength that is unperceived by the world.

The Hebrew word translated "reigneth" is *malak* and means to reign, to ascend the throne, to induct into royalty. Thus, when we are called to *"Come up hither"* to share His throne, we are called to ascend the throne and to be inducted into the royal power of that throne! Therefore, as the elect hear His voice and hasten to His call, we are ascending the very throne of Christ in a greater relationship with Him and in Him. We are being *inducted* into the royalty of the throne of Christ — into His *reigning realm!* Through the experiences we encounter in this earthly life, with all their testings, trials, and provings, we are becoming overcomers and thereby *learning to reign* over all things by His royal mind, will, and life!

What does it mean when the door is opened in heaven and John sees a throne having just been set in a heavenly place? What is the divine message we should understand when the Voice as a trumpet invites John to come up to the throne room? When the Father shows us in the heavenly realm of the Spirit His throne of glory established in a fresh and more glorious revelation, it thus indicates an expanded manifestation and administration of His dominion. God is ready to deal in a brand new way with things not dealt with before! It indicates an increase in spiritual activity in the earth. It indicates a time of the greater dominion of the Lord as King in the earth. He calls His chosen ones to see His throne in the heavens, with Christ seated on that throne, to reveal His truth that He will now rule in them in a greater way, yea, completely, fully, so that He may then reign through them over the New Day He is birthing in the earth. It thus marks the beginning of a period of the revelation of divine truth and the dealings of the Father in His sons to bring them to the hour of manifestation.

Oh, how blessed the prospect! Truly we have come to that time! May the Holy Spirit reveal to all His elect the power and authority of His kingdom that is now to be revealed through the sons of God! May all God's called ones understand that God now determines to change things in the earth! As He allows His chosen ones to see the open heavens, with Christ seated on His throne, and to hear the Voice bidding us to arise and come on up into that place with Him, we know that He is coming to reign in our lives to redeem us fully and completely in spirit, soul, and body. And He shall reign in us until His throne is fully established in us, even that fresh, new, advanced manifestation and administration of His throne that shall subdue all things until the knowledge of the glory of the Lord covers the earth as the waters cover the sea! Hallelujah!

THE ONE WHO SITS UPON THE THRONE

“Immediately I was in the Spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and One sat upon the throne. And He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.” (Rev. 4:2-3)

Let us notice — THE ONE ON THE THRONE DID NOT HAVE AN IMAGE! All John saw on the throne was colors, beautiful colors. And yet, John saw One sitting there. What about this One that sat on the throne, that could be seen, and yet, was not visible to the natural eye? He had no form, only radiance! John was not looking into the natural elements when he saw the One on the throne. The scripture says he was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day! John stood in the very reality of heaven as he was caught up in the highest realm of the Spirit. The One he saw *was spirit*. Do not look, my beloved, at the throne of God... as a natural seat sitting there for someone to sit on. Don't imagine a throne-like chair! Here seated in the splendor of the omnipresent heavenly-spiritual realm John beheld One of many colors. Even though He did not have a figure, John could see Him in and by the Spirit.

The One John saw is spirit. In the tenderest of words Jesus explained to the woman of Samaria this great and eternal truth: *“The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” (John. 4:23-24)* God is Spirit, and we will understand a great mystery when we see that spirit is light. *“God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.” (I John. 1:5)* We cannot see God with natural eyes. No man hath seen God at any time! Pure light is invisible. That is why in outer space there is nothing but darkness, although the light rays from every star are passing through. It is only when light is *reflected* that it becomes visible. The rays of the sun strike the earth and are reflected off of it, creating the light of day on the planet. God is light, and no man hath seen God at any time! Only as we see the light *reflected in God's Christ* do we see Him! *“The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath led Him forth into view.” (John. 1:18)*

As I have mentioned, pure light is invisible. One writer has pointed out that a scientific analysis of sunlight reveals that it consists of three kinds of rays. (1) *Chemical rays or actinic*. These rays are invisible and can neither be seen or felt. (2) *Light rays*. These rays can be seen but never felt. (3) *Heat rays*. These rays are felt but are never seen. GOD IS LIGHT, and in Him there is no darkness at all. Therefore God, in a spiritual way, has His being, function, and expression on those three levels. We know that God has revealed Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father corresponds to the chemical rays of sunlight. *No man hath seen God at any time*. The Son, who is the light of the world, corresponds to the light rays which are reflected, the One whom we can see but not feel. The Holy Spirit corresponds to the heat rays, since He is felt in the lives

of believers but is never seen. Now, these are not three *kinds* of light, but three dimensions of the one reality of light. In like manner, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not three *individual Gods*, but three dimensions, three expressions, or three operations of the one and only God!

Many a sermon has been preached about the throne of God in heaven, and I think most of them have missed the mark because they see only the Father on the throne. The greatest mystery of the ages is that seated on the throne of God today is a MAN. God Himself came down from heaven and invaded humanity, He took upon Himself the nature and the body of a man, so that when He went back to the throne (His omnipotent power in the Spirit) He would take humanity back to the throne. There is no mystery to it that God sits on the throne, He belongs there; but to think now that MAN is sitting on the throne! *“Jesus of Nazareth, a MAN approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs... THIS JESUS hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore BEING BY THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD EXALTED...” (Acts 2:22, 32-33)* Our Lord Jesus Christ has been exalted to the glory of supreme and universal rulership! The right hand of God is the realm of power and authority, a position of eminence, a condition and a state of being. It is the assumption of the almighty power and dominion of the Father! It is the dispensing of His *positive energy force* into creation. Exalted to that high realm Jesus no longer walks in a physical body, for He now indwells the spirits of His many brethren, who are the fullness of Him who filleth all in all (Eph. 1:22-23).

John has given us a description of the radiant glory of this One who sits on the throne. It is interesting to note that the identity of this One is given us further on in the book of Revelation. *“And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.” (Rev. 21:5-6)* Oh, yes! The One sitting on the throne identifies Himself as “Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.” Then in chapter twenty-two this One whose name is Alpha and Omega says, *“I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things.” (Rev. 22:13-16)* There can be no mistake about who Alpha and Omega is! Throughout the book of Revelation He is the Lord, Jesus Christ!

Yet — I show unto you a mystery. In chapter five John beholds a Lamb as it had been slain. The Lamb is standing *in the midst of the throne!* But then the Lamb comes and takes the seven-sealed book out of the right hand of Him who sits upon the throne. It looks like an impossibility! If Jesus is the One sitting on the throne, how could Jesus come and take the book out of the hand of Him who sits on the throne? Throughout the New Testament only Jesus is the Lamb! Only He has redeemed us by His blood! Only He is Alpha and Omega, the Creator of all things! We can only conclude that *both* of these are Jesus! But how can this be? The answer is very simple. We do not see here *two separate persons* but two manifestations, operations, or ministrations of the same person. Do we not have these “parts” within ourselves? Each of us are composed of spirit, soul, and body. Are we then *three different persons*? Not at all! We are but one person in three dimensions of being. My spirit can speak to my soul and say, “Bless the Lord, O my soul!” And my soul will bless the Lord, prompted by my spirit. Then my soul may say to my body, “I am joyful — laugh!” And my body — facial expression, vocal cords, breath — will produce visible, audible laughter. Can you not see the mystery? People talk about the three “persons” of the Godhead — there is no such thing! Just as man is a tri-partite being, yet only one person, so is God a tri-partite Being, yet only one person of God!

In chapter four of Revelation, every description of Christ there is Christ in His deity, Christ as God, sitting on the throne, the eternal Lord, God Almighty. But then when we look at chapter five we find that every description of Jesus is Jesus in His humanity — the Lamb slain, the crucified One, the lion of the tribe of Judah. It was the humanity of Christ that was of the tribe of Judah. It was the humanity of Christ that was crucified. It was the humanity of Christ that died — the Lamb of God. The things seen by John are *symbols, pictures, terms of accommodation* to help us understand the mystery. You see, my beloved, the true and full revelation of God could not come to man until it came in the man Jesus. Through His sinless life, through His sonship walk, through His death, burial, and resurrection *God in man* overcame sin, limitation, death, hell, and the grave. Through this wonderful work God took everything that was in deity and *transferred it into humanity!* Therefore the Lamb is *worthy!* He is worthy to take the book! He is worthy to open the seals! He is worthy to bring to mankind the full revelation of God! Jesus the Lamb, Jesus the man, taking the book out of the hand of the Father, is just a picture of this transferal of divine, incorruptible life and glory from the realm of deity into the world of humanity! It is in and through Jesus the Lamb that this has been accomplished! Isn't it wonderful!

A dear brother was caught up in the Spirit. I know not whether he was in the body or out of the body, but he was caught up in the Spirit and he saw, in spirit, the throne of God. There was *One* that sat upon the throne! He did not see three thrones: God the Father sitting on one, God the Son sitting on another, and God the Holy Ghost sitting on a third. Nor did he see one throne with three persons of God sitting side by side upon it. He saw *One* on the throne and the *One* that he saw was Jesus. He saw Jesus sitting on the throne! But emanating and radiating, in an unending, all encompassing, out-raying of glory, majesty, wisdom, dominion, power, love, mercy and goodness was the Father! God was *in Christ* and Christ was *in the Father* and they were *one*. Shining out of Jesus was the glory of the Father so that Jesus could say, *“If you have seen me, you have seen the Father. believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself (of my humanity): but the Father (deity) that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works sake.”* (John. 14:9-11)

Blessed be God! It may stagger your imagination to hear what I now say, but, once you see the truth of it, the mystery of God will be complete. All those blessed ones who now hear the call to *“Come up hither”* are apprehended *“in Christ Jesus”* to share the honor and glory of His throne. *“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne.”* (Rev. 3:21) This shows that as we come to know the overcoming power in the resurrection life of Christ, we are also made to experience the *ascension* of Christ. We are chosen of God not only to be made alive from the dead and have God’s life, but also to sit in the heavenly places as ASCENDED MEN! And furthermore we are called and chosen not only to be ascended men, dwelling in the heavenlies, but also to sit upon the throne of Christ, which is the Father’s throne, as ENTHRONED MEN! Therefore ascension and enthronement truly are the position of those who know Christ in His fullness.

The position of ascension rests not only on the fact of Christ’s ascension, but on THE LIFE OF ASCENSION WE HAVE OBTAINED WITHIN US. Likewise the position of enthronement rests not only on the fact of Christ’s enthronement, but on THE AUTHORITY AND POWER OF HIS KINGDOM DOMINION THAT HAS BEEN RAISED UP WITHIN US. The Christ who indwells our hearts and is being formed in our lives is the ascended and enthroned Christ, and His life is ascended and powerful and heavenly, and is given from heaven, out of the realm of the Spirit. Although in the conditions of our outer man we still live on earth, yet according to the inner man we are already in heaven. The situation is just like our Lord’s during His time on earth. He said that though He “descended from heaven” He was still “in heaven” (John. 3:13). This was due to the fact that His life and consciousness were heavenly and one with heaven — the realm of the Spirit.

It is true therefore that as we ascend into the high places of God in the Spirit, we are reigning with Christ in His heavenly, spiritual throne. As we truly become overcomers by the ascended life of Christ, we are also given power over the nations to rule them with a rod of iron, and as the vessels of a potter they shall be broken to shivers (Rev. 2:26-27). This rule is given to the overcomers *in Christ!* As the life of ascension within us raises up kingdom dominion in our lives we reign with Christ in the Spirit, and the worldly powers of man shall be displaced by the power of the Spirit and replaced by the spiritual power of the kingdom of God. We are a spiritual people. And the throne of God is the spiritual realm of our Father’s dominion. Therefore our reign in Christ is a spiritual reign, which is accomplished as we move in and by His Spirit in relation to things in the earth realm. Through that spiritual dominion God’s will is brought to pass on earth as it is in heaven.

The implication of such a marvelous truth is staggering to the imagination. I want you to see yourself *in Christ*. I want you to know that we have a great and eternal King upon the universal throne in the heavens! But He is not only in heaven, for God’s elect is *the body of Christ* — the body of the *One* sitting on the throne! *“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.”* (I Cor. 12:12) If you can see that one throne where the Father of glory and the Son of man are seated together as *one*, and then see yourself and all God’s sons seated in them as *one*, you will understand that even if there should be 144,000 sons *in Christ in the Father* sitting on the throne, there would still be *ONLY ONE UPON THE THRONE!*

This is the mystery. *“That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us...and the glory which Thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are*

one: I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one...Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory...and I have declared unto them Thy name (nature), and will declare it (through them): that the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.” (John. 17:21-24, 26)

Such high and mighty purpose is certainly beyond the comprehension of the natural man or the natural mind. The truth and fullness of the wonder of it all only begins to seep into our quickened spirits when the spirit of revelation gives us a view of what it means for our life to be *hid with Christ in God*. Beholding in and by the Spirit the scenes of the wonderful heavenly scheme we see that in our union with Christ in God we are the *fullness of Him* that filleth all in all. GOD is upon the throne of the universe in the heavens! *In the Father* CHRIST sits upon the throne of the universe in the heavens! And *seated in Christ* WE are raised up and made to sit together with Christ in His throne, just as He sits in His Father's throne. There is only *one throne* and there is only *One* upon the throne!

There need be no question in the mind of any saint who is called to reign with Christ that the One on the throne is a CORPORATE ONE composed of many members. John described Him as having the appearance of a jasper and a sardine stone. That is only the radiance of the glory of the Father! Methinks that when all the sons of God have been perfected, changed, transformed, and caught up to the throne of God, one day another dear brother will be caught up in the Spirit and will see, in spirit, the throne of God. And he will not see many thrones: with God the Father sitting on one, God the Son sitting on another, God the Holy Ghost sitting on a third, and many sons brought to glory sitting on a vast array of thrones. Oh, no! He will see one throne and he will see One on the throne. He will see Christ, a Christ of many members, Head and body, sitting on the throne! And emanating and radiating, in an unending, all encompassing, out-ricing of indescribable glory, majesty, wisdom, dominion, power, love, mercy, and goodness *will be the Father*. Shining out of this corporate Christ will be the glory of the Father, He in us and we in Him, so that we can say, “If you have seen us, you have seen the Father: for we and the Father are ONE!”

Jesus has promised us to sit down with Him in His throne. Not in another little throne beside His throne! Just as there are saints who are stones in the wall of the heavenly temple, or pillars in the temple, so there are those who become a *throne people*. These are the ruling sons of God, and it is from the throne of God and of the Lamb that the living river of life proceeds! The greatest manifestation of life the world has ever seen shall yet come forth in the earth through a people who become the throne of God in the earth! The glory of God fills the city, and the whole earth is full of His glory, and His glory is above the heavens — yet God *sits* upon His throne — there is a unique *concentration* of divine life, power, and dominion from those who make up the throne of God!

To be identified with His throne is the ultimate attainment of union with God. He is making us one with Him to such a degree that when He acts we act, when He moves we move, when He speaks we speak, and when He speaks all will speak the same thing because of the united life in the Spirit. It is a unity with Christ and with all who have grown up into the full measure of His stature. When God speaks from His throne, it is the voice of the many-membered Son, the voice that is as the sound of *many waters*, many spirits merged into one gigantic waterfall — ONE GREAT RIVER OF LIFE! Take the shoes from off your feet, oh saint of God, for the ground on which we stand is holy ground! Put away all lightness and foolishness that with heads bowed down, and hearts lifted up in worship, the Spirit of God may make plain how the life of God flowing in the exalted and enthroned Christ and the life of Christ flowing through His many brethren is ONE STREAM OF THE WATER OF LIFE! And these chosen ones who share His throne are included in the scene John saw as He gazed with holy wonder upon that glorious One who sat upon the throne!

Later John sees in the midst of the throne four living creatures, and also a Lamb standing as though it had been slain. And round about the throne, in the same position as the rainbow, which appeared as an emerald, were seated twenty-four elders. All of these are mere symbols of HIM who is seated upon the throne! I will write of this later, Lord willing, but let me say in passing that everything in and around the throne bespeaks of the different spiritual aspects, attributes, faculties, functions, powers, and ministrations of that many-membered One who occupies the throne. Oh, the wonder of it!

As we ascend in spirit to that heavenly realm of throneship we then realize this is where we really belong. The yearning deep within our hearts, wrought by the revelation and love of God shed abroad in our hearts by

the Holy Spirit, to bless the world, right the wrongs, heal the wounds, assuage the suffering, abolish evil, and set creation free from its bondage to sin, sorrow, limitation, and death, is the divine indication that we are destined for throneship. Everything in the realm of the Spirit makes us feel at home with God and His Christ. As we consciously ascend higher and higher into the realm of Spirit, we see that a throne is set up in the heavens of His Spirit. We also see that One who is all glorious, arrayed in the Light that no Adamic man can approach unto, surrounded by a vast multitude of others who are arrayed as He is, and seated there upon the throne of the heavens. Truly it is a glorious scene of heavenly illumination and splendor to those who have been blessed of their Father to see as He sees!

A brother has shared the words of a prophetic song that was given by the Spirit at the time of a special moving of God some years ago. What a wonderful word it brings! The following are the words of that anointed song:

Don't you hear the Spirit calling,
Rise up, my love, and come away?
Leave the things of earth behind you,
Come and walk in God's new Day.

Enter now into His kingdom,
Bright the Light that points the way,
For the shadows now are fleeing,
Can't you hear the Spirit say?

Cast your doubts and fears behind you,
All His leading now obey.
Man's traditions will but blind you,
Jesus is the truth, the way.

The New Age is just before us,
Ye sons of God come lead the way.
Tell all the earth God's great salvation
To be revealed in this great Day.

Yes, I hear the Spirit calling,
Rise up, my love, and come away!
I've left the things of earth behind me,
And now I'll walk in God's new Day!

To be continued...
J. Preston Eby

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 68 THE THRONE (Continued)

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART SIXTY-EIGHT

THE RAINBOW AROUND THE THRONE THE RAINBOW IN THE CLOUD

"Immediately I was in the Spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. And He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone..." (Rev. 4:2-3)

The occupant of the throne appeared like the crystalline brightness of jasper and the fiery sardine (sardius) stone. The glory of the One sitting upon the throne is overwhelming in its impact upon the Seer. Yet, in the midst of it all, John recognizes certain truths expressed by the glory of all that he sees, and channels that truth to us by means of established oriental symbols which are to be found in the Old Testament. The first of these are referred to as the jasper and sardine stones. These were the first and the last precious stones in the breastplate of the high priest, only the sardine stone is there the first while here it is the last. The names of Benjamin and Reuben were engraven upon these two stones (Ex. 18:17-20). Benjamin means "the son of the right hand" and Reuben means "behold a son!" clearly and unmistakably connecting the throne with sonship. Thus we can conclude that God's Christ, Head and body, God's corporate son ready to reign in power — that is what the seer sees in his vision! The beauty and brightness of the jasper and sardine bespeak of the glory of manifest sonship. The sons of God who are coming to maturity shall be invested with the authority, power, and dominion of the throne of God, and they shall reign unto the ages of the ages.

Here is glory indescribable! The scene is one of luminous splendor! The One sitting on the throne was in appearance like unto a jasper and a sardine stone — not as to form or shape, for the idea is not one of physical appearance, but of glory and power. The scriptural representations of jasper are that it is "most precious," crystalline, and purple in hue. The sardine, or sardius, is also described as exceedingly precious, and of a beautiful bright red or carnation color. It is capable of a particularly high and lasting polish. Uniting the qualities of tint and brilliancy belonging to the purer specimens of these precious gems, we have the appearance of flames, without their smokiness — a pure, purple, fiery, red, crystalline, flashing light!

We find this bright, fiery appearance of the Lord also described in the books of Ezekiel and Daniel. *"From what had the appearance of His waist upward, I saw a lustre as it were glowing metal with the appearance of fire enclosed round about within it; and from the appearance of His waist downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and there was brightness round about Him. Like the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord"* (Ezek. 1:27-28)

The scriptures are many which describe God and His throne as fire. *"Our God is a consuming fire!"* This is the aspect of God that so many fear. When Yahweh came down upon Mount Sinai in a blazing, burning fire the children of Israel were frightened and refused to approach Him, sending Moses into God's fiery presence to hear from God for them. Many today will not enter through the open door into the fiery presence of God's throne because they fear the loss and pain it would bring to them! This fiery throne speaks of the Lord's authority in our lives, first in us, then through us. By the power in His throne God consumes all we have and all we are in Adam, while at the same time catching us up into the brilliance of His ineffable glory where dwells divine life, immortality, wisdom, holiness, power, and authority.

The physical symbols of the great and eternal God who is spirit are fire, light, and life. Fire, as seen in the sun, is a terrible and consuming power. Yet it is the source of all life on this planet! Should you seek to enter into the sun, pain and death are the penalty. The sun will consume you! On the other hand, from this flaming source radiate all the marvels and beauties, colors, illumination, food, energy, and warmth that fill our earth. No fire means no light. No light means no life. The fire is only known and mediated to us in its eternal

begetting of the light. It is the light from the fire that passes into all nature, quickening, transforming, sustaining, giving color, form, and substance to all things. This beautiful type teaches us the mystery of God with more force than any spoken word! To perform His life-giving work in creation our God, who is a consuming fire, reveals Himself in three operations: the fire must burn, the light must shine, and life must be quickened in us. These are the glorious and eternal realities emanating from the fiery presence of God and His throne! And these are the glories to be revealed through all of God's sons who become the light and the life of the world!

THE RAINBOW AROUND THE THRONE

“And there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.” (Rev. 4:3)

There is one thing you can absolutely count on in this world — there will never be another world-wide flood! It was God who in the days of righteous Noah opened the windows of heaven and broke up the fountains of the mighty deep, sending upon the inhabitants of earth a flood to destroy the utterly wicked and perverse civilization of that time, but it was the selfsame Lord who, after the fearful flood of waters had abated, made this covenant with Noah and his seed: *“And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; and with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations. I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: and I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.” (Gen. 9:9-17)*

Throughout the long centuries since that fearful day, God in His great faithfulness and mercy has hung His bow of seven-fold witness in the clouds of millions of storms throughout the earth that we may know His heart of love toward all His creation. Would God that every man and woman, boy and girl, who see the rainbow when it appears in the sky would lift up their hearts in praise and thanksgiving to Him whose promises never fail and who keeps His word of salvation and redemption to every man.

There is something entrancingly wonderful about a rainbow! When by the spirit of revelation we look beyond the earthly symbol with its excellent beauty, we find God and see a truth and a glory that awakens the heart to worship at His feet. Thus did Ezekiel worship, when, caught up in the ecstasies of the Spirit, he beheld a vision of God so sublime that the heart of man has never yet been able to fathom its depths nor the tongue of man to expound its meaning. *“Above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. And I saw...the appearance of fire round about...and it had brightness round about. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it I fell upon my face...” (Eze. 1:27-28)*

It is interesting to note that the Greek word used for rainbow in Revelation 4:3 is *iris* and denotes a bow that is a complete circle. In classical Greek the word was used of any bright halo surrounding an object. Everyone knows that the iris of the eye (brought into English from the Greek) is a complete circle that wraps itself around the pupil in the center. The bow surrounding the great throne of the heavenlies is revealed as a circular bow which completely wraps itself around the throne. This is indeed wonderful! In all the world there has never been a circular bow seen in the cloud. Every rainbow beheld by the eye of man is a half-circle and if it is a full bow it connects with the earth at both sides. I'm certain that all who read these lines have heard the old myth that there is a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Of course, as many a curious child has discovered, one can never find the end of the rainbow! Yet the rainbow ends where the earth begins. That is just the mystery of it!

Let your heart consider what I now say. The rainbow in the heavens of God's Spirit is a complete circle simply because there is no "earth" to break it! Only the earth prevents the natural rainbow from being a circle! In like manner, is it not the earthiness of man's carnality, fear, and unbelief that obstructs the full revelation of the glory of the Lord and the dominion of His throne in our lives? My heart greatly rejoices today in the knowledge that God is forming a people, His chosen ones, raising up within us the dominion of His throne, subduing all things in us, ending the old fleshly nature, rooting out the old carnal mind, the old Adamic will, and the old soulful emotions, consuming by His fiery presence the old worldly ways, desires, plans, ambitions, hopes, and dreams, and the old Babylonish religious spirit and ways, that Christ may be all in all to us and through us. Oh, yes! How wonderful the path of the called and chosen really is! How blessed beyond belief to know that the rainbow of the glory of the Lord shall be beheld fully encircling the throne of God within us when there is no more "earth" in our hearts to break it!

Arched above and around the throne John saw a rainbow. As I have previously pointed out, the rainbow was the sign of the covenant that God made with Noah and all the inhabitants of the world proclaiming that never again would He destroy the earth and all creatures with water. Noah is a picture of how we get out of the old world dominated by the flesh and under the curse, and how we get into the new world of the kingdom of God dominated by the spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, wherein dwelleth righteousness. The only vehicle out of the old world is not a cruise ship, but a wonderful Person who has already made the transition! The rainbow around the throne is the symbol of God's eternal covenant of mercy and grace whereby we escape from the old world of sin and death. In order to escape we must, like Noah, "find grace in the eyes of the Lord" in the very face of judgment upon the world in which we live. To escape we must pass through the judgment in the provision of God so that we come out of the judgment in our "ark" which is Christ!

In addition to this the rainbow has seven colors. The covenant has seven levels, just as the tabernacle of Moses had seven pieces of furniture and Israel had seven feasts by which men approached unto God. The seven pieces of furniture and the seven feasts picture the seven-fold process of our complete entrance into Christ. People are at different levels, but each and every son of Adam must experientially pass through all levels in order to fully enter into the new world of Christ. When we have fully entered into the new world of Christ we shall be like Him in nature, mind, wisdom, and power and experience the fullness of His resurrection life in spirit, soul, and body! There will be no more sin or death, no more carnal mind or corruption, no more weakness or limitation, for we shall have put on the Lord Jesus Christ in all the glory of His life and victory, and even our vile bodies shall be changed and fashioned into a body like His body of glory! This new world, fully entered into, is the world of manifest sonship!

The rainbow is a display of the colors of visible light — white light. The colors are arrayed in the order of the spectrum, red at the top, followed by orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. One writer has explained that when we analyze sunlight, we find that it consists of seven visible colors which compose the solar spectrum seen in the rainbow, or in the flashing colors of a well-cut diamond or beveled glass. If we pass a shaft of sunlight through a prism of glass, we find that the different colors have different angles of refraction, and when thrown upon a surface, the prism will appear in seven colors. The fact that light can be divided into the seven basic colors from violet to red speaks of the perfection of the divine nature, for the number "seven" stands for that which is complete and perfect, and God is perfect!

As I did some research on the rainbow I discovered that scientifically a true and complete rainbow has seven colors. This is important! It fits with the whole scheme of seven throughout the Word of God and in the book of Revelation. It is interesting to note that the New Age Movement today makes much of the rainbow. Their rainbow, however, has only six colors — and six is the number of man! What a revelation this is! I have made the necessary discovery that the "inner Christ consciousness" of which New Agers speak is in fact the soul of the natural man rather than the spirit which is in-breathed and regenerated by God. Does this not powerfully explain why New Age people as a whole do not embrace the fundamentals of the gospel, but in fact reject the life-giving blood of the Lamb of God and the quickening, regenerating power of the Holy Spirit?

I have no hesitation in telling you that the "true inner self" the New Age people have discovered within themselves is the awesome, unexplored power of the soul — the selfhood — of the ADAMIC MAN! This can easily be demonstrated. The popular emphasis among nearly all new age groups has to do with psychic powers! The word "psychic" comes directly from the Greek word psyche which means — guess what — "soul

or mind.” Nothing psychic has anything to do with the spirit! All the major thrust of New Age philosophy concerns itself with psychics, psychic powers, psychic phenomena, extra sensory perception, transcendental meditation, bio-feedback, alpha-psigenics, alpha mind control, krishna consciousness, telepathy, hypnotism, psycho-analysis, psycho-therapy and a host of other soulical or mind sciences. None of these have anything to do with the Holy Spirit! And when they do delve into “spirit” realms it is always “spirits” of one kind or another from the “spirit world” and never the HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD! All such activities stem from the recessed delusions of the Adamic mind or from familiar spirits out of the occult realms of darkness. I earnestly exhort every reader to seek the face of the living Lord Jesus Christ until the spirit of wisdom and discernment from God reveals to you by His Spirit the power of the living word of God which is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating to the deepest depths of our nature, even to the dividing line between old Adam’s soul and the quickening spirit of the living Christ in the spirit of every born-again, regenerated man.

The glory emanating from the throne of God’s power brings transforming rays of Life and Light and Love. It awakens dead and darkened worlds, and like natural light that is complete with seven colors, His emanating glory expresses the completeness of His divine attributes. Let us notice briefly these seven colors of light and see how they apply spiritually to the realities of Christ within:

RED — the color of LOVE. The ultimate manifestation of that love is when “God so loved the world, that He gave His Son.” His love went to the cross and poured out His life (blood) for all mankind. Love is forgiveness, acceptance, long suffering, gentleness, kindness, mercy, and blessing. *“Whosoever loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.”*

ORANGE — the color of PASSION. Passion in scripture is God’s burning desire, His great and unchanging purpose to produce growth power, warmth, life, change, transformation, like the power of the natural sun.

YELLOW — the color of the DIVINE NATURE. The divine nature is the heavenly nature of true and eternal joy, gladness, purity, peace, righteousness, wisdom, and power.

GREEN — the color of LIFE. This principle of life is typified by the green grass, vegetation, shrubs, and trees. It speaks of eternal, incorruptible life with healing and creative powers.

BLUE — the color of the HEAVENLY. Blue bespeaks of that which is high and exalted, far above corruption, limitation, and darkness of earth. It points to the higher principles of truth, the mind of Christ, and the power of God in our lives.

INDIGO — the color of PRIESTHOOD. Being a deep blue with a hint of sacrificial, redeeming red, it speaks of the heavenly calling, the ministry of reconciliation, the priesthood after the order of Melchizedek, through which man and God are consciously made one. The writer to the Hebrews speaks of this ministry thus: *“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched by the feeling our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Wherefore, holy brethren, PARTAKERS OF THE HEAVENLY CALLING (of this priesthood), consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.” (Heb. 4:14-16, 3:1)* As every high priest must be a high priest over a house of priests (else he would not be the “high priest”), so Christ is the Head of His body, the priesthood after the order of Melchizedek.

VIOLET — the color of ROYALTY. This is the color of kingly authority and dominion. Thus it is the color of sonship. *“And of the angels He saith, Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom.” (Heb. 1:7-8)* *“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son” (Rev. 3:21; 21:7).*

What this portrays is the prism of our experience in God by which the pure white of God’s unfathomable glory is filtered into our lives on different dimensions. Just as you cannot take a spacecraft and fly into the sun (and expect to survive!), so no natural man can approach unto that pure white light in which HE DWELLS. *“Who is*

the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto: whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen.” (I Tim. 1:15-16) The words of this wonderful passage might seem to exclude us from ever reaching the throne! But such is not the case. The pure light in which He dwells is, like the sunlight, bent, broken, so that we see it in its parts and experience it progressively through all its levels of power, glory, and life. The marvelous reality of it is that having fully experienced the light that God is, in all His aspects, we come at last to that union in Him whereby the full WHITE LIGHT of His nature, wisdom, and power is perfectly blended in us and it is *“no longer I but Christ that liveth in me.”* The intense white light of God’s nature and glory consumes out of us all that is Adamic, so that we, our carnal mind and human identity, no longer exist. Christ dwells in that light which no man, that is, no natural man can approach unto! The natural man passes away in the fiery blaze of His glorious throne, and we stand in the light clothed in our new mind, new nature, new life, new identity which is Christ. THIS IS THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST!

The throne is referred to in scripture as the throne of His glory. What is glory? What is its shape, size, and color? Perhaps you feel that you have never seen it, you feel that it is spiritual, and therefore cannot be seen. Not so, my friend, it can be seen. How my heart thrills to see the glory! The literal meaning of the Hebrew word for glory is weight or substance; worth, dignity and honor; splendor and majesty. In the eyes of men this literal meaning frequently lent itself to the idea that a person possessing glory was laden (heavy) with the substance and honor of this world. Jacob’s flock was his *“glory.” (Gen. 31:1)* The Assyrians’ power was their *“glory.” (Isa. 8:7)* Joseph’s high position was his *“glory.” (Gen. 45:13)* The Israelites thought that they were living to the glory of God by acquiring a weight of material wealth, power, and position. Today, a number of “prosperity preachers” have the very same idea! They think God is glorified in the heaping of the weight and substance of worldly possessions and earthly blessings upon His people. But the prophet Jeremiah told God’s people that they should not consider such human values their glory. Rather, they were to glory in the fact that they knew the Lord, whose glory was His kindness, justice, and righteousness!

When the word was applied to God, it was meant to bring out the weightiness of God’s attributes. All Bible dictionaries agree that “glory” is “the exhibition and display of the excellence of the subject to which it is ascribed.” Thus, in respect to God, it is the visible manifestation of His attributes — His nature, character, power, love, justice, righteousness, etc. (Jer. 9:24). The glory of God is the visible manifestation of WHAT GOD IS. The glory of God is God REVEALED, God PUT ON DISPLAY, the EMMANATION OF HIS ESSENCE, all that God is brought into demonstration on the visible plane so men can perceive what God is like. That is what men saw when they beheld the glory of God! God is love, God is light, God is truth, God is peace, God is power, God is life, God is righteousness. When God brings what He is into expression so we can either see or perceive it, we then “behold HIS GLORY.” It was with this same sense of glory that Jesus spoke about how He would bring glory to the Father. Jesus would not acquire worldly wealth, fame, power, or position. On the contrary, His life would be “heavy” with the glorious heavenly qualities of love, mercy, goodness, purity, compassion, righteousness, wisdom, and spiritual power. And that is the call and aim of every son of God. This is the rainbow around the throne!

Now Christ has given His glory to His “many brethren” — the sons of God. *“And the glory which Thou gavest me I have given them.” (Jn. 17:22)* What a treasure! What riches! What heavenly splendor! God has called us to His kingdom and glory (Col. 2:12). We have been called to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ (II Thes. 2:14). The Captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings that He might bring many sons to glory (Heb. 2:10). The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us (Rom. 8:18). We are even now partakers of the glory that shall be revealed (I Pet. 5:1). Christ is coming to be glorified in His saints (II Thes. 1:10). We are called unto glory and virtue (II Pet. 1:3).

As I mentioned earlier, God’s great glory is His wonderful nature and character, the substance of His Being. Some people foolishly talk about dying and “going to glory” as if glory were a place, an astral location on a planet called heaven. But one doesn’t “go” to glory — the Bible says nothing about such a crude notion. Glory is revealed! Glory is revealed in us! Glory comes to us! Glory is given to us! Glory is not a place you go to, glory is something you become! When the glory of the Lord is fully revealed in the manifest sons of God “all flesh shall see it together.” That is the scriptural testimony about glory! If you don’t apprehend and experience God’s glory here on earth, forget about “going” somewhere to find it! As the sons of God ascend into the

heavens of God's Spirit, into the spiritual realm of His throne, the glory of God emanates through us and out from us — the rainbow around the throne! It is indeed wonderful!

Jesus Christ the firstborn Son of God is the brightness of God's glory, the express image of His person (Heb. 1:3). That's why in Old Testament times when the glory manifested, God covered it with a cloud. He had to protect mankind from it to keep it from obliterating them. In Jesus, however, the light of God was bent, broken, so that men beheld the light as a rainbow rather than a blinding sun. The bow is in the cloud, the Lord told Noah. Under the Old Testament economy God covered His glory with a cloud, but the people never saw the rainbow of promise. When Jesus came the rainbow appeared in the cloud! He was the promise of redemption, blessing, and life for all men!

While living here on earth our Lord was extremely kind. He picked up little children and blessed them. He healed all who were suffering with pain. While relatives were weeping over dead loved ones, He raised four of them to life again. The Saviour of all men said to the woman caught in adultery, *"Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."* (John. 8:11) His kindness made an evangelist out of the wicked woman at the well (Jn. 4:29). Because Jesus really loved the weak, helpless creatures whom He had created, He wept over them, prayed for them and taught them continually. Except those religious Pharisees, Jesus never spoke one cross word to the unconverted masses. He was very tender and kind in all His dealings with men, even the most wicked among them. He sat at meat with the rich and ungodly and never upbraided them for their sins, shortcomings, and moral failures. His approach to them was very gentle, delicate, and considerate. Surely then, we are safer in His hands than anywhere else! The things He has in store for every one of us are far greater than we could plan for ourselves!

The Holy Spirit has taught me three things relative to the life of sonship. [These three principles are expressed in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who is God's rainbow of promise around the throne.](#) First, Jesus never condoned sin. How do I know this? Because, when the woman caught in adultery was left before Him, He spoke prophetically and redemptively into her life, saying, "Go, and sin no more." I believe she did just that! His words were spirit and life unto her, transforming and lifting her life. Jesus did not come to condone our fallen state and sinful conduct, He came to save us from it! He didn't come to say, "I'm O.K., you're O.K., everybody's O.K." Everybody is not O.K.! Jesus was often forgiving sin and then admonishing, "Go and sin no more lest a worse thing come upon you." He perfectly understood the law of sowing and reaping, the law of sin and death, with it's inherent process of judgment.

Hear me now! [Secondly, Jesus never condemned the sinner!](#) Never! His testimony was that *"God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."* Though Jesus never condoned sin, He never condemned the sinner! He didn't go around reminding men what terrible sinners they were. Most men already knew that! He didn't counsel them about all the bad they had done or were doing. He knew what was in man, He understood that people really, within their own human strength and nature, could not help what they were! They needed compassion, love, mercy, and deliverance — not condemnation! Never, in all His years of ministry, did He ever condemn even one sinner! Jesus could do something that very few of our modern fundamentalist and evangelical preachers can do — He could preach salvation without first informing his audience about how fallen, rotten, wicked, and despicable they were, and how hot was the hell that awaited them if they didn't repent! He didn't say, "Repent, or you're going to eternal hell!" On the contrary, He said, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" "Repent — because I have something infinitely better prepared for you!" Isn't it wonderful!

Sometimes people write to me and they have a son or daughter who has just announced that they are "gay". This is so repulsive and an abhorrence to them, and they are so devastated by the news, that they don't know how to handle it or even what their attitude should be. Sometimes the homosexual child wants to visit them and bring along their lover! The first inclination is to tell them what an abomination this is in the sight of God, and in their sight, and tell them in effect to "get lost." They want to shut them out, cut them off, and disown them. Or else they do tolerate them, but are continually offended and emotionally traumatized by the blatant life-style of their once beloved offspring.

The difficulty arises because we live still under an Old Testament mentality of that which is an abomination to God, worthy of judgment or death, and we view things as men under the law. But you see, my friend, the truth

is that sin is sin, any sin IS SIN! We tend to “grade” sin according to our ideas of their perverseness. While on one level there is some truth in that, in the final analysis all sin is sin; the sins of gossip, hatred, covetousness, cursing, cheating, lying (even a little white lie), or drinking a little too much are just as deadly as the sin of adultery or homosexuality. The wages of sin is death — any sin! When it comes to the wages of sin all receive the same wages — there are no little sins that only make us sick and bigger sins that result in death. The wages of sin — any sin — is death! Because all have sinned, all have died, the apostle tells us. There is no difference. When the woman caught in adultery was brought to Jesus He said to her accusers, *“Let him that is without sin, first cast a stone.”* ANY SIN would prevent them from casting a stone! All were equally guilty, regardless of the nature of their sin. To shut one kind of sinner out of our lives while receiving another kind of sinner into our friendship is utter hypocrisy! The glorious truth is that Jesus paid the debt for every sinner, we are no longer under the law that condemns, but under grace that redeems! When Jesus came the rainbow appeared in the cloud!

I say to all who face situations such as this, what you need above all else is peace from God, the ability to rest in Him, and commit your son or daughter, or whoever it is, into His almighty and loving hands once and forever. You can never condone their state of being or their conduct, but neither can you condemn them and shut them out of your life! To do so is to shut them up from the flow of God’s love, mercy, and life. We are neither called to condone or condemn — God sends His sons into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through them might be saved! Sons are not called to be condoners, nor are they called to be condemners — a true son of God can be neither! God is bringing saviours up to Mount Zion! Because Jesus understood this great sonship truth, He became saviour of all and condemner of none! *Jesus loved unconditionally and infinitely. All sons must so love!* And it is just at this point that the work of God must be fulfilled in our lives, bringing the rest, peace, joy, and confidence to wait for God’s deliverance to be wrought out. When you love, love never fails! Pray, intercede, and love unconditionally and you will BECOME A SAVIOUR! THIS IS THE RAINBOW IN THE CLOUD! Will you be a rainbow person?

In the Old Testament the glory was seen in the cloud, fiery, blinding glory, muted by the cloud. We see an example of this in Exodus, when God appeared to Israel at Mount Sinai. *“And the glory of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days; and the seventh day God called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel.”* (Exod. 24:16-17) As we search the scriptures we see that “devouring fire” again and again. The prophet Habakkah says, *“God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise. And His brightness was as the light; He had horns coming out of His hand: and there was the hiding of His power.”* (Hab. 3:3-4) According to various Bible helps the word horns in this passage refers to bright beams. One translation calls them lightning-like shafts of splendor. The Bible tells us that in these fiery, lightning-like shafts lies the hiding place of God’s power. That alone is enough to let us know that experiencing the glory is more than having a warm, “spiritual” feeling. It’s an encounter with the very nature, being, and power of God because His nature, being, and power is His glory!

The rainbow around the throne reveals the great truth that the throne is not a power of destruction, but the very power of life! While most rainbows have more than one color, this rainbow was in appearance like unto an emerald — accentuating only the color green. *Webster defines emerald as: (1) A green transparent variety of beryl used as a gemstone. (2) A clear deep green color. Ireland is called “The Emerald Isle” because of the abundance of lush dark green vegetation.* The green is of course the middle tone of the color spectrum (red, orange, yellow, GREEN, blue, indigo, violet). The spectrum divides the white light into its parts, as the departing rainstorm does to the sun’s light and flashes back to the human eye the complete rainbow. God is light, not in the cosmic sense but in that spiritual reality of which cosmic light is the wonderful parable. Light in its energetic principle is the secret of creation, as the LIGHT WHICH GOD IS, is the source principle of all life.

Green in scripture is the supreme color of LIFE! Yes, there is death to the old, but in the throne we ascend to the highest dimension of life — divine, incorruptible, immortal life. John fell as dead before the face of the One sitting on the throne — his old Adamic life, identity, nature, and mind slain by the fiery glory of God! But let your heart consider the words of this glorious One when He says to John, “Fear not. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore!” In other words, “Don’t be afraid to give up your will, John, your ways, your desires, your emotions, your plans, your hopes, your dreams, your thoughts, your carnal,

human identity. Don't be afraid, says the Lord Jesus, for I had to give them all up when I walked in the flesh. I died! BUT BEHOLD, I AM ALIVE FOR EVERMORE!" Therein is both the power and the promise of the throne! The consuming fire of God will absolutely destroy every vestige of the carnal mind and the flesh life. And then the rainbow of promise establishes within the covenant of divine, heavenly life and reality. Adam dies and Christ arises within us! This is the glory of sonship! This is what is happening within the life of every son of God who hears the call to "Come up hither!" Oh, no, you are not going to be raptured up to a mansion in the sky, but as you ascend in the Spirit you are being changed, transformed into the image of Christ. Oh, the wonder of it!

THE RAINBOW IN THE CLOUD

I will speak of one more thing concerning the rainbow, for my joyful spirit goes far beyond even the blessed truths we have discussed thus far. As has already been pointed out, a rainbow is an arch of beautiful colors that appears when the sun shines after a rain shower. As the light passes through the rain drops still in the air, the rays of light are bent. When this happens, the sunlight separates out into its different colors. You see a rainbow when the sun is behind you, and the rain is in front of you. The ray is refracted as it enters the rain drop, and it is separated into the various colors. Then, as it strikes the inner surface of the drop it is reflected. That is when you see the rainbow in the cloud. The marvelous reality of this beautiful type points to the truth that there must be the idea of rain or moisture connected with the throne, or would it not be self evident that there could be no rain-bow? Where there are no clouds and no rain there is no rainbow! That is the type. That is the symbol. And Revelation is a book of symbols!

Jesus used graphic language when He spoke of His appearing. To the disciples who asked what His coming would be like He said, "*They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*" (Matt. 24:30) The picture language of the Bible employs essentially all the created things of God with which we here on earth are acquainted. There are various reasons why the Holy Spirit has used so much symbolic language in the Word. I think that one of these is its unchangeableness. The meanings of words change somewhat through use and misuse. For instance, three hundred years ago the English word "let" meant to hinder or prevent; today the very same word means exactly the opposite — to allow or permit! Whatever man creates is also subject to change, but this is not true of the created things of God. Only a little more than a hundred years ago nearly everyone used oil lamps for light, today we use electricity. In the sign language of the Bible God has employed the sun, the moon, the stars, and clouds; and on earth, oceans, rivers, mountains, valleys, sheep, goats, horses, wheat, tares, fig trees, and so forth. The characteristics of these have not changed throughout the centuries, and when used in scripture to illustrate the exalted thoughts of God they should have the same meaning to us as they did to the ancients. As signs, they have a spiritual meaning and application.

One of the rabbinical names for the Messiah, based on **Daniel 7:13-14**, was "The Cloud Man." Daniel writes, "*I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like unto the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven...*" Christ, of course, is plainly identified as the "*One who comes with the clouds*" in the Salutation of **Revelation 1:7**, "*Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him...*" Furthermore, when our Lord was adjured by the high priest to tell whether He was the Messiah or not, Jesus answered with the old equivalent of "*Yes!*" Then He said, "*Ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.*" (Mark. 14:62)

What, then, are those clouds with which, and in which, the Christ comes? Why, bless your heart, WE ARE! The incontrovertible proof that the "clouds" in which Christ comes are in reality the sons of God in their glory is couched in the terminology of the scriptures on this subject. Note that in most places the passages in question speak of Christ coming "with clouds." There is only one other group or plurality of objects of which it is stated that Christ comes "with" them or "in" them, and that is — the SAINTS! It is very careful to tell us that He comes "with" clouds. And it also tells us that He comes "with" His saints! "*To the end He may establish your hearts...at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ W-I-T-H ALL HIS SAINTS.*" (I Thes. 3:13) Jude says, "*And Enoch also...prophesied...saying, Behold, the Lord cometh W-I-T-H TEN THOUSANDS OF SAINTS.*" (Jude 14) The Amplified Bible is helpful, when it reads, "*Behold, the Lord comes W-I-T-H MYRIADS OF HOLY ONES — ten thousands of His saints.*" But the Interlinear reading from the Diaglott translation gives the clearest of all renderings from the Greek text, "Lo, comes Lord I-N HOLY MIRIADS OF HIMSELF" "Myriads of HIMSELF!"

All of them begotten out of His life, all of them partakers of His divine nature, conformed to His image, filled with His mind, matured in His life. Myriads of Himself, of His own kind, born of His seed, a many brethren company of sons of God. The apostle Paul once expressed the truth in this way, *“When He shall come to be glorified I-N HIS SAINTS, and to be admired I-N ALL THEM that believe in that day.”* (II Thes. 1:10) And again we hear the testimony, *“And the Lord my God shall come, and ALL THE SAINTS W-I-T-H T-H-E-E.”* (Zech. 14:5) John the beloved sees this same scene in wonder-filled vision and speaking in prophetic language writes: *“Behold, He cometh W-I-T-H CLOUDS; and every eye shall see Him.”*

The apostles Peter and Jude both tell us that false ministries are “clouds without water...carried about of winds.” A true ministry then, is a cloud with water. A true ministry has life to give, and like a cloud is willing to empty himself out in order to be a blessing to dry and thirsty souls. Jesus was a bright cloud laden with water, for *“The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and give His life...”* (Matr. 20:28)

A cloud is made up of millions of tiny droplets of water in a big group. The clouds you see in the sky were formed when a mass of warm, moist air rose from the earth and reached a section of colder air. The invisible moisture in the air condensed and made a visible cloud, just as your breath condenses on a cold day. When a cloud becomes so heavy with droplets that it can no longer hold them, it spills over, and we have rain. *“O Lord my God, Thou art very great...who layeth the beams of His chambers in the waters: who maketh the cloud His chariot: He watereth the hills from His chambers.”* (Psa. 104:3,13) The clouds are the chambers of God containing the water of life! A cloud is full of water and water speaks to us of life. Water typifies both the Word of God and the Spirit of God (Eph. 5:26; John. 7:37-39). A cloud speaks to us of a vessel which contains water or contains life. Even so, God by His Spirit gives Living Water to refresh and impart life to His creation! It is the nature of a cloud to empty itself! *“If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth.”* (Eccl. 11:3) When the cloud gets filled up, it rains. That is the nature of the clouds — rain pours out. All that God is was emptied into Jesus Christ! All that God is was poured into Him; He became a receptacle, a vehicle for all the fullness of God (Col. 1:19; 2:9). He was filled up with the life-giving properties of God! Now, all that Jesus Christ is, is being emptied into His body until we are filled with all the fullness of God — having all the life-giving properties of God! HE IS FILLING THE CLOUDS! The nature of each matured, manifest son will be to pour out that life just as God poured it into Jesus and Jesus poured it into us. That is what will deliver the creation from the bondage of corruption! Every eye shall see His glory. They shall SEE HIM IN THE CLOUDS!

If the saints be full of God they will pour Him out upon the earthly-natured, unconverted, tormented and bound, and unspiritual ones. This is the only hope of creation! This is why the whole creation still waits and groans and travails for the manifestation of the sons of God! A true ministry has life to give, and is willing to empty himself in order to be a blessing to a dry and thirsty people. Pour out his life for others — that is what Jesus did! We are called and chosen of God to empty out that same life on a larger scale on a groaning creation and break the bondage of corruption. Jesus was only one cloud, now we are many clouds! We will rain on all peoples and all nations! Life shall spring forth everywhere throughout the whole earth! All creation is awaiting with bated breath this son company of people who will be the clouds of glory! Their life-giving rain will be emptied upon a dry and cursed earth and creation itself shall be released into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. Aren't you glad!

With these thoughts in mind we can better understand the fact that Christ Jesus departed this earth in one cloud, yet He comes again in many clouds. The one glory has become the multiple glory. Christ the Head has reproduced His life in a many-membered body. The one cloud of His presence has become many clouds of His presence in His many brethren. Isaiah foretold of this day: *“Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee.”* (Isa. 60:1-2) The sign of the coming or the presence of the Lord has always been the shekinah or the glory cloud. It was God's sign to Moses, to Ezekiel, to Daniel, and when our Lord comes again in fullness in a many-membered body of sons, it will be IN THE CLOUDS OF HIS PRESENCE!

From earth's teeming millions of all ages there is a people arising in the image of Christ. We who watch the spiritual heavens are seeing a cloud as we have never seen before. We have seen inky black clouds, and clouds of snowy whiteness; clouds brightly tinted and many silver lined; clouds made brilliantly gorgeous by the

afterglow of the setting sun. But we never before have seen a cloud made magnificently glorious by the blazing splendor of the Son of God! We have seen clouds charged with thunder and lighted up by flashes of lightning as those who call themselves the representatives of Christ have thundered at the world, intimidating them with words of condemnation and threats of judgment, telling all what awful sinners they are and frightening them with promises of certain hell-fire and eternal damnation. Clouds with thunder and lightning, but little rain! Not yet have we seen clouds charged with the power of omnipotence and flashing with the incorruptible radiance of the love of God in Christ! Afar off we have seen the morning clouds as they have enwrapped the distant mountain peaks and splendidly capped the hilltops. We have yet to see the clouds which shall enfold the absolute fullness of the Mighty One!

We have seen clouds driven as chariots to carry rain to the dry and thirsty fields here and there, as God has periodically visited people with revival by the moving of His Spirit. BUT NOW BRIGHT CLOUDS ARE FORMING IN THE HEAVENS OF GOD'S SPIRIT THAT WILL BE SEEN, THAT WILL BE THE CHARIOT OF HEAVEN'S KING OF GLORY WHEN HE COMES IN SONS TO REFRESH AND RESTORE AND QUICKEN ALL THINGS. What a sight it will be! Even as I pen these words droplets are forming, individual sons over all the earth, on every continent, in every nation, in every city, town, and hamlet are being filled with the spirit of sonship which is the fullness of God, and soon, my beloved, soon! these droplets will band together by the sovereign operation of God and these brilliant bands will fill the glory-flashing skies from end to end and flood the world with life and light and love. How magnificent will be the pageantry of the skies! How sublime beyond all mortal comprehension will be the flood of redeeming love, quickening power, transforming grace, the spirit of understanding, the impartation of righteousness, the breaking of the curse, the collapse of man's vaunted kingdoms, the end of the rule of flesh, the resurrection unto life that shall spring forth in all the earth upon all peoples, bringing God's kingdom to pass everywhere the rain doth fall!

Oh, the wonder of it! Having beheld these wonders in the Spirit, may our hearts be assured that the rain from God's clouds of sons, refracting and reflecting the blazing Shekinah of His glorious presence and power, is what FORMS THE RAINBOW AROUND THE THRONE OF HIS RIGHTEOUS GOVERNMENT OUT OF HEAVENLY REALMS. That is the mystery. It is indeed wonderful!

A MAN IN THE RAIN

When light breaks through from the side of the skies
And finds itself caught and impaled and it dies
In the rain that descends from the dark cloud above,
A rainbow is seen, a sign of God's love.

Oh, the colors were there in the light all along
But only the rain can bring out the song
That's been sung by the glory around heaven's throne:
Light's manifold nature displayed and made known.

When the ark came to rest on Ararat's horn
And Noah went forth into mankind's new morn,
God's judgment drew back with the storm on the wane
And His mercy shone forth in the sunlight's new reign.

These two seeming foes did meet in the bow
That was set in the clouds God's promise to show
Both to Him and to us the witness of light
That's been caught in the rain, making peace of the fight.

Has your heart ever looked with wonder and awe
At the bow in the cloud and sensed more than you saw
In the judgment and mercy that met in the rain
And looked beyond that to the Lamb that was slain?

Look — a man just like us who lived life in our shade
And by that pure life a pure light He displayed
That shone with compassion and candor and grace
From Bethlehem's manger to the skull's awful place.

And there did God's wrath and His love fully meet
Finding perfect fulfillment: a work that's complete.
The whole spectrum of love through sorrow and pain
Was declared unto us by a man in the rain!

— Thomas Worth

To be continued...
J. Preston Eby

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 69 THE THRONE (Continued)

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART SIXTY-NINE

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

There are pictures in the book of Revelation. The candlesticks are the churches. Jesus is addressing the church as One standing in the midst of the church. Millions of Christians read the picture language in this book with carnal minds, devoid of any spiritual understanding. They read of a golden candlestick, a golden altar, a golden ark, a sea of glass, or a book of life and suppose them to be some kind of ornate furnishings in a city on a planet called heaven, somewhere "just inside the eastern gate." But the better we understand the types and shadows of the word of God by the quickening of the Spirit, the clearer we see that these are much more than exquisite pieces of furniture in a great heavenly temple out there somewhere beyond the Milky Way. What they are is furniture from the tabernacle of Moses! One of the most important teachings any child of God could have as a foundation for correctly interpreting the book of Revelation is a clear understanding of the symbolisms of the tabernacle of Moses. The tabernacle with its construction, furnishings, offerings, priesthood, and rituals is the root of nearly all spiritual revelation. Everything in the tabernacle portrays something of our reality in Christ!

The entire book of Revelation is communicated by means of signs and symbols. It is wonderfully true that the language in which John is writing is redemptive language — symbols that appear time and again throughout the Bible. There is no possibility of exhausting scriptural truth! Scripture is as inexhaustible as God Himself. There is no end to His wisdom nor His understanding. Therefore it behooves us to prayerfully search out the symbols to see what message they proclaim. Of course, many believers are satisfied with the mundane because they were born into it; their preachers and teachers only dabble in the elementary principles of the truth of Christ, so they've never known anything else.

Sooner or later, if our heart hungers and thirsts after God, we come to the point reached by the little boy with the red wagon. That is to discover that the toughest resistance to pressing into the depths of God is not from without, but from within. The little boy loved to play with his little red wagon. But one day it suddenly occurred to him that he could not recall ever seeing an adult playing with a little red wagon. The moment that thought struck him he burst into tears. His mother was finally able to get out of him what it was that was causing such terrible grief. He sobbed through his tears that he didn't want to grow up because he was afraid that then he wouldn't be able to play with his little red wagon. His mother encouraged him as best she could. She assured him that as far as she knew there was no reason why he should not play with his little red wagon after he grew up, if he wanted to. No one would prevent him. That cheered him a bit. But after a few minutes he burst out crying again. When she asked him what the trouble was this time, he sobbed, "I'm afraid I won't want to!"

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

From within each one of us who have received the call to sonship there comes at last the decisive decision to give up the little red wagons of our childish religious past, and at costly consequences to grow up into the maturity of our glorious Head, the firstborn Son of God! We grow spiritually by hearing the voice of the Lord for ourselves and by following the Lord wherever He leads us, by releasing all He calls upon us to release, and doing all His perfect and holy will. Our Father is leading us beyond the Outer Court with its brazen altar of atonement and forgiveness of sins, and beyond the Holy Place with its lighted candlestick fueled by the oil of the indwelling Spirit. He is also leading us beyond the feast of Passover where we first met the Lamb of God who died for us, and beyond the feast of Pentecost where we received the firstfruits of the Spirit — yes, beyond the candlestick realm, beyond the church order! By the leading of His Spirit we are growing up into Christ, becoming mature adults in the kingdom of our Father. The call for this New Day is to "Come up hither!" The journey of this New Day is from the candlestick to the throne! The divine evidence that we are heeding

that call is if we have truly begun to grow up and become a spiritual adult, we are done with the childish ways of the past and have put them all aside. A spiritual child delights in the childish ways of the past. He or she enjoys those childish ways, and continues to cling to the little red wagon — continues to romp and frolic in the entertaining programs of the old order church system. But when we grow up and become spiritual adults in the more glorious kingdom of our Father, we then put away the childish toys of the past, and with joy set our face toward the throne, ascending in the Spirit into that which is more perfect and complete — kingship with Christ!

A brother shared this experience some time ago. He said, *“My eighteen-year-old son graduated from high school last spring. The ceremony was a great celebration for both the graduates and their parents, symbolizing the passage from childhood and dependency to greater freedom on the journey to becoming an independent, responsible adult. How ludicrous it would have been for the kindergarten teacher of these students to reappear, proclaiming that in order to keep their diplomas, all graduates must now report to her in September to review their ABC’s. You do not take young people who have matured and are ready to accept adult responsibility and treat them like children. Even the graduates would have said, ‘We are not going back!’”* Oh, no! We who are growing up into Christ and have tasted the powers of the age to come are not going back to the kindergarten of our walk in God! Let the children play, let them sit Sunday after Sunday and hear the same salvation story, the same elementary teachings, observe the same forms, rituals, ceremonies, entertainment, and work and labor feverishly in the same tired old church programs and promotions. If they still want to play with the little red wagon they are not ready yet to leave it. And there is no condemnation in that! Children are supposed to play! BUT WE WILL NOT GO BACK!

With keen spiritual insight the late **George Hawtin** wrote this admonition to the Lord’s elect. *“Centuries ago Israel marched across the burning wilderness of Sin (Ex. 16:1). Forty years they journeyed under the continual care and correction of God. Angels’ food was their meat (Psa. 18:25) and spiritual water was their drink, for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them and that rock was Christ (I Cor. 10:4). Their bodies grew not weary and their garments waxed not old; neither was there a feeble one in their tribes (Psa. 105:37) as they journeyed under God’s orders and moved at His command. So it came to pass that, ‘on the day that the tabernacle was reared up, the cloud covered the tabernacle, namely, the tent of the testimony: and at even there was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire, until the morning. So it was always: the cloud covered it by day, and the appearance of fire by night. And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the children of Israel journeyed: and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents. At the commandment of the Lord the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the Lord they pitched: as long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle they rested in their tents. And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of the Lord, and journeyed not. And so it was, when the cloud was a few days upon the tabernacle; according to the commandment of the Lord they abode in their tents, and according to the commandment of the Lord they journeyed. And so it was, when the cloud abode from even unto the morning, and that the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they journeyed: whether it was by day or by night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed. Or whether it were two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not: but when it was taken up, they journeyed. At the commandment of the Lord they rested in their tents, and at the commandment of the Lord they journeyed.’ (Num. 9:15-23)*

“We today are under similar care and similar orders though we know it not. From time to time through the ages the church has been commanded to move on with the cloud to new revelation and experience in God, and after each move to pitch our tent and patiently wait for the moving of the cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night. What a tremendous sight it must have been for Israel, after having camped for a day, a month, a year, or many years, to see at last the cloudy pillar of God’s presence and glory begin to move on, and what a hustle and bustle there must have been as they broke up their old camps to follow the cloud, every tribe in his own order, and every man in his order whithersoever the Spirit led them!

“As time has swiftly passed, the light of that same fiery pillar has illuminated to our waiting hearts many truths which we have embraced and have made part of ourselves and ourselves part of them. But with many of us, as with many of them, God was not well pleased, and they were overthrown in the wilderness (I Cor. 10:5). They lusted after evil things, became idolaters, and committed fornication just as thousands today are doing who once were baptized in the cloud, drinking of the spiritual rock and eating the spiritual meat. (I Cor. 10:2-4).

We have made jobs and money, possessions and pleasures our idols and our gods, and we have committed fornication with the harlot daughters of Babylon times without number. We have tempted Christ and murmured because of the rigors of the way, sat down to eat and drink in the fleshly realm, and risen up to play — to play at church and make a play of religion (I Cor. 10:5-11). These things that happened to them are for examples for us upon whom the ends of the ages are come.

“In the depths of my spirit I seem to hear the trumpet call to a new awakening. It is time to move on from the revelation of the past years. It is time to partake of the resurrection, the bread of God, the better blood and the water of life. The pillar of fire is moving; it is time to move on! The great mystery of the ages, ‘let us make man in our image,’ is about to be fulfilled when all things will begin to find their one head in Christ.” — end quote.

That blessed company called to sonship is now passing through a strange time of transition. In the midst of deep dealings and great testings and mighty shakings a people is being formed to be the Lord's true expression in the earth. Old things are passing away; new things are coming into view! The saints who make up the body of Christ in the earth are progressing from the childish prattle and playing of the carnal church systems to the new and higher order of the kingdom of God. Those who are truly apprehended have left their old camps and have left all their religious play things behind and have released their grasp on every vestige of that old, passing order, and are laying hold on the new order of the kingdom of God. In this transition time when everything is being shaken, we are at peace, resting in Him! We have taken our seat in the heavenly places in Christ, with the assurance that we are becoming His will and His salvation for all the ends of the earth. He is establishing the rule of His throne in our hearts and lives that we might reign with Him over the nations and all things.

“The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.” (Rev. 1:20)

We do not randomly, haphazardly, or arbitrarily interpret these symbols, but they are interpreted for us by the Spirit of God. The candlestick is revealed as a symbol of the church of Christ. The candlestick in the tabernacle in the wilderness was located in the Holy Place. All the churches of the world, all the churches of history have had their experience in the Holy Place realm of spiritual experience! And just for that reason every move of God in the church realm, including the early church, the Reformation churches, the Revival churches, the Pentecostal churches, and the so-called Latter Rain churches have eventually stagnated and gone into apostasy. You see, my beloved, the Holy Place is not a permanent realm.

I can hear someone say, “But the candlestick is made of gold, a metal of value and permanency; doesn't that speak of abiding things and of an eternal realm?” The gold of the candlestick is not the whole story! The gold does indeed speak of the essential nature of the church — the divine nature. But men had to make oil for it, or it gave no light. The oil itself was man processed. It was made according to a God-given formula, after the art of the apothecary, but human hands were necessary to make it. There is the element of the flesh. Who can deny that the flesh has entered in to just about everything done in the church! Furthermore, the oil had to be made again and again, or it would run out. It was not the infinite supply of God! Then, too, within the lamps there were wicks that daily must be raised or lowered, and trimmed to keep the light burning evenly. The ministry of a man was required to snip the wick. Without these ministrations of men the candlestick could in no way fulfill its purpose — there was no light!

The Holy Place, representing the Pentecostal realm, or the church realm, for the church was birthed at Pentecost, also had bread meal associated with it. The bread meal was sown with leaven, and leaven throughout the word of God is a type of sin or error. That's why we read in the book of Hebrews, *“Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle (Holy Place), accomplishing the service of God. But into the second (Most Holy Place) went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: the Holy Ghost thus signifying that the way into the Holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle (Holy Place) was yet standing.” (Heb. 9:6-8)*

The Holy Place had an entrance into a realm beyond the Holy Place! The Holy Place had an entrance into a realm greater than the Holy Place! In that realm, the Holiest of all, there was no oil to be made, no wick to be

trimmed, no bread laced with leaven to be baked. The light of the Holiest of all was the light of the incorruptible, eternal glory of God alone! It never ran out of fuel, man's hand never touched it, and no man could add anything to it. And this light shone over and upon and out of the throne of God upon the ark of the Covenant! By that incorruptible light the manna was preserved without breeding worms and stinking, and there was no decaying, deterioration, or dissolution of anything in that realm! Oh, yes, the throne zone was the Holiest of all! Once each year, in type, the high priest heard, as it were, the call to "Come up hither!" into a higher and more glorious realm than the candlestick realm. As he passed through the veil he made the journey FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE! This is not the church realm we have known, my friend, this is the incorruptible, immortal, unchangeable, omnipotent, eternal realm of God! And it is not a realm we enter after death, in some far-off heaven somewhere, but it is the realm prepared for God's mature sons right here upon earth, the realm of God's fullness, of perfection, of maturity, of wisdom, of power and dominion, where God is all that He is in His people — the realm of manifest sonship!

Most of those who read these lines met Christ as Saviour in the Outer Court and then served God in the Holy Place. But that's not where we have to stay! Our great high priest, even Jesus, has entered into the Holiest of all at the right hand of God. We are the body of the high priest, who is the Head of the priesthood after the order of Melchizedek, and in Him we have access into the Most Holy Place! *"Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither our forerunner is for us entered in, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart..."* (Heb. 6:19-20; 10:17-22)

As we read previously, the Holiest of all is not accessible as long as the Holy Place is standing (Heb. 8:8). In other words we can never enter into the Most Holy Place, into the fullness of God, into manifest sonship IN THE CHURCH! As long as the candlestick realm is standing in our lives, in our hearts, in our experience, in our practice, as long as we cling to it, we cannot pass beyond the veil into the Holiest of all! That order must no longer stand in our lives! Even if we set our foot only one step beyond the veil, we have completely and totally left the old order of the candlestick realm behind! Another picture of this truth is shown us in chapter twelve of the Revelation. In this wonderful chapter the manchild, the overcoming company of the sons of God, is birthed out of the woman church. The sons of God are separate from their church mother just as a baby is separated from the body of its mother at the time of birth. The manchild does not reign in the woman — He reigns IN THE THRONE! (Rev. 12:1-6)

Is this not the same truth that unfolded within John's wondering spirit when he stood in the candlestick realm and heard a voice that commanded, "Come up hither, and I will show you things which must be hereafter" — after the candlestick realm! Immediately he was caught up in the Spirit and beheld the throne room of God. The throne was not in the midst of the candlesticks, it was in a higher realm which necessitated being caught up — beyond the candlesticks! There is even now a change of seasons upon us. The voice of the Son of God has been heard by many in this hour out of the heavenlies, calling a people to come up higher and prepare themselves for the next feast, the next realm, the next experience, the next moving of God in the earth, the third feast, the third day, the third compartment of the tabernacle — the realm of the fullness of God in the Holiest of all!

From time to time the Lord speaks to me in dreams — usually at about six o'clock in the morning. On October 15, 1995, Larry and Betty Hodges were scheduled to be here in El Paso, sharing with some brethren who would meet in a home. That morning I awoke from a dream. In the dream I was in a large hall such as is used for meetings and functions of various kinds. At one side of the hall, against the wall, was a table. To the right of the table were several people seated in chairs along the wall. Brother Hodges was standing before the table, facing the wall, ministering to the people seated along the wall to his right. His back was to the large hall. He was ministering from a manuscript on the table — I could see that it was typewritten, with a number of pages, and double-spaced like a manuscript prepared for a publisher. He had reached the bottom of the first page and was speaking words that evoked a great excitement in my spirit. I was saying within my own thoughts, "Amen! That's right, brother! That's what the Lord has been teaching me!" It seemed it had something to do with death to self.

Then I noticed two long tables out in the center of the hall. And I noted that brother Hodges was facing the table and the people along the wall — his back to the hall and the tables. I was aware that a great number of people would soon be arriving. The tables, however, were cluttered with food and dirty dishes left over from a previous banquet. There were two place settings that had not been used at the head of one of the tables. Obviously, the banquet that had been held there had ended, and things were not ready for the people that would be coming. I thought, “We must clear all this away and make preparations for the arrival of the people!” Someone began to help me and we cleared the tables. Then a folded map appeared in my hands. I laid the map on a shelf — and awoke from the dream.

In my meditations that morning the Spirit gave me understanding of the dream. Needless to say, I was very interested to see what brother Hodges would be ministering that day! I saw that the manuscript he was ministering from was as an unpublished manuscript — a fresh word, a new revelation for a new day — not known by the masses of Christians. It is that which can only be known by the Spirit and is witnessed to by those who are hearing from God in this hour! Those that receive this word are few in number compared to the millions of believers — a “little flock,” even the “remnant” of the Lord. But there is coming a great change! God is setting the stage to move in a new way, in the power of the kingdom of God, and there shall be a great ingathering! Multitudes will flow into the kingdom of God through the ministry of the sons of God! But things are not quite ready — there are yet preparations to be made.

The tables with the left-over food and dirty dishes bespeak of the previous move of God — the feast of Pentecost. It was a glorious feast with rich blessing for many — but the feast has ended. The meal is over! Only remnants of blessings and the vessels used remain. Those that were ordained to partake of that feast came and ate. Some that were bidden to the feast didn’t make it, or refused the invitation. This was represented in the two place settings that had not been used! Some today do not believe that the feast of Pentecost has ended. But I tell you that I have been a life-time witness to the power of Pentecost and have beheld with my own eyes the glory, the signs and wonders, the miracles and manifestations, the gifts and the ministries of that realm, and what I have witnessed in my life-time is marvelous beyond words to express! Believe me when I now tell you that it is over. Oh, yes, there are still scraps of food on the table, there are still tongues and prophecies and occasional miracles and signs, but the vast majority of what I see today does not impress me at all, it is naught but showmanship, charlatanism, the power of suggestion, mass hypnosis, psychologically induced emotionalism, and evangelistic hype. THERE IS NO REAL POWER OF PENTECOST ANYWHERE IN THE LAND TODAY. I do not hesitate to say it. I have been a glad partaker of the real, and I have been a sad spectator of the imitation. There is a difference!

The truth that gripped my spirit that morning in 1995 was just this: The former feast is over and God is now speaking from an unpublished manuscript! What He has to say has only begun (brother Hodges was only at the bottom of the first page), and He is dealing with His called and chosen ones about the price to be paid and the preparations to be made for the next great move of God — the feast of Tabernacles! This is the hour of preparation! Let us prepare our hearts! All who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship now leave behind the feast that has ended and set our sight and our hearts upon the feast that is ready to begin! In my dream brother Hodges (who represents all the elect of God) had his back to the hall with the tables and dirty dishes. In other words, he had renounced that which was past, he had turned away from that with which God was finished. He was speaking from a higher realm, a fresh and greater word, proclaiming a new Day, and pressing into a new glory.

Finally, I saw that the map represents our present walk in the Spirit and our destination in God. I laid the folded map on a shelf, meaning that we have not yet received the full revelation of Father’s timing, and just when or how the Lord will bring every son to manifestation. I confess that I do not know all about it, but I do know the word we have received from God, and today we go forward by faith! In this hour God is raising a people in consciousness to heights never known by man, we are walking in a new place in God, He is establishing a new order in our hearts, and is beckoning us onward to a new attainment, a ministry and a glory never before experienced by any except our glorious Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us, beloved, prepare our hearts for the thing God is doing in our day! And — interestingly, these are the very things brother Larry ministered that Sunday morning — to which my spirit gave a hearty “Amen!”

Let no man think that any of the blessings, gifts, anointings, manifestations, revivals, miracles, or movings of the Spirit we have experienced along our journey have the power to usher us into manifest sonship or in any

way represent what the sonship ministry will be like. None of the few grapes and pomegranates we have received on our journey into the Canaan Land of promise can meet the need of this Day! None who has spiritual eyes of understanding believes that there is much left of the fruit of Canaan in the midst of the Lord's people. When the children of Israel were in the wilderness, the twelve spies brought back samples of the fruit of the Land and they were wonderful beyond description! But the children of Israel were not in the Land, they were in the wilderness, and the grapes and pomegranates brought to them in the wilderness were indeed incredibly tasty and exciting, but were soon gone and the people were still in the wilderness. That's how it is with Pentecost — the firstfruits of the Spirit! Even those grapes of Eschol, and the pomegranates and figs of former revivals are now but a fleeting memory of the good old days. And the Lord's people are still in the wilderness! Many are looking for a return of those blessed times of past revival and visitation, instead of anticipating a still greater and eternal glory that lies ahead. For no matter how great those days were in the past, the full measure that God has reserved for His manifested sons is yet to be revealed!

“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory, which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” (Rom. 8:18-23)

This, then, in some small part, is the glory for which the sons of God seek — the glory of incorruption, the glory of adoption, the glory of immortality — total and eternal deliverance from the power of sin, sorrow, limitation, and death! The spirit of that adoption now pulsates within our consecrated hearts. *“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father! The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ: if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.” (Rom. 8:15-17)* Daily the spirit of adoption increases in victory and power within every son called to glory, that in union with Him we might receive the fullness of the graces, virtues, powers, and riches that are in Christ Jesus!

The history of every son of God will eventually be the story of a progression from the natural through the spiritual to the celestial; passing from the realm of darkness and death through the realm of quickening, change, and transformation, to the fullness of stature and glory in the image and likeness of God; from the world of sinners through the realm of the church to the power and glory of the throne of God; from the brazen altar of sacrifice for sin in the Outer Court to the golden altar and table of prayer, praise, and communion in the dim light of the candlestick in the Holy Place, then on into the Holiest of all, where shines the undimmed and more excellent glory of the undiminished majesty of God.

Many and varied are the ways and paths by which the Lord in faithfulness prepares the people He has chosen. A most enlightening aspect of this preparation is found tucked away among the priceless gems in that treasure house of truth which is the Song of Solomon. At the bursting beauty of spring, standing in the garden of delights, the little Shulamite maiden's Beloved counsels her, *“Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.” (S. of S. 2:15)* Her Beloved warns that it is not enough to dwell in the garden and admire the beauty of the flowers and trees and smell their fragrance. It is not enough to listen to the singing of birds and look forward to the harvest. It is not enough to rejoice that we have been called and made worthy to become partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, that we have been delivered out of the power of the darkness of the world and religion, and translated into the kingdom of God's Son. Oh, no! There is responsibility; we must keep the vineyard of our own lives and souls! And we must take every fox, especially the young foxes that hide away and eat the vines, stripping them of the bark and destroying them.

In this hour at the transition of the ages there is a precious thing being formed, a new thing, a new day, a new people who are of the day, even the first-fruits of the kingdom. The thing God is doing today cannot be compared with anything He has done in the past in the religious systems and church revivals. The only pattern is CHRIST! Christ is the SON OF GOD, the first and so far ONLY MANIFEST SON OF GOD. The harvest of the church age is MANY SONS BROUGHT TO HIS GLORY, CONFORMED TO HIS IMAGE, FILLED WITH

HIS FULLNESS — A VAST COMPANY OF MANIFEST SONS OF GOD! It seems that always when men pray for a fresh moving of God in their midst, they begin to examine all the former “moves” and “revivals” of church history and try to find the “key” as to what will bring the glory of God again, as if God will ever repeat the past. But He declares of this day, *“Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth...”* (Isa. 43:18-19)

As long as we are deeply enwrapped and entangled in the old, yea, even those old things God has done, we cannot ever behold the new, for our eyes and hearts are blinded by the cloak of the old. There are no little foxes anywhere more cute, deceitful, or treacherous than these little foxes of the old ways of Babylon which cling to the vines of our walk in God. How cunning they are! The little foxes of the religious systems prey upon the sentimental senses of our soul, with their music, programs, ordinances, activities, promotions and entertainment. But, blessed be God! by the eye of the Spirit I have come to behold the formations of a completely new move of God ready to be birthed in the earth. I do not hesitate to declare it! I do not condemn any of the present orders of meetings and worship, of hymns and testimonies, of prophecies and prayers, of exhortations and teachings, of sermons and altar calls, of gifts and ministries, for we know that God uses them all; yet, the Spirit is speaking, stirring, dealing, quickening, convincing the hearts of His called and chosen elect to be alert to the little foxes of the old order that is passing away and those who hear His voice are not allowing the ways, methods, traditions, and practices of the old to so cling to us that they choke and strip us even as our hearts cry out for the NEW and the tender grapes of HIS SONSHIP appear on our vines.

That great man of God, Dr. Charles S. Price, many years ago penned this prophetic poem:

Can Christians grow by holding firm
To doctrine or to creed?
The Shepherd leads His sheep to where
They in new pastures feed.

Can food of yesteryear suffice
For hunger of today?
Was it not for our daily bread
That He taught us how to pray?

A soul can never grow in grace
That is content to stay
In blissful contemplation of
The things of yesterday,

And live alone in memory
Of some bright evening star
His grace had sent to lead us on;
Not keep us where we are!

Unfolding revelation is
God’s purpose for this hour.
Why live in flesh? The stratospheres
Are vibrant with His power!

There is a Spirit realm to which
We can triumphant rise,
And blend redemption’s melodies
With music from the skies.

It is my deep conviction that the time appointed of the Father for the manifestation of the sons of God is nigh at hand. Sons of God shout it loud and clear! Let the earth know her redemption draweth nigh! The King of Love is coming! Hallelujah! The Deliverer is coming out of Zion, the whole Christ-body is being prepared, and the time is at hand. There is no other way out of the darkness of this hour. While the religious systems “play

church” and the Christians “dabble in politics” trying to save the nation and the world, the royal heralds are going forth blowing their trumpets, proclaiming the message of the kingdom in the power of the Spirit, preparing the stage for the appearing of the KING in a vast company of the sons of God — the King in the midst of the kings, for He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords! What a glorious and mighty and exultant victory lies before us!

In my years of ministry I have had occasion to reflect upon this saying of our Lord, *“No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom (government) of God.”* (Luke 9:62) Some people come to the hard work of pressing into the kingdom only under painful duress. Once the price of entrance becomes clear to them, they drop the plow and turn back to the beggarly elements of religion, joining themselves again to the programs and activities of a church system in a lesser realm. They are not yet ready for the kingdom! They refuse to enter into the kingdom! In contrast are those who find themselves unable to leave the kingdom walk! They are drawn irresistibly to the transforming and creative process going on within them, and thoroughly understand that there is nothing in the church systems of man for them anymore. Nothing could entice them — not blessings, not gifts, not programs, nor fellowship, nor personalities, nor needs — to turn from their quest of the kingdom. **THEY HAVE REACHED THE POINT OF NO RETURN.** No looking back! The hook is in their jaw. They can do nothing else, so help them God. They have been quickened, captivated, possessed by the voice bidding them to “Come up hither!”

If we are the elect of God in this hour, there is a call within us, and deep calleth unto deep. I tell you, my beloved, there is something within me, an inner compulsion, and I know that I have set my face as a flint and cannot turn to the right hand or the left from my journey into God’s fullness. I can’t go back to the world — the world has nothing to offer me; it is all vanity and vexation of spirit. I can’t go back to religion — religion holds nothing for me anymore; it is wearisome to my soul and an abomination. I can’t even go back to Pentecost, back to the Holy Place — for the veil has been rent and I have tasted of the powers of the world to come and beheld the glories of the throne realm. There is no turning back because my heart has turned to the Lord! As the apostle says, *“When it (the heart) shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away...and we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”* (II Cor. 3:16-18) For some in this hour the veil has been rent in their consciousness and we have found an entrance to behold the transcendent glories of that promised land that lies before us. By the blood of Jesus we have been granted the opportunity to enter into the kingdom of God!

We must love every man, especially those who are of the household of faith. I do love them. I love them every one! I pray for them all! I care for them all! I yearn after them more deeply and fervently than they could ever imagine! I ask God’s blessing upon them all without partiality! I want only God’s best for every believer in Jesus Christ, irrespective of their level of spiritual development, or what doctrines or religious systems they are involved with. But I cannot walk with many of them. I cannot join myself to them in their childish traditions and carnal institutions. I cannot partake with them at their table of static creeds and man-made doctrines. I cannot participate with them in their empty rituals and ceremonies. I cannot be involved in their grandiose schemes and soulish promotions by which they imagine to save the world. Their insipid vision of waiting to die and fly away to that bright glory-world above has nothing in common with the beautiful hope of sonship to God and the revelation of the kingdom birthed within my ransomed spirit by the quickening breath of my Father in heaven. Their expositions, sermonizings, homilies, meetings, projects, hopes, aspirations, and goals are but dim flickering candles compared to the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ!

The ministry all creation is waiting for, longing for, groaning and travailing for, is the ministry of sonship. Only Jesus has demonstrated what it is! But the ministry of Jesus was not in the gift realm of Pentecost, it was not “in part,” it was not “by measure,” but His ministry was the ministry of a **MANIFESTED SON OF GOD** in all the power and wisdom and glory of the Father! Some tell us that the ministry Jesus demonstrated on earth is not what manifest sonship is. If sonship ministry is not what Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, revealed on earth, then pray tell me, what is it? I never thought I would see what I see today, brethren who received a revelation of sonship now “watering it down” to something far less than what Jesus has shown us. Let me tell you — the great secret of the ministry of Jesus was that it was not in limitation but in fullness. Jesus Himself said that the Father did not give Him the Spirit by measure. He also said that the works the Father did through Him were the proof and evidence of His sonship! Jesus did not receive a “gift” in the church realm, but He was the incarnation, the embodiment, the personification of the **FULLNESS OF THE FATHER!** That is the realm of

sonship. And that is why creation is not groaning for another gift-ministry, another apostle, another prophet, another evangelist, pastor, or teacher, another gospel crusade, or another revival.

Creation is in pain and travail waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God! Oh, yes! Only the sons of God will possess within themselves the fullness of the power of the kingdom of God as did Jesus! They will have all that He had plus the power of His resurrection! Only the sons of God, in the power of Christ's resurrection, can deliver creation from the bondage of corruption. Jesus is not the firstborn among many Christians, or among many evangelists, or many teachers, or even many apostles and prophets. Oh, no! He is the firstborn among MANY BRETHREN! The brethren are like Him. They are completely like Him! That is what makes them brethren, and that is what makes them sons! He is not bringing many gifted Christians to glory, He is not bringing many musicians to glory, He is not bringing many deacons to glory, He is not bringing many Sunday School teachers to glory, He is not bringing many preachers to glory, He is not bringing many apostles and prophets to glory, but He is bringing many SONS to glory! Aren't you glad!

Sonship is glorious beyond anything our eyes have seen or ears have heard. Jesus Christ is the firstborn Son of God. He is what sonship is! And now all His brothers are empowered to follow Him to maturity and into the power of His resurrection. All will follow His steps, becoming what He is. The spiritual life of every son has the same origin as the firstborn, for all are born of God. We are being perfected by the same process, and will ultimately achieve the same result. Jesus Christ was and is the personification of the Father, and so shall we be. The holy and divine nature of Jesus Christ is ours to be raised up within us. The works He did we shall do as well. The authority of Jesus Christ, the power of His throne, even the dominion of the ages and all things, He will share with those who come unto the measure of the stature of His fullness. Jesus possesses the totality of God's essence and substance, and this is the heritage of every manifest son of God. The present resurrection, ascension, and enthronement of Jesus Christ is the portrait of our destiny! Oh, the wonder of it!

The sons of God are destined to inherit all things; they are selected by the Father to become the dispensers of blessing to all created realms. Thus creation groans in sympathetic birth pangs, longing for their arrival! From powerful angels in heaven, to worlds in the farthest galaxy, the universe resonates with anticipation of the glorious unveiling of the sons of God. The sons will share the fullness of the glory of their Father. They will grow up into the attributes of God as a permanent state of being. The sons of God will partake of Godlikeness, and a spiritual inheritance that is incomprehensible to natural men, even religious men, saved men, and Spirit-baptized men! This celestial race of beings shall be endowed with all the authority and capacity of God. Immortal omnipotence will flow from them as the light rays from the sun. In the heaven blest days before us, those who have attained to sonship will be displayed in the blazing glory of immortality. This climatic finale is a fast approaching certainty.

From the difficulties, struggles, testings and processings of this present time the son company will burst into everlasting splendor, streaming glory, wisdom, and power as a shower of stars. With Jesus as the Captain, this reigning government of God shall invade the bastions of darkness and by war, yea, by spiritual warfare shall they take the rule from the kings of the earth. These are celestial kings and priests, trained and tested in conquest. They are invincible in the nature and power of the Father. Nothing shall confound them; all will succumb to their sway. This company of sons is the final world government — it will never be overthrown! They will subdue every enemy, transform every life, renew every mind, and be the fountainhead of every blessing! They are the solution that God has ordained for the travail of earth's teeming billions. This is the destiny of God's Christ, Head and body!

God has put His hand to the task; He is ready to grasp the whole world and, through the sonship ministry, switch it on to another track, changing its course and destination. I tell you, dear ones, as sons of God we are laborers together with God in inaugurating the next stage of the kingdom which will impact every living nation of earth. We are now called to "come up hither" to His throne! We shall work and work, minister and minister, reign and reconcile and bless and deliver and transform all nations and all men and all realms and all worlds and all ages until we accomplish the end. *"Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, until He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."* (**I Cor. 15:24-26**) If it takes a week, a month, a year, a decade, a century, a millennium, a billion years or a trillion years, it matters not one whit — the kingdom of God shall increase and expand and triumph until that

blessed day when from pole to pole and from sea to sea and throughout all the vastnesses of infinity everywhere God shall be ALL IN ALL!

Let the mountains reverberate with the sound of the message; let the hills shout aloud for joy, and all the trees of the forest clap their hands! For we now stand on the threshold of a new dimension of the kingdom of God, and we must be prepared to receive HIM in fullness. As we earnestly look for His appearing, we are to receive ALL THAT HE IS, for when He appears in His glory in His manifest sons, all the traditions of yesterday will be swept away and the realms of limitation swallowed up in His surpassing glory. I cannot overemphasize this great and important truth: When Christ appears in the fullness of Himself in His many brethren, we must be prepared to receive Him on a higher plane than we have known Him hitherto. We cannot tell Him what portion of Him we will receive and what portion we will not receive. WE WILL RECEIVE AND MANIFEST HIM IN FULLNESS, and without any reservations or preconceived ideas, or we will not receive Him at all. Either we will walk in the power and glory of His sonship, or we will miss the glory. We will not bring into that new order of life and power the old ways and traditions of the church systems of man. Should we cling to the ministries and methods of the past, we will not be manifest sons. Vast multitudes of Christians will not stand in this new glory because of their tradition — but their time of visitation will come later. But for those who are willing to pay the price, to be thoroughly purged of all that is of the flesh, and disposed to turn loose of the past religious traditions, the old forms and ceremonies, the former means and methods, and the stagnant remains of yesterday's visitations, there awaits great glory and heavenly wealth, and a world-shaking ministry beyond the comprehension of mortal mind.

Captain James Cook was an English explorer who lived more than two hundred years ago. His adventurous life began when he joined the British navy at the age of 27. He surveyed the St. Lawrence Channel and the coasts of Newfoundland and Labrador before he was given his own ship, the Endeavor, to command. He sailed this ship all the way around the world, exploring the coasts of eastern Australia and New Zealand on the way. After returning to England he set out again for the South Pacific with two ships, the Resolution and the Adventure, and explored the icy Antarctic Ocean. He explored the New Hebrides Islands and discovered the island of New Caledonia in the Pacific Ocean off Australia. Early in his career Captain Cook made this amazing statement, I don't remember the precise words, but the thought was this: "It is not my desire to merely go where other men have not gone; I WANT TO GO AS FAR AS IT IS POSSIBLE FOR MAN TO GO!" And his wish was granted, for when he was killed in 1779 by natives in the Hawaiian Islands, there were no more frontiers on this planet to explore, and no more coasts to be charted.

Ah, in the spiritual world just such a desire has arisen within a company, those destined to manifest sonship, the desire to not merely press on in God to heights and depths not discovered by those great ones who have blessed this earth with God's grace, wisdom, and power, but indeed to GO AS FAR AS IT IS POSSIBLE FOR MAN TO GO IN GOD! What a vision! We are well acquainted with the "in part" realm, where God anoints men with the Holy Ghost and with power, and their gifts increase and their ministries expand and many are blessed. But then they die, and while others might try to carry on their vision, it is never again the same for those left behind do not possess the same wisdom or have the same anointing from God, so the movement crystallizes around the "part" the ministry possessed, and when men try to perpetuate it, it finally stagnates and dies. For one thing, every generation needs a new vision and not a carry-over of the old, but in this transition of the ages God is birthing a SON COMPANY that desires not merely to rebuild and restore the work of God of yesteryear, be it New Testament Church Order, five-fold ministry, gifts of the Spirit, expressions of worship, methods of evangelism, or whatever; but we are possessed of a heart to become identified with Jesus Christ beyond the veil, in the Holiest of all, after the power of an endless life, to know God not just in a measure, but in His fullness, and receiving that ministry after the order of Melchizedek which can proceed through the ages until a full victory is consummated and God is ALL IN ALL.

The compelling passion of my life is to be filled with all the fullness of God and be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. That is what sonship is! The deep cry of my heart is for the satisfaction of knowing that my life counts for God. As God knows my heart, it is not a selfish desire. The reason I want to be like Jesus is because I love Him so, and also because it is the only way I can ever be used in the restoration of fallen creation. I see the needs of the world around me, and realize that I am practically powerless to do anything about them. And should I initiate a program it would not even scratch the surface of the need. We thank God for all who are ministering to mankind on whatever level and they shall receive their reward. Yet, men hold

great crusades today and when you listen to their glowing reports you would think the whole world is turning to God. But should you walk the streets of the city they just left, you can barely find a trace of evidence that they were ever there. City-wide life goes on as before. Oh yes, we can pray, believe God, and touch whom we can, and see some people saved, blessed, healed, and delivered. But anyone who says that they have reached the place where their ministry is meeting the needs of the world and changing the order of things is either blind to the realities on this planet, a proud hypocrite, or a liar. But God is not blind to the need of this day, nor is He impotent to move. He has a plan, a wonderful plan! And He is going to move in mighty power just as soon as the time is ripe for it.

God is shaping our lives with a view to the future. What is happening to each son of God today has a bearing on what his role will be in the kingdom of God throughout the ages to come. Our present travail will be easier when we understand this truth. A crown prince cannot live like other people. When the crown prince of Great Britain is born, he is a marked child from the day of his birth. He is different from other children. He cannot go just anywhere or do or be anything he chooses. His education, his way of dress, what he is taught in the home, his associations, his activities, where he goes and when and how, his leisure time — everything about his life is planned to prepare him to be a king. The man or woman called to sonship cannot be like other people or other of God's children any longer. God has a special plan for this one! The truth is that a son of God marches to a different tune than his contemporaries. He hears the band playing the march of victory! He stays in line with those in-Christed ones who march with him. He keeps in step with his leader, Jesus Christ. He marches to the music of the celestials. He marches in the procession of Christ. His music is the music of the kingdom. Because this is a different kind of marching from that of those in the church systems, he is often out of step with them. They are not all marching to the same place! Most Christians are marching to a place in the sky with golden streets, harps, and palm branches to sing and dance and play and frolic for eternity. Sons do not have time for such frivolity, for they are marching to the throne of the universe, to a position of eminence, power, authority, responsibility, and eternal glory as lords and kings and priests and creators after the likeness of their eternal Father. Their business is not dancing over the hillsides of glory, but bringing the kingdom of God to pass throughout the infinity of God's universe!

Always men have greeted friends and loved ones at the beginning of a new day with a cheery greeting, "Good morning!" In these words is the story of the night that is gone and the day which beckons. Fled from us are the lurking shades of night; eagerly we rush to greet the rosy countenance of the dawn. It is fitting that the discovery of the resurrection of our Lord should have been realized in the dawning light of a new day. Behind the disciples was the nightmare of the cross and the tomb. "Very early in the morning" they came to the sepulcher to minister to the dead body of Jesus — only to hear the angels' words, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen." It is as if the angels had said, "Good morning!" It was a good morning; there was nothing more to fear. A new day had dawned for mankind! Forget the fears and dreads of the night; rejoice in the wonders of the day!

Out of the deep and sovereign movings of God a prophetic voice has sounded forth in our generation. The church age is over! The old order is done! God is calling a people by revelation of His Spirit to arise and make the transition into the new age of the kingdom of God, into the new day of manifest sonship. We have heard the voice, we have responded to the call of the voice as of a trumpet to "Come up hither!" In the Spirit we have beheld the throne set in the heavens. It is set for us. Aren't you glad! The throne is our destiny. The kingdom of God is at hand. The manchild is ready to be birthed — to be caught up into the throne. A new order for all mankind is on the horizon. The Day has dawned and the daystar is rising in our hearts. The time of our change has come. Even now a mighty power, a living hope, is working in our lives. "GOOD MORNING SONS OF GOD!"

To be continued...
J. Preston Eby

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 70
THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES AND THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS
BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART SEVENTY

THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES
THE MULTITUDE "BEFORE" THE THRONE

"...and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." (Rev. 1:6)

With these wonderful words John introduces the New Testament church to Old Testament understanding. For the first time in the book of Revelation, here at the very beginning, he is bringing the Old Testament literal types and shadows over into the New Testament fulfillment. The Old Testament was all about natural, physical, earthly types and shadows of kingship and priesthood. Their kings and priests sat on physical thrones and offered animal sacrifices upon brazen altars in temples made with hands. But now John is raising this kingship and priesthood into a higher, spiritual dimension and announces to the saints that Christ now "hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father." With this simple beginning John does what he will do constantly throughout the book of Revelation — refer to Old Testament terminology within the context of New Testament spiritual reality!

More than 270 direct quotations, or expressions, couched in Old Testament language, are found in the Revelation. Rooted in this fertile soil, it is like a tree yielding the rich fruitage of the inspiration of the ages. Because the whole Bible is a prophecy and picture of Christ, therefore this book, drawing its nurture from the prophets of old, and showing forth the reality to which they pointed, could be nothing else but THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST! As from the mountain ranges of the Pacific the gold was once washed down and buried in the deep valleys of California, so from the mountains of the scriptures, from Horeb and Sinai, from Hermon and Carmel, from Zion and Moriah, the precious ore of divine truth and reality has been brought down and deposited in this alluvial book, till it is everywhere glistening with gold seven times refined.

The books of Genesis and Exodus especially, together with portions from the Psalms and the Prophets, form the seed-bed for the whole Word of God. The deepest book in the Bible, theologically, is the book of Revelation because in it we see the harvest, the fullness, the consummation of every seed planted in the Old Testament. It is my conviction that one doesn't need CNN, Time, Newsweek, or USA Today in order to understand the book of Revelation. All you need is a good copy of the Bible, and the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God! Every symbol, every sign, every picture, and every figure of the Revelation is already described and defined in the books of Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets. All the information one needs to interpret the Revelation is already given in the pages of sacred scripture. Our problem is that we haven't understood the seed-bed, so we don't understand the harvest!

It is interesting to note that Genesis begins with a Garden, and the book of Revelation ends with the Paradise of God. In Genesis there is a river flowing out of Eden, whereas in the Revelation there is a river flowing from God's throne. In Genesis 2:12 there is gold in the Land, but in the Revelation there is gold in the City. In Genesis the tree of life is in the midst of the Garden, while in the Revelation the tree of life grows in the midst of the street and on either side of the river in the City. In Genesis there is the bdellium and the onyx stone, and in the Revelation there are all manner of precious stones. In Genesis God walks in the Garden, and in the Revelation God dwells in the City. And we could go on and on for pages! The Word of God is more than a history book, my beloved, and more than a set of rules, laws, and commandments. A lot of people think we should throw the Old Testament away, and if that is what they think it is obvious they have no clue as to what it's about! The Psalmist, by the spirit of prophecy wrote, "In the volume of the book it is written of ME." Then Jesus said to His disciples, *"These are the words which I spake unto you...that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning ME. Then opened*

He their understanding , that they might understand the scriptures.” (Luke 24:44-45) With these things in mind it should not be difficult for any to see that THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST is the subject of the entire Bible, which meets its acme, culmination, fullness, and consummation in the revelation given to John on Patmos!

We must be careful to read the Old Testament in the Spirit of Christ, or we will think everything will be fulfilled literally some day in time, instead of seeing that the FULFILLMENT IS IN CHRIST! All the imagery and typology in the book of Revelation involving the temple, the ark of the testimony, the throne, the most holy place, altars, offerings, incense, fire, seals, wheat, barley, horses, trumpets, wars, Armageddon, tribes of Israel, Jerusalem, mount Zion, the lamb, living creatures, the lion, the ox, the man, the eagle, eyes, wings, robes, harps, vials, and so on, ALL have their fulfillment in Christ. THEY ARE FULFILLED IN HIM! They are not fulfilled in America, Russia, the Middle East, or the so-called Holy Land. Oh, no! Christ is the substance of all the shadows (Col. 2:17). Whatever you are looking for to be fulfilled, don't look at a spot on the map, don't look at a date on the calendar, just look into Christ in the Spirit!

The book of Revelation is without doubt one of the most important and wonderful books ever written. Vivid imagery marks the book of Revelation. There are powerful representations of scenes both in heaven and on earth. The central scene is the THRONE OF GOD. All other things are related to the throne. This throne is the very center of the universe. Not the physiographical center — but the spiritual center! The throne is a symbol bespeaking of that realm of God's absolute dominion and omnipotent power over all things. The throne is not a literal seat in some far-off heaven somewhere; it is the omnipresent dimension of God's sovereign authority and power.

In the book of Revelation all “heavenly things,” that is, all spiritual realities, are revealed in their relationship to the throne of God. And while the King James Bible states that “one sat upon the throne,” you will note that the word “one” in your Bible is in italics, meaning that the word does not appear in the Greek text but is supplied by the translators in an effort to clarify what they perceive to be the intent of the passage. And while it is wonderfully true that there is ONE sitting upon the throne, it is evident that that ONE is a CORPORATE ONE — a many-membered body! God is a God of corporateness. Christ is a Christ of corporateness. *“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, SO ALSO IS CHRIST.” (I Cor. 12:12)* While there is only one God and one throne, yet the God of the throne is ultimately and eternally manifested in corporateness through God's Christ, that vast company of sons who are themselves “the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.” Therefore, He who sits upon the throne is One — yet that One is a Corporate One even as Jesus says, *“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne.” (Rev. 3:21)* This is that eternal unity of the many-membered FAMILY OF GOD of which Jesus spoke when He said, *“That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they may be one in us. And the glory which Thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect IN ONE.” (John 17:21-23)* It is indeed wonderful!

THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES

“And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.” (Rev. 4:4-6)

As I stated earlier, in the book of Revelation all “heavenly things” are revealed in their relationship to the throne. Therefore in the passage just quoted, in addition to the beautiful description of the symbolic throne with its effulgent glory, our attention is immediately directed to certain objects before the throne, round about the throne, in the midst of the throne, and proceeding out of the throne. Each of these positions is vitally significant! Everything in the heavenlies is shown to be either in the throne, proceeding out of the throne, around the throne, or before the throne. This is a throne scene, and concerns sitting down with the Lord Jesus in His throne just as He overcame, and is set down with His Father in His throne. This throne cannot be seen

with mortal eyes, yet it is a living reality in the lives of God's chosen people! All that we both become and perform in God's great throneship purpose is lived out either in the throne, out of the throne, round about the throne, or before the throne. That is the mystery of it!

Four wonderful beasts are brought into view. *“And in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.”* When I first heard about beasts in heaven I was just a child and young, not only in years, but in my walk in Christ. So therefore, the only way I could understand these beasts was to think of them in the natural, which could not have been! When you turn to the natural understanding and try to mix the natural with heavenly things, you move into the world of imagination and delusion. I never could understand the heaven I hoped to go to, and dreamed of so much — for how could this heaven have beasts in it? How did they get there? Did God have some celestial “pooper-scoopers” to keep the throne zone clean? Now, I understand, of course, that the heaven we are talking about is the realm of the Spirit in which God eternally dwells!

The scriptures are abundantly clear that *“YE are the temple of the living God”* and the throne of God is in His holy temple! With this wonderful realization firmly abiding in our hearts we are better prepared to grasp the truth Christ clearly gives us that it is from the throne of that temple which we are that God now speaks by His Spirit. The lightnings, thunderings, and voices “out of the throne” are God speaking out of His kings and priests who sit with Him upon His throne. So what are these “beasts” in the midst of the throne? These are not some kind of weird animalistic creatures out of Star Wars on a far-away planet called heaven. That is foolishness! We're seeing men who walk here upon the earth in the exaltation and glory of the God-man, Christ. These are characteristics that are fulfilled in those who are the sons of the living God. My beloved, this is you in this picture! God is revealing Himself in you! Few believers understand the great truth that God is not external. Earth's voices must fall silent here, for only by revelation of the Holy Spirit can a man know that God dwells in him and that he dwells in God. What eternal purpose would be served by the knowledge of some weird creatures flying around a throne somewhere out beyond the Milky Way? We must know what is for us in the revelation of Jesus Christ! Today I see more clearly than I have ever seen that the revelation of Jesus Christ is in and through the body of Jesus Christ. Sweet mystery of the ages!

Let us get a firm mental picture of this scene which John saw in heaven, in the realm of the Spirit. He saw the throne of God and God sitting on the throne. And in the middle of the throne, and also encircling the throne, were four beasts, full of eyes in front and behind. These each had six wings, and their faces were like a lion, an ox, a man, and a flying eagle. In a circle around the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and on these thrones were twenty-four elders clothed in white robes and with crowns of gold on their heads. In the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a lamb as it had been slain. Before the throne, evidently between the elders and the throne, stood seven lamps of fire burning. Outside the circle of the elders stood the great multitude of the redeemed from every nation and tribe on earth; they were clothed in white robes and had palm branches in their hands. Around all this were the angels of heaven, an innumerable host — myriads upon myriads, thousands upon thousands. What a scene!

The word “beasts” is an unfortunate translation, being necessarily associated in our minds with the brute creation and that which is typified thereby. It is not the Greek word *therion* which in thirty-five instances in the book of Revelation is translated *beast*, meaning “a wild and ravenous beast,” thus denoting an animal of ferocious disposition. It is, rather, the Greek word *zoon* which signifies simply a “living creature” and is so translated in nearly all modern translations of the Bible. In the Revelation the word *therion* is used as a type of the base corruptible and fleshly nature of the natural man and of the brutish and tyrannical kingdoms of this world, ruled by the carnal, depraved, and vicious nature of unregenerated men. The word *zoon*, however, means living creature, or a creature expressing life. It comes from the root *zao* from which also is derived the word *zoe* which is used always in reference to divine life or the life of the ages. All of these words denote that which is alive or is lively! How significant, then, that these four creatures of life are found “in the midst of the throne” and “round about the throne,” occupying the central position in the throne while emanating as an essence, glory, and power out from the throne.

This term “in the midst” is very significant! The prophet Ezekiel once saw far in the distance a great whirlwind moving toward him, and in the whirlwind a fire. As it moved closer and closer, and his eyes were opened more

and more, he beheld in that fire the four living creatures, until finally he beheld the Almighty in the midst thereof. The picture is clear — these are in some way identified with, or representative of, “HIM that sits upon the throne.” A further key to their identity is found in **Revelation 5:6** wherein we read, *“And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne...stood a lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.”* Ah, notice the divine parallel: “In the midst of the throne...stood a lamb” and “In the midst of the throne...were four living creatures.” Both the Lamb and the four living creatures are thus manifestations of the authority and power of life in the One who sits upon the throne!

Imagine this headline in today’s newspaper: Cure Found for Death! Newspapers would soon be sold out. Everyone would be scrambling to find out what this fantastic announcement had to say. But suppose the article under the headline reported that a traveling teacher has announced that he personally is the cure for death — he has not made a scientific discovery nor found some secret fountain of youth — but by revelation he has proclaimed himself as the source of life and immortality! We might begin to suspect that he’s just another religious teacher who has gotten carried away with delusions of self-importance, even if he has raised a few dead people back to life. And when we read about his claim that the only way to escape death is to believe in him, we’d say, “How preposterous!” Perhaps it’s not surprising that relatively few people take Jesus’ bold statement seriously — *“He who believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.”* (**John 11:25-26**) After all, it’s probably the most startling claim anyone has ever made! Why should anyone believe it? We should believe it, not because Jesus raised Lazarus after he had been dead for four days, but because Jesus Himself arose after He died for us — and because He still lives today! The Lamb that was slain is in the midst of the throne, and He has sent forth from the throne the very spirit of His life into us by the power of the Holy Ghost! It is a glorious fact, for we have received it! Christ alone has the credentials to claim that He can give life and immortality to men!

The Greek word *zoe* is the word used throughout the New Testament for the God kind of life. There are three primary Greek words translated “life” in the New Testament. *Zoe* is the first, always used when speaking of divine and spiritual life. Then there is *psuche*, denoting natural, soulish, or human life. The third is *bios*, meaning the affairs of this world and our living in it. Jesus declared that He came into the world for one purpose — *“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”* (**John 10:10**) The Greek word translated “life” in this verse is *zoe*. This eternal life He came to give us is the very nature of God! *“For as the Father hath life (zoe) in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life (zoe) in Himself.”* (**John 5:26**) And again, *“In Him was life (zoe); and the life (zoe) was the light of men.”* (**John 1:4**) By His *zoe* life God imparts His very nature, essence, substance, and being into our human spirits! *Zoe*, then, means what we call eternal life, or God’s life, or divine life. This new kind of life is that which quickens the human spirit, awakening us and making us alive unto God! This has already happened in those who believe. This life effects great changes in our lives, transforms our minds, and raises up the image and likeness of God within us. Ultimately this is the heritage of every son of Adam! *“Therefore as by the offense of one (man) judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”* (**Rom. 5:18**) *“I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”* (**John 6:51**)

Only the life that is both divine and eternal can be counted as life, for every other kind of life ends in death. Only life which is immortal can be considered life, for that which is immortal is unchangeable; it remains the same and continues living even after passing through any kind of blow or destruction. A life which is subject to any change, weakness, or death is neither unchangeable, indestructible, immortal, nor eternal. Such cannot be considered life! Only that which is divine, the God quality of life, is truly life. Though a man might claim that he has put on immortality in his body and will never physically die, if his body is still capable of being splattered on the highway by a Mack truck, he obviously does not have life reigning in his body! Even Jesus could die physically, until He came forth in the power of resurrection in a body possessed by divine life. That divine body could pass through any kind of blow or destruction without being affected in any way. He could pass right through the wall, appear and disappear, and nothing could overcome Him. What does it mean to have life? It means to have God Himself! Life is a mighty power! We will know the full power of that life when we have come to live fully out of that life. This life is centered in the throne. The One in the throne is the LIVING ONE! How do we know this? *“...those living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to Him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever.”* (**Rev. 4:10**)

In the midst of the throne! The four “Living Creatures” are four manifestations of LIFE — the LIFE OF THE GOD OF THE THRONE! They are four representations of NATURE — the NATURE OF THE GOD IN THE THRONE! The four Living Creatures are four expressions of the POWER AND DOMINION OF THE THRONE! If you want to know what the God of the throne is like, then take a look at the four Living Creatures in the midst of the throne. In them is manifest the attributes of the life of the God of the throne. If you wish to know the nature of the authority, rule, and dominion of the throne, then understand the nature of the four Living Creatures in the midst of the throne; for these embody within themselves the character of the dominion of the God of the throne. Not only do they represent the life and nature of the God of the throne; not only do they express within themselves the character of the dominion of the throne — they likewise reveal the very life, nature, character, and dominion of A-L-L WHO SHARE THE THRONE!

This is the life of the throne! The throne means kingship! The One on the throne REIGNS! This is the glory of the sons of God who reign with Christ! This is the fourfold character of God revealed through the dominion of God from the throne. This is God’s identity through His kingdom administration in and through those who share His kingship, to reconcile and restore all things into God again. The four Living Creatures are the four faces of God revealed in His power, grace, wisdom, and exaltation. The four Living Creatures are the fourfold nature of God revealed in dominion. When the power, grace, wisdom, and exaltation of God have been raised up in that earth which you are, as it is in heaven, you will behold the four Living Creatures within yourself! Ah, precious friend of mine, if you have received the call of the overcomer to “sit with HIM in His throne,” then all that the four Living Creatures represent is even now being wrought out in your life, their nature becoming your nature, for naught but the nature of the Lamb and of the four Living Creatures can stand “in the midst of the throne.”

My spirit thrills with the harmonies of heaven as I contemplate these things and the glories typified by the four Living Creatures unfold within my spiritual understanding, for truly they reveal the nature of throneship, the realm of God’s omnipotent power and sovereign dominion. They bespeak the position and ministry of KINGSHIP. God REIGNS! The Lamb REIGNS! The four Living Creatures REIGN! The overcomers REIGN! The manchild REIGNS! All are IN THE THRONE! What else would you do in the throne? And if you would share that throne as a king in God’s kingdom, then the nature of God, which is the nature of the Lamb, which is the nature of the four Living Creatures, is now becoming your nature, too! *“And...the four Living Creatures and the four and twenty Elders...sung a new song, saying, Thou art worth to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God KINGS AND PRIESTS: and we shall reign on the earth.”* (Rev. 5:8-10) There we have the clearest possible identification of the four Living Creatures. They are God’s kings! They represent His kingship! They are they that reign! Not in heaven — on the earth! They are God’s government on earth!

Now let us consider for a moment the fact that these Living Creatures are four. When ancient man went outside of his home and looked about him, he had no conception of the modern world as we know it. No Copernicus had ever opened his eyes to the vast significance of the universe. To him the world was a great flat surface with four boundaries, east and west and north and south. There were four winds from the four sides of the earth. Thus, when he thought of the world he thought in terms of four. Four became the cosmic number. The world in which men lived and worked and died, was conveniently symbolized by four. There were four corners of the earth; four elements of earth, air, fire, and water; four seasons, and four phases of the moon; the great “World Powers” as revealed to the prophet Daniel were four in number: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Four is the number of all that is worldly, world-wide, or universal. Thus, the four Living Creatures in the midst of the throne, who reign on the earth, signify the world-wide, all-encompassing, and universal power and dominion of the life of God from His throne!

What power pertains to those who are seated with Christ in His throne! And you, dear called and chosen of the Lord, are seated with Christ in the highest of the heavens! You are not seated there to sing and shout and dance all over God’s heaven. Oh, no! You have been apprehended to His throne to rule, to reign over the earth! Simply speaking, to reign is to exercise authority for God — to rule all things. God’s one intention from the beginning has been that He may make man in His image and likeness and give him dominion — that he

may reign for Him in the universe. Although this matter of reigning will not be completely realized until the manifestation of the sons of God, yet today God wants it to have a beginning on earth. If any believer has not yet reached the degree of reigning for God, he has missed God's purpose in creating man. There must be such people prepared by God that through them the authority of God can be executed and the kingdom of God can come to pass upon earth.

The Lord says, *"Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall in any wise hurt you."* (Luke 10:19) True, the King James Bible states that Christ has given us "power" to tread on serpents and scorpions, but the Greek word is *exousia* meaning authority or jurisdiction. When Jesus speaks of the "power" of the enemy, however, He uses a different word, *dunamis*, meaning power. Our English words dynamite and dynamo come from that Greek word. Praise God, all that the adversaries of this present age have is POWER — but what the Lord gives us is AUTHORITY! This shows that authority is greater than power and can control power; therefore authority is over power. People talk about the power of the adversary; yes, the adversaries do have some power, but they have ABSOLUTELY NO AUTHORITY! The satanic realm has been stripped of all authority!

The Lord gives us authority in order to deal with all the power of the enemy. We may illustrate this by an automobile moving along the street. Although it has hundreds of horsepower under the hood, yet a traffic policeman has authority over it. When he blows his whistle the mighty engine must slow to a whisper and the car must stop. That is authority over power! Again, it is like an army. Although it has great power with its men, tanks, airplanes, guns, and bombs, yet the General has the authority. Nothing moves or does anything until he gives the order! He has authority over power! Authority is over power and controls power, therefore authority supersedes power. The Son of God who sits upon the throne has given us authority over all the power of the enemy! Rejoice ye kings and priests! You have authority to speak to the power of the adversary and that adversary must obey your word! You have authority to command every stratagem and work of the enemy, that its hold be broken. You have authority to speak life to men, situations, and nations. That is the wonder!

What a reign God shall bring forth through His king-priest company! Who shall banish cruel oppression? Who shall drive savage war with all its horrors, from the face of the earth? Who shall stay the ravages of famine, pestilence, and disease? Who shall free the sad world from murder, suicide, hatred, and crime? Who shall release the prisoners of sin and death, and wipe all tears from off all faces, that there be no more crying, neither sorrow, nor pain anywhere in God's beautiful earth? The moan of the world's agony comes to me as the surge of the sea upon a rocky shore. Alas, Lord! for the sorrow, bondage, sin, torment, and death which all our efforts cannot undo, and all our sympathy cannot banish. What can't Thou do for these, O Lord? And I hear the Lord's whisper from within my deepest spirit. "The sons of God are arising to set creation free. As the sons arise in the power of my peace — fear, hatred, and violence shall cease. As the sons arise in the authority of my victory — oppression and tyranny shall end. As the sons arise in the strength of my righteousness — the bondage of sin shall be broken and mankind released into my holiness. As the sons arise in the intelligence of my mind — ignorance and superstition shall surrender to my wisdom. As the sons arise in the quickening of my life — death's hold shall be broken and the way of life opened to all mankind. As the sons arise in the splendor of my light — the darkness shall flee away, the sorrowing shall be comforted, the meek exalted to reign, the broken-hearted healed, and the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Hallelujah!

The anointing of the sons of God shall be an anointing without measure, and the message of these sons shall be a message stripped of all the ineffectual absurdities that have been preached throughout the years. The sun is sinking in the western sky of this age of the "in part" measure of the candlestick realm. A new day is dawning for those who have received the call to "Come up hither" to the throne realm. And there shall be an exultant victory! For now the day is dawning when *"ALL nations shall come and worship before Thee."* (Rev. 15:4) *"And...all nations...shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to KEEP THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES."* (Zech. 14:16) It cannot be denied that throughout the church age all nations have never come up to worship the Lord. They don't today! Iraq doesn't come. Israel doesn't come. Saudi Arabia doesn't come. China doesn't come. Tibet doesn't come. And the list goes on and on. Furthermore, none can deny that throughout the church age those nations that have come to worship the Lord

have worshipped Him in the feasts of Passover and Pentecost. But there is a day, glorious day! when all nations shall know the Lord and feast with Him in the blessing and glory that flow from the FEAST OF TABERNACLES! Aren't you glad!

I have met men who professed that they had no desire, no ambition whatever, to rule and reign with Christ. It is enough, say they, to know that we are saved by grace and shall make heaven at last. In fact, I have been greatly criticized by some for my hope of inheriting the kingdom and sitting with Christ upon the throne of universal dominion. In the eyes of these accusers I am vain, conceited, self-righteous, presumptuous, heretical, and power-mad because I cherish the beautiful hope of sonship and rulership in the kingdom of God. I do not hesitate to tell you that it is none other than Christ Himself who has graciously bidden us to overcome and share with Him His authority over the nations and all things! He would both be king in us and exercise His regal power through us. Such high and holy purpose for those who go all the way with Him is merely the tangible expression of the approval of God, and we may no more deny Him the pleasure of fulfilling His purpose in us than we may renounce it once it is conferred. HE WHO DESPISES A THRONE DESPISES HIM WHO CONFERS THE THRONE. This was one of our Lord's rebukes to the Pharisees — *"The glory that cometh only from God ye seek not."* (John 4:44)

Throne-ship involves far more than mere power over men's lives and events. IT IS A MINISTRY AND AUTHORITY TO BLESS. I might add that it is the greatest ministry available with the largest capacity to bless. The purpose and scope of this kingship ministry is stated by the apostle Paul in these words, *"That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together into one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him."* (Eph. 1:10) We do not desire the throne for what we can get out of it, for our own fame and fortune, but for the infinite potential it holds for blessing and restoring creation. Today the world is full of broken hearts, the hospitals are crowded, the cemeteries are being filled, even nature itself is groaning. You go down to the seaside and you can hear the sob of the waves, you go to the mountains and you can hear the low sigh of the wind in the tree tops, you walk through the forest and you can hear the anguished shrieks of the animal kingdom. Creation is groaning, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God!

It is not more preachers we need. It is not more radio broadcasts or television programs. It is not more missions and missionaries. It is not more tracts or even Bibles. It is not more programs and crusades. It is not another revival. All we need is the cry of the groaning creation and the prayer of the travailing saint to be joined with the unutterable longings of the Holy Spirit, all crying in unison and harmony for the manifestation of the sons of God. Oh, how my heart cries for it! There is an elect people who, even as I pen these words, are being made participators in this grandest of all dramas of history. Their prayer, praise God, is soon to be answered!

Ah, my brother, my sister, do not sell creation short! Do not settle for less than God's best! All creation is standing on tiptoe, waiting and counting on you. If you love Israel; if you love the Chinese; if you love the Africans; if you love the Muslims; if you love all the nations and kindreds of the earth who know nothing of the Saviour; if you love the sad, the tormented, the impoverished, the deceived, the sick and the dying; if you love the multitudes held captive in the blindness and stupidity of religious systems; if you love the burdened brute creation; if you love the mountains, the trees, the rivers, and the oceans so mindlessly being destroyed under the hand of greed — you will joyfully welcome the hope of the manifestation of God in His sons; for it is the hope that shall bring to the groaning creation emancipation from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God; to Israel, her Messiah; to the heathen idolater, the knowledge of God; to the rebellious, correction; to the sick and dying, health and life incorruptible; to the bride, the presence of the bridegroom; to the captives of religious Babylon, the living reality of the Spirit and the Truth; to mute nature, blessed release from the cruelty of man and the blight of the curse.

One of the amazing features of human experience is man's capacity for ascent and descent. No creature of God throughout the vastnesses of infinity is capable of ascending to such heights and descending to such depths as is man. The carnal mind has never been endowed with the ability to measure the limits of man's upward reach, for *"the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto*

him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (I Cor. 2:14). Revelation, however, has given the spiritual man a vision of the possibility of his rise into dizzy heights of splendor and glory.

Man is not destined to ascend to heights angelic. Man is not programmed to become either angel or archangel. The man Christ Jesus is Himself the revelation of man's destiny and of Him it is written, *“Being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when He bringeth the firstbegotten into the world, He saith, Let all the angels of God worship Him! But to which of the angels said He at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool?” (Heb. 1:4-6, 13)*

“Now are we the sons of God and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but...we shall be like Him,” proclaims the Word of God. Divinity through sonship to God is the limit of man's ascent. He may be like the Son of God who is God, blessed forevermore. Sons of God must learn to think of themselves as a totally different sort of people. We are indeed a peculiar people, for we have been begotten again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead and have become new creatures in Christ Jesus, the very sons of very God. We have been lifted by Christ into a heavenly realm and all our behavior and ambitions have altered their course. So much are we become inhabitants of a new sphere that we discover that we are no longer citizens of this present evil world. We have acquired a new citizenship in a celestial realm, both experiencing and enjoying the rights of citizens of that higher world.

THE MULTITUDE “BEFORE” THE THRONE

“After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And one of the Elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? And whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation (pressure) and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth upon the throne shall dwell among them” (Rev. 7:9-10, 13-15)

This is the great company of the redeemed of all ages who wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. But note their location relative to the throne: “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude which no man could number... stood before the throne, and before the Lamb.” The Lamb is IN THE THRONE — REIGNING upon the throne! The four Living Creatures are IN THE THRONE — KINGS reigning with Christ! But the great multitude is not in the throne; it is “before” the throne. The great multitude is not “reigning” with Christ upon the throne; it is “serving” Him who sits upon the throne. These do not rule and reign as kings, but they are redeemed, washed in the blood of the Lamb! These have been delivered out of the sin and death and travail of this present evil age, and receiving the life, joy, and victory of Christ's redemption are now “servants” of God. These did not “grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head,” to become kings and priests upon the throne, but by His matchless grace they have become beloved children of God and serve Him in His temple “before” the throne — that is, in the Holy Place and the Outer Court. They are blessed indeed! *“He that sitteth upon the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore...for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” (Rev. 7:15-17)*

The imagery is drawn in allusion to the encampment of the children of Israel in the wilderness. God is represented as sitting upon His throne in the tabernacle of Moses, within the Most Holy Place, between the cherubim, upon the throne of mercy. There “before” His throne camped the tribes of Israel, three tribes on each side of the tabernacle, and He that sat upon the throne dwelt among them.

Israel is used in many instances to typify the church, the body of Christ. For instance, when they left Egyptian bondage, they were a type of God's children who hear His call to come out from the bestial spirit of this world and follow Him into His kingdom. But while Israel is thus and in other ways used to represent the body of

Christ, yet as we are now viewing it, in its relation to the tabernacle in the wilderness, it is a wholly different type. In this setting the whole of Israel lay totally outside of the tabernacle, outside of the place of sacrifice in the Outer Court, outside of the ministry of the priesthood in the house of God, outside of the presence and glory of God, separated by the white curtain of Christ's righteousness from all that lay within. Thus "the Camp" was separated from all holy things by the curtain of white linen surrounding the tabernacle, representing to those within a wall of righteousness by faith, but to those without a wall of unbelief which hindered their view of, and access to, the holy things within. Therefore Israel, in its relationship to the tabernacle, represents the whole world of mankind that is outside of Christ, excluded from His promises, separated from His presence, estranged from His life, barred from His glory, having no hope, and without God in the world.

The Outer Court of the tabernacle represents the condition of justification, entered through faith in Christ, the "gate." There was only one gateway into the Court, the type thus testifying that there is but one way of access unto God — one "gate" — Jesus! *"I am the way...no man cometh unto the Father but by me." "I am the door, by me if any man enter in he shall be saved."* (John 14:6; 10:9) It was at this gate that the sin-offering was slain, and it was on behalf of the whole Camp that the blood was sprinkled upon the mercy seat of God's throne in the Most Holy Place. The Camp of Israel represents, on one hand, the whole world of lost mankind and, on the other hand, the great multitude of the redeemed which no man can number that stands "before" the throne and "before" the Lamb, "serving" God.

Someone will surely inquire, "How can the same Camp represent both the lost world and the redeemed saints? The answer is very simple! We were all sinners before we became saints. J. Preston Eby was once a sinner; now he is redeemed: the same man, but transformed into a new state of being, with a new relationship to God. It is the blood of the Lamb that makes all the difference! *"To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."* (II Cor. 5:19) *"But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."* (Eph. 2:13)

To be continued...

J. Preston Eby

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 71
THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES AND THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS (Continued)
BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART SEVENTY-ONE

THE ORIGINAL TRUTH
THE ROYAL PRIESTHOOD

"And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold." (Rev. 4:4) "Twenty-four other thrones surrounded the throne and seated on these thrones were twenty-four Elders, arrayed in white clothing, with Crowns of Gold upon their heads." (Amplified Bible)

The Greek word for elders is *presbuteros*. By the way, the word "presbyterian" comes from that, and I am reminded of the story about the little girl who came home from her Presbyterian Sunday School, and her mother asked her what they had talked about. "We talked about heaven," the little girl replied. "Well, what did they say about it?" her mother asked. "The teacher said that there were only twenty-four Presbyterians there!" Seriously, elders were representatives. We know that Israel had elders and that elders were ordained in the early churches to rule and to represent the entire church.

The twenty-four Elders in the book of Revelation bear a special signification for they are represented as distinct from both the four Living Creatures "in the midst" of the throne and the great multitude "before" the throne. These Elders occupy a unique position described as "round about" the throne — yet UPON THRONES! In order to fully appreciate the scenery here drawn by the Spirit, we need to go back and examine one particular of the order established by God among the people of Israel after they came up out of the land of Egypt. It is important that we get a clear idea, not only of the structure of the tabernacle of Moses, but also of the arrangement of both the people and the priesthood in relation to it. On page two of this article I give you a diagram of that arrangement.

What do we see then? In the second chapter of Numbers we find the order given for the encampment of Israel as they journeyed through the wilderness. The camp of Israel as it was established in Sinai formed a hollow square. In the center of the hollow was the tabernacle of Moses. Around the tabernacle Israel was divided into four camps: one camp of three tribes on the east side, another camp of three tribes on the south side, another camp of three tribes on the west side, and the last camp of three tribes on the north side. There was to be one ensign for each camp of three tribes. Judah was to be the head tribe of the first encampment, and they were to camp *"on the east side toward the rising of the sun." (Num. 2:3-9)* The tribes of Issachar and Zebulun were to camp with Judah around his standard or ensign, which ensign was the lion. Therefore, the flag of the tribe of Judah with a lion of gold on a background of scarlet was erected in front of the camp of Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun.

Next in order was the camp of Reuben on the south side along with the tribes of Simeon and Gad. These three tribes were to camp around the ensign of Reuben, which ensign was the man. On this flag a man was represented against a background of gold. The third camp was made up of the tribes of Manasseh and Benjamin, with Ephraim as the head tribe to camp on the west side of the tabernacle. The ensign of the tribe of Ephraim was the ox. The flag of Ephraim had a black ox with a background of gold. The final camp was the camp of Dan together with the tribes of Asher and Naphtali. History shows that the ensign of the tribe of Dan was the eagle. This flag had an eagle of gold on a background of blue.

The tabernacle with its courts set "in the midst" of so many thousands of saved and happy Israel, must have been an imposing sight — an all-absorbing scene of wonder to the whole nation, as well as to each one of the mighty host. In this arrangement we see the same typical picture, under different symbols, as that presented to us in chapters four and five of the Revelation. The Most Holy Place was the abode of the God of Israel

among His people. When the tabernacle was set up as described in Exodus chapter forty, then the Shekinah, the Cloud of God's Glorious Presence, covered the whole tabernacle, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. It is interesting to observe that while the Cloud of God's Glory rested upon the entire tabernacle complex, the glory of the Lord also "filled the tabernacle," thus designating the Most Holy Place as the dwelling place or the tabernacle of God.

Later God said to Moses, *"Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the Most Holy Place within the veil before the mercy seat... that he die not: for I WILL APPEAR IN THE CLOUD UPON THE MERCY SEAT."* (Lev. 16:2) Isaiah testified, *"O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, that DWELLEST BETWEEN THE CHERUBIM, Thou art God."* (Isa. 37:16) God was in the cloud, He appeared in the cloud, He spoke out of the cloud, He led Israel by the cloud, and in the cloud He dwelt in the Most Holy Place, over the ark with its mercy-seat or throne of grace. The tabernacle, and especially the throne upon the Ark, was in very fact GOD'S THRONE among Israel from which, by His word and His power, He ruled over them!

The "Mercy-Seat" was a slab of solid gold, in fact a lid, with cherubim, one at each end facing each other, all made of one piece. The tables of the law of Yahweh were to be put in the Ark and the Mercy-Seat placed above it. The mercy-seat, or Throne, was to be put upon the Ark of the Covenant within the veil, in the Most Holy Place. That was the only piece of furniture in the Most Holy Place. It was indeed the THRONE ROOM! It was there, upon the mercy-seat, that the glory of the God of Israel dwelt, and from there God communed with His people and set judgment and mercy in the midst. *"And thou shalt put the mercy-seat above the Ark...and there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat..."* (Exod. 25:21-22) *"Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel... Thou that dwellest between the cherubim, shine forth."* (Psa. 80:1)

The covering of the Ark of the Covenant was the place of the judgment-of-mercy for Israel's sins. It was the Judgment Throne of the Invisible One, Israel's King. It was the Throne of Mercy! Everything in the law of Moses centered in that Mercy-Throne. All the sacrifices had to do with that Mercy-Throne within the veil. All the shedding of blood of offerings had to do with that one chief sprinkling of blood upon the Mercy-Throne. The Mercy-Throne was, in the arrangement of things, the center of all! The tabernacle was in the center of the camp. The Most Holy Place was in the center of the white linen curtains or outer wall which marked off the tabernacle territory. The Mercy-Throne was in the center of the Most Holy Place. So the Mercy-Throne was in the center — or midst — of everything! The Mercy-Throne was what the Most Holy Place was made for! The mercy-seat, as the King James Bible calls it, was not a "seat" as we know a seat; the old English word means the "origin" or "center," just as when you speak of the "seat of pain" or the "seat of government" as the point of origin of it. The mercy-seat was the place where MERCY ORIGINATED! This is the description of something supreme — M-E-R-C-Y! The writer to the Hebrews calls it "the throne of grace."

The mercy-seat is an absolute picture of Jesus Christ. There was no wood in it at all. It was made of pure gold. It speaks of God and all that is the nature of God as revealed in Christ. [The word for mercy-seat in the Greek language is hilasterion.](#) In the New Testament there are only four verses that use this word, as follows: *"And over it the cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy seat."* (Heb. 9:5) *"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past."* (Rom. 3:25) *"God... sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."* (I John 4:10) *"And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."* (I John 2:2)

[From these four verses you will see that the Greek word hilasterion has been translated both as mercy seat and propitiation.](#) Christ, we are told, is the propitiation for our sins. But the word is MERCY SEAT! It simply means that Jesus Christ BECAME OUR MERCY SEAT, He became the origin or center of God's mercy and goodness toward us, and it is He from whom that mercy originates! So now, blessed be God! We have a faithful and merciful high priest who is also the seat, the center, the origin, and the powerful throne of EVERLASTING AND INFINITE MERCY! I do not hesitate to tell you that God is not dismantling His Mercy Throne, He is not evacuating His body off of this planet, He is not taking His Holy Spirit out of the earth, the day of grace is not, as the preachers so ridiculously proclaim, about to end; indeed, it is barely beginning! God is even now forming a body, a son company, kings and priests after the order of Melchizedek, to display and reveal His mercy and power unto creation throughout the age and the ages to come, making all things new. Therefore, though we have but tasted of His mercies, through vast ages yet unborn He will continue to unfold

the riches of His grace, manifesting it through His vessels of mercy, until the fullness thereof is revealed, and God becomes, finally, ALL-IN-ALL!

The Most Holy Place is, then, an earthly picture of the throne of God — the realm of God's manifestation in power and dominion. The Most Holy Place prefigured Christ the King together with all those holy sons of God who reign with Him in the authority of the Spirit. It is the glory of KINGSHIP! Armed with the understanding that the tabernacle constituted God's throne among His people, let us remember that there is "before" that throne a "great multitude" of people receiving the blessings and benefits of His kingdom ministered through the typical sacrifices and ministrations of the temple service and the priesthood. As you will note in the diagram, the arrangement of the tabernacle, the priesthood, and the camp of Israel in three distinct divisions (tabernacle, priesthood, camp of Israel), sets forth the three-fold economy of God in His redemptive and restorative processes.

The tabernacle is the dwelling place of God — His throne, His sphere of activity, the center of His power, glory, and goodness. The camp of Israel, the great multitude "before" the throne, is the whole world of mankind outside of God, estranged from His life, yet redeemed, blessed, and brought nigh. But there is a third company — the CAMP OF THE PRIESTS — situated, as it were, "round about the throne," directly between the "throne" and the "great multitude"! The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, *"The Israelites shall encamp each by his own tribal standard or banner, with the ensign of their fathers' houses, opposite the tent of meeting (tabernacle) and facing it on every side. Then the tent of meeting (tabernacle) shall set out, with the CAMP OF THE LEVITES IN THE MIDST OF THE CAMPS. (Num. 2:2, 17)* The tribe of Levi was not counted among the tribes of Israel, therefore they were not camped with the other tribes, for they were the Lord's priests, ordained to be camped in the center of the encampment near the tabernacle. Divine infinite purpose lies behind this whole arrangement and the moment the wonderful significance of this dawns upon our spiritual understanding, we see that God has placed a PRIESTHOOD COMPANY between Himself and the world of mankind!

A priest or priesthood infers that there is a reason why such has been raised up by God. It denotes that there has been in the minds of men an estrangement between God and His creatures and the priest ministers to bridge that gulf and bring about peace and at-one-ment. Deep in the heart of every man there is a strong and instinctive demand for a priest, to be a mediator, to lay one hand on man, and the other on God, and standing between both to bring the two together into unification. [Webster's dictionary defines priest as: A mediatory agent between God and man. In the Old Testament the word priest is translated from the Hebrew word cohen, the root meaning of which is "one who stands up and draws nigh for another." The Greek word, in its root, means "to minister."](#) Thus, a priest is one who draws nigh and ministers in two directions — drawing nigh to God on behalf of the people and drawing nigh to the people on behalf of God! The priest stands between. The ministry of the priest is an intermediate or go-between ministry. He reaches forth with one hand and takes hold of God; he reaches out with the other hand and takes hold of humanity; and brings the two together by the power of his priestly ministration. Can we not see that this is the very reason God placed the priesthood of Israel in an encampment directly between the tabernacle throne and the great multitude of the people. That is the picture! Most people miss this great truth, and I don't remember ever seeing a drawing of the tabernacle and the camp of Israel in the wilderness with the tribe of Levi correctly positioned in the open area of the hollow square between the tabernacle and the camps of the tribes. It is abundantly evident that they correspond precisely to the twenty-four Elders that John beheld "round about the throne." Isn't it wonderful!

THE ORIGINAL TRUTH

In the book of Hebrews we read that our great High Priest, even Jesus, is set on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens where He is minister of the sanctuary, the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man (Heb. 8:1-2). In ancient times there was in every temple a god, an unseen god, among the pagans an idol god, concealed in the Holy of holies, to whom the temple was devoted. Religion is as old as the human race and religious systems and observances pre-date the oldest empires of antiquity such as the empires of Sumer, Egypt, and Babylon. As these religions spread over the world they developed into an expression in all lands and kingdoms with only a slight change in the names of the gods and slight variations in the rituals. The almost identical knowledge, stories, myths, gods, temples, priesthoods, sacrifices, and belief systems and observances of all kinds had their origins very early in human history. The question is, of course, where did all

this come from? Was religion merely an “invention” of superstitious savages, or did it originate somehow as an integral part of man’s constitution, revelation, and experience from his very beginning?

The evidence certainly suggests that religion had its origin from the dawn of history. Every religion shared similar characteristics — even among the indigenous cultures of the Americas. The Mayan temples of Central America and the Aztec temples of South America were constructed, even to their “holy of holies,” along lines similar to those in Egypt and elsewhere. The evidence points to the fact that behind them all there was some ancient historical reality. There are no traces of evolution from simple to sophisticated. All theological systems stemmed from some common but exceedingly ancient source. This raises the question — what was that common but exceedingly ancient source? The evidence unquestionably points to some meaningful design right from the earliest time of man’s appearance upon earth. This type of uniformity suggests a guiding hand at work. Oh, yes! There is the same supernatural design throughout practically all the ancient religious systems — God, temple worship, sacrifice, priesthood, after-life, redemption, eternal life, resurrection, judgment, etc. Design from the beginning!

The Bible affirms that the worship of God originated with an original truth revealed to man by His Creator. Adam and Eve stepped forth from the garden with this original truth implanted firmly in their hearts. They knew of the tree of life, which was Christ as life. *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. In Him was life; and the life was the light (illumination, inspiration, revelation) of men.”* **(John 1:1, 4)** They experienced the presence of God and the glory of God, for the Lord God Himself walked with them in the Garden in the cool (Hebrew: spirit) of the day. They knew what it was to walk in the Spirit! They conversed with God and understood His will, His word, and His ways. The only government they knew was the life, spirit, and word of God! But then they came to know the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which indicates a living after human reasoning and law, instead of life. They knew about sin and death, for they both sinned and died. They understood conscience, for after partaking of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil they perceived that they were naked and were ashamed, hiding from God because of their shame. They tried the impotent route of religion by works, symbolized by them sewing their own flimsy aprons of fig leaves in a futile effort to cover their shame. They received the divine revelation of redemption by sacrifice, for God Himself slew a lamb (the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world!) and with it covered their nakedness. To be naked means to have your flesh exposed, that is your own carnal mind, will, and nature revealed for what it is, and this was covered by the life of the Lamb! They thus received the revelation of being clothed in the righteousness of Christ! They had the promise of a redeemer, and a restoration to life and glory. They were instructed that this redeemer would be known as “the seed of the woman” a manchild, Christ, Head and body, and that He would bruise the serpent’s head. They had been introduced to the “god of this world,” the serpent, who cunningly allured them into the living out of the natural intellect, reason, human conscience, and man’s own perverted sense of man-made law, instead of out of the living Spirit of Christ as Life. Let us now acquaint ourselves with the following important fact: All the so-called wisdom of this present world, yes, all the vaunted wisdom of the worlds of science, philosophy, education, politics, government, psychology, astrology, economics, religion, and a thousand more things that shape our world systems are one and all brought forth out of the illumination of the serpent-mind. For this reason we are admonished, *“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”* **(I John 2:15-17)** In that long ago beginning our first parents were given the promise of redemption, reconciliation, and restoration of all things to God! They saw afar off their regained dominion by the wisdom, spirit, and power of God. Their first offspring knew about worship, sacrifice, offering, redemption, and living in the presence of God, and by the revelation of God, for Cain and Able brought their sacrifices out of a knowledge of the plan and purpose of God. But what happened was that as man moved farther and farther from Eden and the presence, life, and glory of God, that original truth was passed through the polluted corridors of time and human nature, becoming distorted, contorted, embellished, misconstrued, disfigured, and mutilated. This is what the scriptures call apostasy!

We see examples of what apostasy does to an original truth in our own age, the church age. Jesus and His apostles came and brought an original truth — redemption and transformation of mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and the power of His kingdom in and by the Spirit. Now

consider what happened to that original truth as it was filtered through time and human imagination! Look at the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and other ancient disciplines with their cathedrals, priests, vestments, traditions, holy water, candles, incense, altars, statues, icons, shrines, holy relics, ceremonies, confessionals, rituals, masses, rules, celibacy, monastic orders, and on and on. Do any of these even faintly resemble the original truth and the power and glory and experience of the early church? Not at all! The church world today is but a grotesque caricature of the gospel of Jesus! Yet — the essence of that original truth is still present on some level in all of them! They all acknowledge that Jesus is the Son of God who came and died for the salvation of mankind! And all their carnal-minded procedures seek in some way to illustrate that truth.

What I am saying is that the similarities in all ancient religions reveal an original truth from which they stemmed — God, worship, temples, priesthoods, altars, sacrifices, forgiveness, prayers, salvation, resurrection, eternal life, judgment, future life, paradise — all of this and more, though convoluted, twisted, distorted, misfigured, embellished, and even demonized — still reflected something of that original truth! What becomes evident is that the Sumerians did one thing with that original truth, the Babylonians did another, the Egyptians another, and so on through all the pagan systems. All had temples, priests, altars, incense, sacrifices, gods, saviours, worship, prayers, etc. In the most powerful and enduring myths that man inherited from his beginning, the human race had retained a confused and perverted memory of the original truth.

Some years ago Lorain and I were privileged to take a tour of Egypt. At the many temples of Egypt I stood in several “Holy of holies” including the one in the temple of Luxor. There is no denying that Moses’ tabernacle in the wilderness was fashioned somewhat after the model of the temples in Egypt. The Egyptian temples each had their “Holy of holies” in which the only item present was the idol god. Superficial thinking might reason and conclude that since Moses was from Egypt, and learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, he simply modeled his tabernacle after the order of the Egyptian temples. But such reasoning misses the point altogether! All the ancient temples reflected the original truth of God tabernacling among men. Therefore, that Moses’ tabernacle would be similar should be self-evident! It would have been a blunder and an absurdity of momentous proportions if his tabernacle would have been completely different. Here is what happened. Religion, from the time Adam and Eve left the garden, had been on a steady decline, apostatizing into wretched forms and gross misrepresentations of the original truth. False and hideous portrayals of God sat in their temples — grotesque idols of imaginary beings and animal gods. In the land of Egypt this pagan stupidity had sunk as low as man’s serpent-inspired imagination could carry it.

Oh that the darkening veils of ignorance might be torn from our minds that we might see that just at that point in history GOD GLORIOUSLY INTERVENED! The great difference between Moses’ tabernacle and the Egyptian temples was just this — the Holy of holies of Moses’ tabernacle, for the first time since its type in Eden and its archetype in the heavenlies of God’s Spirit, now held THE LIVING PRESENCE, GLORY, AND POWER OF THE TRUE AND LIVING GOD — not an idol! The bottom had been reached, religion had sunk as low as it could go, the point of return had arrived, and the ascendancy of the original truth back to its purity, fulfillment, and consummation had begun! The Exodus and Moses’ tabernacle was the turning point for God’s purpose among men in the history of the human race! That, precious friend of mine, is historical fact. God manifested Himself as a living reality in the midst of His called and chosen people there in the wilderness and eventually in the temple of Solomon in Jerusalem. And now — isn’t it interesting that temple worship survived only until Jesus came!

The ascendancy of the original truth came about this way. God manifested His presence and power in the midst of His people in Moses’ tabernacle. He established His throne there in the midst of Israel. Later His presence, power, and rule in the midst of His people was intensified when Israel possessed their land, through the prophets, judges, kings, and the temple of Solomon. Then the presence, power, and rule of God was intensified again even more as out of that nation God came in Jesus Christ and tabernacled among men! The ascendancy of the original truth reached a higher level yet when on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was outpoured from on high and God came and dwelt and walked and talked in men. Is it not significant that within that very same generation when the true tabernacle, the body of Christ, was raised up in the earth, the Jewish temple was violently and completely destroyed, never to rise again! And within a few generations all the temples of the ancient gods would stand empty and silent. The turning point came with the tabernacle of Moses! There is no idol god in the temple of Luxor today — only because Moses came on the scene by the

intervention of God to change the course of human history, beginning the ascendance of the original truth revealed in Eden, and the eventual consummation of God's purpose in man. THIS IS THE TRUE MEANING OF HISTORY.

All God's holy prophets since the world began prophesied that the coming One, the redeemer of the world, would banish all the gods of the nations, that He was the hope of all creation, that all nations would come and worship before Him, that all things and all men would be reconciled unto Him, and that all principalities and powers would be made subject to Him. Oh, yes! And history clearly records that in relation to all the mystery religions and the ancient gods of all the great empires of antiquity, THESE PROPHECIES WERE EXPLICITLY FULFILLED IN JESUS CHRIST! Of all the religions of earth only Jesus triumphed over the ancient gods! There are no temples or altars to Zeus today, nor to Athena, nor to Baal, nor to Diana, nor to any other of the ancient gods and goddesses. And He triumphed not only because those gods, by man's imagination and manipulation, had become false gods, perverted representations of the original truth, but truly because HE BECAME AT LAST THE VERY EMBODIMENT AND FULFILLMENT OF THAT ORIGINAL TRUTH SO FAINTLY SHADOWED IN THEM! Jesus appeared right on schedule, by divine destiny, and accomplished all that the prophets had foretold and that the myths of all religions pointed to! Thus He is the fulfillment not only of all the types and shadows of the Old Testament, but even of the figures still set forth in all the pagan religions of antiquity! Oh, the wonder of it!

THE ROYAL PRIESTHOOD

Let us return now to the encampment of Israel in the wilderness. In every temple there was a priest, the priest of that temple, who was to receive the petitions and the sacrifices of the worshipper and to get the answer back from God. So it was with Aaron in the Old Testament. It was said of him and of the priesthood of Israel, "They shall stand in my presence to minister," and "they shall go out and bless in my name." This great truth reveals why God placed the camp of the priests directly between Himself and the people of Israel. It should be clear to any thinking mind that the priesthood camped "round about" the tabernacle-throne corresponds precisely to the twenty-four Elders seated "round about" the throne in Revelation chapter four!

I would remind the reader of the account in I Chronicles chapter twenty-four of how, under king David, the Levitical priesthood was divided into TWENTY-FOUR COURSES under the headship of TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS! The twenty-four courses or orders of the priesthood were chosen by families — according to the twenty-four grandsons of Aaron the high priest. Each course was named for one of these twenty-four grandsons and the male descendants of each grandson constituted one of the twenty-four courses throughout their generations. We are inclined to lightly pass over many profound statements of Holy Scripture. The priesthood was divided into twenty-four orders for this stated purpose: *"This was their order for coming on duty to serve in the house of the Lord, according to the procedure ordered for them by their grandfather Aaron, as the Lord God of Israel had commanded him"* (I Chron. 24:19, Amplified)

The priesthood numbered, in the time of David, some 18,000 who lived in the countryside of Galilee and Judea. Of course, all those priests could not go into the temple at one time, so they were divided into courses and assigned to work shifts, each "course" of priests and Levites came on duty for a week, from one Sabbath to another. When a "course" was on duty, all its members were bound to appear in the temple, and the service of the week was subdivided among the various families which constituted a "course." This order continued until Jesus came. We read about Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, in these words, *"There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth."* (Luke 1:5). The point I wish to emphasize here is this: It took all twenty-four courses to MAKE UP THE ENTIRE PRIESTHOOD OF GOD! As the Father unfolds these truths to the inner man, we become convinced that as the four Living Creatures "in the midst of the throne" reveal the glory of KINGSHIP, so the twenty-four Elders "round about the throne" reveal the glory of PRIESTHOOD. KINGS AND PRIESTS! A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS! PRIESTS THAT SIT UPON THRONES! REIGNING PRIESTS!

This is the great truth revealed in the four Living Creatures and the twenty-four Elders. John the Revelator summed up in three short verses the wonderful truth of which I now write: *"And when He had taken the book,*

the four Living Creatures and the four and twenty Elders fell down before the Lamb, every one of them having harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints. And they (the four Living Creatures and the twenty-four Elders) sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.” (Rev. 5:8-9) That is the mystery!

The twenty-four Elders represent the whole priesthood of God, of which Jesus is the Head, our great High Priest. The priesthood of God ministers from the Holiest of all, from the Mercy-Throne in the heart of the Father. It is written of our Lord Jesus Christ, *“Forasmuch then as the children (of God) are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same. For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a MERCIFUL AND FAITHFUL HIGH PRIEST in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.” (Heb. 2:14-18)* When the Word of God consented to be made flesh, to strip Himself of the glory He had before the world was, and become a man, a human being, to live among the vileness of the sinful, rebellious, and dying, to be touched by the same infirmities, weaknesses, and feelings that touch us, to suffer being tempted in all points like as we are, to be rejected and suffer the agony of false accusation and the humiliation of ridicule, the pain of the stripes received from the Roman lashes, and the trauma of the cross itself — why did He submit to all this? The stock answer is that He had to become a man and suffer and die in order to purchase our redemption. That is true! That is certainly part of the reason He became a man, but only part of it; there is much more to the reason He became a man, much more!

In the passage quoted above we see that Jesus became a man and suffered all that mankind suffers, not merely to die on the cross for our sins, for He could have died without all the lifetime of suffering, pain, temptation, sorrow, weakness, rejection, and infirmity. He suffered so that after having redeemed us to God He might become a High Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, a faithful High Priest and a MERCIFUL HIGH PRIEST. Ah, Jesus could be the eternal King without having been so completely compassed about with infirmity. But He could never be a Merciful High Priest without it! He might have been perfect in character and desirous to help us; but, if He had never tasted death, how could He allay our fears as we walk through the dreadful quagmire of this death realm? If He had never been sorely tempted, if He had never encountered the allurements of the flesh and the almost irresistible drawing power of sin and the world, how could He succor those who are tempted? If He had never wept, how could He soothe and dry our tears? If He had never suffered, hungered, wearied on the hill of difficulty, or threaded His way through the swamplands of grief, how could He be a merciful and faithful High Priest, full of understanding, compassion, and kindness?

My purpose in writing of these mysteries is that all who read might see that the nature of the firstborn Son of God, the High Priest of our Profession, must be the nature of every member of the house of sons who are also the body of the High Priest — the Priests and the Priesthood of the most high God! This company of priests, reigning priests, are the twenty-four Elders “round about” the throne! *“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.” “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and...they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.” (Rev. 20:4, 6)*

The wonderful book of Hebrews is literally packed full of mysteries, types, shadows, and allegories, all pointing to the ministry of the sons of God who are God’s Royal (Kingly) Priesthood. These are only unfolded by the Spirit as we are able to bear it. Hebrews chapter five sets forth the qualifications of that typical High Priest under the law, and therefore the qualifications that Christ Jesus, the anti-typical High Priest of the new order of the Kingdom, must possess. All the members of the Royal Priesthood, the Kings and Priests of the Kingdom who are, with Him, “partakers of the heavenly calling,” must also have the same qualifications, for they are the body of the High Priest.

“For every High Priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way, for that he himself is compassed about with infirmity.” (Heb. 5:1-2) Here we have defined the intrinsic nature of the priestly office! *First, he must be “taken from among men,” that is, he must partake of both the*

nature and circumstances of those on whose behalf he acts. Second, he acts not as a private individual, but as a public official: “is ordained for men.” Third, he came not empty-handed before God, but furnished with “gifts and sacrifices for sins (errors, missing the mark).” Finally, he himself must not be exempt from infirmity, so that he might the more readily succor the distressed and distraught.

All this is important for it points to Jesus’ qualifications to be our great High Priest, the Head of the priesthood company. A High Priest must know and experientially understand the problems and limitations of those he represents. “Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.” On three different occasions Matthew tells us that our Lord was “moved with compassion” on the multitudes. Frankly, when you read the Gospels you read of Jesus doing miracles, healings, mighty signs and wonders; but Jesus never went around looking for a miracle to perform! HE WENT ABOUT DOING THE FATHER’S WILL. The Father brought Him to a place where His heart could be moved with compassion. It was not a gift of compassion that that came to Him by a spiritual experience; it was the compassion wrought out in His life by His many sorrows, sufferings, and testings. He had suffered loss, He had suffered pain, He had suffered reproach. Coming to a town He sees a funeral procession and as a Son, having suffered the loss of Joseph and friends and family members, and shared in the sorrow of His mother at the loss, thereby developing the nature of a priest, He is filled with compassion when he sees the widow and her dead son. There was no Social Security in those days, and the boy was the only person to look after the widow, so He stops the procession, raises the boy, hands him over to the mother, and goes about the Father’s business. I find that the basis of Jesus’ sonship ministry was not power — IT WAS COMPASSION!

When He saw the multitude He was moved with compassion. They were hungry, and He had known gnawing hunger, so He said, “Let us feed them.” When He met the leper He was moved with compassion, for He had experienced pain and shame, and He laid His hands upon him and healed him. He could have spoken a word to heal him, but the man needed the touch of somebody’s hand on him, he had been separated from people so long, he needed more than to be healed from his leprosy, he needed the sense of the hand of God upon him. When Jesus looked upon the careworn faces of the toiling, tax-ridden multitudes — taxed by cruel priests; taxed by Herod; taxed by Pilate; taxed by their own sins and sorrows; wearily burdened, wounded at heart, and heavy laden — He was not looking for a chance to show off His power — He was moved with compassion.

“Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; FOR THAT HE HIMSELF ALSO IS COMPASSED ABOUT WITH INFIRMITY.” Ah, the condition which develops compassion in us, is that we ourselves get compassed — surrounded, hedged in — by the problems, the difficulties, the needs that are going to be represented in the people to whom we minister. So many of us are intolerant in certain areas of our lives because we have not gone through the pressure, we have not been drawn by that insidious temptation, we have not been compassed by that particular infirmity, weakness, sorrow, or need. Priesthood demands suffering, trial, testing, tribulation, and pressure. Sonship demands relationship with God. He sends the spirit of the Son into our hearts and we cry, “Abba, Father!” Now God intends that all of us who have been called should be sons of God, and that all of us should be a Kingdom of Priests, a Royal Priesthood unto God. But you may be a son and still not be a priest!

John the Revelator said, *“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them... and they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.”* Here you see that it is not the sons who are reigning — it is the PRIESTS! What about the sons? *“He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.”* The sons inherit, for they are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17). Who, then, is destined to reign? THE SONS WHO ARE PRIESTS! Christ was a Son before He was a Priest. He was not a Priest during His years in the flesh, although He was qualifying to be one, but He was a Son. Christ in His ministry from the heavens today is not merely the Son of God. As a Son He is “heir of all things.” But to become the great High Priest and provide the priestly ministry on our behalf the Son had, as a Son, to go through the experience that was necessary to perfect Him for the understanding heart of the Priesthood. *“We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; BUT WAS IN ALL POINTS TEMPTED LIKE AS WE ARE...” (Heb. 4:15) “Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect (for the Priesthood), He became...AN HIGH PRIEST AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK.” (Heb. 5:8-10)* Ah, Jesus could

have been a son without being so totally compassed with infirmity, BUT HE COULD NEVER HAVE BEEN A PRIEST WITHOUT IT!

There have been those precious folk who have said to me, "Brother Eby, I don't understand. Since I came into this kingdom message things have gotten worse — all hell has broken loose." That is just what you need — IF YOU WOULD BE A PRIEST! Have you not known some beautiful saints to whom you naturally betake yourself in time of trial and sorrow? They always seem to speak the right word, to give the very counsel you are longing for; you do not realize, however, the cost they have had to pay ere they became so skillful in binding up gaping wounds and drying tears. But if you were to investigate their past you would find that they have suffered more than most. They have watched the slow untwisting of some silver cord on which the lamp of life hung. They have seen the golden bowl of joy dashed at their feet, and its contents spilt. They have stood by ebbing tides, and drooping flowers, and darkened skies; but all this has been necessary to make them comforters and healers, the priests of men. The reason our blessed Lord is touched with the feeling of our infirmities is that He knoweth our frame. He remembereth that we are dust. He knows this not by revelation or by divine omniscience, but He Himself was a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Aren't you glad!

Merciful priests! The priestly heart is above all things a caring, sympathetic, compassionate, merciful heart in which the love of Christ constrains us to express His goodness unto men. The Bible-waving preacher on the street corner, screaming at the passersby that they must repent or burn in hell, knows nothing at all about being a priest of God. If a vicious serial killer is caught and put to death, or some homosexual activist is murdered or dies of aids, there is that deceitful self-righteous spirit within us which silently judges, saying, "Good...there is one less murderer and one less pervert in the world." As righteously moral as that appears, I tell you earnestly that it is not the Spirit of God, and it is not the judgment of a Priest of God! A priestly heart! Oh, Spirit of God, write upon my heart with indelible letters the merciful heart of my High Priest!

It is my deep conviction that it is more important to express the tender, forgiving, compassionate nature of Christ in meeting a person's need, than in witnessing to people about the "plan of salvation." Christians have become so conditioned to the idea that they aren't "doing anything for God" unless they go out and witness, skillfully using the sword of the word of God. But, my precious brother, my dear sister, when you are unconditionally loving and merciful and encourage and speak life to people in their desperate need, you become a living word to them that says, "I care and God cares for you!" Jesus said that He did not come into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. Priests are not condemners; priests are saviours! Jesus speaks His word through us in actions, we become a word that is alive to men, not a dead doctrinal word, or religious word, but a Living Word. This is a life to be lived, as Jesus did, and it is more important than quoting scripture, witnessing, teaching or preaching. Instead of witnessing, we BECOME THE WITNESS of what our Father is really like.

Those who are called to the high calling of sonship to God are the kings and priests who shall reign on the earth and restore all things back into God again. There is both a Godward and a manward work in redemption, reconciliation, and restoration. As I mentioned earlier, there was this Godward and manward ministry expressed through the priesthood of Aaron in the tabernacle in the wilderness. It is written of him and the priests of Israel, "They shall stand in my presence to minister," and "they shall go out and bless in my name." And so our great High Priest, Jesus, stands in the heavens of God's Spirit as the "minister of the sanctuary," as the priest of the tabernacle which the Lord has pitched, and not man, and He ministers in this dual way. He both carries us to the Father and brings the Father into us. In and by His blood He Himself brings us nigh to God. But He does more! Without interruption there flows back from the Father to the Son, in whom He delights, a stream of blessing to impart to His people on earth. And in Him, the entire priesthood, the body of the High Priest, so ministers both unto God and unto men. Anything short of this is not priesthood!

The High Priest was thus the mediator between God and the people. He carried into the presence of God the sins and needs of the people, and carried the people in him. The people drew nigh to God in the person of the High Priest, identified in him as he entered into the Holiest of all by the blood. He obtained from God the power to declare remission of sin and the right of blessing the people. Then when the High Priest came out of the Most Holy Place, God drew nigh unto the people in the person of the High Priest. Oh, we see it so clearly

in these instructive words, *“And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and BLESSED THE PEOPLE: and THE GLORY OF THE LORD APPEARED UNTO ALL THE PEOPLE.”* (Lev. 9:23) The service of the priesthood is thus clear, FIRST TO MINISTER TO THE LORD, then to stand between the Creator and His creation, to minister the life of Christ to those who sit in darkness, in the region of the shadow of death, until all are fully reconciled to God again, and behold the glory of the Lord! The body of Christ, like its glorious Head, is a kingdom of priests, a people for a purpose.

I cannot emphasize too strongly the important truth that all priesthood has a double outreach — ministry to both God and man. Notice how Jesus often spent the whole night in prayer communing with the Father; then He came down from the mountain, from the high place in the Spirit, to touch and bless and deliver the multitudes of the helpless and needy. It could not be otherwise, for a priest is one who “stands between” the throne and the great multitude, and the moment a priest ceases to touch both God and man, unifying the two, he simply ceases to be a priest. He may be a worshipper who speaks to God, or a king who rules for God, or a prophet who speaks on behalf of God, but no man can have a one-sided ministry and be a priest! The priest ministers unto God on behalf of men and unto men on behalf of God. The priest touches God with one hand and mankind with the other hand, bringing the two together by his priestly ministrations. That is priesthood! Anything less or different than this is not priesthood at all.

Let us then stand assured of this marvelous truth: the four Living Creatures represent kingship, for they dwell in the midst of the throne. The twenty-four Elders reveal within themselves the ministry of priesthood, for they are round about the throne, standing between the God of the throne and the vast multitude “before” the throne. These are not two separate companies; these are rather two aspects of ministry that have their source and power in the throne. This is the KING-PRIEST MINISTRY OF THE MANIFEST SONS OF GOD! These are all sons of God in the power and outflow of life and glory from the throne. God is raising up within each of His called and chosen elect the spirit and nature of sonship, the spirit and nature of kingship, and the spirit and nature of priesthood. These are the realities John saw in the throne room! Oh, the mystery of it!

To be continued...

J. Preston Eby

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 72
THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES AND THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS (Continued)
BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART SEVENTY-TWO

PARTAKERS TO THE HEAVENLY CALLING
THE HIGH PRIEST AND THE PRIESTS
CROWN OF GOLD
THUNDERINGS, LIGHTENING AND VOICES
THE SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD

"And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold...and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind." (Rev. 4:4-6)

The word "beasts" is an unfortunate translation, being necessarily associated in our minds with the brute creation and that which is typified thereby. Beasts in this passage is translated from the Greek word *zoon* which signifies simply a "living creature". It comes from the root *zao* from which also is derived the word *zoe* which is used always in reference to divine life or the life of the ages. All of these words denote that which is alive or is lively! How significant, then, that these four creatures of life are found "in the midst of the throne" and "round about the throne," occupying the central position in the throne while emanating in glory and power out from the throne!

In the midst of the throne! The four "Living Creatures" are, then, four manifestations of LIFE — the LIFE OF THE GOD OF THE THRONE! They are four representations of NATURE — the NATURE OF THE GOD OF THE THRONE! The four Living Creatures are four expressions of THE POWER AND DOMINION OF THE THRONE! Not only do they represent the life and nature of the God of the throne; not only do they express within themselves the character of the dominion of the throne — they likewise reveal the very life, nature, character, and dominion of A-L-L WHO SHARE THE THRONE! The throne means kingship! The One on the throne REIGNS! This is the glory of the sons of God who reign with Christ!

The twenty-four Elders in the book of Revelation bear a special signification. These Elders occupy a unique position described as "round about" the throne — yet UPON THRONES! In order to fully appreciate the scenery here drawn by the Spirit, we need to go back and examine the order established among the people of Israel after they came up out of the land of Egypt. The Camp of Israel as it was established in Sinai formed a hollow square. In the center of the hollow was the tabernacle of Moses. Around the tabernacle Israel was divided into four camps: one camp of three tribes on the east side, another camp of three tribes on the south side, another camp of three tribes on the west side, and the last camp of three tribes on the north side. Then — in the open area between the camp of the tribes of Israel and the tabernacle was camped the tribe of Levi with its priesthood — "round about" the tabernacle. In order to go to the tabernacle from any of the tribes of Israel it was necessary to pass through the camp of the priests! This great truth reveals that God placed the camp of the priests directly between Himself and the people of Israel. It should be clear to any thinking mind that the priesthood camped "round about" the tabernacle corresponds precisely to the scene of the twenty-four Elders seated "round about" the throne of God! For you see, the Ark of the Covenant in the Most Holy Place of the tabernacle constituted the throne of Yahweh in the midst of His people! And "round about" that throne was His priesthood!

Further confirmation that the twenty-four Elders represent the ministry of priesthood lies in the fact that in I Chronicles chapter twenty-four we read of how, under King David, in preparation for their future ministry in the temple, the Levitical priesthood was divided into TWENTY-FOUR COURSES under the headship of TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS! The priesthood had become so numerous that all of those priests could not go into the house of the Lord at one time, so they were divided into courses and assigned to work shifts, each "course" of priests

and Levites came on duty for a week at a time. It took all twenty-four courses to MAKE UP THE ENTIRE PRIESTHOOD OF GOD! The twenty-four Elders represent the whole priesthood of God, of which Jesus is the Head, our great High Priest!

Let us then stand assured of this marvelous truth: the four Living Creatures represent the ministry of kingship, for they dwell in the midst of the throne. The twenty-four Elders reveal within themselves the ministry of priesthood, for they are round about the throne, standing between the God of the throne and the vast multitude “before” the throne. These are not two separate companies; these are rather two aspects of ministry that have their source and power in the throne. This is the KING-PRIEST MINISTRY OF THE MANIFEST SONS OF GOD! These are all sons of God in the power and outflow of life, glory, and power from the throne. God is raising up within each of His called and chosen elect the spirit and nature of sonship, the spirit and nature of kingship, and the spirit and nature of priesthood. These are the heavenly realities John beheld in the throne room! Isn’t it wonderful!

The four Living Creatures — **KINGS!** The twenty-four Elders — **PRIESTS!** Together they bow low before the great King of kings and the High Priest over the house of priests, intoning this new song — *“Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign over the earth!”* (**Rev. 5:9-10**) Ah, beloved, these are not mere words. God’s meaning of a “song” is “message; revelation; experience.” All songs are meant to convey a message! Man calls anything a song, any weird beat, any unnatural accents, any harmonic dissonance, any melodic discord, the ba-ba-bu of the jungle, the raucous racket of rock music, the monotonous drone of hip-hop is merchandised as a song. A “new song” in spiritual language means a **NEW REVELATION**, a **NEW MESSAGE**, a **NEW EXPERIENCE** in God! A new song is born when men experience the inworking of a new message, the message and the messenger so becoming one until the messenger becomes the message. I am reminded of Cartwright, the backwoods preacher of a past century, who used to sing a hymn as he went through the woods:

“No foot of land do I possess,
No cottage in the wilderness;”

And one day a man presented Cartwright with a cottage and a piece of ground, and he went on his way singing:

“No foot of land do I possess,
No cottage in the wilderness;”

And he stopped and said, “Joseph Cartwright, that is a lie; you have got a cottage and land; you cannot sing that hymn!” Every time the Spirit of God unfolds new dimensions of truth to our hearts, effecting further transformations into His image, bringing us into a new place in God and a further appropriating of our inheritance in Christ, a new song is born. The old song was good and true for its time, but we can sing the old song no more, for a new day has dawned, a new glory has arisen, a new reality is birthed within, praise His name! While this is not all it means, yet it is true that many songs we sang in church when I was a boy growing up I cannot sing today because they no longer express what God is doing in my life, or the reality, word, and purpose He is bringing forth. Some of them are so far from the truth as I now know it, that I cannot bear even to listen to them, much less sing them!

God is even now preparing a people, a royal priesthood, a kingdom of priests, sons of the Most High; and while the church world continues on with its time-honored traditions and childish delusions, singing about flying away to cabins in the corner of glory land or to mansions over the hill-top, a people is arising in the earth with a new and wonderful vision — to become kings and priests unto God — their hearts vibrating with the melodious strains of a new song, the song of a people with a purpose, a company gathered out of the generations, grown up into the fullness of Christ, conquering every enemy within and without, which in due time shall be led forth to be the manifest expression of His image, character, and nature, the revelation of His glory, power, and dominion, with an outflow of life and light and love sufficient to change the course of history, transform the nations, and restore all men and all things back into the life of God. What a song!

For these manifest sons the whole creation groans, and they are in the process of preparation, being made, in the skillful hands of the Great Potter, a KINGDOM OF PRIESTS. God knows every detail of His plan for His kings and priests, and precisely the work to be wrought upon each one to conform them unto His own priestly heart. Ah, those who receive this call, those who behold this vision, those who cherish this hope, indeed sing a new song which can be learned by none but those apprehended, the firstfruits of His redemption. This is the ineffable, preeminent Song; ineffable because it strikes a chord, the vibration of which cannot be discerned by the carnal man; preeminent because it is the Song of the Lamb who stands in the midst of the throne, the King of kings and the High Priest of our profession, who in all things has preeminence!

PARTAKERS OF THE HEAVENLY CALLING

HE THAT HATH AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS! Across the land and around the world the Spirit is saying today that He is preparing a people, He is preparing a body, He is preparing sons who shall be conformed to the image of the Son, partakers of the divine nature, who shall have the mind of Christ, who shall be brought to glory and who then shall become the very express image of the Father, the very brightness of the Father's glory and the outraying of the Father's person. Even as the first Son, who went into the ground and died as a grain of wheat to produce other sons in His likeness — He was the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of the Father's person — and God sent Him to be the Saviour of the world. God is now preparing sons, God is now preparing a body for that first Son, we are the body of the first Son, the body of the Christ, the body of the King of glory, the body of the great High Priest in the heavens after the order of Melchizedek. We are the body of the Christ, and in and through these sons, when all have been brought to His fullness, His salvation shall be manifested, exhibited, and demonstrated unto the ends of the earth. All peoples and all nations shall at last see what God is like in the fullness of His love, glory, wisdom, and power! The Lord is saying to His people in this day, *“For this cause I have raised thee up and sent thee to be a light unto the nations and thou shalt BE MY SALVATION to the ends of the earth.”* (Isa. 9:6; Acts 13:47)

“Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.” (Heb. 3:1) The subject in the book of Hebrews is Christ's priesthood and the writer says that we, the holy brethren of Christ Jesus, seeing how true it is that the Christ came into man's world and fully shared his weaknesses and sorrow; seeing how true it is that the Christ is now exalted as the High Priest to the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens — as partakers with Him in this heavenly calling of priesthood after the order of Melchizedek, let us consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of this order of priesthood to which we are called. If you would know the meaning and the glory and the power of that to which you are called — CONSIDER HIM! Don't consider Him any longer merely as Saviour, Healer, Blessor, and Baptizer — consider Him as the Apostle and High Priest of the order of priesthood to which you are called!

An apostle is the first advocate and initiator of a new order. A high priest is the head and chief of an order of priesthood. Jesus is the apostle of that order to which we are called. He is the sign Son, the first-begotten Son, the pattern Son for all who are called to be sons of God. He is the apostle and the High Priest of the Melchizedekian Order of Priesthood! All who are called to sonship and priesthood through the age shall come into that same wonderful image and fullness of Jesus Christ. It is time now, above all times, for us to mightily stress these truths. I see no possibility of any long delay until the hour of the manifestation of the sons of God becomes a reality. One does not attain the realities of sonship by thumb twiddling or presumption. Sonship appears as a great vision before our understanding by the quickening of the spirit of revelation and we attain it through surmounting faith, patience, endurance, testing, proving, obedience, and growth into His fullness through eternal vigilance. Men in the church order may have other men as their apostles, but when it comes to sonship, kingship, and priesthood, the apostle of this realm is only Jesus! This realm has only one Apostle even as it has only one High Priest. As our Apostle Jesus Christ proclaims and opens up the way before us, and as our High Priest He reconciles us fully to God that we may walk in the calling ordained for us.

The “heavenly calling” is the calling unto the priesthood of Christ. Hebrews is very clear about this! *“Now the main point of what we have to say is this: We have such a High Priest, One who is seated at the right hand of the majestic God in heaven, an officiating priest, a minister in the holy places and in the true tabernacle which is erected not by man but by the Lord”* (Heb. 8:1-2, Amplified). Hear it, O ye sons of God — Christ is the great High Priest of the heavens and we are called to be partakers with Him in that heavenly calling!

THE HIGH PRIEST AND THE PRIESTS

The notion, held by the vast majority of evangelical Christians, that the priesthood of the Christ is an individual, singular priesthood exercised by Himself alone in some far-off heaven, is an absurdity. The term “high priest” is a relative term, “high” being translated from the Greek word *archiereus*, meaning “chief” in order or rank. It is the same word translated “chief priest” or “chief priests” in numerous passages. It is a title denoting the CHIEF OR HEAD OF AN ORDER such as the terms “Chairman of the Board,” “Archangel,” “Chief of Police,” “Speaker of the House,” “King of Kings,” etc. It should be clear to every thinking mind that you cannot have a High Priest without a priesthood any more than you can have a Chairman of the Board without a board for the Chairman of the Board to be chairman over. You cannot have a High Priest without a priesthood any more than you can have an Arch-angel without an order of angels for the Arch-angel to be leader of. You cannot have a High Priest without a priesthood any more than you can have a Chief of Police without a police force for the Chief of Police to be chief of. You cannot have a High Priest without a priesthood any more than you can have a Speaker of the House of Representatives without a House of Representatives for the Speaker of the House to be speaker for. You cannot have a High Priest without a priesthood any more than you can have Jesus as King of Kings and Lord of Lords without any kings or any lords for Him to be King and Lord over.

High Priest! The High Priest in the heavenlies! Ah, yes, we are holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, receiving the vision to become one in Him, to share in this heavenly priesthood, and as we follow on to know Him in all His glorious fullness we shall see a ministry unfold before us which leads to deliverance and restoration for all God’s creation. Our task will not be left undone, for we shall have the ages before us to carry it through to victory, praise His name!

The priesthood of Aaron foreshadows that of Christ in a very striking way. The honor of being a High Priest is not open to man’s ambition. No man can claim it for himself (Heb. 5:4). The High Priest ministers in such high and holy matters that only God can appoint him! Thus it was that Aaron was called of God to this task. He did not take it to himself; nor did Moses make him High Priest. God called him to do this work, and no one else could have done so. In the same way, “Christ glorified not Himself to be made an High Priest” (Heb. 5:5). He is High Priest because God made Him so! He was “*called of God*” (Heb. 5:10) to this office.

It is inspiring to meditate upon the thought given us in **Exodus 28:1** wherein we read, “*And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him from among the children of Israel, that HE may minister unto me in the priest’s office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron’s sons.*” God chose five men, Aaron and his four sons, and then referred to them in the singular pronoun, “That HE may minister.” The ministries of these five men were inseparably wrapped up in each other, so that God saw them as one. Aaron did not minister without the priests (except on the day of Atonement), and the priests could not minister apart from the High Priest. This is all very wonderful, for Christ does not minister alone! God has called us to be priests that we might share in the ministry of reconciliation. We, too, like the priests of old, cannot minister apart from our great High Priest upon whom we depend at all times. We have understood what priesthood is only in a very limited way and have fulfilled this ministry feebly in a measure. But these are days of restoration! God is about to bring forth the full power and glory of Christ’s priesthood after the order of Melchizedek in this earth so that all creation may be delivered from the bondage of corruption and set free to know and serve the Lord!

The Father has called us unto sonship that we might stand with Him and cry, “Our very own Father!” He is apprehending a people for the authority of kingship that He might be “King of kings,” a many-membered kingship. He is raising up a people to be priests after the order of Melchizedek that He and they may stand in one ministry unto the Father — satisfying the heart of the Father for the fellowship of sons, the rulership of kings, and the outflow of priests through whom He may reveal His person unto the whole creation. And even now, all creation is standing on tiptoe to behold the glorious sight of God’s sons, God’s kings, and God’s priests coming into their own! Because of the wise and gracious council of God from eternity, Christ now has no identity apart from us, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. The Father looks at His Son and His sons, His King and His kings, His High Priest and His priests, and says, “That HE may minister unto me!”

In my meditations upon the order of Melchizedek, I find it impossible to separate between the High Priest and the priests. Under the Aaronic order the HIGH PRIEST was the one, and the only one, who went into the Holy of holies. He passed through the veil and entered into the place of God's blazing fullness unseen by all others. The PRIESTHOOD did not do this. But, precious friend of mine, if you think that Jesus is keeping all the glory of that realm to Himself, then you just haven't read these inspired words: *"Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."* (Heb. 6:19-20) Let me repeat — the only person permitted an entrance beyond the veil was the High Priest!

While manifested on this earth plane, Jesus Christ left us His personal example that we might follow in His footsteps. It is a way that leads beyond the veil into the glories of the Father. It was necessary that He tread all the course that we might be able to follow all the way into divine fullness. HE IS THE WAY unto the Father, and in our union with Him we find it is first a way of humiliation before it becomes a way of exaltation. Thus we humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, assured that in due time HE will lift us up, and we shall live in His sight.

A forerunner is one who goes ahead of others. He goes ahead as a sample of those who are to follow. Jesus is our forerunner, which clearly indicates that others are expected to follow on into the same realms of glory. Christ, a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, is our forerunner, He went first, and where He went, we are to go. The Forerunner blazed the trail all the way, and we rejoice in this fact, but then He also came back, in and by the Spirit, to escort us all the way into the glory beyond the veil, the glory of a PRIESTHOOD FOREVER AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK. Full well He knows the route, for He has traveled it all the way through to victory, and now is able to guide us down the same path into the glorious victory which He obtained. It is HIS daily enabling that gives us strength to carry on until the consummation is reached.

WE HAVE A HOPE! That hope is the anchor of the soul. Our hope in the Christ is the anchor of that life both sure and firm, and it has entered into the veil, taken there by our forerunner, even Jesus. He ran ahead of, or before us! Thus it is evident that WE ARE GOING TO RUN ALSO! What He entered into we also will come into. He simply has opened the way for us and He is the anchor or the hope of that life which is behind the veil.

Let us remember — in the Old Testament order it was only the High Priest who could enter into the Most Holy Place. None else could enter, and even the High Priest would enter in with fear and trembling and only after much preparation and vested with special garments. But how glorious the word that now comes to us! *"And having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."* (Heb. 10:21-22) And then we read, *"Having therefore brethren boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus."* We, the Royal Priesthood, do have boldness to enter in! We do not wait, and we do not have to go to some far-off heaven somewhere. This thing is taking place within us right at this time, blessed be the name of the Lord!

For those who understand with a spiritual mind it is a glorious privilege to enter in because Jesus Christ, our High Priest and Forerunner, has opened the way and bids us enter. Christians have generally entertained the idea that entering in beyond the veil means simply that every believer now has access to enter into the presence of God and offer up his prayers with no human mediator in between. It is much more than that! Multitudes know Jesus as their Saviour, Baptizer, Healer, Sanctifier, and Blessor, but do you know Jesus as your forerunner? Do you know Him as the forerunner of the MELCHIZEDEKIAN PRIESTHOOD? Do you know what it means to be a priest after the order of Melchizedek? Now we hear the word of the Lord to us and it is that we are to come in with boldness. Come right in to the Holy of holies! Come right in to the presence of God! Come right in to the full glory of God! Come right into that high and holy realm that only HIGH PRIESTS enter! We need not be afraid that we can enter as a priest after the order of Melchizedek, for we have a High Priest of that order who is now appearing in the blazing fullness of God's glory for us, not in our place, but on our behalf, for that is the true sense of the words "for us." This wonderful High Priest abides in the power of His priesthood and we are to come right in to reign as priests!

You may stand without. Many believers today dwell in the Outer Court of salvation while others tarry in the Holy Place of the baptism and gifts of the Holy Spirit. How obvious it should be that all believers, while children

of God, are not part of the elect company of the Melchizedek Priesthood. All the tribes of Israel, while God's people, we not priests! And not all priests had access to the Holy of Holies! True, the veil has been rent, but also true to the type, the vast majority of believers throughout the church age have dwelt and do now dwell in the Outer Court of spiritual experience. In spite of all their noisy profession, and constant flurry of religious activities, they inhabit that realm where the natural man understandeth not the things of the Spirit of God. They never plumb the depths of Jesus Christ! Deep spiritual things are foolishness unto them; neither can they know them, for they are spiritually discerned. These are comfortably at home with the lifeless forms, static creeds, empty ceremonies, entertaining programs, and repetitious works of Outer Court religion, and have not the foggiest notion of what the Royal Priesthood is about! The harlot system has sapped and sucked away their spiritual life and left them in spiritual poverty, void of understanding of the high and holy purposes of God, and like little children they wait expectantly for the thrills that await them in that far-away Disney World in the sky with its golden streets, mansions, harps, and wings!

God has a people today who are not ordinary people. They are not people of this earth, earthly minded, but citizens of the Celestial Kingdom. They are God's dwelling place and they dwell in God. The great High Priest of that Heavenly Kingdom, the One after the order of Melchizedek, HAS ENTERED THE HOLY PLACE NOT MADE WITH HANDS. He reigns there as a priest! The great invitation to God's elect now is, "COME ON IN." After such an awesome revelation as this we find it impossible to return to the old way. The old-order church systems and methods, the old preaching of man-made creeds and petty religious traditions has become a stifling boredom. We can have nothing to do with such things. The ways of Babylon are the ways of death to us. WE HAVE A HIGH PRIEST OVER THE HOUSE OF GOD! HE IS EXALTED IN THE HEAVENS! THERE IS STILL ROOM UPON THE TWENTY-FOUR THRONES AROUND THE THRONE! THE VOICE SAYS, "COME UP HITHER!" WE HASTEN TO ENTER IN, TO BECOME ALL THAT GOD HAS APPREHENDED US TO BE!

CROWNS OF GOLD

"And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold." (Rev. 4:4)

It is instructive to notice the characteristics of the twenty-four Elders. Throughout the scriptures only men are "elders." Only men sit on thrones. Only men wear white raiment. And only men wear crowns! This is fitting because the Greek word means a "victorious crown" won in an athletic contest or on the field of battle. It bespeaks of one who has gone through the battle of life on earth, in obedience to the will of the heavenly Father, with all the testings, trials, tribulations, provings, and triumphs in order to earn the victor's crown! In Bible days it was men who won and wore such crowns.

We are not, however, speaking naturally, but spiritually! "Men" represent spiritually those persons who, irrespective of their gender in the flesh, have developed within themselves the spiritually masculine qualities of divine life — strength, authority, discernment, wisdom, dominion, and power! These are mature ones! There are many different spiritual states of being, planes of development and levels of growth, revealed in the Word of God. Some are called "babes" in Christ, others "little children," others "young men," others "mature men," others "women," some are called "sons of God," others "daughters of God," and there is a class identified as "the bride" of Christ.

Children are children. Children are not "sons" in the scriptural sense, for the word for a child is the Greek word teknon, whereas the word for a grown son is huioi. When the scripture speaks of the manifestation of the sons of God it refers to those who spiritually have grown up into the nature, stature, and authority of the Father! On the other hand, a girl, as long as she is a child, is neither prepared for, nor capable of, fulfilling the role of a wife. In order to enter into marriage a young girl must pass through years of physical, mental, and emotional development. Finally, upon becoming mature in these areas, she is fitted for marriage and her role as a wife. And so is it in God's Family! The term "child" describes the believer in his walk of immaturity in God. But as one begins to grow up into spiritual maturity, it is then that the truly feminine and masculine aspects of divine life take form and become manifest. "Vive la difference!" someone once said. And starting from early childhood we all begin to notice there is indeed a difference! We become increasingly aware of it as we grow

up. It is only as fully developed adults that the real power, potential, and purpose of the feminine and masculine attributes find their fulfillment.

The following words by **Ray Prinzing** are freighted with spiritual wisdom and godly instruction. *“There are many relationships that are spoken of in the scriptures, and for years all we heard taught was on ‘the bride of Christ.’ Then came the unfolding of the precious truths of sonship. And soon the one was pitted against the other with emphasis on the position to be obtained, this greater than that, etc. But we are coming to see that all these relationships are allegorical — we can draw from them all some needed instruction, but we must not reduce them to physical, carnal realms, and hold them there. All these allegories serve to bring out the characteristics desired. ONENESS WITH CHRIST in its full reality goes beyond being a bride, or a son, or male, or female.. So regardless of the symbol at which we are looking, it is the deeper meaning and truth which we desire, and may the Lord quicken to us this vital instruction for our up-building in Him. To be perfect in Christ, complete, mature, one in Him, this sums up all the facets used to illustrate our growth and development, characteristics, attributes, etc. Dare we settle for anything less? Can any parabolic example reveal such glory? Each part reveals something unique and wonderful, but they all fall far short of expressing the whole which is summed up in Christ. He is ALL IN ALL, the fullness that filleth everything with Himself” —*
end quote.

As God becomes so many things to us, even Mother, so must we become many things to Him. When God created man male and female in His image, He revealed that He is Himself male and female within the attributes of His nature. In spiritual maturity we enter into relationship with God in all the facets of His nature. We may truly become the bride of Christ and the sons of the Father and many other things as well! The bride relationship bears the feminine nature whereas the sonship relationship bears the characteristics of the masculine nature. Aggressiveness, boldness, strength, valor, authority, power, and dominion are among the dominant traits of the masculine sex. Hence, the Lord says to the overcomer, *“He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. To him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne.”*

Modesty, gentleness, tenderness, love, sensitiveness, nurturing, and dependence are attributes of the feminine sex. Can we not see by this that brideship bespeaks of the spiritually feminine relationship of intimate love and reverent submission to Christ, whereas sonship embodies the spiritually masculine characteristics of strength and dominion to rule over all things. Ah, beloved, let us not become so over-balanced in our zeal to become sons of God that we circumvent the marvelous reality of brideship! The simple yet sublime truth is that THE WAY TO SONSHIP IS BRIDESHIP! This is why the Spirit has given us in Revelation chapter twelve the beautiful example of a glorious sun-clad woman giving birth to a remarkable man-child who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron. It is the inworking of brideship that births the realm of sonship! Jesus said, “I am the way...no man cometh unto the Father but by me.” Our relationship to Christ as a bride foreruns our relationship to the Father as a son! Brideship is the harbinger of sonship! It is through the intense love, intimacy of fellowship, and vital union with Christ, made one in Him in love, that we are initiated into that illustrious glory of strength and dominion over all things as sons of God. The manchild comes out of the woman. These are both realities within each of us! Until one falls madly in love with Christ, and submits to Him in all things as the Head of the body, he will never go on to become a son of the Father. That is the mystery!

The twenty-four “elders” are mature men, those who have grown up into Christ, putting on His wonderful mind, strengthened with His might, filled with His wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, equipped and enabled to minister the blessings and benefits and powers of the kingdom of God! These are the sons of God who are the kings and priests of the Most High! The twenty-four Elders are clothed in white raiment, which means they have glorified bodies made pure by His indwelling Spirit and the righteousness of Christ, and on their heads are crowns of gold which means they have divine authority to rule and reign with Christ as priests because they have faithfully followed the leading of the Spirit and have overcome all things.

The crowns of gold are upon their heads. Though this appears a very natural statement, yet it is freighted with deep significance! [The Greek word for “head” is kephale which comes from the root kopto meaning “to seize.”](#)

Is it not the head, the mind that the adversary most wants to captivate and take hold of? The mind is the gateway to the whole being! It is in the mind of man that he is alienated from the life that is in God (Eph. 4:18), and it is by the renewing of the mind that we are transformed into the image of Christ! It is the head or mind that the Spirit of God is today “seizing” or “laying hold” upon in every one who has received the call to sonship, that HE may be fully manifest therein. What a battle has been waged by the serpent-inspired philosophies of men, political ideologies, educational agendas, advertising, entertainment, and religion to keep the mind in subjection to the bondage and darkness and ignorance of the world system. But contrariwise, there is also a battle whereby liberty comes to the mind to bring it enlightenment and renewal. It is thus upon a renewed mind that the crown of gold rests!

It is also interesting to note that the Greek word *kephale* is in the feminine gender! Although the ones crowned are men (spiritually), yet the head upon which the crown rests possesses the spiritually feminine qualities of gentleness, kindness, mercy, love, goodness, grace, nurturing, sensitiveness, compassion, etc. These are, one and all, necessary characteristics in the nature of a PRIEST! Kings rule, but from a priestly heart flows forth love, mercy, kindness, grace, gentleness, forgiveness — the very spirit and word of RECONCILIATION! What a beautiful blending of the masculine-feminine nature of God!

These crowns are not the coronets worn by the sovereigns of this present world. The feeble kings and rulers of this dark world system represent in their weakness the transient glory of earth’s passing kingdoms, but the golden crowns on the heads of God’s Royal Priesthood are not like one of these. The most common term rendered “crown” in the New Testament is the Greek word *stephanos*. This crown was usually a laurel wreath woven of fragrant branches, or the like. It was granted to winners in the Panhellenic games and also as a token of public honor for distinguished service — especially of military leaders who had been victorious over their enemies on the battlefield. It was also given at marriage feasts, especially in royal families, to celebrate the joy of the bridegroom in having “won” the maiden for his bride. This crown always denotes a VICTOR’S CROWN — the crown of an OVERCOMER!

How appropriate that we should read of the Royal Priesthood: “And round about the throne were...four and twenty elders sitting...and they had on their heads crowns (*stephanos*) of gold.” Golden Stephanos! Golden Victor’s Crowns! Gold is a symbol for the divine nature. And how true that we are only able to fully overcome by being made partakers of His divine nature! To be “crowned” means to be given kingly authority. As the kingly authority and dominion of God’s divine nature now ascends the throne of our lives to rule within us — we are CROWNED, RULED OVER by our Father, but more than this, made rulers, not after the carnal concepts of the flesh, but in the love, justice, and glory of God’s own character!

Of course the crowns of fragrant branches won by the Greeks in their athletic contests were short lived, for they soon wilted and became dead and brittle. In contrast to this, our *stephanos* are incorruptible crowns which will never fade away — for the Royal Priesthood is of the Melchizedekian Order — after the power of an endless life! In the Theater of Ephesus there was found an inscription which read: “He fought three bouts, and was crowned two times.” In like manner the sons of God will soon be rewarded for their bouts with the flesh, the world, and the principalities and powers which have their rule in the darkness of the carnal mind. God is even now bringing forth an incorruptible people, overcomers, who are overcoming all things. And of them, finally, it shall be said: “They fought many, many bouts, and were crowned every time!” No more weakness and failure. No more flunking two tests and winning one. Overcoming all things! Oh, no, we have not always overcome all things, but those who are called and chosen in this hour are being strengthened by experience and by the power of the spirit of life within and are becoming strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. God is teaching us to reign in our lives and in every situation! He is making us a Royal Priesthood! Priests reigning in the Father’s own nature, love, and power! Reconciling the world. Subduing all things. As kings these are seated in the throne; as priests they sit around the throne. Their rule is rooted in authority as kings, but as priests they become the bond between the God of the throne and the creation so desperately needing His life. Isn’t it wonderful!

THUNDERINGS, LIGHTNINGS, AND VOICES

“And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices...” (Rev. 4:5)

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, Part 72, Four Living Creatures and Twenty-Four Elders

[J. Preston Eby] ~ BIBLE STUDY 8

The scene is drawn from the time when God came down in the midst of Israel to speak to His called and chosen nation. The Hebrews had come up out of Egypt, and were standing in front of mount Sinai. The mountain was full of fire and smoke. Thunderings and voices were bursting from its mysterious awfulness. Great trumpet-blasts came piercing through the frightened air. Everything bore witness to the awesome presence of God! The Hebrews were appalled and terrified. We can see them cowering and trembling. They turn to Moses and beg him to stand between them and God. *“Speak thou with us, and we will hear,” said they, “but let not God speak to us, lest we die.”*

At first it seems as if their feeling were a strange one. This is their God who is speaking to them, their God who by a mighty hand brought them “out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” Would it not seem as if they would be glad to have Him come to them directly, to have Him almost look on them with eyes that they could see, and make unnecessary the interposition of His servant Moses, bringing them messages from Him? Will they not feel their whole history of rescue coming to its consummation when at last they find themselves actually in the presence of the God who has delivered them, and hear His voice?

Ah, they would not hear for themselves the words of God, and they never did hear, for they rebelled in unbelief, they broke His laws, they went after other gods, then they imprisoned, stoned, and killed the prophets sent to them, and crucified the very Lord of glory. They hid themselves from the glory of His presence and refused to hear His voice! But now, praise God, He is speaking again out of His throne in the midst of His people, out of our innermost being, in and by the Spirit, and there is a people who hear for themselves the word of the Lord! Many believers are like the Hebrews in the wilderness, they have neither desire nor capacity to hear from God themselves, so they seek an apostle, a prophet, a pastor, a teacher, a church order, someone to hear from God for them and communicate His message to them. God certainly does use ministries and fellow members of the body of Christ to confirm to us the revelation of the Spirit. Thank God for it! But we who do know our God now hear His voice speaking out from His throne right within our spirit, and out of those who are one in Him. Oh, yes! He speaks in the power of thunder, with flashes of light, sudden bursts of brilliant illumination as of lightning, and with the clarity and manifoldness of the many voices of a corporate unfolding. The ones who so hear His voice are those who have become related to His throne, for only in the throne-room does one see the lightnings and hear the thunderings and voices. It is indeed wonderful!

THE SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD

“And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God.” (Rev. 4:5)

For many years we did not know that God has seven spirits! Although we were raised in church, and had read the Bible through, we had never understood the mystery of the seven spirits. We all knew that *“there is one body, and one Spirit.” (Eph. 4:4)* We all thought that when we were baptized in the Holy Spirit, receiving the one Spirit, that was the beginning and the finish of it! We spoke in tongues and prophesied, did a few miracles, danced in the Spirit and rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory, and that was it! That is all we knew God had for us this side of heaven.

The question follows — are there seven spirits of God? If you say that God has seven spirits, to some that makes you a heretic! If, on the other hand, you say that the Spirit of God is not seven spirits, you are disagreeing with the heavenly revelation given to John! Is the Spirit of God, then, seven or one? If God says there is one Spirit, then there is one Spirit; and if God says there are seven spirits, then there are seven spirits. That is the mystery of it!

One of the keys to this mystery is found in the passage quoted above, *“And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God.”* In the Old Testament, the structure of the lampstand or candlestick was quite unique: below was one lampstand, above there were seven branches, and in each branch there was a lamp. (Ex. 25:31-37) It was one lampstand, yet it had seven lamps; there were seven lamps, yet it was but one lampstand. The same picture is presented in Zechariah 4:2. Therefore, it is correct to say that there is one lampstand, yet it is not wrong to say there are seven lamps! So also is the Spirit of God. Without question, He is one Spirit; but He is also called “the seven spirits,” that is, the sevenfold, intensified spirit of God!

Seven, in the scriptures, is the most sacred number of the Hebrews. This number is used more often than all other numbers, save the number one. It is the number denoting spiritual perfection and completeness. In this connection it is instructive to note that in the title "Holy Spirit" the word "holy," according to Webster, comes from a root meaning "whole." Hence, the Holy Spirit is the WHOLE SPIRIT! The seven spirits of God, seven denoting spiritual perfection and completeness, are likewise a figure of the "holy" or the "whole" or "complete" Spirit. When we understand that the number seven conveys the idea of unity and completeness, rather than diversity, then we can see with unclouded vision that the seven Spirits of God are the sevenfold, intensified Spirit of the Lord — the absolute FULLNESS OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD!

Great is the mystery and the wonder of it, for there is one Spirit and yet there are seven spirits! This can easily be understood from the natural creation. Have you drunk a glass of water today? How many things is water? To us water is one thing, one item, one substance. But no — water is actually two things! Two parts of a gas called hydrogen and one part of a gas called oxygen are fused, and they make water. But water is not gas! When the two gases are mixed they produce an effect. You have something new, something different, something of another quality — liquid. I didn't get up this morning and tell myself that I needed a glass of H₂O. It was unnecessary to bother with the chemical formula. I just knew I needed a glass of water. If I never knew anything about hydrogen or oxygen it would make no difference. Water is water! God knows how He made it. Scientists discovered God's formula, but God invented it!

The almighty Creator has used that same principle of compounding to make everything that appears in the material creation. In the whole universe, the heaven, the earth, all the stars and suns and planets and moons, there are exactly ninety-six different things which are called elements. Everything we see everywhere is composed of some combination of some of those ninety-six elements. We think of salt as one thing. Yet salt is not one thing; salt is two things. Somebody has taken a piece of metal called sodium and a piece of a gas called chlorine, and mixed the two things together. The result is what chemists call sodium chloride and we common folk call it salt. How about air? Isn't that one thing? Wrong again! Air is always three things. Seventy-nine parts of a gas called nitrogen mixed with twenty-one parts of a gas called oxygen, and a tiny, tiny portion of carbonic acid gas, make up the simplest kind of air. Air is not one thing. It might be as many as twelve or fourteen things, depending on how close you live to a glue factory or a garbage dump!

God has used that simple principle of compounding to make everything that appears in the vast expanses of the universe! And the physical creation is simply the mirror of the spiritual world! In just this way it is no longer necessary to see the Spirit of God as just one thing — for God Himself is not just one thing. God is light. God is love. God is life. God is spirit. Those are four things and we haven't even begun! In like manner, contained in the Spirit of God are all the attributes, characteristics, faculties, and powers of God that are spirit. It is the complete or whole Spirit, the sevenfold intensified Spirit of the Lord!

The seven spirits are seen by John shining in the brightness and light of the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, its glory radiating the sevenfold splendor as of a rainbow which is seen in beauty like unto an emerald. These seven lamps of fire represent THE SEVEN SPIRITS OF SONSHIP. All that is connected to the throne reveals the mystery and the glory of sonship to God, for it is the Son who has been exalted to the throne. God's sons are His kings and priests who reign over the earth! The Lord Jesus Himself is the firstborn among many brethren, the proto-type of what sonship is. Isaiah prophesied of this sevenfold anointing of the spirit of sonship, saying, *"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. And shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears: but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth...and righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins."* (Isa. 11:1-5)

This is the sevenfold sonship anointing that rested and does rest upon the firstborn Son of God! And this mighty and glorious anointing shall come also upon all the manifest sons of God to enable God's kings and priests to inaugurate the wonderful and blessed age of the kingdom of God upon all the nations of mankind,

and shall endue them with power and all the attributes of Him who is the Head of the body. They shall not judge after the sight of their eyes, nor reprove after the hearing of their ears, but with righteousness shall they judge the nations. This anointed company of sons of God shall be girded with the righteousness of Christ and the faithfulness of Him who loved them and lifted them from the pit of sin, sorrow, and death, and exalted them to the glorious heights of the throne. Then the wolf nature in the carnal man will be tamed and will lie down with the nature of the lamb in the throne, the fierce leopard nature shall lie down with the innocence of the kid, the calf and the young lion together, with a little child (for of such is the kingdom of heaven!) leading them. In that blessed day of glory, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain." Oh, the wonder of it!

Think of it! A world governed by the sevenfold intensified spirit of God! What a different spirit that is! It is the spirit of love, grace, mercy, peace, joy, righteousness, pardon, reconciliation and transformation! It is sometimes difficult for those kings-and-priests-to-be who have come out of the church system with a heavy hangover of condemnation and charging every man with guilt and shame. It was a sin to do this, it was a sin to do that, and we were so sin-conscious that we were not able to kindle any consciousness of the awesome power of HIS UNCONDITIONAL LOVE.

How we have ranted and raved and stormed at men about their sins and judgment! But it has been well said that there is no difficulty that enough love will not conquer; no disease that enough love will not heal; no door that enough love will not open; no gulf that enough love will not bridge; no wall that enough love will not throw down; no sin that enough love will not redeem. It makes no difference how deeply seated may be the problem, how hopeless the outlook, how muddled the tangles, how great the error or mistake — love never fails — and God is about to bathe the world in redemptive love through the government of the sons of God and by the power of the sevenfold spirit of God radiating from His throne!

To be continued...

J. Preston Eby

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 73
THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES AND THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS (Continued)
BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART SEVENTY-THREE

FACES OF THE LIVING CREATURES
THE LION

"And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal..." (Rev. 4:6)

Before we consider the sea of glass, I would like to point out that throughout the scriptures the sea is a type of the raging, restless, surging masses of unregenerate humanity, tossed to and fro by the inner storms of the turbulent nature of the carnal, Adamic man. The prophet Isaiah penned these inspired words, *"The wicked are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."* (Isa. 57:20-21) Jude also described the natural man when he said, *"These are raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame."* (Jude 13) The beloved John, banished on the Isle of Patmos, had a vision of a great whore sitting on many waters. The angel that spoke with him revealed the meaning of the many waters, saying, *"The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."* (Rev. 17:5)

John also saw a vision of a beast rising out of the sea, a beastly expression coming up out of the midst of the multitudes of raging, restless, seething humanity, the sea of man. The natural sea is a great deep, an abyss (Gen. 1:2; 7:11; 8:2; Deut. 8:7; 33:13). The Psalmist wrote of this abyss of fleshly men, *"They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart is deep (an abyss)."* (Psa. 64:6) To the enlightened mind of David the depth of iniquity of which the human heart is capable is so great that it is beyond the ability of man to comprehend! The heart of man is an unfathomable depth, or, as Jeremiah observed, *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"* (Jer. 17:9) While John the Revelator saw the beast (outward manifestation) rising out of the sea (abyss, depth) of humanity (carnal mind), Jesus expressed the same truth thus, *"For from WITHIN, O-U-T O-F THE HEART OF MEN, proceed all these evil things!"*

Yet God, blessed be His wonderful name, has a remedy for the raging of the sea of fleshly emotions and devilish passions within man! The word of the Lord declares, *"Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, Thou stillest them."* (Psa. 89:9) Long centuries ago the Spirit of God inspired these beautiful words of promise, *"The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves. The Lord on high IS MIGHTIER THAN THE NOISE OF MANY WATERS, yea, than the MIGHTY WAVES OF THE SEA."* (Psa. 93:3-4) Praise God! HE rules the inner raging of the sea and HE stills all its tempests! That unstable nature within, so quickly moved by the storms created by the carnal mind, the torrents of passion, the streams of vain imaginations, the waves of frustration and fear, the winds of doubt and unbelief, the turbulent emotions of body and soul — all are quieted by the Lord, the Spirit, who arises from within in peace, confidence, truth, and faith to RULE THE RAGING OF THE SEA. And then follows the calm, the state described by Paul, *"that we be no more tossed to and fro with every wind...but may grow up in all things into Him who is the Head, even Christ."* (Eph. 4:14-15) The Spirit of Life within is great peace, overflowing joy, unfailing love, unwavering righteousness, and omnipotent power! Oh, yes! It is only necessary then to gain the conscious awareness of the presence and life of God as the very essence of our being, and to know that this life is the law and substance of our reality. When our consciousness is imbued with the Spirit of Truth — not merely the letter of truth, but the Spirit of Truth — all inner and outer tempests are stilled, the sea is calmed, and the dragon out of the sea vanishes over the horizon!

When John beheld in holy vision the unveiling of Christ — Christ the Head and Christ the body — he also saw "a throne set in heaven" with God's Christ upon the throne. It is then that we read, *"And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal..."* As surely as the raging sea represents multitudes of restless,

clamoring, surging, sinning humanity, so does the exquisite sea of glass before the throne of God represent an assembled throng of quickened and transformed saints IN WHOSE HEARTS THE PEACE OF GOD RULES. This great sea of redeemed men is calm and serene, tranquil and quiet, transformed *“even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”* Furthermore, the sea-dwelling beast has been dealt with! The inner nature of man has been transformed, Satan is bound, and the sea is now calm. In contrast with the hurricane and the tumult of winds and waves, we now perceive the effectual dominion of God — the peace and rest of the divine nature, undisturbed by earth’s changes and storms. The sea of glass illustrates the ineffable calm of the divine nature — a mighty deep within of holy, divine love and purpose, of understanding and confidence, of righteousness, peace, and joy, upon which no wind blows, no tempest strives, no violent currents disturb its unfathomable depths.

Just how did this crystal sea become what it is? John envisions this sea of glass twice. In both of these descriptions, they are symbolical views of both a people and a state of being. They have been as individual grains of sand — for glass is melted sand. John beheld this sea of glass mingled with fire — having come through the furnace of afflictions. As the Lord says, *“Behold, I have refined thee...I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.” (Isa. 48:10)* These have been perfected through their fiery trials! *“Tried with fire...and now they have been...found unto praise and honour and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” (I Pet. 1:7).* In the image and likeness of Christ, they are bonded together in a divine union of life. John sees the whole redeemed company not as millions of individual grains of sand, but as one body, even as a crystal sea of glass!

Glass is sand that has been heated in the fire and is melted and flows together until each grain of sand loses its individual identity as sand. These myriads of grains of sand are melted together into one piece of glass. This shimmering sea that John beholds is composed of a vast throng of the Lord’s people who have passed through the fires of tribulation, trials, testings, and provings, and have overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil by the power of His indwelling life. They can never again be affected, moved, tossed, disturbed, agitated, distracted, disquieted, bothered, or tempted by anything in those realms, for they have fully and forever overcome! They are standing in their eternal victory over the fleshly, beastly nature of the carnal, human identity, and the spirit of this world, as well as the false religious image of the man-made church systems.

A sea of glass like unto crystal! The figure is a striking one, and later on in the book of Revelation we find the overcomers standing on the sea of glass mingled with fire (Rev. 15:2). These have harps and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb — the song of deliverance, the song of the overcomer! Here we see a picture of a people who are neither going through the sea, nor being tossed by it, because they are standing on top of it. The message is clear — the crystal sea speaks of the nature in which they stand, and their walk has become stable and transparent! The fact that what is underneath their feet is solid, brilliant, and clear reveals to us the great truth that they are rooted and grounded in the pure, perfect, and holy nature of the Christ within.

The sea of glass mingled with fire represents the purification that is necessary for every son of God who enters the throne zone. It is not possible to partake of the realm of God’s sovereign, unlimited, omnipotent power and authority until we have passed through the crystal sea mingled with fire and been purged from all carnality and self-hood by the quickening radiance of Christ’s own pure and divine life. By the regenerating power of the living water which Christ is we lose the scent of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Every son of God is today passing through the sea of purification, into the state of transparency, which gives us access to the throne room of God!

It is here that all the fickle emotions of the soul and all the relentless passions of the body have been put under our feet until they toss us no more. There is a great calm! There is substance — a solid foundation — under our life and our walk, for we cannot fail to observe that God Himself possesses the same attributes as the glassy sea which surrounds His throne. The sea before the throne is the very nature of God established within a people until they stand and walk in the power of it. The sea is the emblem of mystery in many of the apocalyptic writings. But here we are told that the mystery which surrounds the nature of God is no longer mystery to those who are able to see Him as He is. The sea of glass is crystal clear with the light of truth! The glassy sea is thus a beautiful figure for the perfect revelation of the grace, righteousness, and glory of God.

Those who stand upon the sea of glass have escaped from the imprisonment of self into the mind of Christ. They have lost themselves so completely in the life of God that there is no longer any distinction between “I” and “Christ.” They have reached the good beyond the good; the right within the right; the truth of which the truth we have known is but the shadow. They have been lifted out of the tossing sea of human passion and carnal understanding into the eternal calm of Christ-consciousness. These love without fear of losing, and worship without ceasing that which is the living God reflected in our own being — our very reality and state of being being the homage we render unto Him who is the source and substance of all.

This is what every man is searching for who is tossed by the raging waves of the sea of humanity! It is what the greedy man wants when he goes out to make himself rich; he does not want the money and the things money buys, but that of which the wealth is the symbol, that something for which his soul is craving and will not be denied, even though he is seeking it in the wrong way. It is what the evil man wants when he spreads havoc and ruin in the path of his ambition and lust; he is looking for heaven in the hallways of hell. It is what drives every man to be a workaholic, or a pleasure seeker, or a drunkard, or an adulterer, or a money grabber, or a tyrant over men, or seeker of fame, power, popularity, or one who loses himself in the carnal programs and promotions of man’s religious systems. Man is so constituted that he can never stop seeking until he has found the eternal calm of the perfect and pure reality of God. If you try to rest in anything less you will be spurred on again and again by your own spirit and swept upward from height to height until you enter upon the great peace on the shores of the crystal sea!

All who attain to the heights in God are moved to climb the steep and winding path that leads from the valley of the shadow of death to the everlasting heights of divine life and nature. As we scale the heights of Mount Zion we become what we seek! We shall never enter upon the realization of any reality which is external to ourselves. Knowing is being, and apart from being there is no knowing of the things of God! Only those who can stand upon the glassy sea, are those who walk in the spirit and come off victorious in the conflict with the beast of the flesh and the carnal mind. That means waging war with the foul and degrading desires of the flesh and the deceptive illusions of the old Adamic mind — even the “good” religious mind! When the sea waves toss your little ship to and fro in the storms of life, lift up your eyes to the throne in the midst of which is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Understand that that throne is here now — the power and dominion of the Christ within ourselves is strong and mighty enough to cause us to enter into our full heritage in God! To follow Jesus to the heights of victory; to be privileged to gaze upon that infinite crystal sea, the manifested life, light, love, righteousness, and power of Christ in our very own spirits, is the vision John saw and has shared with us. The reality is far greater than the symbol!

I’m sure it would be thrilling to stand upon a literal, physical sea of glass and play a harp while waving a palm branch. But that would change nothing within us! How much more glorious to stand in that eternal calm where all warfare, strife, struggle, fear, temptation, and failure have forever ceased — far, far above our own soulish efforts, yet deep within our spirits even now! When shall we behold that glorious expanse of righteousness, peace, and joy? When? Only when we ourselves become the perfectly manifest life, light, and love of God, eternally at one with Him, and with all that is His image and likeness. This alone is real; all else is but seeming. There is nothing beyond the crystal sea but the throne of God!

THE FACES OF THE LIVING CREATURES

“In the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes before and behind. And the first living creature was like a lion, and the second living creature was like an ox, and the third living creature had a face as a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle.” (Rev. 4:6-7)

The four living creatures had four faces in the likeness of four different creatures. These represent four aspects of kingship, and are the four “faces” of the corporate Christ which reveal the qualities of His dominion and His appearance when He is doing a specific work at a particular time. Each of the faces reveals the work of Christ in His body of sons as well as His work through His son company in the earth. They are, furthermore, the four-fold manifestations of Himself to all mankind!

The four living creatures had the face of a lion, the face of an ox, the face of a man, and the face of a flying eagle. The lion speaks of strength — power, authority, and dominion — for he is the most powerful of all the

big cats, and is known as the king of beasts, the king of the forest — by virtue of his awesome prowess! The ox is symbolic of servanthood, for he is the largest and most useful of all domestic animals and is historically a beast of burden, a servant to man from time immemorial. The face of a man indicates intelligence — understanding, knowledge, and wisdom — for this is what distinguishes man from all the creatures beneath him. Adam was made in the image and likeness of God, revealing in his face the attributes and character of God, and was thereby given dominion over all the works of God's hands. The eagle speaks of exaltation, for it is a heavenly creature, one who flies high in the heavens and lives, makes its home, and raises its young in the highest peaks of the mountains. These four faces reveal the intrinsic qualities that define God and His sons in the ministration of kingship!

The picture presented here in the faces of the four living creatures is that of God's called and chosen elect who have been completely conformed to the image of the Son! They have grown up into His nature and character in each of these four areas! They have been made like unto Him in His spiritual strength and kingship; they are made kings to reign with Him upon His throne. They receive the highest position in the kingdom because they have done as their Lord taught them. Instead of exalting themselves in self-importance, they humbled themselves as the ox, took their place as servants, to love unconditionally and serve and bear the burdens and bless those to whom they were sent. The face of a man indicates that they have put on the mind of Christ and have matured in the knowledge, understanding, and wisdom of the ways of God. The face of the eagle shows that they have ascended into the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, high into the heavens of God's Spirit, freed from the limitations of the flesh and the shackles of men, and follow only and always where the Spirit leads. These living creatures portray a life that is completely yielded unto God and His purpose, and whose transformation into the image of the Son is full and complete!

THE LION

With the face of a lion Christ reveals and manifests Himself as the "lion of the tribe of Judah." As the lion of the tribe of Judah He is the mighty, victorious King and Lord of all who reigns in righteousness and faithfulness. Judah is the royal tribe of Israel, the portion of the Lord's nation to whom the reigning scepter was given (Gen. 49:8-10). As He reigns, Christ and His body shall subdue every enemy! He shall bestow on all the inhabitants of the world and upon all realms everywhere the blessings and benefits of His kingdom of righteousness, life, and peace. This symbol speaks of KINGDOM AUTHORITY. Wherever the firstborn Son of God went, He demonstrated the authority and power of the kingdom of God! Sin, disease, the very elements, devils and death all obeyed His word! Jesus' sonship ministry was only a "firstfruit," a sample and proto-type of the kingdom authority and power and blessing that shall subdue every enemy and restore all things into God. And now, through His many brethren brought to glory, the further "revelation of Jesus Christ," more of His kingdom authority shall be revealed in us to set creation free and establish His rule in every heart and life of mankind.

There is a further truth concerning the manifestation of Christ as a lion. As the lion devours its prey, so Christ becomes a lion to His people. The lion of Judah is King over all the beasts of human nature. He springs to unscaled heights and to unfathomed depths, and nothing escapes His grasp. He reveals Himself as with the face of a lion to all who receive the call to sonship and to the throne, to devour the bestial nature within them and fully redeem them from carnality, sin, and death. Oh, yes! The lion will consume all of your flesh nature and break every bone of old Adam's body. There will be nothing left of the old human identity! In order for this company of overcoming rulers to be fully transformed into the image of Christ, each of them must experience Christ as the lion of the tribe of Judah who is devouring all our flesh and carnality. The lion of the tribe of Judah raised up within all the sons of God who are called to kingship is the first of the living creatures in the midst of the throne! This is the authority of His Spirit within our spirit, raised up to bring the strength of Christ to ascendancy in our lives! This is the power of His life expressed through us! His authority and power by His Spirit and His Life are the lion in the midst of the throne — the manifest KINGSHIP DOMINION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD!

Now let us look further at this lion of the tribe of Judah who reigns in strength from the throne in the hearts of His chosen ones. Some people tell me today that the manifest sons of God will not go about personally touching men, healing the sick and emptying out the hospitals, performing mighty signs and wonders, casting out devils, raising the dead even out of the mortuaries where they have been embalmed, and so transforming

men's lives on a massive scale that even the maximum security prisons can open their doors and let the inmates walk out free. They tell me that that is not what sonship is! Well, if that is not what sonship ministry is about, what is it about? The sons of God are manifest for the express purpose of setting creation free from the BONDAGE OF CORRUPTION! I wish someone would explain to me how you can set all mankind free from the bondage of corruption without healing the sick, emptying the hospitals, casting out devils, raising the dead, and bringing total redemptive power into all men's lives. Anything short of this will leave this old world right where it is!

Jesus was Himself the demonstration of the power of the kingdom of God on earth! The miracles that Christ wrought while on earth in flesh were His Kingdom Credentials. His miracles announced to the Jews that He was the promised Messiah, the One of whom the prophets wrote. *After John the Baptist was arrested and imprisoned he sent messengers to Jesus to inquire, "Art thou He that should come, or do we look for another?" Jesus told John's inquiring disciples, "Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them."* (Matt. 11:2-6) The signs and wonders wrought by Jesus, the firstborn Son of God, were tangible evidence of the power that would reside in the kingdom — power that would be seen, felt, and experienced!

The miracles Jesus did set forth the nature of the blessings that would exist when the kingdom of God has come to earth as it is in heaven. Jesus on another occasion said, *"If I by the Spirit of God cast out devils, then the kingdom of God is come unto you!"* Jesus clearly shows the relationship between the kingdom and His miracles. Without miracles the kingdom cannot be revealed! Miracles are the manifestation of possessed power, and Jesus is the firstfruits, the firstborn, the first example, and the pattern for all the holy sons of God who shall reign with Him in the kingdom. And while we have now received the firstfruits of the Spirit, and have in fact experienced a foretaste of this miracle power of the kingdom, when we have completely put off the Adamic mind, and have fully matured unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, and the Father witnesses to our sonship, declaring out of the heavens before men, "These are my beloved sons, in whom I am well pleased," then shall all the sons of God be manifested in power and great glory, and shall go forth doing even those "greater works" that Jesus promised His brethren. Only God can teach us these things! Truly He is training us in this very hour in the ways of His kingdom. We have a poster on the wall of our office which says, "We Do Not Believe In Miracles — WE RELY UPON THEM!" Through experiencing the power of God daily in our lives we are learning to walk in the power of the kingdom of God! Aren't you glad!

"And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And His fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto Him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy: and He healed them. And there followed Him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan." (Matt. 4:23-25)

Jesus' power was unlimited, unceasing, and unstoppable! He took the time to do all those things. He didn't have any mass healings — He prayed for, and spoke to, and ministered to, every single one of those people individually. He touched them and imparted His life to them and healed them and blessed them. Multitudes came to Him and He had to make time for every one of them — and I don't have time for the things that clutter up my life today! So what did Jesus do? He sacrificed His life doing nothing but demonstrating the power of the kingdom of God that restores men to wholeness again. No sickness could stand in His presence! No demons could resist His command! The very elements obeyed His voice! Death fled at His word! There was a funeral procession and a widow's son of Nain lay dead, and weeping they passed by Jesus, and the dead could not stay dead! Can you imagine the expression on those people's faces when that boy sat up on the bier! If this isn't sonship ministry, then what is?

Jesus was the firstborn of God's vast family of sons. He came into the earth to reveal the glory of sonship and the power of the kingdom of God. In Him we see what it means to be a manifest son of God! When the storm on the sea was great, and the wind was violent and the waves contrary, and their lives were in danger, all He had to do was speak, "Peace, be still!" and the wind ceased and the waves went to rest in the bosom of the

deep. All nature cries out for the manifestation of the sons of God! Can you imagine a world where all natural disasters of earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, volcanoes, floods, and so on are subject to the authority of the word of the sons of the living God? That is what Jesus came to show us! The purpose of sonship is to remove the curse from off all the creation! What a world that will be!

When He needed money to pay taxes, and had none, He sent Peter to get it out of a fish's mouth. When the multitude was fainting with hunger, He multiplied the loaves and fishes of one little boy to feed five thousand men. That is the kingdom principle of supernatural supply! There was never a need that He could not meet! Can you imagine a world where the poor, the impoverished, the down-trodden, the starving, the men and women with thin, emaciated bodies and sad sunken eyes, the little children with bloated stomachs, and the tormented and dying are finally ruled and governed by a vast company of sons of God who have come to unleash on the whole world of mankind the power of the kingdom revealed in Jesus Christ? If that doesn't sound like sonship ministry, then what does? Jesus always had the power, the wisdom, and the means to take care of them all. This is the power of the kingdom manifested in the Son of God, and it is the power of the kingdom to be revealed through all the sons of God! For this all creation earnestly and expectantly waits! **THIS IS THE STRENGTH, AUTHORITY, POWER, AND DOMINION OF THE LION IN THE MIDST OF THE THRONE! Hallelujah!**

With what joy and holy wonder do I tell you today that this is the power that will again be manifested on earth through the ministry of Christ's many brethren, the sons of God! What a calling rests upon the firstfruits! How humbly we should seek God, how fervently we should cry out to the Lord, that His work be completed in us to bring this sonship ministry to pass in the earth! How we praise God for the in-part ministry of the church age — it has been glorious beyond words. But none can deny that the ministry of Jesus has not been fully duplicated in all the power and glory of the kingdom of God! Who among us can raise his hand and tell me that in him, or in his prayer group, or in his church, or in his movement, or in his crusade the miraculous sonship ministry of Jesus has been reproduced in all its fullness and power? Just think about it! Were we to make such a claim we would all be found liars. After two thousand years of the meticulous formation of the Christ body, creation still groans and travails, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God who shall deliver creation itself from the bondage of corruption!

The greater ministry of the sons of God will allay every disturbing element; break the power of sin and death; put down every wrong; still every clamoring tongue; calm every raging sea; touch every inflamed sore of society; banish all ignorance by the power of truth; unite into harmony every quarrelsome crowd; convert every sinner; convince and transform every terrorist; heal every excruciating pain and suffering; pilot every tossed soul into the harbor of rest; banish all fear, malice, bigotry, and hatred in the melting fire of divine love; bind every demonic power; sweep away every false religion; heal every sickness, disease, and torment; fill to the full every lack and void; impart life more abundant to all men everywhere; and give joy unspeakable and full of glory until the whole earth is full of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea, and all creation pulsates with the scintillating life and light and love of God!

The Lord has absolute power over all nations and all mankind and is the architect of all the ages of time and the destiny of world history. The coming of the firstborn Son into the world was a mighty manifestation of omnipotent power! By the power of the kingdom resident in Him the whole course of human history was altered and the direction of multitudes of lives was changed as men repented of their sins and were reconciled to God. By the power of His indwelling life the lives of multiplied millions of people have been wonderfully transformed. All through the centuries since that time the seed of the kingdom has been working in the earth, bringing forth a harvest of blessing and righteousness among men. The object of all this working and dealing is to bring forth in the earth a company of fully redeemed, transformed, and matured sons of God who shall be so conformed into the express image of the firstborn Son, and so quickened in spirit, soul, and body, by the power of His resurrection, that the manifestation of sonship shall be fully produced in them in the power of the kingdom. This, fully this, and nothing short of this, is the hope of all creation!

The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power! (I Cor. 4:20). The fullness of the kingdom authority and power of God is that power which is coming first to the elect to transform them fully into the image and glory of Christ. That is how it came in the days of the first Son. The power of God came first in the life of Jesus to raise up within Him all the nature and glory and authority of the Father, before showing it forth through Him to

bles and deliver and restore men to God. The Father spent thirty years of Jesus' life developing in Him the understanding, wisdom, discipline, maturity, overcoming victory, authority and power of sonship. Today we are experiencing the power of God within and God must first finish the work of perfecting and maturing His sons, before showing them forth to creation. It is our turn now, and we who have been called to sonship are in our Nazareth growing in wisdom and in stature and in the ways of the Father. The truth we should now know is that when God's sonship company is ready, fully developed, prepared, and matured, this kingdom power will flow out from them unrestrained and uninhibited — power to the full extent! THE LION IN THE THRONE SHALL ROAR WITH A MIGHTY VOICE AND SUDDENLY LEAP FORTH TO THE PREY!

When this idea of power is used in the New Testament the Greek word is *dunamis*, from which we get our English words *dynamite* and *dynamo*. It speaks of God's power as explosive, His divine energy and ability to move and change all things. The other use of the word power is in terms of authority. The Greek word for this is *exousia*. It speaks of authority inherent in a role or office. Simply put, *dunamis* is the ability to do something, *exousia* is the right to do it. The President of the United States possesses in his office the authority needed, for instance, to defend the national and international interests of the United States. This authority is given him by the Constitution of our nation. The word that is understood in the church world is "ordained." When a church ordains a person to teach or preach, they have empowered that person so that they have the right to act in that place. They are given authority to teach and preach and do the work of the ministry.

In the Old Testament, the king had a ring and a scepter. His seal was on his ring and at the end of his scepter. When the king gave someone his ring or his scepter, they had the king's permission to operate in his name. Anything the king's seal was affixed to, the king had given his approval to. His seal was his signature. Only the most trusted, those who had been proven to have the king's best interest at heart, were trusted with this seal. Those trusted men were given authority to operate in the king's name! God has men He has entrusted to operate in His name! He has set His seal in their forehead! Those who receive the seal of the living God in their forehead have come into total submission to His will and way.

It is important to understand that ability or force does not always win out in the area of ruling and reigning. The privilege, the freedom, the right, the authority of *exousia* always wins out over the force or power of *dunamis*. The words of Jesus make this truth crystal clear. *"Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy."* (Luke 10:19) True, the King James Bible states that Christ has given us "power" to tread on serpents and scorpions, but the Greek word is *exousia* meaning authority or jurisdiction. When Jesus speaks of the "power" of the adversaries, however, He uses the word *dunamis* meaning power. Ah, all our adversaries have is POWER, but what the Lord gives us is AUTHORITY! The Lord gives us authority in order to deal with all the power of the enemy!

I mentioned this recently, but will use the following illustration again, as it illuminates the truth so beautifully. Consider an automobile moving along the street. Although with its engine, transmission, and gasoline it is full of power, yet a traffic policeman has authority over it. When he blows his whistle and raises his hand the mighty engine must slow to a whisper and the car must stop. That is the difference between power and authority! Power is always subject to authority! The Son of God gives us authority over all the power of the adversary! As we understand these two terms by the light of the Spirit, it becomes clear that authority without the power to act is worthless, and the power to act without authority is worthless. An army without a general has no direction, and a general without an army has no force. These two realities must be brought together within us if we are to have both God's power and God's authority operating in our lives. You cannot have one without the other! Should you have one without the other you will fail.

This is what made Jesus' sonship ministry so mightily effective! An example of this is when Jesus dealt with the demon in the synagogue in Capernaum. *"And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! For with authority and power He commandeth the unclean spirits and they come out"* (Luke 4:36) Jesus obtained both power and authority in His life! Jesus had the Father's authority within Himself, and He had the power to execute His authority. One without the other is ineffective. When the people witnessed the power and authority used together they were all amazed. The unclean spirit had power but no authority. When One with authority showed up, the spirit had to obey. His power was subject to authority. When people witness those who have obtained God's authority and power to act in a given situation, they

stand amazed. We have all been witnesses to this at times and in certain situations when the Spirit has moved through men to accomplish miraculous things. But God's power and His authority will yet come together in all fullness in the manifestation of the sons of God. THIS WILL BE THE UNVEILING OF THE LION IN THE THRONE!

Authority depends entirely upon our standing, position, and rank. With the position there is authority; without the position, there is no authority. A president-elect has no authority to run the government of the United States until he is sworn into office, until he has been installed into his position. A policeman without his uniform and not standing in the assigned post has no authority to direct traffic. A general taking leave from his duty has no authority to command an army. Likewise, our heavenly authority depends solely upon the reality of our calling and position in the order of God. All the authority of the sergeant or lieutenant who commands soldiers depends not only on his uniform and position, but also on his submitting to his superior. If he rebels against his superior and refuses or fails to obey orders, he will lose his official rights. In like manner we must not only be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, but we must also walk in the Spirit, being led by the Spirit, and obedient to the will of the Father. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God!

The ones who receive power and honor from the Father, who are seated together with Christ in the heavenlies, and are submitted to HIS LORDSHIP, are then in the position to accomplish great and mighty things in the kingdom of God! We have experienced a measure of power and authority in the church realm by the gifts and ministries of the Spirit. But there is yet to be an official installation of the sons of God into the realm of HIS FULLNESS, just as Jesus received at the river Jordan. When the Father witnesses from heaven before men, *"These are my beloved sons, in whom I am well pleased,"* then shall the greatest drama in the history of mankind begin! The manifest sons of God shall go forth in the fullness of the power and authority of the Spirit to subdue the nations and deliver creation from the bondage of corruption. For this very thing the Father is preparing us in this hour!

The kingdom of God is the authority and power of the Father manifest first in the personal lives of His elect, then in the world around us, unto all times and the ages of this world, and finally in the whole universe. The kingdom is the power of God that changes everything in its reality, function, and influence, as determined by the Lord in His great and glorious program of creation, redemption, and the restitution of all things. The power of the kingdom of God shall eventually change us in our consciousness and experience from human to divine, from earthly to heavenly, and from mortal to immortal; then it shall in like manner change the world around us, including all the nations of men and the earth itself, and then it shall change the vast universe unto the endlessness of infinity. THE WHOLE CREATION SHALL BE DELIVERED FROM THE BONDAGE OF CORRUPTION! I wonder sometimes whether we have yet fully understood the enormous, fathomless implications of that word! The elect of the Lord today is experiencing the unfolding power of the kingdom of God within; it is the power of the kingdom that is consuming everything within us that is foreign to the life, nature, ways, and will of the Father. Christ is taking His throne and is now reigning in our lives! And He must continue to reign in us until He has put every enemy under His feet! THIS IS THE MIGHT OF THE LION IN THE THRONE!

The lion of the tribe of Judah within us is the dominion and authority of God being formed in our lives. It is the spirit of kingship! It is the omnipotent power of Christ manifest within us as He reigns on the throne of our hearts to transform us into His image and stature. As we truly seek the fullness of His kingdom with our whole heart, we experience the power of His kingdom to purge us of all iniquities and present us faultless before His throne. We shall first be presented before His throne, standing upon the sea of glass mingled with fire, as a people fully prepared, equipped, and qualified to ascend to His throne and sit and reign with Him upon His throne (Rev. 3:21). When His power has cleansed us of all that is foreign and contrary to His nature, not only will He have taken His great power to reign in us, but He shall then proceed to reign through us. He wisely withholds the fullness of the authority and power of His kingdom until He has thoroughly changed us into His very own image and likeness.

Jesus rose from the dead and appeared on earth in the sight of men in the body of His resurrection, which is the spiritual body of incorruption and immortality. With this clear and obvious demonstration of the power of the kingdom of God, all doubts and fears were removed from the minds of His disciples. Now they knew that He was the King of kings! Now they knew the reality of His message of life and glory! In Him they saw the

fullness of the power of His kingdom! He was now forever above and beyond the bondage of corruption, free from the limitations of this mortal body and this physical, material realm, and free from any possibility of ever dying again.

And now, in the end of this age, Christ's many brethren shall come to that same fullness of His kingdom. In them the kingdom of God shall come with power, even the power of His resurrection! Then shall creation see a race of men upon earth who dwell in a realm above sin, sorrow, limitation and death, for in them the bondage of corruption has been completely broken. Then shall creation see the manifestation of the sons of God, just as Jesus' disciples saw Him manifested in all the glory and power of resurrection. Christ was revealed to His disciples, and He is still revealed only to His disciples, His very own brethren. But the manifest sons of God shall be revealed unto all creation! It is the Lord's own people who now hunger and thirst after Christ as life. But it is the creation that waits and longs and travails to behold the manifestation of the sons of God! Christ is now our hope of glory, but Christ revealed in His many brethren is the hope of the groaning creation! Christ is now our life, but His life in His sons shall become the life of creation, delivering all men from the bondage of corruption, raising them up into a wonderful place in the liberty of the children of God (Rom. 8:19-21). Oh, the wonder of it!

For those who entertain the notion that the "revelation of Jesus Christ" is just the ordinary living out of the Christ life in the every-day experience of believer's lives, let me tell you plainly that the world has been blessed for two thousand years with beautiful spiritual men and women who have walked in high places in God. Love and grace and mercy and power have flowed out of the lives of many godly saints throughout the age. But none of this has delivered creation from the bondage of corruption nor raised it up into the glorious liberty of the children of God! God has a greater plan than these dear folk are capable of grasping. Jesus personified the kingdom of God! From the time of His birth until the moment of His ascension He revealed within Himself all the powers of the kingdom of God. We can understand absolutely nothing about what God intends to do for creation through His sons until we SEE JESUS! In Him we see what the power of the kingdom is, and what it can do, and what it shall do for all mankind. He is the firstfruits of kingdom dominion! We are also becoming a firstfruits of His kingdom by virtue of our calling in Christ.

The power of the kingdom was manifest in Jesus' virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His revealing the nature and purpose of the Father on earth, in the power of His word, in the signs and wonders and miracles He wrought, in the transformation of men's lives He effected, in His transfiguration on the mount, and in His resurrection from the dead. The glory that was manifest in His wonderful life, in His outward works of power, in the impartation of salvation into men, in the glory of His transfiguration, and in the power of His resurrection was the result of His inner condition. The power within Him was such that the scintillating brilliance of His Father's glory radiated from within and shined through His garments on the holy mount. The Amplified Bible states that Jesus "became resplendent with divine brightness." It is the same divine brightness that blinded Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus and totally transformed and revolutionized his life!

I do not hesitate to tell you that it is that same divine brightness that shall out-shine from within us just as it did with Jesus, and that is the power of the kingdom of God! If you think the kingdom is merely establishing righteousness on earth by some display of divine force for a thousand years, you have completely missed the power of the kingdom! Oh, yes, the kingdom will bring righteousness to the nations — but much, much more! The fullness of the power of His resurrection is what we long to experience; it is that same power for which the whole creation groans and travails, by which all things, and all men, and all creatures, and all worlds, above and beneath, shall be given an entrance into the holy, righteous, divine, incorruptible, immortal, eternal SPIRITUAL WORLD OF GOD!

Hallelujah for the lion in the throne! To be continued...
J. Preston Eby

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 74
THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES AND THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS (Continued)
BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART SEVENTY-FOUR

THE OX
THE FACE OF A MAN

"In the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes before and behind. And the first living creature was like a lion, and the second living creature was like an ox, and the third living creature had a face as a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle." (Rev. 4:6-7)

The four living creatures are in the "midst of the throne" denoting kingship. The four living creatures had four faces in the likeness of four different creatures, representing four aspects of kingship which are true in Christ Jesus and are also wrought out in the life of every son of God apprehended to share His throne. Each of the faces reveals an aspect of the attributes, characteristics, and qualities which qualify one to rule and reign with Christ in His kingdom. They are, furthermore, the four-fold manifestation of Himself to all mankind!

THE OX

In our previous message we considered the face of the lion which speaks of strength — power, authority, and dominion — for he is the most powerful of all the big cats, and is known as the king of the beasts, and the king of the forest, by virtue of his awesome prowess! This brings us to the face of the ox which is symbolic of servanthood, for he is the largest and most useful of all domestic animals and is historically a beast of burden, one that draws wagons, plows fields, can be milked, and gives meat — a servant to man from time immemorial. With the face of the ox, Christ is revealed and manifested as the compassionate servant of all. The firstborn Son of God did not come to lord it over people, or to compel them to obey Him. He came to serve! (Phil. 2:7). The service Christ renders is done with compassionate mercy and out of a heart of divine love. It is the greatest service ever! He stoops to touch and receive and bless every man right where he is, without condemnation or judgment. His is the service of redeeming love and transforming grace that draws a person to serve and obey Him. When He comes to us and draws us with the cords of lovingkindness, by the sacrifice of Himself, we can do nothing else but respond in love and devotion to Him who has redeemed us!

Only the spiritually ambitious man will lay hold upon the kingdom of God. To be spiritually ambitious is to earnestly desire God's best — in His way and time, according to His purpose, and always and only for His glory. It means to seek first the kingdom of God in all things! It means to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, soul, and strength. It means to come only to do the will of the Father, and to do only what we see the Father doing. To be spiritually ambitious is the very spirit of sonship! There is a place for ambitious men in the kingdom of God! Jesus explained the process, *"Whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all."* He did not turn the man away from the ambition to be great. He simply told him how greatness can be achieved — become the servant of all!

Then there are degrees of this greatness. If you want to be great, be "the servant of all." If you want to be first, be "the bond-slave of all." The servant and the bond-slave represent degrees of self-giving, and they, in turn, represent degrees of greatness attained, namely, "great" and "first." Beyond that is a level to which Jesus Himself attained. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." In other words, since He went deeper than being servant of all, or a bond-slave of all, in that He gave His very life, so He becomes the Son of God upon the throne of the heavens, which is more than being great, or first, among a group — it is the acme of being! So the door is open for ambition. You may be least, or less, or great, or greater, or greatest, or first, or a son of God upon the throne!

Yet, it does not mean that we give in order to get — that is not the kingdom of God at all! We do not put on humility and serve others with the motive of becoming great, attaining to exalted positions of power and honor.

If we are serving to gain advantage, to receive a position of authority over others, for the sake of authority, then we are not truly humble servants at all, but devious, cunning, crafty, deceptive, scheming, snaky, contriving, plotting, insincere hypocrites — and our motive is all wrong! That is not how the kingdom works! We do not serve to be made great — we serve because we are great with God's greatness!

This is not a position of exercising power over others but of serving them. Serving is the power and the greatness! The motivation of the desires of those who are truly called to sonship is the same as the Captain of our salvation. Filled with the great love of God, the desire to attain to this position is to give ourselves in sacrifice and service for the deliverance and restoration of the rest of God's creatures. Having attained to this deliverance from the bondage of corruption as the firstfruits of the creation, our only desire is to labor together with the Lord in the deliverance of the rest of His creation, to lift them up to the same level of life as He has lifted us. The heart of God, the heart of unconditional, unlimited, and sacrificial love and all goodness, is the greatest heart in the universe. It is not serving that makes us great, it is true divine greatness that causes us to serve! Oh, the mystery of it!

Let us see how beautifully Jesus taught this by His own example. Everything is prepared and set in order for the last supper, to the very water to wash the feet of the guests, as their custom was. Christ and His disciples gather in the upper room to eat and fellowship together on this solemn night. Each one waits for the other, for there is no servant available to perform the customary service of washing the guest's feet. Washing feet was one of the basest tasks in the culture of Jesus' day. It was a job usually done by a house slave. Just as we offer a visitor hospitality, so in Jesus' time they customarily washed a visitor's feet. Washing feet was undesirable responsibility: the roads were dusty well enough. But the filth of the road was more than dust! The transportation of that day was the camel, the donkey, the horse, and the mule. It takes little imagination to understand that the streets and roads were littered with their manure. The traveler's feet would be covered with this as well as being caked with dust. The washing of feet was assigned to the lowliest slave because it meant handling the filth of the streets. This job was thought to be beneath the dignity of the "good man of the house."

Not one of the twelve thinks of humbling himself to do the job, for, after all, are they not the honored ones, the disciples of the very Son of God, the flaming apostles of the kingdom, the future rulers of the world! Even at the table they were full of the thought — who should be greatest in the kingdom that was then beginning to dawn. Suddenly, unexpectedly Jesus stood up from the table, and began to take off His inner layer of garments until He was stripped to the waist, wearing only His loin cloth. He then took a large towel and wrapped it around Himself, poured water into a large brass basin, and, beginning with one of the men at the end of the table, laid heavy emphasis upon His words of a few moments before, "I am in the midst of you as one that serves." Oh, the wonder of it! on which angels gazed with adoring wonder. Christ, the Creator and King of the universe, at whose word all worlds and galaxies flooded the infinity of space, who might with one word have compelled any man or legions of angels to do His bidding, Himself chose the slave's place as His own, taking the soiled, filthy feet in His own holy hands, and washes them. It was to this task that the Lord of glory stooped!

But listen more carefully to the divine why and how of this wondrous spectacle. Jesus does it in the full consciousness of His divine glory, for the apostle John records, "*Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God and went to God, rose...*" What a startling combination of sublime cause with curious consequence! How could Jesus have done this? How could the Master and the King of the universe wash dung from His disciple's feet? He could do it because HE WAS SECURE IN WHO HE WAS. He knew that the Father had given all things into His hands. He knew that He had come from the Father and that He was the Son of God and was soon to ascend the throne. He knew that He was going back to the Father after He defeated sin, sickness, death, hell, and the grave. He didn't have to prove anything to Himself or anyone else. His life had already proven who He was to those who had eyes to see. And He didn't stoop so low to become a tyrant, to rule over this world by force. Oh, no! He came to heal and bless and deliver and transform, to reign by serving! Ah, yes, my beloved, once we thoroughly know who we are there is no need to proclaim it, no need to sound a trumpet, no need to wear a badge, to remind people of how special we are. Once we know that we are the sons of God WE ARE FREED TO SERVE!

You see, it wasn't in spite of the fact of His greatness that Jesus took the place of the servant — it was because of His greatness! The greatness of Jesus is the greatness of the Father's heart. The greatness of Jesus is the greatness of divine love and humility. The greatness of Jesus is the greatness of sonship! For the hands into which the Father gives all things nothing is common or unclean. Because one is the offspring of the God of all grace, compassion, love, mercy, and goodness, in whose hands all things are given, it is not difficult for him to stoop so low. In this taking the form of a servant, Jesus proclaims the divine order of the kingdom of God and the nature of the kings and priests who reign. The higher one stands in attainment in the kingdom, the more it is his joy to be servant of all! *“Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.” (Matt. 20:27)* *“He that is greatest among you shall be your servant.” (Matt. 23:11)*

The higher I rise in the consciousness of being like Christ, the deeper shall I stoop to serve the creation around me. The reason why we so often do not bless others is that we wish to appear to them as their superiors in blessing, calling, or rank. But that is not the spirit of sonship! The truth is that only as a son can we truly be a servant. It was the Son of God who assumed the form of a servant and humbled Himself. Ah, beloved elect of the Lord, walk among men as sons of the Most High God! A son of God is only in the world to show forth his Father's glory, to demonstrate how God-like and how blessed it is to live only and always to find a way to love, bless, redeem, and restore God's fallen creation. Someone has well said, “God has three sorts of servants in the world: some are slaves, and serve Him from fear; others are hirelings, and serve for wages; and the last are sons, who serve because they love.”

I once read a story which beautifully illustrates why the mighty God would stoop so low as to appear as a servant in His sons in order to restore creation. A little child was handed over to another by her own father — not because he wanted to part with her, but they were very poor, and so that she could have sufficient food and clothing, a good education and opportunity in life, he gave her into a rich man's keeping, letting her be adopted by the rich man as his own daughter. He then hired himself as a servant to the rich man where he was given a small cottage to live on the grounds. He was always there and daily kept watch over that little life until she matured; and the girl, as she grew up, always felt a peculiar bond with him and that she could always rely upon the unselfish love and wise counsel of him who seemed but a serving man. Her father, as she supposed him to be, was cold, demanding, and even cruel. The day came when he repudiated her in a fit of rage because she had brought what he perceived as shame upon his name. In that dark moment the serving man stepped forward, and flung his arms around her, shouting, with the fierceness of righteous indignation to the man who had so cruelly abused her, “She never was your child!” Then the girl knew why it was that she had felt such acceptance, concern, care, peace, and joy in the presence of the serving-man. She had listened to his language of love many a time, not knowing the speaker was her real father!

Old father flesh, old father Adam, old father the devil repays all men with cruelty, injustice, baseness, lack, pain, fear, sorrow, and death. But there is a better Father — the One that sent you here, the one who has watched over you, cared for you, counseled you, blessed you, helped you, entreated you, wooed you and overshadowed you with His love as you have passed through this world of tears and trouble. Even when you knew it not, He was already your Father! And in Jesus He came as a servant to minister to your need, to lift and redeem and restore you unto Himself and His kingdom. And now, bless His name, He comes in many sons to reveal His heart of love to the whole vast creation and restore all things. We, as sons of God, are among men as Him that serveth!

This is the great miracle of sonship! It unites greatness and humility in a divine combination. It is the figure of an ox in the midst of a glorious throne! Oh, the wonder of it! This is the new creation in Christ Jesus! The great secret lies in the indwelling spirit of Jesus. Being made partakers of His nature and mind we are able to stand before Pilate, and when he says, “Are you a king?” we answer, “Thou sayest it.” On the same night it is possible to kneel before our brethren with a towel and a basin of water, washing their feet — cleansing their walk — in the spirit of service and humility. Only in sonship do power and humility find their true relationships and their true balance. Have you ever seen the President of the United States cutting the grass at the White House? How about Queen Elizabeth scrubbing the floors of her palace? Or the Prime Minister of Canada cleaning the toilet? We don't expect people of high position to do lowly and seemingly unimportant tasks. Yet Jesus has revealed the law of a Higher Kingdom, a kingdom where power and servanthood are joined together in a divine outpouring of love, grace, and goodness!

Lyn Gitchel, a dear friend of ours in Pennsylvania, once shared a precious point about the meaning of what we call ministry. She wrote, *“The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and give His life a ransom for many. The whole idea that we have of “ministry” has got warped up in these days, and I believe we shall have to have a new picture of what ministry really is put into our minds by God. The word ministry comes from two Latin words, minis, (from which we get minus), which means lesser, and tri, which is the Latin word for servant. Now, when you think about it, a LESSER SERVANT is a whole lot different from what we think of when the word ministry is put in our minds. We think of accomplished pastors, famous evangelists, large meetings, crowds with a tremendous flow of miracles and worship, and people that can really hold your attention by their great preaching — and then we find that the word means LESSER SERVANT!*

“The impact of this hit me recently and I’ll share the experience with you. For most of my life I have served in a professional capacity. Before I was an ordained minister I was a registered nurse. I have never really worked as a servant of any kind, until recently. A friend of mine was doing a little job here in town which involves helping an elderly lady who has had a stroke. You need to help her in whatever capacity she needs, from housework to bathing her. My friend had to leave town and, to help her out, I took the job. Nearly a year later I am still doing it! One day I was kneeling on the bathroom floor drying her feet when suddenly I said to myself, ‘Whatever am I doing here — I’m supposed to be an Ordained Minister!’ Immediately the Spirit of God answered within my heart, ‘You wanted to minister, didn’t you?’

*“The time has come when we must understand that ministry is not preaching but servanthood. We are going to have to learn all over again what it means to serve people with the same heart of love that Jesus had when He walked among men. It was not beneath Him to lift a woman caught in adultery to her feet and speak a word of reassurance to her, nor was it beneath Him to eat at the house of an ungodly tax-gatherer and his friends. Jesus did not hire a huge auditorium and put out publicity announcing great meetings. He simply moved among men and women where they were and touched them with love, and healing, and compassion”
— end quote.*

There is the story of a man who desired from the Lord a true understanding of heaven and hell. One night in a dream he was told that he would soon receive this understanding. He was taken into a room where a few dozen people were sitting around a huge kettle of stew. Each one had only a long-handled spoon to eat with, and their arms were straightened so they could not bend them and bring the food into their mouths. The people were extremely upset and angry at their plight, shouting and cursing those who had done this to them. This, he was told, was hell. Then he was taken into another room which would be a picture to him of heaven. To his surprise, the room was identical. The large pot was there, as well as people with stiff arms and long spoons. There was one major difference, however. In this room, each one would smile and lovingly dip into the stew with his or her long-handled spoon and feed his fellow on the other side of the kettle! In this day we are being translated from hell to heaven within ourselves as we learn the ways of the kingdom which is the kingdom of love — by SERVING!

Every new year the Queen of England publishes her Honors List, conferring titles and decorations upon men and women who have rendered distinguished service to mankind or to the country or to the political party in power. I have in mind a little Honors List of my own! There is not much point in publishing it, because you will never have heard of these people. They include a dear sister who was poor in this world’s goods, who lived in a little house that approached being a shack, yet was committed to God’s purposes for this Day and vibrant with her love of God. She was always sharing the Word with the neighborhood children who graced her porch, continually cooking and sharing with others, fixing up and maintaining a building for the gatherings of the saints, entertaining the ministries the Lord sent their way, and encouraging everyone. She never murmured or complained about anything that came her way.

Honor also goes to a brother who prayed earnestly and is credited with “praying down” a mighty move of the Spirit of God many years ago, by which others with whom he was associated were propelled into world-wide fame, while he unpretentiously cherished the deep truths and hope of sonship and the reconciliation of all things, continuing in prayer, setting an example of righteousness and humility before his family and community, regularly visiting the widows, orphans, and shut-ins. I honor another brother whose name I do not even know

who, during our Conferences in Florida years ago, would sweep and clean the meeting place until the wee hours of the morning (without being asked — it wasn't his responsibility!), while most of the brethren and the preachers were enjoying rich fellowship over a mid-night spread of food at the local restaurants. The one thing that these quiet heroes have in common is that they lived the spirit of servanthood without pretense or any motive other than a pure love and the deep desire to bless creation and advance the kingdom of God into men's lives. Truly such are to be called great in the kingdom of heaven! In the spirit of these precious ones we see THE FACE OF THE OX IN THE MIDST OF THE THRONE!

That there are different levels in the kingdom of God, from the least in the kingdom to the greatest, Jesus clearly taught. He told His disciples, *“Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”* (Matt. 11:11) On another occasion we read of Jesus' disciples that *“they disputed among themselves who should be the greatest. Jesus sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.”* (Matt. 9:34-35) Christ Himself was the greatest among them! He said, “I am in the midst of you as he that serveth.” He was the humblest, and therefore, the greatest, but had He no authority? He had authority in heaven and on earth! Because He takes the place of deepest humility, does that strip Him of His kingly authority? Not at all! It intensifies and magnifies it! Both the lion and the ox are in the midst of the throne! They reign there together! This is revealed so powerfully in the Lord Jesus.

Many Bible commentators endeavor to make a case for the idea that the characteristics of the four living creatures are portrayed in the four Gospels: Matthew showing us Jesus as the lion of the tribe of Judah; Mark revealing the Lord as the ox, the servant of all; Luke portraying the Lord as the Man above all men; and John manifesting Christ as the eternal Word, or the flying eagle. Personally, I find very little ground for this. The truth is, if I were picking one of the four Gospels as a portrait of Christ as the ox-servant, I would choose the book of Matthew. There are more passages concerning greatness through servanthood in the book of Matthew than in all the other three Gospels combined! You will note that nearly all the scriptures I have quoted on the subject in this message are taken from the gospel of Matthew!

Christ was the greatest, yet He took the place of the lowest. He who stooped from the highest heaven, not only to earth, but to the deepest hell, who descended into the deepest depths to seek for erring and sinful men, is greatest. That is why He exercises authority today in the heavens and on the earth! He now takes the highest place as the Head of the body, the High Priest of our profession, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, and the Head of all principality and power. He is the greatest! And He is still the servant of all!

He that would rise to be the highest,
Must first come down to be the lowest,
And then ascend to be the highest
By keeping down to be the lowest.

God has called a people aside in this hour and brought them to a place of brokenness, humility, and nothingness in the eyes of the world and the church systems of man. We have obeyed the word the apostle Peter admonished, *“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.”* (I Pet. 5:6) God is about to exalt His sons, but it shall be the exaltation of humility.

Many years ago amidst a great moving of the Spirit of God the revelation of sonship fell with wonder upon our ears and burst with glory within our hearts. We sat enraptured for hours, day after day, and were taught by the Spirit about the Father and His purposes and about that elect company He has called, apprehended and chosen to be His sons to rule with Him in His kingdom and restore all things. We learned that these sons would have power unlimited — power over everything! Power over sin, power over sickness, power over demons, power over the elements, power over the nations, and power over death. We were going to rule and reign in power, and our eyes sparkled like diamonds in the noonday sun and our hearts swelled with joy in expectation of the wonderful position and authority we would soon have in the kingdom. We could think and talk of nothing else but the power we would have, and in our glorying we tried at times to usurp and demonstrate this power. We were intoxicated with illusions of grandeur as we pressed our way into the

kingdom and the exalted position of sitting on the throne with Jesus and ruling the world and the vastnesses of infinity forever.

Little did we understand in those early days that the way up is down! The carnal mind would have us believe that the way up is up. Thus we have pressed our way into ministry, pressed our way into the kingdom, stood on the promises, demanded of God our “rights,” presuming even to command God to do this and that, and sought to seize the throne. It is true, elect of the Lord, that God wants to take us UP — high into the realms of God — UP to the throne — but God would have us know that the way UP is always DOWN! The one who serves the people well as a priest is the one who will also reign well as a king. “They shall be priests...and they shall reign.” That is the order! Though He is calling us to be kings with authority over all, yet our inner spirit must be that of a servant that we might freely minister out of a contrite spirit and a broken heart the compassion and love of God right down where creation is. Do you want to know what manifest sonship is? CONSIDER JESUS! Jesus was the most lowly and humble of all men, and also the most powerful and authoritative. He was not a super-duper-elite-country-club Son of God. He didn’t bounce onto the platform under the lights with a flare of worldly showmanship and then disappear out the back door to escape contact with the people. Oh, no! He was the ox in the throne bearing the burden, pulling the wagon, plowing the fields, and giving His life to be meat for mankind. That is the mystery!

The following prophecy from the late **Norene Nicholls** has come into my hands at this time, and it surely speaks for this Day. *“A strange and wondrous thing is about to come, for the Lord has spoken to those that will hear, and their ears have been sharpened. There is a gathering of the royal family, and the shepherds of Israel shall become rulers on the thrones. They have stood in desolate places and listened to the low sound of the sheep — even a little flock in a wilderness place, but now it shall change. The shepherds who have proven their worth in aloneness shall now come forth to be acknowledged of those who would not have Me to reign over them in times past. Behold the thing is at the door! Some have chosen high places for themselves, but others have allowed the Lord to choose for them, and thus have they been separated from their brethren and lost to sight. But now shall events bring forth the deserted ones and show them before kings who are really not kings at all. The scepter of these kings shall be righteousness and the girdle of faithfulness shall be upon their loins. They shall be recognized, not because they are of great stature or commanding of personality, but they shall be recognized because the Spirit of the Lord is upon them!*

“Men shall no longer gather to men, but the men of God shall gather to the establishment of truth where the angels activate the holy ground. There shall strange but wondrous things take place, for instructions from the presence of the Lord shall be heard, and kings shall lift their voices in confidence and courage at the declaration. And, there too, shall be that peculiar anointing reserved for kings come into being; and that anointing shall teach you all things. Then from that pillar of truth shall the kings issue forth to do exploits and turn the aliens back from the shores of the land promised. Be not afraid nor amazed, for the Lord has spoken in verity and truth and shall bring it to pass. No longer shall you stand idly by and wait for another day, but there shall be activity of a new source — yet activity that is effortless and quiet. You shall slip quietly into palaces and judgment halls and speak a word in season. You shall stand before prelates and counselors, but not one of your words shall fail. You shall see the manifestation of what you have spoken, and men shall shut their mouths nor argue the point. This is a strange work to be done, but it shall come by the decree of God and stand unmovable before heaven and earth. The closing of the day is also the opening of the Day, and to this time have you been called. So it is and shall be.” — end quote.

THE FACE OF A MAN

The third living creature had a face as a man. The face of a man indicates intelligence — for it is this which distinguishes man from the brute creation. It is intelligence with understanding, knowledge, and wisdom, for Adam was created in the image and likeness of God, revealing in his noble face the inward nature and character of God, and was thereby given dominion over all the works of God’s hands. Every son of God is being filled with this divine intelligence with heavenly understanding, knowledge, and wisdom. We can never reign apart from these!

Let us consider these three ingredients in intelligence. The first is understanding. Understanding is an ability and function of the mind. Without mind there can be no understanding! A man’s understanding corresponds

precisely to the condition, development, and quality of his mind. Every created life form possesses mind and the understanding of the creature is limited by the quality of its mind. Quality of mind is first and foremost an inherited characteristic. For instance, a cat thinks like a cat, knows as a cat, understands as a cat, and acts like a cat because it was born a cat, therefore possessing the brain and mind of a cat. Until recently we had a cat in our home. This cat would come and lie in our room or curl up on my lap while I watched the evening news. While I was very interested in the news stories, the cat had positively no interest at all! He couldn't care less! It's not that he didn't see the pictures flashing across the screen or hear the sound from the speakers, he could see and hear just fine, but he had no understanding of them, so he just curled up and went to sleep! It simply isn't possible for cats to understand things human. Humans are of a different and higher order than are cats. Cats may see men, and observe their movements, yet there is no common ground of knowledge. The cat has no true comprehension of what it sees. It discerns only things pertaining to its own realm. It has positively no understanding of the ways of man, or of the meaning of his movements, or words, or plans. Cat minds function on the level of cat nature, while human minds function on the plane of human nature!

Likewise, God, the Spirit, is of a different and higher order of life than is the natural, Adamic man! The mind of the natural man functions on the level of human nature whereas the mind of God functions on the plane of divine nature. There is no common ground of understanding or knowledge between the two. Therefore, the natural man, the Adamic man, is totally incapable of comprehending that which pertains to the realm of God! God is of a different and higher order than is the natural man. Paul stated it so well when he said, *"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."* (I Cor. 2:14) For natural minds to comprehend things spiritual is equally as impossible as for cats to comprehend things human! There is no common ground of knowledge. So, until humans receive of God's Spirit, the Spirit that knows and understands the things that pertain to the realm of God, it is impossible for them to have any understanding, either of God, of His word, or of His ways.

With what truth did Paul write to the saints, saying, *"For who could really understand a man's inmost thoughts except the spirit of man himself? How much less could anyone understand the thoughts of God except the very Spirit of God? We have now received not the spirit of the world but the Spirit of God Himself, so that we can understand God's generosity towards us."* (I Cor. 2:11-12, Moffatt) The spirit of man in the unregenerate individual is truly the offspring of God who is spirit, yet it does not serve the Lord, for it is in darkness, and knows not from whence it came nor who or what it is. This is easy to understand! If a human baby were placed in a dark room and kept there in captivity without contact with other humans or the outside world, it would grow up knowing neither from whence it came or what it is. It would be unable to talk, unable to understand those who do talk, unable to walk, and incapable of functioning at all in the human world. It would be less than an animal! But let someone discover its plight, give it light, get it in contact with other humans, expose it to the world about it, shower it with love and attention, and it will grow up comprehending and corresponding to the world to which it belongs! That has been the precise state of every man born into this world of Adamic consciousness! Man's spirit, truly the offspring of God, has been buried, concealed and locked up in the dark room of the dreadful deep beneath the outer shell of our soulical consciousness and the limiting confines of the mortal body. There has been no fellowship with that spiritual world from which we came and to which we pertain! But our Lord Jesus Christ is the One who has come to rescue us, and He is that *"TRUE LIGHT which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."* (John 1:9) The wise man has told us that the spirit of man is the candle of the Lord (Prov. 20:27). Ah, when HE lights our candle, when our spirit is quickened by His Spirit, there is awakening, illumination, comprehension, and we begin to see into realms of spiritual life and reality to which, heretofore, we had been blind. This involves more by far than someone informing us that we are a spirit, a spiritual being, and that we should therefore actively begin to live out of our spiritual reality and identity instead of from the intellect of our soul and the desires of the body. That would be like someone sticking their head in through the window where the little child I described is in captivity, and saying to it, "You're a human being, you can talk like a human being, walk like a human being, act like a human being, now get up and act like it!" That's not enough! It is not by mere information or human effort that we can live out of spirit — the spiritual life! The awakening we must receive involves the sovereign, dynamic, living, quickening, redemptive operation of God within our spirit effecting the actual standing up within us of a new creature raised up by the power of God through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost (Titus 3:5). Regeneration is a renewal that consists of the inbreathing of God's Spirit into our spirit, effecting union with His life. Only man, of all God's glorious creation, can be penetrated and lighted up within

by the mind of God, to have an understanding of things unseen by the inspiration of the eternal Father, in one word, to be spirit, and have the consciousness of God, and contact and communication with the heavenly realm, being irradiated, permeated, filled, enabled, glorified by His infinite Spirit and His divine fullness. It is indeed wonderful!

And then after men receive of God's Spirit, and are quickened and awakened by it, the depth of their knowledge and understanding is wholly in proportion to their growth and development in the realm of the spirit. The mind of Christ must be "put on" and we are transformed by the renewing of our minds. Upon being born again we realize that we are actual sons of God, yet babes, "babes in Christ." And the understanding of newborn babes is limited in the extreme! They cannot have a deep knowledge and comprehension until they have passed through many experiences, been schooled in the wisdom of heaven, grown up into the stature of mature divine life, and been filled with the mind of God, the spiritual mind being fully developed within.

We who have received of God's Spirit have been renewed in the spirit of our mind, that is, we have taken on a new mind originating in a newly quickened Christ-consciousness, so that we now think and act as an entirely new creation, a new man, a new creature. As we have followed on to know the Lord, more and more we have found our darkened minds giving way to this new creation mind which is the mind of Jesus Christ. Paul wrote, *"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."* The mind that was in Jesus was the Father's mind! Because He was fully possessed of His Father's mind, He was able to say, "I and the Father are one." This is the reality into which every son of God is being brought! In every son who reigns with Christ in those glorious ages to come, it will be the mind of our heavenly Father that will rule the world and all things and all realms. The Father has purposed that He will rule the universe by that man, the many-membered Christ, whom He has chosen, and those sons, every one, will be possessed with the Father's mind!

All understanding is in the mind, therefore, the understanding of God is in the mind of Christ, which is the mind of the Spirit, which is the mind of the new creation man. We do not understand the spiritual realities of the world of our heavenly Father with our natural minds. It is not the same mind that understands how to drive an automobile that understands the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Oh, no! It is the new mind, the spiritual mind that comprehends things spiritual. When the firstborn Son of God received the seven spirits of God He received the spirit of understanding (Isa. 11:2). This was not the understanding of the same mind that made furniture in Joseph's carpenter shop! This spirit of understanding is the very MIND OF GOD — to know and understand as God knows and understands! The mind of Christ is being developed today within every son from one stage to another until we understand all things as our heavenly Father understands! Can you not see the mystery? THIS IS DIVINE INTELLIGENCE, THE FACE OF A MAN IN THE IMAGE OF GOD IN THE MIDST OF THE THRONE!

The second ingredient in intelligence is knowledge. All of the Lord's people are admonished seek after the knowledge of the Lord! The apostle Peter exhorts, *"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."* (II Pet. 3:18) Paul's earnest desire for the saints was that they might *"walk worthy of the Lord, increasing in the knowledge of God"* (Col. 1:10) Something of the magnitude of this knowledge of God is expressed in these words of inspiration, *"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counselor? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever!"* (Rom. 11:33-36)

As the mighty oak lies hidden in the tiny acorn, so the knowledge of God lies concealed in the seed of Christ planted in the womb of our hearts. As the great oak inches heavenward year after year, so the knowledge of God bursts forth from realm to realm out of the life of God in our spirits. *"Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him."* (Col. 3:9-10) Renewed in knowledge! What a revelation that is! And the knowledge that is being renewed in us is the knowledge we possessed when once we were in the image of God! That is the clear meaning of those words. The new man is being renewed in knowledge, and that knowledge restores to us the consciousness of God's image and likeness.

One can only be renewed in knowledge by refreshing or recalling something he has known before. We often read over such statements so lightly and carelessly, missing the true implication and import of the words! The

scriptures are very clear that each of us came into this world out of the bosom of the Father. Before the Creator formed you, He knew you. He didn't know you in your present physical form as Joe Smith or Sally Brown, but He knew you as spirit. God spoke to you about His plan for your life before ever you were formed as an embryo in the womb of your mother. Paul states it so clearly when he says, *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love."* (Eph. 1:3-4) The Amplified Bible reads, *"Even as He chose us, actually picked us out for Himself in Christ, before the foundation of the world."*

Never doubt this reality for a moment — the only way God could have loved you, chose you in Christ, and picked you out for His own before the foundation of the world is that you truly existed in and with Him before the appearing of the worlds. Nothing can be plainer than that! Yet we have supposed that we were just recently, in this life, apprehended of God to sonship. I thought the work of God began in my life seventy years ago. Now I find that the thing God is doing with humanity began in eternity! It didn't begin in time. It began before the ages were framed! God loved me, knew me, counseled with me, and picked me out for His unique purpose before the foundation of the world. My origin was in God! God begat me by His Word — in Christ — as spirit before He exhaled me as spirit into a very unique body upon earth.

Each of us were born into a mortal, physical body and into a world of darkness, sin, and death. Our spiritual life was buried, covered, encased, concealed within the prison house of a natural, worldly, human consciousness just as the little child I mentioned earlier was imprisoned in a room with no ability to relate to the world he was in or to understand, express, expand, or function on that level. But this was according to God's plan! It wasn't Adam that created the cunning serpent or invented the desirable tree of the knowledge of good and evil or placed in man's path the way of death. Oh, no! It was God who planted the garden eastward in Eden and placed all these things strategically in it! But God had both a purpose and a plan! Paul speaks of an action of God involved in that plan when he says that we are *"in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."* (Titus 1:2) This is indeed wonderful! We were born into this world with a promise from God — the promise of eternal life! This promise of salvation and life more abundant was given us before the world began! When we came here we were born with a promise! How could God make such a promise to us if we were not there with Him before the worlds appeared? Furthermore, we were predestinated at that time to be the manifest sons of God! *"For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."* (Rom. 8:28-29) Not only were salvation and sonship promised, the kingdom was promised also! *"Then shall the King (Jesus) say to them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."* (Matt. 25:34)

All these wonderful things happened to us, and many more too numerous to mention at this time, before we entered this world as a human being. But do you remember any of it? Can you remember when you were there with the Father? Can you remember Him informing you of the plan, the purpose, in sending you to earth? Can you remember what was said, what you knew, what you agreed to, and why, and what you had when you were there with the Father? Do you remember being chosen in Christ, promised eternal life, promised a kingdom to reign in, and predestined unto placement as a son of God, before the foundation of the world? Do you remember the beginning of your journey?

Ah — YOU ARE REMEMBERING! Do you know how you're remembering? The answer is simple — all revelation is but a remembering! Someone says, "Oh, brother Eby, the Lord showed me such and such — I've had a revelation and I see thus and thus." Yes, you had a revelation! The reality is, however, that what you perceived as a revelation was simply God reminding you; He woke you up, refreshed your memory, and caused you to recall knowledge you once possessed before you entered this mortal state of limitation and confinement! We should always be fervently aware that a revelation is an unveiling. That is the meaning in the Greek. To have something revealed means to have it unveiled. There have been masterpieces of art and sculpture that have had a day of unveiling. Michelangelo was famous for the unveiling of some of his great works. But you see, my beloved, the unveiling is not the creation of the thing unveiled! The unveiling is simply the revelation or uncovering of something which already exists! Spiritual revelation is not the impartation of either knowledge or experience that you have never known before. Not at all! Spiritual revelation is the

uncovering of the secret knowledge of God within our spirit. Revelation is a remembering! The whole purpose of the Holy Spirit's moving upon us in our journey in God in this life in the flesh is to cause us to remember the realm from whence we came, who we are, what our purpose is — that we might complete the journey and fulfill that purpose! That is the mystery.

How meaningful then is the verse we quoted earlier. *“Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man (human consciousness) with his deeds; and have put on the new man which is RENEWED IN KNOWLEDGE after the image of Him that created him.” (Col. 3:9-10)* I like the Amplified Bible's rendering: *“And have clothed yourselves with the new spiritual self, which is ever in the process of being renewed and remolded into fuller and more perfect knowledge after the image and likeness of Him who created it.”* How grateful we are that in the midst of all the darkness of man's knowledge, our God is bringing forth a light, even the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. This wonderful light and knowledge is shining in our hearts, the Daystar arising, progressively increasing and breaking forth out of the lives of a firstfruit company. Those apprehended by God for this Day are discovering that the light is indeed growing brighter and brighter, and their one and only all-consuming desire is that they might KNOW HIM “in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” THIS DIVINE KNOWLEDGE IS THE INTELLIGENCE OF THE FACE OF A MAN IN THE THRONE!

The final ingredient in intelligence is wisdom. Wisdom is simply the ability to discern and properly use the understanding and knowledge one has acquired! As the firstborn Son of God Jesus had within Him the spirit of wisdom (Isa. 11:2). How did it manifest itself? In His waiting to hear what the Father spoke! *“Morning by morning He wakeneth mine ear to hear, as they are taught.” (Isa. 50:4)* Perfect teachableness was the mark of the firstborn Son on earth This is the mark of the Spirit in all the sons! *“What things so ever He shall hear, these shall He speak.”* The life is the light; as the Spirit finds our life in perfect obedience to Him, He teaches by what He works in us. Wisdom is learned through experience! This is the meaning and object of all the testings, trials, provings, processings, and dealings of God in each of our lives in this significant hour. God is teaching us wisdom! Wisdom is in knowing the ways of the Lord! Knowing the ways of the Lord goes beyond revelation — such holy knowledge comes by experiencing the contrasts between the fruit of man's ways and the results of God's ways.

In his first letter to the Corinthians Paul draws the contrast between the wisdom of this world and the wisdom of God. He says that none of the princes or rulers of this world know the wisdom of God! They do not learn the ways of God, but the ways of man, which are the ways of human intellect. Human intellect is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil! It is the food of the serpent! It was in seeking wisdom that man fell. “And when the woman saw that the tree was...a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat” (Gen. 3:6). It was in the pride of man's wisdom that heathenism had its origin. *“Professing themselves to be be wise, they became fools.” (Rom. 1:23)* We see this today in much of the so-called “science” which promotes the most ridiculous of theories as scientific fact. The theory of evolution, for instance, is so absolutely untenable as to be laughable, yet multitudes of scientists and professors with doctorate degrees earnestly teach it to millions of students with a straight, serious face, as though it were unquestionable, indisputable, historical fact. Professing themselves to be wise they have become fools!

It was in man's wisdom, philosophy, and the search after truth (science) that the Greeks sought their glory. It was in the external knowledge of God's will, in their constant extrapolation of every jot and tittle of the law into an elaborate system of legalistic phobias, that the Jew made his boast. And yet when Christ, the WISDOM OF GOD, appeared on the earth, Jew and Greek combined to reject Him! Man's wisdom, whether in possession of a revelation or not, is utterly insufficient for comprehending God or His wisdom. As his heart is alienated from God, so his mind is darkened that he cannot know truth aright. Even when in Christ the light of God in its divine wisdom and love shone upon men, they knew it not, and saw no beauty in it.

And so the great apostle Paul says, *“My preaching was not in persuasive words of man's 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. Howbeit we speak wisdom among the perfect: yet a wisdom not of this world; but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which none of the princes of this world knoweth. But unto us God revealed (uncovered, caused us to remember) it through the spirit. But we*

received, not the spirit which is of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that we might know the things...of God; which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the spirit teacheth." **(I Cor. 2:4-15)**

Intelligence — understanding, knowledge, wisdom — THIS IS THE DIVINE QUALITY REVEALED IN THE FACE OF A MAN IN THE MIDST OF THE THRONE! IT IS THE MIND OF CHRIST IN THE SONS OF GOD! IT IS AN EXPRESSION OF THE LIFE OF GOD WHICH QUALIFIES ONE TO REIGN WITH CHRIST UPON HIS THRONE! Isn't it wonderful!

To be continued...
J. Preston Eby

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 75
THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES AND THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS (Continued)
BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART SEVENTY-FIVE

THE FLYING EAGLE
THE WINGS OF THE LIVING CREATURE
THE EYES OF THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES

"In the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes before and behind. And the first living creature was like a lion, and the second living creature was like an ox, and the third living creature had a face as a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle." (Rev. 4:6-7)

These four living creatures are in the "midst of the throne" denoting kingship. The four living creatures had four faces in the likeness of different creatures, representing the four aspects of kingship which are true in our Lord Jesus Christ and are also wrought out in the life of every son of God apprehended to share His throne. Each of the four faces reveals an aspect of the attributes, characteristics, and qualities which qualify one to rule and reign with Christ in His kingdom. They are, furthermore, the four-fold manifestation of Himself to all mankind! The face of the lion speaks of strength — power, authority, and dominion. The face of the ox is symbolic of servanthood, revealing Christ, Head and body, as the compassionate servant of all. The face of a man indicates intelligence — divine understanding, knowledge, and wisdom. We can never reign apart from these!

THE FLYING EAGLE

The fourth face or quality of kingship is that of a flying eagle. The eagle speaks to us of exaltation — that which is high and lifted up. The eagle is noted for its swiftness in flight (Deut. 28:49); it hastens to its prey (Job 9:26); its courage and farsightedness (Job 39:28-30); rises to the heavens (Prov. 23:5); and has great strength in flight (Isa. 40:31). Although the eagle is a bird of prey, it is highly regarded as a sign of power, courage, freedom, and exaltation. In the land of Israel there are two kinds of eagles, the Golden and the Imperial. Gold bespeaks of the divine nature, and the Imperial of kingship. The eagle is the king of birds, just as the lion is the king of beasts. The characteristics of the eagle find a beautiful application in the realm of the spirit, and are spiritual characteristics of those appointed to the high places in God. The "eagle saints" dwell in the high places and soar to the highest heights in the heavens of God's Spirit! They continually follow on to attain to new heights in the purposes of God! They will forsake the old paths and low places of dead religion, static creeds, empty ceremonies, and flesh-oriented programs and promotions to soar into the highest of the heavens to know and experience God in the heights of life, truth, and reality.

The eagle is the highest form of bird, the only creature able to look as it were directly into the sun's dazzling radiance. Aspiring to heights far beyond the physical or grossly material, this great bird symbolizes the upward flight of our journey into God. The Lord Himself is referred to a number of times in scripture as an eagle. "*Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagle's wings and brought you to myself.*" (Exod. 19:4) and again, "*As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him.*" (Deut. 32:11) Christ is that royal eagle, flying high; the one who is at the right hand of God; who thought it not robbery to be equal with God; that glorious One, the Son of God exalted on high!

I invite you now to meditate upon both the heights and depths of Christ the eagle — Head and body. It is one of the loftiest of spiritual emblems! From the dawn of human history the challenge of flight has captured the imagination of man. The conquest of the air in the past century has imbued men and women with a sense of awe and romance unequalled in the annals of history. Somehow the ability to fly has epitomized the longing of man to rise above the confines of the earthy and the mortal and soar into the realm of the spiritual and the supernatural. God has made wonderful provision in His kingdom for man to have this spiritual need met, yet

few believers ever discover the laws by which this escape is possible, few ever achieve the perspective of the eagle, an ability to rise high enough to see things that those on the ground can never see, and to truly see all things as they really are. How can a man break into the high realm of the spiritual and the eternal — to soar in the heavenlies with Christ? In response let us look at the beautiful illustration used by the prophet Isaiah. *“They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint.”* (Isa. 40:31)

The wise man said in the book of Proverbs that among those mysteries in the universe that were too hard to understand, one was the *“mystery of the eagle in the air”* (Prov. 30:18-19) The symbolism of this passage points to the inexplicable potential of each and every son of God, which is like the eagle’s, which can fly higher than any bird without once flapping a wing. Did you notice that Isaiah said that eagles and eagle saints “mount up” and not “flap up”? Eagles were not made to go flapping about in soulish exercises, unprofitable self-efforts, or wasted fleshly energy — they were created to soar high and free! Eagles learn to fly without struggling because they instinctively understand the air currents. The eagle has about 7,000 feathers and weighs only about 14 pounds. When the right wind is blowing he lifts effortlessly into the air with a shrill scream of triumph and freedom. *“They that wait upon the Lord...shall mount up with wings as eagles.”* Herein is one of the eagle’s secrets in being able to mount up — waiting. Those who wait upon the Lord, it is written, who trust in His moving, who respond only to His promptings, who rest in His timing, who move in His purpose, will be the ones to mount up!

The “mounting up” process is important and necessary to each son of God who would take his place in the heavenlies, filled with the precious mind of Christ, conformed to His wonderful image, and caught up to the throne of God to reign with Christ over all things. But it only comes to those who will wait in His presence until the glory that shines from His face changes them from the image of the earthly into the image of the heavenly. Should the eagle fail to wait for the current that lifts, he would never get off the ground. And the saint of God who does not wait for the moving of the Holy Spirit in the purposes of God will never get air borne or soar into the heavenlies! We are soaring into the heavenly places of God’s Spirit! But some think they have already soared as high as they can go. I know precious brethren who are impatient to wait for God’s timing and God’s moving to manifest His sons, and have reduced sonship to something less than what God has sovereignly revealed by His Spirit. They claim to be already walking in the power of the third day, in the glory of the most holy place, in the blessings of the feast of tabernacles, and even now are, they say, putting on immortality and ruling and reigning with Christ over the nations and bringing the kingdom of God to pass in the earth. Yet I see no fruit of this in their lives, or in their aging bodies, or in their ministries, or in this cursed earth, or in the agitated, confused, warring, sin-blighted nations they supposedly are ruling over! It is a delusion, they are still sitting on the naked limb of a dead tree, imagining that they have lifted into the air and circled high into the crags of the mountain. Not everyone who professes Christ and enjoys the blessings of His grace and embraces the word of sonship and the kingdom will pay the price to follow on to know the Lord in the heavenly places. But God has predestined those whom He has foreknown, and has placed this instinctive and constant call within to rise to greater heights in the celestial realms above. And those who are willing to wait for the current of His mighty moving shall in due time mount up with wings as an eagle!

We are mounting up from realm to realm! We are learning to recognize the currents of God’s moving and how to be lifted effortlessly into the heights of God! Eagles prefer the heights when they soar, and when they rest. His is a soaring spirit! The eagle is the jet plane of the bird family. One of the most awesome sights I ever witnessed happened several years ago when Lorain and I were on Resurrection Bay in Alaska. There was a duck swimming placidly on the water. Suddenly we saw this mighty eagle flying across the bay at an incredible speed. Some eagles have been clocked at 200 miles per hour, as he swoops down upon his prey. This eagle flew right into that bird, catching it in his powerful talons, without even a shudder from the impact, and flew away at the same speed to a place where he could safely feed upon it. The eagle soars the highest, goes the fastest, and is superior to all other birds in this respect. I began to understand why they represent the heavenly thrust of man: power, beauty, freedom, the lord of their environment through their ability to master the air. They move in regal splendor, for they are born as kings! As the eagle is born with the divine right of kingship, so every son of God born from above possesses the inherent potential of soaring into the very highest heights in the kingdom of the Spirit.

You do not have to prompt the eagle to fly, once he has learned how. No need to sing a chorus twenty-five times, clap the hands, stomp the feet, and get loud and all emotional in order to work up the spirit of soaring. Oh, no! If he cannot fly, he is in misery — he was made for altitude. He is born for the heights. And flying is just as natural as breathing. Eagle saints have their citizenship in heaven, in the heavens of God's Spirit. They live in the world, but their feelings, affections, desires, aspirations, conversation, and actions are above it. Their greatest impulses are upward, ever upward! They build their nests in the heights of the Mountain of God, and prefer and long to be where they are no more annoyed with the noises, mundaneness, and dangers of this world system.

John Wright Follette has shared in one of his writings some beautiful observations about the eagle. He says, *"I believe the Lord purposely uses the eagle as a type here because of special peculiarities of that bird. One summer while in Yellowstone National Park, I had occasion to study or observe some eagles in their natural habitat — and thereby learned some helpful lessons. I think He speaks of an eagle because it is the only bird which goes high enough and sustains its position. They have been known to fly at an height of 6,000 feet. The lark also may reach the upper heights and pour out its songs, but it does not stay so long in the heavens. God seats us 'together with Christ in heavenly places.' We are heaven-born and now our affections are on things above. The Holy Spirit will hold us in our lofty place!*

"The eagle is not often seen — he is the most solitary of any bird. Many birds are common to sight and even afford amusement. Parrots can talk and entertain, causing remarks and comment. The eagle stays alone. Did you ever hear of a flock of eagles! The noisy geese go in flocks. But who wants to be a goose? God seeks eaglemen! No man ever comes into realization of the best things of God, who does not, upon the Godward side of his life, learn to walk alone with God. Had we time we could trace through the Word the lives of many of God's eaglemen. We find Abraham alone upon the heights, but Lot (a just man and saved) dwelling in Sodom. Moses, skilled in all the wisdom of Egypt, must go forty years into the wilderness alone with God. Paul, who was filled with Greek learning, and had also sat at the feet of Gamaliel, must go into Arabia and learn the desert life alone with God. Let God isolate us! In this isolation experience He develops an interdependence of faith and life so that the soul needs no longer the constant help, prayer, faith, or attention of his neighbor. Such assistance and inspiration from the other members are necessary and have their place in our development, but there comes a time when they act as a direct hindrance to the individual's faith and welfare. God knows how to shape the circumstances to give us an isolation experience! This isolation produces another characteristic mark — quietness. No other bird can keep quiet so long as an eagle. The soul acquires a new grip on his life and is now moved by God rather than by things seen. He can trust God to control his spirit in the most vexing circumstances. We see this majestic calm and quietness so marked in the life of Christ. When we mount up with wings as eagles...we can keep quiet" — end quote.

Many of the Lord's people have not discovered the way of the eagle. Some who now read these lines know what I'm talking about. You are stuck in a rut! Your life, naturally and spiritually, just isn't going any place. Some of you are trapped and stuck, mired down on your job, in your home, in your marital relationship, in family situations, in difficult circumstances, frustrating problems, and binding limitations. These are all holding you down in an earth-bound consciousness, hedging you in and shutting you up to a state you think you can't surmount. The cares of this world have turned many people's lives into a pressure cooker, choking the spiritual life of the kingdom of God. The strain of everyday living is steadily growing worse because of financial problems, pressures at work, responsibilities, sickness, doctor and hospital bills, rebellious children, and a thousand other things.

The pressures of "this life" are too numerous to mention, we are all faced with them every day. There are those involvements of daily living which we cannot shirk, but when they so overwhelm us that we find ourselves so fragmented and distressed that we are not able to gather ourselves together to walk in the peace, joy, and victory of the kingdom — then we need to be loosed from these things, escape from them, and soar above them! Praise God, we find in Him a realm of freedom from all "these things," so that whatever state we are in we can rejoice and not be bound by any of them. There is an escaping from the pressures of this world, and only "the way of the eagle" can reveal it! You can be like the eagle, my beloved, you can soar like an eagle! Nothing is impossible to those who mount up with wings as the eagle. Whatever it is that is weighing you down, whatever it is keeping you from soaring, it is possible to break away. The ability to soar lies within

— you don't have to go anywhere. You don't have to change any of the circumstances about you, or sit on the fence and frantically flap away. You can rise above them. The eagle is in you. You are the eagle. You can soar high above it all! Oh yes, you can!

There is a life within you that transcends all the lowlands of the flesh — it will carry you high as you give yourself to it. It is the life of sonship, the power and glory of the Christ within. He is greater than all! I speak to you today by the word of the Lord, God is delivering you in this very hour from your earthbound existence, lifting you up by the Holy Ghost into heavenly places in Christ! Fear not, for you are not a child of the earth. Look up, lift up your head and rejoice, for you have come to this planet from the bosom of your Father in the heavenlies, and you are a child of redemption — you have inherited that heavenly nature! Today God looses the prison doors. Be free from your captivity! Let your tears of joy wash away all the marks of the cords which have so cruelly bound you! Be not imprisoned any more by the circumstances about you, but learn the ways of your God which are in your spirit, and follow Him alone. You shall rise above all things and shall not fear nor be dismayed, for I am with thee, saith the Lord!

Oh, to catch the winds of flight
And soar where eagles go,
To leave the woes of troubled souls
Behind me far below.

I'd listen to the song of birds
And sail in endless flight,
Then chase the sun through cloudy paths
And play with stars at night.

The boundless heavens for my home,
The breeze to lift me high
To rise above my mortal bonds
And never have to die.

Knowing I had found the way
To trails where angels trod,
And when my wings could fly no more —
I'd take the hand of God!

C. David Hay

Actually, we do not move in and out of heavenly realms at our whim. Our citizenship is in heaven, we exist constantly in the heavenlies. This is a spiritual state of constant existence, but because we are still in this flesh realm, we are not always conscious of the greater privileges of our heavenly state of being. In the kingdom of God the heavenly man is the only man — the man is Christ. *“If I have told you earthly things, and ye believed not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things. And no man hath ascended up to heaven but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, which IS IN HEAVEN.” (John 3:12-14)* Jesus Christ while on earth was still in the heavenlies! That is not a strange statement to an eagle saint! “He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.” He had eagle's wings — the spirit of the heavenlies. His body was on earth and His spirit joined to the heavenly Father far above all. Those who have been swallowed up by Christ gravitate around Him. His life is their life, His thoughts their thoughts, His will their will, His joys their joys, His peace their peace. They have no other life. “For me to live is Christ,” said Paul. Paul was an eagle saint. Paul's life was heavenly. He was above. He would not come down!

Let us look at the scriptural portrait of an eagle saint. *“The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they that are heavenly.” (I Cor. 15:47-49)* *“Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed (transformed, transfigured) into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (II Cor. 3:17-18)* *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in*

heavenly places in Christ.” (Eph. 1:3) “Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places.” (Eph. 1:20) “And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” (Eph. 2:6) “Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling...” (Heb. 3:1) “But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly (spiritual).” (Heb. 11:16) “But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.” (Heb. 12:22)

In questioning Job the Lord said of the eagle, *“Doth the eagle mount up at thy command to make her nest on high? She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place. From hence she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off.” (Job 39:27-29)* The eagle sons have the advantage, born of altitude. “Her eyes behold afar off.” The eagle son looks out to regions beyond, to heights and depths in God. The call of God is upon him. The life of God is in his heart. There is response. There are commitments, born of heavenly life. Heaven is in control! The son and the Saviour share the same life, fly the same heavens, have the same destiny. Heavenly bounty fills all! Earth’s splendors are fading for he who soars. Earth’s treasures and recognition hold nothing for him anymore. Heavenly investments are sure. Eternal values are in view. Fear does not plague the eagle son. “The eagle dwelleth and abideth upon the rock.” The rock is the Christ life. The security of every son is in the solid rock of the Christ within. He draws his life from above. Earth’s pleasures and hopes fade. They are made of poor stuff. The saints of all ages have known this. The Lord has taught them, in their hearts! The Lord cuts His elect saints off from the world, from the systems of the flesh, from the old-order religious activities of the church world, but in the same stroke, He grafts them on to heaven. Far beyond the confusion of play-church...far above the strife of the land, higher than the yearnings of the flesh and the aspirations of the soul...yea, even into the light of the Most Holy Place...the eagles soar! Those who thus soar live in and by their heavenly life! This heavenly life flows out of the very heart of God, like a river forever. It courses through the veins of the inner man, bringing life where ere it goes.

The heavenly life makes heaven. Heaven has come to earth in the life of every son of God! The life of God is heavenly life. The believer who says that should his body die, he will be dead like a dog, unconscious and non-existent, knows not that he has been born from above! The impact of this new heavenly life determines everything. This life governs the universe, and nullifies the kingdom of darkness. Satan is never in his stride, in the presence of heavenly life. This is raptured life, the life from above. The old Adamic man of the flesh, of human consciousness, is truly “left behind” in those who live in the heavenly, raptured, life! The eagle son is not waiting for a hole in the sky to escape this world, for he has raptured life, the joyful life, the peaceful life, the righteous life, the abundant life, the satisfying life, the all-powerful life, the glorious life. Every step that the firstborn Son of God took on earth was a raptured step. Every word that He uttered was a raptured word. Every work that He did was a raptured work. The life of Jesus was a raptured life. He was caught up all the time! That is what gave Him the heavenly touch, enabled Him to hear the heavenly voice of His heavenly Father within. That’s what made Him what He was — the heavenly man! The eagle son does not need death, or a miracle, or a meeting, to get him on the wing. He is in the heavenlies all the time! That’s all the life he knows. He shares with the raptured Christ, the heavenly life!

Learn to breathe the ozone of heaven — the rare, crisp, pure air of the heavenlies, that is sweet to the nostrils and life to the lungs and body. Our mortal bodies shall be quickened by this heavenly life! (Rom. 8:11). Mountain air is good, and in ancient times man found it, along with plenty of sunshine, to be the cure for many diseases. There is too much grime and smog in earth’s low atmosphere. There are so many respiratory problems. There is so much low living and difficult breathing. The environment is wrong! Living in the lowlands of the fleshly mind will weaken and kill you. It is good medicine to meet a saint that is above — a saint with eagle’s wings! They quicken and refresh. Spend time with those that live above. You, too, will learn how to stay above. Remember that the young eagles have to be taught to fly. If they refuse to learn they are destroyed. Learn to live the heavenly life if you would save your life. Go as high as you can and stay as long as you can. Get away from the depressing order of the valleys. Learn to live in your habitat — your element. Refuse to be embroiled in confusion and strife. There is nothing to gain. Soar and soar until you master all the strong currents of the upper atmosphere, for they will lift you into the heights of God. If the other fellow falls out of the heavenlies, just do not follow him down to chew on his flesh. As you stay in the heavenlies, you will help draw him back. The wings of the spirit are eagle wings.

THE WINGS OF THE LIVING CREATURES

“And the four living creatures had each of them six wings about him...” (Rev. 4:8)

Six is the number of man, and having six wings speaks of man. But this is not the earth-man, this is the exalted man in the throne! Long centuries ago the prophet Ezekiel saw visions of the glory of the Lord in the temple of God and in that glory he saw the cherubim with their wings. He described the scene thus: *“Then...the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the Lord’s glory. And the sound of the cherubim’s wings was heard even to the outer court, as the voice of the Almighty God when He speaketh. And the cherubim lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight” (Ezek. 10:5, 19)*

These words teach us the great truth that the wings of the living creatures represent THE VOICE OF GOD WHEN HE SPEAKS! The wings are the living word of God, or His voice by the Spirit. This wonderful scene also teaches us the great truth that it is by lifting up His voice, that is, by magnifying and exercising His word within our lives that we are lifted up from the earth! The wings speak of flight, and they represent a people who are empowered by the living word and the voice of God within. God is speaking to us a pure word in this hour, the present truth, His word from the very throne-room on high! It is not a word that the carnal-minded believers in the old-order church systems can hear. Religious minds have no idea what God is doing in this Day, nor can they hear even when they are told. God is always speaking! In the perfumed magnificence of Eden He walked and talked with man face to face in the spirit of that day. At sundry times and in divers manners God spoke unto the fathers by the prophets. Two thousand years ago the voice of the Galilean rang out over the hills and through the streets and the hallways of God’s people, Israel. All through the centuries of the church age God has been speaking by His Spirit!

And today God is speaking, not the same word He spoke to any other people in past generations of His unfolding purpose, but He is speaking a fresh word, raining down fresh manna, and His elect are prayerfully and joyfully receiving of His mind and His will for this hour of the manifestation of the sons of God. We are now receiving our daily bread, the bread for this day, this new day that the Lord hath made. When this new, fresh, present word of the Lord becomes a mighty power and the inward motivation of our forward walk in God, we are transported from the earth into the heavens of God’s Spirit! God is teaching us to live by every word that is proceeding out of His mouth, and as we do we are lifted up out of our fleshly, earthly, human consciousness into the glorious mind of Christ. These wings of His word will carry us to heights unknown, to the place of their origin — the throne of God! Yet — it is impossible to soar into the heights of God by wings alone. Wings without wind are absolutely useless! In like manner, without the winds of God’s Spirit the wings of His Word are as good as dead. Without the wind the wings have no power by which they can rise! It has been well stated that the Word without the Spirit leads to legalism; and the Spirit apart from the Word leads to fanaticism. God is bringing that beautiful balance between the Spirit and the Word in those who follow on to know Him in this new Day of the Lord! God is moving powerfully by His Spirit within His elect in this hour, and the Word of God by the Spirit of God is lifting us up into a higher place than we have ever known before. It is indeed wonderful!

THE EYES OF THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES

“In the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes before and behind.” (Rev. 4:6) “And they were full of eyes within...” (Rev. 4:8)

The “eyes” are of course symbolic, as is everything else in the visions John beheld in the Spirit. The eyes which are described as “before” and “behind” and “within” denote the superior vision and perspective of God’s Christ, Head and body. Each one in this called and chosen company of kings and priests possesses those wonderful “eyes” of the spirit of wisdom and revelation! John saw seven eyes of the Lamb, which he identified as *“the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.” (Rev. 5:6)*. The elect of the Lord are being given the eyes of the Spirit, which is the fullness of the anointing of the Spirit. That anointing enables them to see things that others cannot! The superior vision of the eyes of the mind of Christ make it possible for us to see the deep things of the Spirit of God, and the eternal realities of the all-encompassing truth of God. The mind of Christ includes the full spiritual potential to see things that are beyond the sight of the natural man. When we have put on the mind of Christ in fullness, we shall indeed make up that “living creatures” expression of the kingship of Christ, which is “full of eyes before and behind and within.”

The spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ is the result of having anointed and enlightened eyes. The firstborn Son of God functioned solely by the “eyes” of the mind of Christ. He did only those things He “saw” the Father do. He said, *“The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth: and He will show Him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.”* (John. 5:19-20) Jesus had a spiritual vision that was beyond the ability of mere mortal man to comprehend. He did not see these spiritual realities by the eyes of the natural understanding. The things He saw the Father do, He “saw” by the mind of Christ, by the anointed eyes of His sonship. And regardless of how much men proclaim about the so-called “finished work” of Christ, I do not hesitate to tell you that there is much more to be done by the mind of Christ. It is a great truth that Jesus has fully accomplished the sacrifice by which He reconciles all men to God and provides salvation for all the ends of the earth. But beyond that, the Father’s works are not yet completed!

Not until the closing chapters of the book of **Revelation** does the decree finally go forth, *“Behold, I make ALL THINGS NEW! And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea.”* We all understand that sin and wickedness still abound everywhere, and sickness, pain, sorrow, and death stalk the whole human race. The wonderful work of the Spirit to put every enemy under the Christ’s feet, to transform and restore all things back into God again, until God is All-in-all, still remains to be done! The very One who is credited with the “finished work” still must reign UNTIL He has put all enemies under His feet, and the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” It shall be fully accomplished by the wisdom of the mind of Christ and not by man’s carnal mind and works. Jesus said that the Father will show Him (Christ) *“greater works than these that ye may marvel.”* Those greater works are yet to be fulfilled by the many-membered Christ! And we shall do those “greater works” when we fully possess the mind of Christ with eyes before, behind, and within, and can “see” as Jesus saw in the power of the Spirit!

The four living creatures, God’s kings who reign with Christ, will express within themselves the totality of God Himself. They will manifest the full wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and power of the Father. They have eyes in the forehead, eyes in the back, and eyes within! They have eyes to see in the future. They have eyes to see in the past. And they have eyes to go within to perceive the true identity of themselves in Christ. This signifies that we are able to see all that is true in Jesus which is also true in us, as the apostle John wrote, *“A new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in Him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth”* (I John. 2:8). This “new commandment” of which John speaks is not a rule, not a law, it is rather the law of an inward life, for he says that the commandment is that which is true in Him (Christ) and in us. You see, my beloved, it is not sufficient to know what is true in Christ, for what is true in Him must also become substance within us. It is not enough to know that Christ so loves the world, but that love must be shed abroad in our hearts until we love as He loves, yea, until we love with His love, and have eyes to see the reality of Christ raised up in us. The eyes before see all things that God’s Christ shall perform and accomplish in the future. The eyes behind have perfect revelation of all that has been accomplished in the past, even from the foundation of the world and from eternity. But the eyes within are in tune with the Father and see all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge that are hidden in Christ within! They have a complete awareness of the spiritual world, within and without. They penetrate into the deep things of God in the Spirit! And they reveal to us the identity of Christ within ourselves, the awesome potential within our spirit.

The Indian mystic, Sadhu Sundar Singh, said in one of his teachings, “Many there are that are like a hunter who, while wandering in the jungle, picked up some pretty stones on the bank of a stream. Unaware of their value he used them one by one in his sling to shoot at the birds perched on the trees near the river, and so one by one they fell into the water and were lost. With one still in his hand he returned to the city, and as he passed along the bazaar a jeweler caught sight of it, and told the silly fellow that it was a valuable diamond for which he could get thousands of rupees. When the man heard this he began to bewail himself and say, ‘Woe is me! I didn’t know their value, and have been using many of these diamonds to shoot at birds by the riverside, and they have fallen into the river and are lost, otherwise I should have been a millionaire! Still I have saved this one, and that is something gained.’”

The spirit of Christ in every man is like a precious diamond! Ah, yes, there lies buried within you the greatest of all treasures — the fullness of God in Christ within you. Discover the treasures of that Christ within today,

my friend, draw from His wealth, suck from His life, receive from His power and you will be a son of God indeed! The fullness of God is closer to you than the air that you breathe. It's closer to you even than the blood that courses through your veins. All the fullness of the Godhead bodily dwells in Christ, and Christ is your life. Oh, the wonder of it! And this is why you are given eyes "within" — that you may see, perceive, understand, and appropriate the life of God that is within you. You are a son of the Most High God. The very life of God is within you today. In that life there is no limitation at all. All the wealth of divinity, all the riches of the mind of the Father, all the abundance of joy, peace, righteousness, love, and power that are in Jesus Christ, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge that are hidden in Him are in you today, and God has given you spiritual eyes within to behold all that is yours, all that is resident within your spirit, and all that can be raised up in power and glory in your life as your very own reality.

It is also said that the four living creatures are "full of eyes" before and behind and within. FULL OF EYES! The Lamb had seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God, or the fullness of the Spirit. So these living creatures are full of eyes which are the fullness of the Spirit of God! The Spirit of God gives you the vision of God, for no man can truly see anything spiritual except by the Spirit of God. The fullness of the Spirit brings fullness (perfect clarity) of vision! As it is written, *"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."* (1 Cor. 2:9-10) The four living creatures are full of the vision of God! All things are clear and open unto them by the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God. They see all things as they really are, within and without. Nothing in God is hidden from them. This creature that we are becoming is empowered with knowledge! It is truly wonderful!

There is a scripture passage in which the prophet Isaiah speaks of the day when God brings forth His Zion company, and they shall see "eye to eye." *"Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion."* (Isa. 52:8) Many have thought that in order for Zion to see eye to eye we must come to the place where all our understandings of God's plan, will, and purpose and all our interpretations of scripture are identical in every respect. We thought it meant theological conformity or doctrinal purity. We all need the Spirit of God to clarify our vision about many things found in the scriptures. We are still learning the truths of God's ways, His will, and His word. We don't have any stakes put down in what we believe about any number of things in God's great purposes. We do not tell God that what we now know or think we know is sufficient, that we have learned all there is to learn.

Well do I remember sitting in geography class in the fourth grade in the rural school house in south Alabama where I was raised. I was about nine years old. I sat there with my thoughts running to and fro throughout the world presented to me in my geography book. I gazed out the window in deep contemplation, and suddenly it occurred to me that I understood just about everything there was to understand about life and the world! My childish mind was quite certain that very little could be added to my vast knowledge about all things on earth. Of course, the truth was that I knew nothing as I ought to know, and through many years of crucial experience, growth, and development unto maturity, I finally came to see just how much I didn't know! I personally am very aware that spiritually we still see through a glass darkly, we see men as trees walking, and still look at things as we perceive them to be, but often without the crystal clarity of absolute truth and full revelation. We wait upon the Lord for the understanding that comes only from above and crystallizes within our spirits as He moves in our experience. If we abide in the attributes of humility, teachableness, yieldedness, and remain in the atmosphere of His presence and glory we can't go wrong in this Day of the Lord! The Spirit is not talking about doctrinal uniformity, as desirable as that may be. It means that "eye to eye" all will be of the same stature, there will not be some little children and some tall men, or diverse degrees of spiritual development and maturity in God. The Lord is growing us up together into a common maturity and stature in Christ — unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ! Thus, in and by the Spirit, all God's sons shall be elevated to the same place in the Lord, and then shall truly see "eye to eye"! Aren't you glad!

To be continued...

J. Preston Eby

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 76
THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES AND THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS (Continued)
BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART SEVENTY-SIX

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

"And the four living creatures rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." (Rev. 4:8)

The general interpretation of this scene is that it is up in heaven in eternity — but the passage says that "they rest not day or night." Day and night are not associated with heaven — they are conditions on earth! *"And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day."* (Gen. 1:2-5) I think most believers are very careless readers of the word of God, for in reality the scene John beheld in the spirit portrays no such thing as people imagine and the meaning is opposite to what has been taught. The four living creatures, as we have seen, represent kingship — those who rule and reign with Christ in His kingdom. The sons of God, God's kings and priests, are those who shall rest neither day nor night in the earth as we trumpet the complete, perfect, and full knowledge of the glory of the kingdom of God and establish His holiness in every heart of man unto the ends of the earth. It is a symbol — not some weird animalistic creatures around a throne in some far-off heaven somewhere monotonously repeating again and again, for ever and ever, the words "holy, holy, holy," but within themselves they proclaim by their very nature, spirit, ministry, and kingdom authority HIS HOLINESS!

"And when those living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to Him that sat on the throne...the four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever...saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power..." (Rev. 4:9-11)

The twenty-four elders, who represent priesthood — God's kingdom of priests — now take John's attention. Here they are seen prostrating themselves before the God of the throne which is enshrined in its emerald rainbow of life, light, and love. Now notice the word "when." *"When those living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to Him that sat on the throne...the four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him..."* The "when" of verse nine indicates that the chanting of "holy, holy, holy," by the living creatures is periodic and not constant. I would point out that the twenty-four elders are seen falling down in adoration before the God of the throne four times. Two of those times they do so alone — here, and in chapter five, verse fourteen. Two other times they fall down in accord with the four living creatures in chapter five, verse eight, and in chapter nineteen, verse four.

Inasmuch as the twenty-four elders fall down and worship whenever the living creatures cry, "holy, holy, holy," it should be clear to any thinking mind that they are not constantly repeating the phrase through an endless eternity. Such a practice would have the elders falling and standing and falling and standing without end, which is absurd. And it certainly would contradict the words of Jesus when He taught us, *"Use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking"* (Matt. 6:7) These are not literal scenes in any event, but beautiful symbols which convey to us the great truth that in the lives of God's sons who are called to share Christ's throne there is no spirit of self-importance, no grasping after power for power's sake, no lifting up in pride, no sense that we have attained to this place by any works that we have done or by any self-effort on our part, but we are keenly aware that He has called us and chosen us by His grace alone, and HE it is who is worthy, and we have been made kings and priests to show forth the virtues and excellencies of HIM who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light and by His mighty hand exalted us to His throne of glory. What a word!

“And when those living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to Him that sat on the throne...the four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat upon the throne...and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord!” (Rev. 4:9-10)

All the overcomers are receiving crowns according to their degree of overcoming, the inworking of God in their lives, and their spiritual maturity. There is an incorruptible crown (I Cor. 9:25), a crown of rejoicing (I Thes. 2:19), a crown of righteousness (II Tim. 4:8), a crown of gold, of divine nature (Rev. 4:4), a crown of glory (I Pet. 5:4), and a crown of life (Rev. 2:10). Each one of us, as we overcome, are receiving these crowns as a result of our spiritual growth and attainment in Christ. These are not, nor shall they ever be, literal crowns upon our heads, but speak of virtues, powers, and spiritual realities with which our lives are crowned, which are the very state of being out of which our kingdom authority flows. But when we realize by whose sacrifice, purpose, strength, and power we received these crowns, we will gladly cast them before His throne! It is beyond our human strength or ability to receive any one of these crowns. Only by the sacrifice of Jesus, the calling of His grace, the predestination of His purpose, the inworking of His life, and His great faithfulness to keep us and finish His work in us, could we ever have received these crowns. So we joyfully and respectfully cast them before His throne!

“And the four and twenty elders...cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created.” (Rev. 4:10-11)

It is wonderfully significant that it is the twenty-four elders who magnify God in respect to creation. Before we consider that thought, let us meditate for a moment upon God as Creator. It is my conviction that our God is spontaneously creative, not systematically creative. What I mean by that is that God does not employ a program in His creative activity. God is a God of spontaneity. God moves and acts not by system, but by the creative power and flow of His life. The life of God is the creative instrument of His nature.

Everything that God creates is unique. He is a God of unlimited diversity, infinite variety, and inexhaustible capacity. We see this in the natural, physical, material creation. Scientists tell us that in the visible universe there are more than two hundred billion galaxies. They may be correct that there are that number of galaxies in the visible universe, but there are far more galaxies than that! You see, my beloved, not only is the creation co-extensive with the Creator in the sense that God has always been creating, but the creation is co-extensive with Him in His infinite Being. In other words, the only reason that the scientists believe that there are two hundred billion galaxies is simply because that is as far as they can see!

No man can see any further than the scope of his vision. God is infinite — unending, unlimited, unbounded, inexhaustible, and unmeasured. Not only is there no “place” where God is not, but God IS INFINITELY whether there is any “place” there or not. God creates out of the infinity of Himself. I don’t know how many galaxies there are, because there is no end to them. You would never find the outer extremities of the universe, because God created all things out of Himself, He upholds all things by the word of His power, He fills all things, and if you were to discover the limit of His creation, you would discover the limit of God Himself. Not only does God always do everything that He does, He also does everything that He does everywhere He is. God is infinite. If God does not create to the extent of His infinity, then there would be some “place” where He is not Creator. So there is no limit. There is no end to the creation simply because there is no end of God!

What an incredible field for diversity! Scientists know that even within the visible part of the universe stars are still being created. They are still coming into existence throughout the immensity of what we call space. The apostle Paul tells us that there are no two stars that are equal in their glory (I Cor. 15:41). Think of that! With my human brain I can’t conceive of creating even two hundred billion trillion stars, making every one of them different, giving each of them a name and a glory that is unique from any other glory, and then realize that infinitely there are galaxies without number and without end, each with its own name and glory. It staggers the imagination!

Even in our little solar system each of the nine planets are very different from the others. You would think that if the scientific theories of origins were correct they should all be quite similar. But they aren’t! How many

snowflakes do you suppose have ever fallen upon the earth? They tell us that no two snowflakes have the same design! More than six billion people walk the face of this earth today, and there are no two fingerprints that duplicate. No two people are identical either in their appearance or in their DNA. Everyone is unique. God sets it all in motion by a word. When God speaks the superlative comes into existence. God is a God of unlimited diversity, infinite variety, and inexhaustible capacity. Behold the majesty and the glory of the almighty Creator of all things!

According to the very first statement in the gospel of John, that kindly Nazarene, that gracious Galilean, that wonderful Teacher and Healer who walked the paths of Galilee and sat beside its shores, was none other than the living God, the Creator of all things. John goes on to say that by Him were all things made and without Him was not anything made that was made. He is the Creator of all! He is the architect of the cosmos! He is the fashioner of the galaxies! He is the designer of suns, the artificer of planets and moons. He is the framer of the vast eons of time. The eternal, omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent God was born a wee baby; He visited this blue-green orb which He had delicately fashioned and spun off into its orbit.

The creation is God's just because all things were created and made by Him and therefore belong to Him. In the light of this truth I would like to reaffirm something that the world at large, and many believers, seem to have forgotten: THIS IS GOD'S WORLD! Long before time began, long before a single heavenly body inhabited the vast regions of space — GOD WAS. God has always been Creator. This creation we know is not the first thing God ever created, nor will it be the last. Yet this particular creation did not always exist! Long before the worlds were made, long before the billows rolled across the boundless seas, long before the mountains thrust their towering, snow-capped peaks up through the clouds, long before there was one flower, or the song of any bird, or the roar of any beast, long before there was any light, or the glory of daybreak, or the beauty of the sunset...yes, long before there was anything at all of this present creation...THERE WAS OUR HEAVENLY FATHER. Then the blessed word of God rolls back the curtain of antiquity and shows us God at work, creating all that is, and all that ever was. The very first passage of scripture establishes for all time and eternity the ownership of this world and the heavens above: "In the beginning GOD created the heavens and the earth." He made it, and it is His! No one can take it from Him. It was then that God wrote His signature of ownership — a signature that reaches from the earth to the farthest outposts of the cosmos.

The Psalmist David was perceptive in the Spirit when he wrote these immortal words, *"The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein."* (Psa. 24:1) Does the earth belong to the devil? Does the world belong to the devil? Do they that dwell in the world belong to the devil? Does anything on the earth belong to the devil? Did any of it, even before Calvary, belong to the devil? Not in David's day, it didn't! "The earth is the Lord's!" "And the fullness thereof!" "The world is the Lord's!" "And they that dwell therein!" Who do you belong to? Who do the nations belong to? Who do the wicked belong to? Who do Fidel Castro and Saddam Hussein belong to? IT IS ALL THE LORD'S! The devil doesn't own one square inch of it, nor does he own one poor wretched human on it. Isn't it wonderful!

There is an understanding that has been quickened in the consciousness of the "called out ones" to know that ALL the earth — is the Lord's. Not just a tree or two, not just a mountain or two, not just a nation or two, not just the church, not just those apprehended to sonship, but all the earth is the Lord's and the very fullness thereof. We are His whether we know it or not, we are His whether we like it or not, whether we desire to serve Him, or whether we are presently in rebellion against His will. God has everything and everyone in the palm of His almighty hand! He is Sovereign! Job said, *"In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath (spirit) of all mankind."* (Job 12:10)

The prophet Daniel penned these inspired words: *"The Most High...liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?"* (Dan. 4:34-35) God is saying to us that He is sovereign. Another way to express that truth is: God owns the earth and everything in it — He does what He wants to do and nobody can stop Him from doing it. In particular He is sovereign with what He does with the earth. God does not have to ask anybody's permission to do anything He wants with any part of the earth or anyone on it — and none can hinder or resist Him!

If the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, then we need to somehow come to understand that God has never at any time dealt with Satan on a percentage basis. God never did tell Satan that he could have ninety percent and God would be satisfied with ten percent. Neither did God ever say that Satan could have ten percent and He, God, would settle for ninety percent. WITH GOD IT IS ALL! ALL belongs to Him! First, because He created it, and second, because He redeemed it. Just as you may temporarily leave a valuable watch at the pawn shop and later return to redeem it, so God assigned to satan a temporary and limited sphere of influence over the creation, for the outworking of His wise and wonderful plan, but HE HAS NOT CEDED OR TRANSFERRED OWNERSHIP OF EVEN ONE INCH OF IT TO SATAN FOR A POSSESSION. The reality is, after giving the adversary a limited lease and sphere of operation, God came down in the Person of His Son and redeemed the world and everything and everyone in it! In the same way that you get your watch back from the pawn shop when you redeem it, so God gained full control of the whole world when He redeemed it. To say that there is any part of God's creation that satan now sovereignly controls or that he will possess forever is a blatant repudiation of Christ's redemption and a horrible blasphemy against God.

The scriptures clearly reveal how ownership is the central factor in both creation and redemption, the link that binds them together. [Two things are inherent in ownership — purpose and responsibility.](#) Do you know that if a person makes or buys anything He surely has purpose in mind for it? And is it not equally true that when a person makes or buys a thing he then assumes the responsibility for it? The man who purchases a good hunting dog has a definite purpose in owning the dog, and if he is not a hunter he will not buy it. With ownership of the dog there comes the responsibility for the dog, to feed and care for it and treat it humanely. You have, I suppose, sometime bought something? As you have paid your money for it and it was delivered to you did you not have a plan for it? And are you not now responsible for it?

More than forty years ago Lorain and I bought a house in Sarasota, Florida. It was a lovely little two bedroom white frame house, entirely adequate for that time. Some years later the Lord led us to Mississippi to live and minister among a group of saints, and we were there for almost two years. During this time we rented out our house in Florida. The original tenants left, and we rented the house to a man and his wife and grown son, none of whom we had previously known. It is almost unbelievable what those people did to that house within the space of a few months! If you have had rental property you will believe it! Evidently they didn't sweep those beautiful hard wood floors even once, the dirt was ground so deeply into the wood until the entire finish was ruined. Windows were broken, the holes stuffed with plastic or rags. Water had been allowed to run over the kitchen and bathroom floors, loosening the tile. The furniture was demolished, sofas and chairs propped up on bricks with great gaping holes staring insultingly at us. On and on the disaster went! The place was completely "trashed." Needless to say, because we were the owners, it didn't take us long to swing into action! The tenants were promptly given notice and evicted. Then followed the long, tedious and expensive process of restoration. Ah, because we owned the house we had purpose for it and responsibility to it. On the basis of that purpose and responsibility we were willing to spend the money that had to be spent, and expend the energy involved in long days and weeks of hard work until all was restored to its original beauty and usefulness!

We are not in this life as the result of our own scheme or plan. We did not make ourselves, therefore we do not own ourselves! The Psalmist declared, *"Know ye that the Lord He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves. We are His people, and the sheep of His pasture."* (Psa. 100:3) God is responsible for our existence, for it was He who issued the grand fiat: "Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness." It was God who sent us here! It was God who planted the garden eastward in Eden and put man in it! It was God who drove the man out of that garden! You see, my beloved, GOD IS RESPONSIBLE for our existence here in the flesh, lowered into the realm of vanity, sin, and corruption. Oh, yes! God is responsible! The whole human race is God's responsibility because He is both Creator and Owner. We are here because of our Father's plans, desires, purposes and will, just as your children are in this world because of your plans, desires, and will. God is a God of principle! Having begun a work, He will assume responsibility for it, care for it, and finish it and not throw it aside because it was marred by sin and death. This, too, was part of His plan!

While men are busy blaming others for the world's problems, and the devil for their own, God Himself as Owner of all takes His great responsibility for all, and therein lies the foundation of the whole scheme of

creation and redemption. **Romans 11:36** says from the Diaglott, *“Because out of Him, and through Him, and for Him are all things. To HIM be the glory for the ages. Amen!”* The Amplified Bible beautifully renders this, *“For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. For all things originate with Him and come from Him; all things live through Him, and all things center in and tend to consummate and to end in Him. To Him be glory forever! Amen.”* To say the least, it will give us great peace of mind and heart if we can see and understand that God as Creator and Owner takes responsibility for the world today! God is responsible for every human being that has ever lived, is living, or ever will live. God is responsible for every nation, every government, every empire that has risen and fallen, and every condition and circumstance of all mankind today and in every time and place since the foundation of the world. And because He is responsible and has great and eternal purpose for His creation HE WILL DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT!

This great truth is what makes our text so utterly awesome! *“The four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him...saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: FOR THOU HAST CREATED ALL THINGS, AND FOR THY PLEASURE THEY ARE AND WERE CREATED.”* It is deeply significant that the twenty-four elders are the ones making this wonderful declaration. The twenty-four elders are God’s Royal Priesthood! It is this Royal Priesthood that is proclaiming that God created all things for His pleasure, and therefore He brings forth the glory and the honour and power of His kingdom. The seed of this beautiful thought is found in the words of the Lord to Israel when they stood before mount Sinai. *“Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: FOR ALL THE EARTH IS MINE: and ye shall be unto me A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS, and an holy nation.”* (Exod. 19:5-6)

I have often characterized the above passage as the GREAT DIVINE SANDWICH. A sandwich is two slices of bread between which is placed meat, fish, cheese, or the like. Three items are necessary to make a sandwich: two outer items — two identical slices of bread — and in between another, and different, item. Such is the structure of this passage! *There are two statements of like nature surrounding and enclosing another and different kind of statement.* Notice the two outer statements: **(1) Ye shall be a PECULIAR TREASURE unto me above all people** **(2) Ye shall be unto me a KINGDOM OF PRIESTS, and an holy nation.** Then “sandwiched” in between these two wonderful promises is this remarkable word: **FOR ALL THE EARTH IS MINE!** Can we not see by this that the purpose of God to establish in the earth a Royal Priesthood is rooted in the great fact that **ALL THE EARTH IS HIS!** That all the earth is His answers the why of priesthood. *“Because all the earth is mine...YE SHALL BE UNTO ME A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS.”* The message is clear — God is preparing a priesthood because He owns the earth, the whole world, and all that dwell therein! The priesthood is His instrument that reaches out with one hand and takes hold of God, reaches out the other hand and takes hold of humanity, and by virtue of the priestly ministrations brings the two together into oneness. The Royal Priesthood is the ministry of reconciliation to restore all things and all men back into God again!

I believe that God loves all lost men and women. There are lost men in jails and prisons and mental hospitals. They are in saloons and brothels and in sickness and pain and sorrow and ignorance and sin and death and judgment and hell, and God loves them all with an undying love. He still remembers them and remembers His Son on the tree, suffering and dying on their behalf, pouring out His wonderful life for them all. And in the redeemed body of this resurrected and glorified Son He now prepares a Royal Priesthood after the order of Melchizedek to restore all mankind back into the image of God. *“Because all the earth is mine, ye shall be unto me a KINGDOM OF PRIESTS!”* is the word of the Lord. The earth, the world, and all that dwell therein belong to God first because He made them, and second because He redeemed them, and now He is sending forth His many-membered body of priests to reclaim for Him that which He has created for His pleasure.

Because all the earth is His, and because Jesus is the redeemer, God is raising up the body of Christ, a royal, kingly priesthood, sons of the God of heaven to reign in mighty spirit power and authority over the earth, not to be little human dictators, but with an irresistible outflow of life and light and love, touching God with one hand, and humanity with the other, bringing the two together, that God may indwell all men by His Spirit and live and rule in them in power and great glory. The kingly nature in us is not to dominate other men’s lives, but to deal with and break the power of self-hood and rebellion and sin and death and the devil that men may be quickened to God. Kings have power and authority, priests reconcile in mercy and love. God’s Royal Priesthood shall reveal to all realms the awesome **POWER OF GOD’S LOVE AND GOODNESS**, until all men

bow low before Him and with worshipful wonder and joy proclaim, *“Thou art worthy, O Lord, for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure we are and were created!”*

All who have received the call to sonship have also received a vision of their destiny in God, of what they are being prepared to do for creation. They are here by divine appointment. They have been born for this hour. They have been called and chosen and are being made faithful. They have been drawn out of and separated from all the religious realms that they might learn the higher ways of the kingdom of God. The message of the hope of sonship and the high calling of God in Christ Jesus is going forth in power in this day and circling the globe as thousands of the Lord’s people are heeding the call to this unique walk in the Spirit. God has removed from the hearts of these the foolish desire to “fly away” to some far-off heaven somewhere, as He unfolds within their ransomed spirits the heavenly knowledge that God has created all things for His pleasure, and all the earth is His and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein; and for this sublime purpose He has ordained a priestly people!

The good pleasure of God is that which gives Him satisfaction; it is also His delight, His desire, His enjoyment, His contentment, His fulfillment, and His purpose revealed and fulfilled! When the twenty-four elders, God’s priesthood company, say of Him, *“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created,”* they are proclaiming a fully restored creation! Therefore we may be absolutely certain that the same merciful and loving Father would never plan to destroy this world and send billions of people screaming into the torments of hell fire forever and ever. Such false doctrines come out of the carnal mind of man which is never able to receive the things of the Spirit, and are contrary to the wonderful truths of God and His wise and glorious purposes for the works of His hands. God will not fail and because of some unfortunate and unforeseen circumstance beyond His control, lose the very thing He made FOR HIS PLEASURE!

As a priest of the Most High God I claim this earth for God, for He made it. I claim this earth for God, for Jesus has ransomed it with His blood. I claim this earth for God, for the earth is the Lord’s. The sea is His, for He created it. His hands formed the dry land. I claim everything that comes out of the bowels of the earth for God, “for all the gold and the silver is His.” I claim every man in El Paso, and in Miami, and in New York, and in Calcutta, and in Manila, and in Moscow, and in Beijing, and in the whole wide world for God, for “it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves,” and he made us “for His pleasure.” I am not willing to cede even one thing or one person to the devil, as some wickedly do, for this is my Father’s world and I am an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ. He that overcometh shall inherit all things! This world and everything in it and every man upon it is part of my inheritance! I am asking my Father for my inheritance even as He has instructed me I should: *“Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen (nations) for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shall break them with a rod of iron...be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth!”* (Psa. 2:8-10)

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

The call of God in this hour is for a people to move from the candlestick realm to the throne room. This is the Father’s great purpose for His called and chosen elect in this new Day of the Lord! Years ago **Douglas Wilson** penned words that are just as fresh and meaningful for us today. The next several pages of this message is taken from his article titled **JOSHUA AND CALEB**. May God bless it to your heart!

In all the time that Joshua, Caleb, and the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness, their next realm, their next age, was just a short distance away from them. Had they gone directly from Egypt into the Promised Land, it would not really have taken them very long to get there. It has been said that it was a journey of eight to ten days. And naturally, the wilderness was even closer than Egypt to the Promised Land! The coming age, especially for Joshua and Caleb, was not some place a long way off, but it was so very close by. It was of very easy access, yet they could not get into it.

At least some of us are realizing in this hour that the next age, or the next REALM IN GOD of which we speak, isn’t in some far distant place, but it is close by. And yet, here we are, apparently unable to enter into it! We find ourselves to be a people unknown to ourselves. We are one type of people, living in one type of age or

realm, being prepared for another age or realm that is just over the line, so to speak, from us. Actually it is no farther from us now than it was from Israel when they were in the wilderness! Yet we are prevented from entering in. This we know — Caleb and Joshua had to wander in the wilderness for forty years until all the unbelievers died. After that they could enter in. We had always been taught that all who came out of Egypt, except Joshua and Caleb, had to die before the rest of them could enter into the Promised Land. But this did not bear witness to our spirit, so we began to read and discovered it was not so. It did not work out like that at all. All of those who could not go in were the soldiers, the men in the army, who were over twenty years of age, and who would not believe that they could take the land. All those who were under twenty years of age, and the women, lived on, just as Joshua and Caleb did. It was these soldiers who had to die in the wilderness! They were the unbelievers who were under God's orders to take the land, and they refused to do it, saying they could not, and thus declaring that in their judgment, God was a liar.

God described to the children of Israel the land into which He would take them. It was a land flowing with milk and honey, a land of hills and valleys that drinks water of the rain of heaven, a land which the Lord cared for, a land in which He would bless their seed, and prolong and multiply their days as the days of heaven upon earth! They would be placed in a land, a realm, a dispensation about which they knew nothing and that would be entirely different from anything they had known before. He commanded them as to how they should live and walk in the land, and what kind of people they would be unto Him. Now multitudes of people today will not believe we can have days right now that are as the days of heaven on earth! They cannot believe it, because they are looking for heaven away off somewhere amongst the starry skies. The people to whom God was speaking these words, were a people of one type and of one dispensation, and He was telling them something about the kind of people they were going to be, and the kind of land in which they were going to live. It was a realm of which they had no knowledge. God told them that their future home was to be nothing like the land of Egypt they had left. The valley of the Nile was the richest known spot on earth. It is so yet today. But God told them their future home was not so, for in Egypt they sowed their seed, then tread on the water wheel, in order to water that seed. But in the Promised Land they would have rain from heaven! It was to be an entirely new realm, with entirely new conditions and circumstances. It was to be a new age, a new dispensation, a new realm in God, and God was right then getting them ready to go in and take it and occupy it. It was to be as heaven on earth!

That was all in the natural, earthly realm. God was preparing a people for another realm, another age, another dispensation in this realm of flesh. This is a type of what God is doing today! Most of us have no conception of what God is doing in our lives and bodies. Just because we cannot see or feel something being done, is no sign that God is idle and doing nothing within us. We often think that there has to be a lot of external manifestation taking place for God to be doing something. But on the natural plane, termites can invade a building and work, and unless the building is inspected, no one will know of that work until the building is so weakened that it falls. Just so, we have little conception of that which God is doing in the lives and bodies of those people He is working with and that He is preparing as HIS SONS for that age which is to come. There is so much that we don't understand at this time, but we do know that God is working, preparing an elect company to bring deliverance to the whole of the groaning creation in the age and the ages that lie before us.

As we approach the new age of the kingdom of God there are many Joshuas and Calebs in the land today, being prepared to enter into the coming age, the promised land of this day. Though they will enter the same land, their training and their present lives are completely different, for they have a different destiny in the land to come. Shall we say it like this? Caleb was of the people. He was out in the multitudes in the camp. Caleb had absolutely nothing to do with the tabernacle. He had nothing to do with the ministrations of the priests. He had nothing to do with the ministry of Moses in any way. But Joshua is referred to as the minister of Moses. And in the first chapter of the book of Joshua we find God telling Joshua that Moses is dead, and that he was now to arise and go over Jordan, and that as God had promised the land to Moses, so would He give it to Joshua, and every place where the sole of his foot trod, was his.

As we have said, we too are in a time of preparation. A people is being prepared for the coming age, and those who are being prepared particularly, are not the Calebs. To a certain extent the Calebs are being prepared, in that they possess a different spirit and they see and know that something different in God is coming. They are willing to wait, even in the midst of unbelief, God's time to enter into the next age or realm in

God. But all their preparation is to bring them to a place in which they can wait in faith, for they are a kind of people who will inhabit the land. But for the Joshuas there is something else! In **Exodus 33:8** we read, “And it came to pass that when Moses went out to the tabernacle, all the people rose up and stood every man at his tent door and looked after Moses till he was gone into the tabernacle. And it came to pass as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle. And the Lord talked with Moses. And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent door. And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he (Moses) turned again into the camp, but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, DEPARTED NOT OUT OF THE TABERNACLE.”

Moses was taken up with the work and care of overseeing that vast multitude of people. God had told Moses to move the tabernacle outside the camp, and so when the people saw Moses going out to worship, they would also stand and worship, every man in his tent door. When Moses passed through the tabernacle door, then the cloudy pillar would descend in order to seal off the tabernacle so that God and Moses might commune together. Moses was the one lone man who had access to the Holy of holies whenever he desired to go into it. He was above the high priest in this, for he was the friend of God, and he had need of God's communion frequently. God did not speak with Moses as He would with the high priest, but as to a friend. And the people saw the cloudy pillar come down and when the time together was finished, the cloudy pillar would rise and Moses would come again into the camp. He would have to go back into the multitude in the camp, to judge them and to watch over them, to be their leader, fulfilling the work that God had given him to do.

But God had His hand upon a young man, Joshua, and that young man did not depart out of the tabernacle. The time came when God commanded Moses to lay his hands upon Joshua and impart to him the very same spirit that he (Moses) possessed. God gave unto Joshua the very same promises and the same powers that He had given Moses. No man could stand before him! Wherever he placed his foot that was his! God told him that just as He had been with Moses, so would He be with Joshua. Joshua was to be strong and of good courage. He was not to fear, for God was with him, even as He had been with Moses.

It was necessary that Moses leave the tabernacle and return to the camp, but it was necessary that His servant Joshua remain in the tabernacle for special training. As we understand it, Joshua was constantly in the place of ministry unto the Lord. He was continually in the place where the priesthood operated. He was in that place where the people were bringing their offerings for sin and where those offerings were being sacrificed. He remained in this place day after day, and year after year, absorbing all that went on in the tabernacle. God had given Joshua a privilege and a work which had been denied Moses. He came into a place that Moses never possessed! Moses had led the people out, but God now provided a young man, Joshua, the son of Nun, or the son of perpetuity, to perpetuate and carry forth into new dimensions all that had been started in Moses. This Joshua was to lead the people into the Promised Land! He was to give to every man his inheritance! For this reason, Joshua COULD NOT LIVE A LIFE LIKE CALEB. He could not be just one of the people, another face in the crowd, another pebble on the beach, living the same way, doing the same things. He must know the mind and the will and the purpose and plan of God! He could not have just a vague knowledge of it, He must acquaint himself with each and every detail of it. He must know the boundaries of each tribe, what they were to get, and what they were to do. It was his place to give out the inheritances to all the people of Israel!

In this we find a true type of those sons of God whom God is preparing today! We have seen this for some time, and we know by personal experience it is true. This class of people is greatly misunderstood, criticized, and condemned, because they are not doing a great number of wonderful things. They are not generally performing great healings and astounding signs, wonders, and miracles. They are not out conducting great crusades, no vast throngs are following them, and the fact of the matter is most of the people stay away from them! Such people are not participators in the activities of the rest of God's people, even those who will become inhabitants of the land. They are not Calebs, not out in the camp with the tribes. Perhaps not even going out to gather their supply of manna for that day! God has separated this company of people from all those things.

Rather, they are of the class of people who are in the tabernacle, DWELLING IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD, LEARNING OF THE WORK AND THE POWERS OF THE AGE TO COME! God had a Moses to go out and

minister to the multitude in their wilderness walk. Moses and the judges were to minister to the people and all their fleshly needs. But none of this was for Joshua! He never did have any ministry such as this! For forty years Joshua spent all his days in the tabernacle. Moses, who ministered to the people, would often come in to commune with God that he might receive the message and the word of God, so that he might go back out and minister to the people.

But Joshua stayed right there in the presence of God! He was absorbing the very life, power, wisdom, knowledge, and spirit of God, so that when the proper time came, God could say to him, "Moses my servant is dead, now it is time for your ministry." At that time Joshua would rise up, for all the ministry of preparation would be over. All the work and ministry of the man Moses was now finished, for the people were now at the borders of the Promised Land, the new age and realm in God. It was time for the children of Israel to enter the Promised Land! It was time for the people of Israel to receive their inheritance! It was time for the fullness of God to be revealed! Now was the work of Joshua to come to pass! He was to bring them into that land, a land of rain and one that flowed with milk and honey. A land entirely different from the Egypt they had left. Now all the tedious training of Joshua would begin to bear fruit! All the years of loneliness and application to the plan of God would lead that vast multitude into a new land, into a new age, and give them their full portion!

Knowing that human nature in that day was just like human nature of today, we see the possibility of some saying, "How is this? How and why is Joshua being elevated up over all the rest of us? He has done nothing but sit out there in the tabernacle for forty years! He never healed anybody. He never prayed anybody through to the baptism in the Holy Spirit. He wasn't out holding crusades and saving souls. He wasn't even part of a recognized ministry! He never preached any marvelous sermons. He just spent his time in the tabernacle."

All through those forty years, God was getting a man ready to bring the people far beyond what they were receiving from the hands of Moses and the judges — INTO THEIR INHERITANCE! Moses and the judges were merely preserving the people in their wilderness condition. God had Moses and the judges to take care of the natural things for the people in their carnal state of being, to continually bless, encourage, and revive them lest they faint in the wilderness. Some of us are well aware of these facts. Even though we did possess such ministries in the past, yet at this time, many of us are not functioning in the ministry of a Moses, nor in the ministry of any of the gift realms where men minister very much unto the people in their natural, fleshly realm of healings, material needs, blessings, revivings, etc. It seems we are set far apart from the multitude of the people, and from the accepted type of ministry, and most Christians do not want much to do with us! But with this company of people, God is working and preparing them for a future ministry and work.

As we stated, God has people, many of them, who are ministering unto the multitudes the things of the natural realm, the loaves and the fishes. But there is another class of people, and God is dealing in a different way with them. They are being prepared to know the plans and purposes of God, not just for this age, but for the ages to come, that they might lead the people into the full inheritance God has for them. There must be someone who will be capable to lead the people in, and get them established in that greater glory which God has prepared for His people. Caleb put in his days with the rest of the people, Moses and the judges put in their days maintaining the people in their wilderness state, but Joshua remained always in the tabernacle, absorbing the mind and life of God for the inheritance to come!

Joshua was an entirely different man! As we meditated upon these things, we saw clearly these two different classes of people. There are those who are in the multitude of all God's people, yet God has done something in them to give them a spirit that is different from the rest. They have received a glimpse, a taste of the glories of this higher realm and know that it is something marvelous beyond where they are living. They have tasted of the powers of the world to come, and know they shall enter into it. But they are still like Caleb, willing to stay in the multitude and put up with all the slanderous reports about the land or the age to come, and wade through the unbelief all around them and just wait for the day of entering in.

At the same time, however, God has the Joshua's placed off somewhere in the tabernacle, in the presence of God. It doesn't have to be in four walls, or certain kinds of meetings, but just in the presence of the living God! Apparently they are doing nothing, but they are absorbing the spirit and the life and the knowledge and the

wisdom and the purpose and the plan of God. How important this is! When Moses' ministry is over and done, when all the natural ministry of the church orders and religious systems is finished, then God will lead out the Joshuas, having completed their training, and they shall lead the people into the next realm in God, into the next age!

We are sure that we are in such a position now. We are in one age, and we are being prepared for something, though we have only caught faint glimpses of the glory and wonder of it. We do not understand all the workings of God, because we do not know exactly what we are going to do in the future, how it shall be done, or even what we are going to be. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." (I John. 3:2) Therefore it is sometimes hard to understand the training we are receiving, for our training depends entirely upon what we are to be in the next age or realm in God. So we cannot question God concerning the "whys and wherefores" of all we are experiencing in our lives in this hour, and in the lives of others.

The new age was not very far from Joshua and Caleb. It was just over the line, just beyond Jordan, and so it is in this day. This new age lies before us, and the glory of it is beginning to be made known unto us by the Spirit. Caleb and Joshua knew the way into the Promised Land, for they had visited it in a fleeting moment, yet they were forced to await the proper time to enter. Caleb needs remain with the multitude, and Joshua must be prepared to take the whole multitude into the coming age. We have a wonderful experience ahead of us in the Lord, and we are grateful for it. It is not of our choosing, but of His, and we know He will perfect that which concerns us! — end quote.

That is a powerful word from the pen of **Douglas Wilson**. He has passed on, but he will stand in his lot in the day of manifestation. As I read this, I was reminded of a story out of history. Several centuries ago, the Emperor of Japan commissioned a Japanese artist to paint a bird to be put on display in the Emperor's gallery. Months passed, then years. Finally, the Emperor went to the artist's studio to ask for an explanation. The artist set a blank canvas on the easel and in fifteen minutes completed the painting of a bird that became a masterpiece. The Emperor asked why there had been such a long delay. The artist then went from cabinet to cabinet; he produced armloads of drawings of feathers, tendons, wings, feet, claws, eyes, and beaks of birds; these he placed one by one before the Emperor. The Emperor nodded and left the studio. He understood. The exquisite beauty of the painting completed in fifteen short minutes was merely the result of long years of research, preparation, and work!

Our Father shall have a glorious firstfruits company of sons in His own image which He shall put on display before the entire universe as the revelation of His own bountiful grace and matchless glory! The day of that unveiling shall surely come, and will not tarry. In the meantime, and to that end, the blessed Holy Spirit of God is patiently and unrelentingly operating in the lives of His apprehended ones so that we may be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. This conformation cannot take place in an instant, nor by a superficial experiencing of God. It does not happen in a single "experience" one night at an altar, nor can it be imparted by prophecy with the laying on of hands. The hour of our quickening unto God and His great plan was no more than the declaration of the divine purpose; it is just the beginning of the long work. The whole process is a detailed and painstaking progress "until Christ be formed in you." When the work is fully finished, the day shall then arrive when there will come to us a new and living and powerful moving of His omnipotent Spirit and the completed work will flash forth in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye; the grand and glorious portrait of God's Christ, exquisitely wrought upon the canvas of our lives, that He might display in the ages to come the transcendent riches of His grace and goodness...for we are God's own handiwork, created in Christ Jesus! (Eph. 2:7,10).

*The new, with its glory, shall come to the fore,
Proclaiming the Kingdom is nigh at the door.
Yet, strange the confusion as some try to stay
Entwined with the old, though it's passing away.*

*While some try to mix the old with the new,
To be torn by the strife, and the rending in two.
For saviours shall come and His fullness declare,
With beauty for ashes, and treasures most rare.*

What ages have veiled as the old order reigned,
Shall burst into view at the time He ordained.

— Ray Prinzing

To be continued...
J. Preston Eby

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, Part 76, Four Living Creatures and Twenty-Four Elders
[J. Preston Eby] ~ BIBLE STUDY 11

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 77

THE SEVEN-SEALED BOOK

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART SEVENTY-SEVEN

THE BOOK—CHRIST WITHIN

"And I saw in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals." (Rev. 5:1)

John the Revelator, as he entered upon the marvelous visions recorded in the book of Revelation, saw a door opened in heaven and heard a voice as of a trumpet speaking with him, saying, *"Come up hither, and I will show thee things..."* The door opened in heaven bespeaks of an entrance granted into a realm beyond the flesh, beyond the physical and psychical senses, into the realm of the Spirit. That is where John entered and that is the character of the things John saw. He beheld heavenly things — spiritual realities. He saw a throne set in heaven — he perceived the authority, power, and dominion of the Spirit. He saw living creatures in the throne, the principle of manifest life in the Spirit. He saw the four living creatures in the midst of the throne and twenty-four elders round about the throne, the King-Priest ministry of the Melchizedekian Order after the power of an endless life — the ministration of the redemptive power of the divine life unto creation. It is being seen by a vast company of people that hears the voice of the Lord in this hour that a door has opened in the heavenlies through which those who are obedient shall enter into a state of being and a ministry of unsurpassed and unimaginable glory — in the throne zone! That is the message of chapter four of the Revelation!

The fifth chapter of the book of Revelation represents a scene in heaven — the realm of Spirit. A book is held in the right hand of the Majesty on high, in the hand of Him who sits upon the throne of Omnipotence. The scene is purely symbolic and spiritual! God is omnipresent spirit. God never sat on a throne. He never held a book in His right hand. Let us notice — THE ONE ON THE THRONE DID NOT HAVE AN IMAGE! According to Revelation 4:2-3 all John saw on the throne was colors, beautiful colors. And yet, John saw One sitting there! What about this One that sat on the throne, that could be seen, and yet, was not visible to the natural eye? He had no form, only radiance! John was not looking into the natural elements when he saw the One on the throne. The scripture says he was in the Spirit on the Lord's day! John stood in the very reality of heaven as he was caught up into the highest realm of the Spirit. The One he saw was spirit. Do not look, my beloved, at the throne of God as a natural seat sitting there for a physical being to sit on. Don't imagine a throne-like chair! His throne is the dimension of His omnipotent power. Here seated, as it were, in the splendor of the omnipresent heavenly-spiritual realm John beheld One of many colors. Even though He did not have a figure, John could see Him in and by the Spirit. And in and by the same Spirit John could see a book in the right hand of him that sat on the throne! The book is the symbol of the revelation of Himself in and through a people.

The book was not a book as we know books, but a scroll of papyrus or parchment, written on both sides, rolled up and sealed with seven seals. The ancient scrolls of Israel were generally sheepskin rolls. One writer has observed that the book of Romans would require a roll of parchment almost twelve feet long; the Gospel of Mark, nineteen feet; and the Revelation itself would require a roll at least fifteen feet long. This can give you some idea of the picture we have before us. Now, when John says that the scroll was sealed with seven seals, it does not mean that the seals covered the outside, but the scroll was rolled up to a certain point, and then at that point there was a seal put upon the very edge so that it could not be opened. Then it was rolled up again a little farther and the second seal was put on and so on until all the scroll of parchment was written in seven parts, or sections, and sealed at the end of each section, and thus it was sealed with seven seals. It will be seen that there were six seals on the edge of the scroll, and one seal on the outside fastening the entire scroll, which became the first seal to be opened.

The book is in the right hand of Him who sits upon the throne. Stupendous words! Words of deepest mystery, enshrouding the eternal purpose of God. The scriptures portray the right hand of God as the hand of strength, power, salvation, blessing, and anointing. The implication is that the right hand of God is the good hand of God doing wondrous things! The psalmist confirms this when he says, *“In Thy presence is fullness of joy, at Thy right hand are pleasures forevermore.”* (Psa. 16:11). Again, *“The voice of rejoicing and salvation in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly. The right hand of the Lord is exalted.”* (Psa. 118:15-16) To this the prophet Isaiah adds his inspired testimony: *“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”* (Isa. 41:10) In the Old Testament, whenever God is portrayed as manifesting His power, it is done so with His right hand or arm. *“Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power.”* (Exod. 15:6) *“O sing unto the Lord a new song; for He hath done marvelous things: His right hand, and His holy arm, hath gotten Him the victory.”* (Psa. 98:1). *“Though I walk in the midst of trouble, Thou wilt revive me; Thou shalt stretch forth Thine hand... Thy right hand shall save me.”* (Psa. 138:7) Numerous other Psalms express the same thought. In the New Testament, after His resurrection and ascension, Jesus was by the right hand of God exalted, and made to sit at His right hand (Acts 2:33-34; Heb. 1:3,13).

This speaks of Jesus Christ, the firstborn Son, our Forerunner. He is exalted to the right hand of God! This is therefore the calling of every son of God! He is the positive, saving, redeeming force of God in the universe *“who is gone into heaven (spiritual realm of government) and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him.”* (I Pet. 3:22) There is no greater prize than oneness with Christ. The inspired apostle exhorted the saints in Colosse, *“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.”* (Col. 3:1) The message is clear — the elect of God are to SEEK THE THINGS OF CHRIST AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD! Seek the things of the right hand! What a word is that! There are your orders, dear child of God who treasures the hope of sonship.

People tell us that we are too concerned with deep things and with high things. Nothing could be higher than the realm of God’s right hand! Seek it! Seek it! Seek it! That is the word of the Lord to every one who is conscious of being risen with Christ. Seek to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might! Seek the anointing of His power! Seek the investment of His authority! Seek to rule and reign with Christ! Seek to be victorious in all things! Seek to be a blessing to creation! Seek to be His salvation unto all the ends of the earth! Seek to speak and act and rule by His love! Seek to do wondrous things in His name! Seek to reconcile and restore all things and all men to God! That is what it means to seek the things of Christ at the right hand of God! Some of the greatest truths of the word of God are the ones that lie hidden like pearls of great price, unnoticed by the careless but available to all who will search prayerfully and diligently in the depths of God.

The right hand of God is not a physical location somewhere in the universe. The right hand of God is a realm of power and authority, a position of eminence, a condition and a state of divine being. Blessed be God! We now have a share in the REALM OF THE RIGHT HAND! The apostle Paul tells us that *“when we were dead through our trespasses, God made us alive together with Christ...and raised us up with Him, and made us sit together with Him in the heavenly places (the heights of His own exaltation).”* This shows that as we come to know the resurrection life of Christ, we are also made to experience the ascension of Christ. This is a matter of realization, of consciousness, of appropriation! It is already true in Christ, but it is only true to us as we receive the revelation of it, acknowledge the reality, and experientially lay hold upon it. We are chosen of God not only to be made alive from the dead and have God’s life, but also to sit in the highest realm of the heavenlies as ascended men! This is the present truth of God for everyone who has received the call to sonship. He is causing every son of God to consciously and experientially ascend with Christ and sit with Him in the higher than all heavens — NOW!

It is true therefore that as we ascend into the high places of God in the spirit, we are reigning with Christ from His heavenly, spiritual throne. As we truly become overcomers by the ascended life of Christ, we are also given power over the nations to rule them with a rod of iron, and as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers (Rev. 2:26-27). This rule is given to the overcomers in Christ! As the life of ascension within us raises up kingdom dominion in our lives we truly begin to reign with Christ in the spirit, and all the worldly powers of man can be broken by the authority within God’s sons! The will and ways of man are being

displaced by the power of the spirit and replaced by the spiritual life of the kingdom of God. We are a spiritual people. And the kingdom of God is the spiritual realm of our Father's dominion! Therefore our reign in Christ is a spiritual reign, which is accomplished as we move in and by His Spirit in relation to things in the earth realm. As the anointing teaches us what we should pray for, and what situations and circumstances in the outer world we should speak to by the spirit, the creative power of God is released to bring change and transformation. Through that spiritual dominion God's will is brought to pass on earth as it is in heaven!

The right hand signifies authority and power. Peter referred to this when he declared to the multitude on the day of Pentecost, *"This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."* (Acts 2:32-33) Later Peter told the rulers of Israel, *"The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour."* (Acts 5:30-31). Paul spoke of the mighty power and the awesome authority and dominion and the riches of the glory that is the inheritance of the saints. He says that this is the very same power that God wrought in Christ *"when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named."* (Eph. 1:20-21) The writer to the Hebrews expressed the truth this way, *"...when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than angels..."* (Heb. 1:3-4)

Scripture could be piled upon scripture showing that the right hand of God is the position of the very highest authority and power in the universe. And scripture could be piled upon scripture to show that it was the crucified, resurrected, and ascended man Jesus who was raised up to the right hand of the Father! We have pictured this as a literal throne somewhere in the sky. But there is no literal throne, nor are there "two Gods" up there seated on a throne! You see, my beloved, Jesus was and is a man. Some deny that Jesus is still a man! They tell us to forget the man Jesus! They insist that if we still reverence the man Jesus that we have made an idol out of the historical man of Galilee. But the truth is that *"there IS one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."* (I Tim. 2:5) The truth is that *"this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool."* (Heb. 10:12-13).

When the Son of God came into this world He testified of His own humanity, declaring, *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that himself doeth: and He will show Him greater works than these that ye may marvel."* (John. 5:19-20) The humanity of Jesus had no more authority or power on earth than my humanity or your humanity. It was the Father in Him and through Him that did the works! Oh, the wonder of it! While here in human flesh Jesus manifested a measure of the omnipotence of deity, but clearly stated that the Father would show Him greater works than those that He did. Now, praise God, HE, the man Jesus, has been raised up to that place where ALL POWER AND AUTHORITY IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH is given into His hands! And yet the mystery is just this. Jesus still cannot of Himself express the omnipotence of God! The Father is still showing Him the "greater works" than those He did while on earth. The deity still must flow through Him!

If by the spirit of revelation you can see the man Christ Jesus seated in that position of universal authority and dominion, yet that very authority and dominion flowing through Him from a source beyond and greater than His glorified humanity, you will then be able to comprehend what it means to be seated at the "right hand" of power, or on the "right hand" of the Majesty on high! If Jesus Christ has no humanity, if Jesus Christ is something other than a glorified man, if Jesus Christ is only deity, then the heavenly scene of Christ at the "right hand" of power, or on the "right hand" of God, is meaningless. It is a misrepresentation and a deception. Oh, yes, Jesus is God's "right hand" man! The power is from God the eternal Father, but it has been ordained to flow unto us by and through our Lord Jesus the Christ. Aren't you glad!

John sees a book in the right hand of Him who sits upon the throne. This hand holds the book. A book is to be read, since it contains words of information, instruction, counsel, or revelation. However, God has no need for such a book, for He forgets nothing, learns nothing, and has perfect knowledge of all things everywhere and of all His works from the beginning of the creation. This book in God's right hand is for mankind and for the

whole vast creation; it is God's revelation of Himself that is to be read and known of all men! It is interesting to note that when Christ "takes" the book out of the Father's right hand, He does so with His own right hand. Therefore, when He opens the seals, He does so with the book in His right hand. This reveals the great truth that one of the fruits of His triumph is the power of His own right hand of blessing and salvation to open the seals of God's book of destiny, to unlock the mystery of Christ in us, and to bring to the ultimate issue all the events that culminate in the manifestation of the sons of God. Think about it!

Beloved sons of God, let us be fully aware of this great truth. All the sons of God are destined to sit in Christ and with Christ upon the throne at the right hand of God! There is a people that is possessing the right hand authority and power of God. *"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne."* (Rev. 3:21) We have been called to share His glory, the very same glory Christ now has with the Father! It is not robbery or blasphemy to proclaim that we are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. Many in the sonship realm have sought a glory separate from the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no glory outside of His glory! There is no sonship outside of His sonship! There is no life outside of His life! There is no power outside of His power! There is no throne outside of His throne! Jesus Christ is at the right hand of the Father, and all God's sons are called and chosen and ordained to sit with Him there. We have a right to take our place in this right hand position and declare the deity of the Father in us!

Multitudes of Christian ministers today are ministering from the lowlands of religious traditions and carnal church creeds and programs. We have a higher calling in God! Only as we rise into the heavens of God's Spirit and minister unto the Lord and for the Lord from the realm of His greater, spiritual presence in the most holy place of His throneship, shall the blessings and benefits of His heavenly kingdom continue to change us and the world. Since heaven's greatest desire is that the sons of God be manifested, let us learn that we are the book in the Father's right hand and we must be "taken" by Jesus Christ the Lord; He must rip off the seals from that book which we are so that there shall be a revelation of the life of God that is written within. Father has raised us up into a unique place in this spiritual temple of the body of His sons. Our hearts cannot settle for anything less, for we yearn and long and pray and seek His will to be done in earth as it is in heaven. Nothing else will satisfy! Those who are called to sonship are experientially ascending in the spirit to the high places in God. They are recognizing and taking their rightful place on the throne of the Lord, by the Spirit, where they reign with Christ.

Today we are living in momentous times. Christ is opening the seals of that book which we are to bring forth the revelation of Jesus Christ in us. We are living in a period between the ages, and God is initiating a new order and ministry in the earth. My prayer is that all who read these lines will see in the spirit this new ministry of the kingdom of God in the earth! When we ascend in the Spirit into the heavenlies where God's will is revealed to our hearts, and God's word is put in our mouths, and we worship and intercede and speak from the throne of the Lord, we then begin to defeat all darkness and evil and put every enemy under Christ's feet by releasing the presence and power of the kingdom of God into the world. This is a new ministry we are entering at this time, and it is real and very powerful! Make no mistake about it — sons of God have a tremendous responsibility. Preaching and ministering according to the old carnal methods and techniques of the church systems will avail but little in this battle against the corrupt kingdoms of this world. Nor are we called to merely learn deeper truths; we are called to RULE AND REIGN WITH CHRIST! The world has not yet seen or read the revelation of Christ out of that book in the Father's right hand; they have only seen and read the creeds, programs, and promotions of the religious systems. The spiritual ministry from the throne of God out of the heavenly realms of the presence and power of the Lord is the secret to conquering all evil and all darkness! We are called to possess the kingdom, to take the kingdom, to take dominion over all darkness, sin, and death. We are first taking the dominion within ourselves, then we shall be able to break the kingdoms of man to shivers, and to rule mankind and all things as if we were shepherds tending a flock of sheep.

"Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power." (Psa. 15:6). While it is difficult for us to conceive of God becoming something more than He already is, and as to His nature there can never be any change, yet the Spirit reveals that the right hand of God had not previously been all that it was when the children of Israel triumphantly marched dryshod through the Red Sea, for the prophet speaks of a day wherein the right hand of the Lord "is become glorious in power," denoting a process in the unfolding of the power of His right hand in

the midst of men. And, while the right hand of God is first and foremost the realm of God's almighty power and authority, His right hand became glorious in power before the eyes of men when it was revealed in mighty signs and wonders through the person of the man Moses.

Now there has been a wonderful enlargement in the revelation of God's right hand, for Jesus Christ has been exalted to the realm of the right hand, and there shall be a further enlargement when all the holy sons of God have been also exalted to sit with Christ in His throne in all the power, authority, and glory that that means. Thus God's right hand is in fact becoming a people, the Christ, Head and body, a many-membered son of the right hand, and the manifestation of God in this right hand company is becoming even more glorious in power as the appointed hour for the unveiling of the sons of God is fully fulfilled. These not only declare His word, but have authority and ability to see it established in the earth and in all realms. As the power of God arises in all majesty in His body of sons, and He is exalted in the people He has prepared, how unspeakably glorious and majestic He will be in the eyes of His creation!

“O sing unto the Lord a new song; for He hath done marvelous things: His right hand and His holy arm, hath gotten Him the victory. The Lord hath made known His salvation: His righteousness hath He openly showed in the sight of the nations. All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together before the Lord; for He cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall He judge the world, and the people with equity.” (Psa. 98:3,7-9) This is a prophecy! Think of it — the nations are ready to worship the Lord, His enemies submit, and sing to His name; the ends of the earth and the whole world turn to Him because His right hand shall do marvelous things, and He shall make known His salvation to all!

Truly, beloved, this RIGHT HAND COMPANY will get Him the victory! There is no doubt about it — no devil, no wicked men, no conniving politicians, no hostile nations, no massive armies can stop this company from doing the things God has declared they will do, and because of their ministry, the nations will be joined to the Lord and sing His praise. As the work of restoration progresses, what harmony, what glorious unity and bountiful blessings and abundant life shall fill the universe, as this order of King-Priests flows together, to gather together into Christ all things in one, till all has been set in array, and God is indeed ALL IN ALL.

How sweet shall be the influence of this right hand company, the positive force of God's omnipotent energy, ministering His life, His love, His joy, His peace, His righteousness, and His wisdom unto creation. How thankful we are not to be numbered among those called to the left hand, to walk in darkness, and be vessels of wrath. There is no harshness in the ministry of the right hand — oh yes, even the right hand “dashes the enemies in pieces” — but it is the destruction of the negative qualities that there might be life. These bring correction ministered in love, leading all mankind to the Fountain of Living Water, feeding them in green pastures, causing them to lie down and rest, and not be afraid. Ah, we would SEEK THE THINGS OF THE RIGHT HAND!

THE BOOK — CHRIST WITHIN

One writer has pointed out that the seven seals of Revelation are similar to graduation diplomas. In some parts of the country, when a child completes the eighth grade, he receives a diploma. Then, upon graduating from high school, he receives another. When he graduates from college, he receives another diploma. If he goes on to graduate school and graduates, he receives another. Thus, diplomas represent specific accomplishments by the graduate. Much work and varied experiences go into obtaining each diploma! With each one, the skills of the graduate become more valuable and demand for his accomplishments grow.

The Father also designed that when the time came to open the seven-sealed book, there would be a careful process connected to exposing the contents. The process is the full disclosure of all that Christ is! Christ Jesus possesses every power that the Father has, for the deity in Jesus is the almighty Father! However, the full glory and authority of Christ has been hidden beneath the veil of our flesh, for we are the body of Christ and the temple of God. The restoration of all men and all things to God requires the full disclosure of Jesus Christ in and through His body on earth. So, the opening of each seal is connected to a brighter and clearer revelation of all that Christ is! As each seal opens, more of Christ is seen! This is the revelation of Jesus

Christ! Can you not see the mystery? The seven seals are similar to seven diplomas. As each diploma reveals more about the accomplishments and worthiness of the graduate, so each broken seal reveals more of the glory, wisdom, love, and power of God's wonderful Christ, Head and body!

Even though John does not call the seven-sealed book the "book of life" in chapter five, he clearly refers to this book as the "Lamb's book of life" in other places in the Revelation. John calls it the "Lamb's book of life" because it is the only book the Lamb receives in the whole book of Revelation! Notice: *"All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast — all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb..." (Rev. 13:8)* *"...the inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast." (Rev. 17:8)* *"Nothing impure will ever enter it (New Jerusalem), nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life." (Rev. 21:7)* Can we not see by this that the "Lamb's book" is the very book the Lamb receives from the right hand of God! And it is the very book of HIS OWN LIFE WRITTEN IN A PEOPLE!

Four ministers were once discussing the various translations of the Bible. One liked the King James Version because of its majestic English; another preferred the Revised Version of 1881 because of its literal translations of the original language; the third chose James Moffatt's translation for its up-to-date vocabulary. The fourth minister was silent. When pressed to express his opinion, he said, "I like my mother's translation best." The others were surprised. "We had no idea that your mother had translated the Bible." Oh yes," he said, "she translated it into life, and it was the most convincing translation I ever saw!"

Ah, Jesus never carried a copy of the Old Testament when He taught the multitudes. I have in my library many Bibles including the Literal Bible, the Comparative Bible, the Analytical Bible, the Emphasized Bible and the Amplified Bible. But Jesus Himself is the EXEMPLIFIED BIBLE! He is the PERSONIFIED BIBLE! He is the true picture of His Father, the Living Word of His Father. He is the full and complete revelation (unveiling) of His Father's life! Jesus in His humanity upon earth was the very first chapter of this marvelous book of the Life of the Lamb! And now the Lamb of God, living out His life in us, is the completion of the Book! Through that blessed company conformed to His image the world shall now, at last, read "the rest of the story"!

Many years ago the Indian Christian Mystic, **Sadhu Sundar Singh**, penned these illuminating words: *"When I was in Palestine last month I thought about many things and one thought that came to me was that our Lord did not write anything. It would have been a great thing if Jesus Christ would have written the Gospels Himself, but He did not write a single word, neither did He ask His disciples to write. He did not say to them, 'I am going to dictate, take down notes.' The writers in the Bible did not get inspiration by taking down notes but by living with the Word of Life. That is why our Lord did not ask His disciples to write anything! He says, 'My words are spirit and they are life.' It is easy to write words in book form but it is difficult to put the spirit into words! His life and spirit can only be put into the hearts of people and not into the pages of books. Jesus Christ knew that He was going to work on the hearts and not only through the pages of books."* — end quote.

I do not know how or why Christians came to the conclusion that the Lamb's Book of Life is a literal book in some far-off heaven somewhere. It is the book of the life of the Lamb. Even the most die-hard literalist has enough sense to understand that the Lamb is not a four-legged woolly little creature romping through the pasture squealing, "Baa...baa...baa!" We could preach on the "lamb" of God in any church in America and everyone would agree that this lamb is not a barnyard animal. If the "Lamb" who opens the "book" is not a four-legged lamb, it should not be difficult for anyone to understand that the "book" is not a two-covered book! People do such sloppy thinking about such divine and exalted things!

"And another book was opened, which is the book of life." (Rev. 20:12). The book of life is called *"the book of the life of the Lamb."* (Rev. 13:8) If I were to give you a book entitled THE BOOK OF THE LIFE OF GEORGE WASHINGTON, you would understand at once that it is a biography of the life of the first president of the United States, George Washington. That book should contain everything you always wanted to know about George Washington! Every detail of his life would be there. The portrait of his character and accomplishments would be drawn there. In the same way, THE BOOK OF THE LIFE OF THE LAMB is the autobiography of God's Lamb, the expose of who He is, what He is like, what He does. Everything you ever wanted to know

about the Son of God is contained in this wonderful book of the life of the Lamb! It is not a literal book, of course, for the sons and daughters of the Most High are the living record and revelation of the life of the indwelling Lamb! It was to the apostle Paul that the revelation was given that the book of life, the book of the life of the Lamb, the book which draws the portrait of the life, nature, character, and accomplishment of the Son of God — IS A PEOPLE! *“Forasmuch as Y-E are manifestly declared to be THE EPISTLE OF CHRIST ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.” (II Cor. 3:3)*

The Lamb is our Lord Jesus Christ! The Lord Jesus is seen by John approaching the eternal Father to receive from His right hand the book that is sealed but is now to be opened. What this book is, becomes crystal clear when in holy contemplation we consider what it is that belongs to the Father, is then given to Jesus Christ, is subsequently opened by Him, and through that opening becomes the revelation of Jesus Christ! That is the mystery. When our divine and wonderful Christ communed with the Father in His holy prayer in Gethsemane just hours before He offered Himself as “the Lamb slain,” it was concerning this very scene John beheld in figure on Patmos, that Jesus held discourse with His Father in heaven. I will quote the passage. Dear saint of God, read reverently and prayerfully and the blessed Holy Spirit of truth will flood the passage with light.

“I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name (nature) unto the men which thou gavest me...thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee, Holy Father, keep through thine own name (nature) those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one... Father I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.” (John. 17:4-11, 18-24)

Can you grasp the fact, dear reader, that our Lord, when speaking of those who were the Father’s, who are now given to Him, who are also given the same glory that is His (at the right hand of God!), and who are destined to be the revelation of that glory to the ends of the earth — can we not see that these indeed are the book in the Father’s right hand, given to our Lord Jesus Christ! Opened by Him these are they who bring to pass in the earth the revelation of Jesus Christ! The revelation was given to Jesus (Rev. 1:1) when He came to earth to reveal the Father. Now we are given to Him, bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, and He is raised up within us to reveal through us the Father in the sons. Oh, the wonder of it!

A further confirmation that this is precisely the meaning of the seven-sealed book is found in the events that transpire as soon as the book is taken from the hand of the One upon the throne — a paean of praise breaks forth as the four living creatures (kingship) and the twenty-four elders (priesthood) cry in rapturous exaltation, *“Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and has redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.” (Rev. 5:9-10)*

The following words from **Brother Paul Mueller** shed precious insights into this wonderful **Book of the Right Hand**. *“The fact is, the Bible as we now know it will one day become obsolete for us. The blessed book that we carry around, study and sometimes memorize is to be imparted into our lives so that we are truly epistles...known and read by all men. This is not to downgrade the Bible or to denigrate its effectiveness, authority, and inspiration. The book we call the Bible is, for the most part, the inspired word of God, and we are truly and deeply grateful for all it means to us. However, our respect for the Bible will not alter the great*

truth that it is God's intention that we become His living word. Every truth that has been given by the Spirit will eventually become a part of our lives, so that we will not need to turn to chapter and verse for guidance and truth, but rather, that truth will be written and engraved upon our lives so that we do by nature all the truth the Bible contains to the glory of God.

"The laws and covenants of God were not intended to be repeated on the pages of the book we call the New Testament. The old covenant clearly states that the next time the Lord writes His laws and covenant, it would be upon the hearts of His elect and chosen ones. The highest fulfillment of anything is to become that which it contains and reveals. When we have fully become the promised living epistles, manifesting the very Life of Christ, we shall then be able ministers of the new covenant! Then the law shall go forth of Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. (Mic. 4:2) It will not be the dead letter read from the pages of a book, but the living, anointed truth of God coming forth from lives that have been transformed by the power of that word! Many nations shall then desire to come up to the house of the Lord, where dwell those living epistles. Then shall they learn the ways of the Lord from kings and priests who express the experiences of the Spirit. Then, many peoples and nations shall walk in the paths of the Lord, for they will have witnessed the grand fulfillment of the new covenant within an anointed and holy people.

*"Each kingdom ruler will be like streams of water in a dry place, and like the shade of a great rock in a wearisome land. The presence of Christ will flow out of their lives like streams of water gushing from an overflowing fountain. The glory, power, and life of the Spirit will be so manifest that all who had ears but could not hear will then hear and understand the truth of God clearly. Eyes that once were blinded to revelation and reality will be opened by the power of the Spirit that is flowing out of the elect. The minds of those lacking true judgment and the ability to apprehend will then be able to comprehend fully God's abundant, redemptive love for them, as well as His living truth. Then the tongue of the stammering will be quick to speak plainly. The multitudes will receive the anointed message of Life coming from those living epistles." — **end quote.***

How tragic that the people of earth for the most part have never read this beautiful epistle of Christ, this glorious book of the life of the Lamb. They have poured over the books of religion, the commentaries of learned scholars who write out of carnal minds with the words of man's wisdom, the books of hypocrisy, the books of forms of godliness that deny the power thereof, the books of dead doctrines, empty rituals, lifeless ceremonies, and man-made rules and regulations of self-righteousness. But precious few have ever seen the BOOK OF THE LIFE OF THE LAMB! Oh! What a wonderful gospel shall fill the earth beneath and the celestial realms above when God fully opens His holy book of Life! The book of Life is that blessed company of the sons of God in whom the life of the Lamb is fully and eternally formed! This book is being carefully written word by word, sentence by sentence, paragraph by paragraph, page by page, and chapter by chapter in the nitty-gritty of our daily experience with God until the full revelation of the Christ shall be written therein. Time's clock is striking the hour for the manifestation of the sons of God, the opening of God's book of life people, and what a manifestation it shall be! That book is being opened within us even now, for it is the spirit that giveth life. As Christ in our spirit is opened within ourselves, the life of the Lamb is released to swallow up all sin and death.

God has a message for the world — the revelation of Jesus Christ! The message is being written in flaming words of glory upon the pages of the lives and hearts and minds of men and women who are dying to that impudent and death-dealing devil of self, in order to walk and live by the spirit of HIS LIFE. I am terribly at a loss for words to express the glory of God's book of Life Company, but I can assure you that once it is fully ready, prepared, and finished, it shall become the world's "best seller" throughout the ages to come! As the pen is mightier than the sword, so this book, above any that has ever been written by the finger of man, shall alter the course of history, and the dark covering that has been cast over the minds and hearts of the people for ages and dispensations will be completely destroyed by the flood of transforming light and wisdom and knowledge and glory and power shining forth from the living pages of God's eternal and incorruptible BOOK OF LIFE!

When John sees a book written within and without and sealed with seven seals, he is not talking about the Bible. He is not even talking about the book of Revelation. Nor is he seeing what many teachers describe as the "title deed" to the earth. He is talking about the book within that has been sealed, like the little Shulamite

maiden who was a fountain sealed (Song of Solomon 4:12). It is the book within, the book of Christ in us, the book of the law of the spirit of life that has been sealed! John saw the new covenant that God would make with the house of Israel whereof He says, *“I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts.”* (Heb. 8:10) That’s what John saw! He perceived in spirit that which is being written within. He saw where you find the performance of the new covenant — not in your own strength, not in your self-effort, not in your fleshly ability, not in your religious conformity, but by the Life within. He discovered that God’s elect is becoming living epistles, not of the letter, the outward, but of the spirit, the inward, because there is Life!

The reason the “word” of God has bound and killed more people spiritually than it has helped is because it has been legislated outwardly. To these the “word of God” is a book full of laws and commandments to be imposed on those who would live godly. Religion makes godliness a law rather than a life! “God said!” they thunder from their pulpits high upon the craggy pinnacle of Mount Sinai, and then lay an outward rule and observance upon the people extracted from an outward book. To people who have been through the trauma of divorce they advise, “You can never be remarried; God says, I hate adultery, and you can only please God by remaining single the rest of your life.” They kill people with the letter of the Word, not seeing the spirit, the compassion of God, the love of God, the heart of God. People have been forced to go to the world to find some judgment because they couldn’t find it in the church. They have been compelled to go to the counselors of the world to find some understanding because the preachers had no grace, no mercy, no wisdom from the Lord. Christian ministers of the grace of God LEGISLATING THE LAW! What an enigma! What a travesty! “But the Bible says!” you contend. You hypocrites! You don’t even know what the Bible says! You know the letter that kills! You have never perused the pages of the blessed Book of the Life of the Lamb — the spirit that gives life! The New Testament is not that black, leather-bound book we call the Bible. The New Testament, the true Bible, the Living Epistle of Christ is the law of His life written upon the fleshy tables of the heart.

You, precious child of God, are the epistle of Christ, you are the book of the life of the Lamb, and every day God is writing in your book! He’s not writing for nothing — for your book is to be opened! And there is only One who is worthy to take the book and loose the seals thereof, and that is the Lamb in the midst of the throne. The Lamb! Oh, the wonder of it! The book is the book of the life of the Lamb. The opening of the book is the unveiling of the life of the Lamb, the revelation of His life written and engraven in the minds and hearts of those who share His nature. He is the One who is worthy to take each one of us and open us up! And it is only through Jesus Christ our Lord that we can be opened up as the Book of the Life of the Lamb!

Multitudes of God’s people would rather remain a closed book. We wish to stay closed because of our unique personality, we are shy, reticent, humble, immature, inexperienced, or burdened down with sin-consciousness and condemnation. But I declare unto you, my beloved, that when God has finished writing in you, when He completes within you that living epistle which He knows is capable of being read and known of all men, then He will open you up! As God breaks and removes the seals from off of us, not only will great and mighty things take place in our own experience, but things will begin to happen in the outer world. Why is there such darkness over the earth, and gross darkness over the people? Because the very light of God is concealed within us. Although we are the light of the world, the light is shut up. Although we have within us the mighty River of Life, we are a fountain sealed. God must work mightily in us to release the light of our lives that His glory may arise upon His people and be seen upon them. And when that hour arrives nothing can stop God’s judgments from coming into the earth. And when His judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. Aren’t you glad!

The seven-sealed book is not a record of past or future events in the outer world. It has nothing to do with wars between nations or judgments poured out upon the nations of earth. A book of world events would not be the revelation of Jesus Christ! A book of human events would not be of such a nature that no one in heaven nor on earth nor under the earth would be able to open the book or even to look thereon. Nor is it a book of “last things” in the destiny of the world, as all futurists proclaim. The vision of John shows that the seven-sealed book has its own contents. The revelation we are given indicates that the seven-sealed book symbolizes something that only Christ can handle. Therefore it must be a book of spiritual reality!

The main purpose of the vision in chapter five of the Revelation is to focus attention on the seven-sealed book. In this book we have the beginning of the revelation of Jesus Christ! It is the revelation of Himself released

through His mighty spiritual work of transformation in His called and chosen elect. The breaking of the seals is the solemn and judicial way in which the Lamb nature establishes His rule and reign in those who have been purchased by His blood. It is the processing of God whereby the life of the Lamb is uncovered and unfolded within us. This is a book within a book. Literally, in the book of Revelation, the seven-sealed book is a symbolic book within the book John wrote of his visions. However, spiritually this means that John was brought to the place where he could see the intention of God written in the nature of a people.

There are seven seals upon this book. The number seven denotes that contained within this book is the totality of God's character and the complete revelation of His will and purpose. As these seals are loosed in God's people they begin to experience the fullness of all that God is. There has never been an expression of God at this level in the earth at any time except in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, for it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell. But now there is a people, His body, the completion of Him, that has been sealed unto the day of redemption, and when God has loosed in them all the seals there will be brought forth in the earth a many-membered expression of God at the same level of God's fullness. You will know Him no longer by measure, you will see Him no more through a glass darkly, or as a reality beyond or outside of yourself. He will no longer be a mental image, a good feeling, an ideal, a philosophy or doctrine. You will know Him even as you are known by Him and will see Him face to face.

A remarkable prophecy was given by a saint of God in the year 1619. A portion of this prophecy confirms the truth I now share. It says, *"There shall be a full redemption of Christ. This is a hidden mystery not to be revealed or understood without the revelation of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is at hand to reveal the same unto all holy seekers and loving inquirers. The completion of such redemption is withheld and abstracted by the seals of Revelation. Wherefore; as the Spirit of God shall open seal after seal, so shall this redemption come to be revealed, both particularly and universally. In the gradual opening of the mystery of redemption in Christ, does consist the unsearchable wisdom of God, which will continually reveal new and fresh things to the worthy seeker. The unsealing of the living testimony (perfected remnant of believers, the man-child, the literal sons of God's people), along with the ark of God (Jesus Christ), must begin the promulgation of the everlasting Gospel of the Kingdom."* What a word!

To be continued...

J. Preston Eby

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 78
THE SEVEN-SEALED BOOK (Continued)
BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART SEVENTY-EIGHT

WHO WAS WORTHY TO OPEN THE BOOK?
NO MAN CAN OPEN THE BOOK
THE ONE WORTHY TO OPEN THE BOOK

"And I saw in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals." (Rev. 5:1)

The book is "written within" — that is, the nature, wisdom, and power of Christ, which is the law of His life, is inscribed in our minds and written in our hearts, known only to God and to us. It is also "written on the backside" or outside — bespeaking the reflection of that inner life expressed outwardly through our words and actions, open to the gaze of others. Yet the full revelation of Christ in us has been sealed! Every son and daughter of God is aware that the Christ who dwells in us is a whole Christ, all that He is and all that He has is resident in the life we have received. Have we not yearned and desired above all things to manifest His fullness? And still, the full and complete manifestation of His indwelling life has not been shown. The breaking of the seals, the unrolling of the scroll, shall set all things in God's order! This book has been sealed away from the influences of men. It has not been tampered with by man, for it has been held secure in the right hand of the Father, the hand of omnipotence. Our almighty Father has been in control of every experience of our lives as He has moved to bring us to the full stature of Christ! When every seal has been broken, and the book is fully opened, it will confound all the wisdom of men and the pride of religion.

In the past we have by inspiration and revelation spoken the message of God, but now we are destined to be the open book of God, the very being of the message of God, written not in words of earth's languages, but lived out of the essence of the Christ-life within. The book is not in some far-off heaven somewhere, neither is it something outside of us. Nothing written by the hand of man can contain the totality of God. Ah, my beloved, the sons of God are within themselves the embodiment of this wonderful book upon the hand of Him who sits upon the throne! The book that has been sealed within us is even now being unsealed and opened. What is it that is being unveiled? The totality of the Father in His sons is now ready to be made manifest! The Lord Himself is arising in the totality of all that He is within the nature, personality, and expression of His called and chosen elect upon this earth! All mankind shall see and behold the salvation of God!

One of the most beautiful books of the Old Testament is the Song of Solomon, which describes the relationship between two people who are deeply in love. While this is its imagery, spiritual-minded saints throughout church history have seen in the story a thrilling picture of Christ, the Bridegroom, and His bride, the church. Individually, it portrays Christ the Bridegroom in our spirit, and the bride of our soul. How fitting, therefore, are the words in which the Shulamite bride declares that her Beloved is *"altogether lovely."* (**Song of Solomon 5:16**). A great preacher of another day penned the following thought-provoking sentence about our Lord Jesus Christ: *"Not one feature of His glorious person attracts attention at the expense of others; but He is perfectly and altogether lovely."* Continuing, he exclaimed, *"Oh, Jesus! Thy power, Thy grace, Thy justice, Thy tenderness, Thy truth, Thy majesty, and Thine immutability make up such a man, or rather such a God-man, as neither heaven nor earth hath seen elsewhere... Thou art music without discord; Thou art many, and yet not divided; Thou art all things, and yet not diverse. As all the colors blend in one resplendent rainbow, so all the glories of heaven and earth meet in Thee and unite so wondrously, that there is none like Thee in all things; nay, if all the virtues of the most excellent were bound in one bundle, they could not rival Thee!"* Can we not confess it? The truth is that the manifest sons of God are the body of the Bridegroom. In making that statement, I am fully aware that such a thought runs contrary to long-established views of "theology"; but as George Hawtin once poignantly said, we are not concerned with the views of theology, for theology is not really

the views of God but the ideas of men. We are concerned only with the truth of God as it is revealed in His word in the light of inspiration and revelation. Every son of God will gladly and joyfully confess that CHRIST IN US IS — ALTOGETHER LOVELY! This is the beauty, holiness, grace, love, wisdom, glory, and power that is unveiled as the seals are loosed from that book which we are!

Oh yes, the book is Christ Himself, for Christ is the revelation of the One who sits upon the throne! Christ is the Word of God. The book is a Word-Book! The book is a message, and Christ is the message of God. *“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son...” (Heb. 1:1-2)* Yet — it is not merely Christ in heaven, but Christ in you and me! The sealed book is the very nature, wisdom, glory, and power of Christ held back and obscured by the outer man of flesh, by our natural identity and human consciousness, until the seals are broken!

The book is sealed with seven seals. Seven is the number of completeness — the seven seals bespeak of the total depravity of the natural man. Paul said it so well, *“I know that in me, that is in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing.” (Rom. 7:18)* *“For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.” (Rom. 7:22-23)* *“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” (Rom. 8:7)* The Adamic nature is a hellish nature and shut tightly against the spirit of God. It must be broken, loosed! It always seemed a little strange to me that such an act as loosing the seals brought so much woe, calamity, judgment, and distress on earth, yet it evoked such rejoicing, jubilation, worship, and all-out adoration in heaven! To the natural mind this appears rather offensive, malevolent, and sadistic. Indeed, heaven rejoicing over the pain, anguish, and torment of men on earth!

The truth, however, is far too telling, glorious, and overwhelming for us to miss it. The truth is just this — the seven seals are the bondage of the flesh and it is this complete imprisonment of the Christ within by the dominance of the consciousness of the outer man of flesh that is suffering all the dealing, judgment, and fire of God! These are the seals that are being broken! Rejoice, oh man of spirit, rejoice ye heavens and they that dwell therein! How my glad heart leaps for joy in the light of a truth so significant and glorious! I cannot weep for the natural man, even my natural man, the carnal mind, or the sin which wars in my members. At long last I understand and rejoice in the heavens of God's Spirit for the mighty revelation of Jesus Christ that emanates with scintillating beauty as the seals of my very own corruption are stripped away! What a word that is!

WHO IS WORTHY TO OPEN THE BOOK?

“And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?” (Rev. 5:2)

The Greek word translated “proclaiming” is related to the task of a herald who thunders forth a royal declaration in thunderous tones. “Loud voice” is in keeping with the strong angel's role as a herald. In fact, the Greek words for “loud” and “voice” are joined together to form our English word “megaphone.” Mega means “loud” and phone means “sound.” It represents a mighty message! The powerful angel is portrayed as speaking in tones that are so overwhelming that his words reach the ends of heaven, throughout the earth, and even into the underworld. In spite of his deafening appeal there is no answer, as we shall see, from any celestial, terrestrial, or subterranean creature. None is worthy, for none can qualify!

With these thoughts as a background, let us consider the scene in the heavens of God's spirit as it is revealed in chapter five of the Revelation. The eternal Father, seated upon the rainbow-encircled throne, is presiding over the mighty assembly. The majesty of that scene is beyond words! In the midst of the great throne are the four living creatures, representing the kingship of the sons of God; and around them are the twenty-four elders, portraying the priesthood of the sons of God. In the right hand of the Father is a book. It is written on the inside and also on the outside. A mighty angel, a strong messenger, a mighty message steps forward and challenges the entire universe. “Who is worthy to open the book,” he cries, “and to loose the seals thereof?” His voice shook the earth and penetrated all space and galaxies; it resounded through heaven.

Mark you, “who is worthy,” not who is skillful enough or wise enough or strong enough, but who is worthy, who has character enough, who has drunk deep enough at the fountain of the eternal Spirit, who is enough like God, to unlock the secrets of divine life? Will one reach forth to take the book? Will thousands of men and spirits and creatures rush madly to the throne to grasp the book? Who can take the book? All heaven is searched. Might seraphim, cherubim, or angels open those seals? Or perchance might Enoch, Noah, Abraham, David, or Elijah present themselves as worthy to fulfill this need? Might one among the saints who “by faith” are among “the spirits of just men made perfect” step forward? Might some advanced and powerful alien entity from some far distant galaxy respond to this challenge? Earth is searched. Might some president, king, or great statesman or religious leader perform this great deed? The search is dropped to the regions “under the earth.” Might Caesar, Napoleon, or Nero or other of earth’s mighty dead presume to offer themselves? But every mouth is stopped! “No man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.” The suspense is awful. John’s tender heart is moved to tears.

NO MAN CAN OPEN THE BOOK!

“And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open the book, neither to look thereon.”
(Rev. 5:3-4)

Although the sound of the heavenly messenger’s voice resounds throughout all of heaven, the high and holy realm of the spirit; throughout all the earth, the dwelling place of the natural or soulical man; and the underworld, bespeaking of the body realm, the gross wickedness of the flesh and the bondage of the devil, there is no one who is able to qualify as “worthy” to open and to look upon the contents of the scroll. The word translated “able” is the Greek word which means “to possess power or authority.” Nowhere in all of God’s vast universes was there found a creature who was authorized or empowered of God to open the book and bring forth the revelation of life that it contains! No man can open the book! No man! No carnality. No one by intellect or human reasoning or fleshly ability. No person moving in a religious spirit, or proclaiming a creed or doctrine, or observing outward laws, ceremonies, rituals, or man-made programs, promotions, and efforts could open the book. Not one!

It is a good thing that this book was not opened here in Texas because we have a whole passel of preachers who say they can tell you what is on the inside of this book, on the outside, and all around it. They have all the answers. If John had just been in Texas, instead of being on the isle of Patmos, they could have given him the answers! Well, John didn’t have the answer, but there is one who can open the book, as we shall see.

I can understand that no man on earth was found able. Some of us who are living way below our privileges in the realm of the earthlies are not worthy, nor capable. I can also understand that no man under the earth, those living in the underworld of the sensual, fleshly, and devilish realm, was found able. But then it goes on to say, “no man in heaven.” No man even living in the heavenlies of God’s Spirit, that place of exaltation, triumph, and power, was found able, not only to open the book, but even to look thereon. In these days of transition from the church to the kingdom the full expression of Christ’s redemption must be made manifest and it begins with the opening of the seven-sealed book — not single-sealed, not double-sealed, but a book with seven seals, written within and on the backside, which means written all over — and HE ALONE CAN OPEN IT!

Perhaps we have felt that, if God could find a man who would be totally committed to Him, or one that has attained to a high place in God as an apostle, or prophet, His purposes in the earth could be fulfilled. But no matter how dedicated, committed, gifted, and heavenly minded a man may be, no matter what spiritual progress or position or attainment a man may have, when it comes to the unveiling of Jesus Christ in the breaking of the seals which release the forces that will eventually bring about the full expression of God’s glory and purpose, no man was found worthy. This is a word that needs to be heard by all who seek after manifest sonship in this day! As we move into this wonderful new day of the kingdom, and nothing much seems to happen, perhaps we start blaming ourselves, or our teachers, or the prophets, and we ask, “Where is this

greater manifestation of the Spirit, this full expression of the power of the kingdom of God? I am not speaking here about healing some sick and casting out some devils and seeing a few things change around us and having some miracles, which in time past we have called “revival.” These things have been taking place throughout the ages, and happen all the time, but by and large the world does not even know they are happening!

We gather in our little meetings and conventions and declare our sonship, that we have entered beyond the veil, that we have arrived in the day of the Lord, that we have come out of religious Babylon and left all the lower orders behind, that we have been set in the new order of the kingdom, that we have even now begun to put on life and immortality, and a number of other wonderful declarations, and yet no one up and down the street where we are gathered even knows that we are in town! The world goes on day after day, month after month, year after year, decade after decade wallowing in shame, bound by sin, sorrow, pain, and death, with wars and starvation and troubles of every kind affecting billions of people. That is not what the day of the Lord is to bring forth: a little moving over here and a little stirring over there, BUT A RELEASE OF THE FULLNESS OF THE POWER AND THE GLORY AND THE LIFE OF GOD OVER ALL THE EARTH. This is the unveiling of the triumphant One, who by His death, resurrection, and ascension to the right hand of the Father has prevailed! And yet we cannot escape the awful truth — NO MAN CAN PRODUCE IT! Not even a man in heaven!

Soon after John saw and heard this scene there was a mighty weeping going on concerning who was worthy to open the book. **J. A. Seiss** commented on this scene, *“Some speak of these tears as mere tears of disappointed curiosity. This, indeed, is the common explanation. We are told that the book had unknown revelations in it, which John was very impatient to understand; and that his much weeping was caused by the prospect of having his personal desire to obtain a knowledge of the future, ungratified. Poor John! What a silly mortal, to be troubling himself about unrevealed prophecy, and to keep up this crying in heaven because there was no one to open the book for him! The thing is absurd. It is beneath criticism. What a sad picture of inspiration, that it should strip a venerable and disciplined servant of God of all manly dignity, and make him a silly and peevish child! No, no; John knew by that Spirit in which he was, what that sealed book meant. He knew that if no one was found worthy and able to take it from the hand of God, and to break its seals, that all the promises of the prophets, and all the hopes of the saints, and all the pre-intimations of a redeemed world, must fail.”* - **End Quote**

The Seer waits in the oppressive silence until he can bear it no longer. Then he breaks down into bitter weeping. The word translated “wept” does not refer to quiet tears streaming down the face, but to audible wailing and uncontrollable sobbing. John is terribly upset because there is no response to the heavenly messenger’s thunderous appeal for someone to open the book, loosing the contents hidden within. His soul is shaken to its foundations as he recognizes that the outcome of all things on behalf of all creation hangs upon the contents of this sealed book! John’s tears, therefore, express his sensitivity in things spiritual, for he realizes that there must come a time when God must mightily intervene in the affairs of men and the whole world or the kingdom of God will never be realized on earth. His longing for that great Day is joined with his longing for the release of the fullness of the power and the glory of God over all the earth. Hence the awful sense of frustration expressed in weeping when no creature responded to the messenger’s call.

The mystery is just this. John represents you and me! Have we not wept, groaned, and travailed in pain within ourselves for Christ in us to be unsealed, fully revealed? Oh, yes! But the weeping, groaning, and travailing of itself cannot bring forth the Christ. “Weep not!” one of the elders commanded. The elder here referred to is undoubtedly one of the twenty-four who have been identified as representative of the priesthood of God. Notice, the elders do not weep! Only John wept. The elders do not weep for they are in the secret of God, and as the redemptive agents of God the priests of the kingdom understand the process taking place. What was dark to John is light to them! It means that when the reality of priesthood breaks in our spirit, and we are given a priestly heart, and a priestly understanding, our tears are dried. Once the revelation comes, and we know God is in control, and we are certain of the Father’s purpose and our calling in it, and the final outcome is sure, then we truly rest in His love, and weeping ceases. It is indeed wonderful!

John says that there was no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth who was able to open the book. What this means in the understanding of the Spirit is just this: Who is able to reveal, to show forth the Christ? Who is able! And he says, “No man” — matters not what heaven he dwells in, nor what occult realm he works from — no man is able to open up, expose, disclose, release, unveil, reveal, or exhibit the fullness of Christ! Then there came the voice, *“Stop weeping! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has won and overcome and conquered! He can open the scroll and break its seven seals! And there between the throne and the four living creatures I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God who have been sent far and wide into all the earth. He then went and took the scroll from the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.”* (Rev. 5:5-7, Amplified)

Oh, to be anointed to understand these words of deepest mystery and highest glory! It was the strength of the Lion of the tribe of Judah that prevailed. But it was the humility, meekness, and unselfish sacrifice of the Lamb that accomplished the work! We can roar like a lion, but we will never open the book by that roar. The book cannot be opened, the Christ within can never be revealed, except by the spirit of the Lamb! Nor can weeping open the book. We can weep all day long and it isn't going to make the book open. In Pentecostal and Evangelical circles they tell you, “Repent! Weep your way through at the altar, come between the porch and the altar and cry out mightily to God.” There is a time for weeping, but you can cry till you turn blue and you will die crying. In the revelation of Jesus Christ God has come to wipe away tears! *“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”* (Rev. 21:4)

WHAT WILL OPEN THE BOOK? Can you open the book? Will lamenting and weeping about the situation open the book? Do you know what John realized? No man can open this book. Weeping won't open the book. Roaring like a lion won't open the book. Positive thinking won't open the book. Confessing won't open the book. Being heavenly minded won't open the book. No man in heaven was able to open the book. Are you a heaven dweller? You still can't open the book! If John could have opened the book he would have. He was standing “in the spirit” on the Lord's day and “in heaven” when he saw the book! If you could open the book you would. If I could open the book I would. If I could call forth the revelation of Christ, if I could generate and produce the manifestation of the sons of God I would. Oh, yes! But John felt as I have felt many times. “And I wept...” “Boo-hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo! I'm not perfect...I'm still just human... I can't overcome... I am weak and hopeless... Lord help me... Lord change me... boo-hoo-hoo-hoo!” But that will never open the book!

THE ONE WORTHY TO OPEN THE BOOK

The messenger said, “Stop crying! Weep not! Stop feeling sorry for yourself! Stop bemoaning the world! Stop feeling hopeless! There is somebody that can open the book!” Ah, beloved, dry your tears and hush your cries — The mighty Lamb of God is standing up within each of God's elect in this hour, and He is able to open the book!

This book must be opened. This is necessary and imperative for the salvation of humanity and the restoration of all things back into God! The following words by **J. T. Dean** bear eloquent testimony to the work of Christ within us in opening the seals. *“Now, what is the Lamb said to do? He opens the seals of a sealed book. He reads what is already written therein. He brings to actuality a purpose already formed and fixed. He does not introduce something new into the purpose of God. He does not alter God's will. He unfolds it, realizes it, brings to actuality what God intended from the beginning with regard to man. He does not open a door for man to enter into a new and different life than that for which God made him at first. He carries out God's eternal purpose respecting man. God set the human race on a journey. He gave it a goal to strive after and reach, even the image and glory of God. But instead of taking the direct road to his destination, man left the path. He began to wander round and round in ways that made no progress, but that led him even farther from the goal than he was when he started. And Christ comes to him while he is thus wandering. He does not give him a new destination. He does not set another goal before him. But He guides him back to the path which he has left, and sets him to walk anew towards his former goal. Or, to take another illustration, God brought man into the world a little child spiritually, but a child that He meant to grow up into a strong spiritual manhood in the likeness of Christ. But instead of growing up to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, with never*

a day's illness to set back his growth, man was afflicted with sickness of soul, with sin. He advances towards manhood through a sickly youth. And Christ, the Great Physician, helps to keep the disease under, reinforces the powers of health, and brings the sickly child through the weakness unto the perfect man. Christ does not help man to become something other than God's design for him. He helps him to become all that God meant him to be! He opens the seals, and brings God's purpose to fulfillment" — End Quote. To which I would add — the Lamb is the One who opens for all creation the mystery of sonship to God!

Joyce Morris has shared an excellent word concerning the worthiness of our Lord Jesus Christ and His ability to open the seven seals of the book. The following is a quote from her anointed message.

"As you know, many books have been written in the world. There have been awards (like the Pulitzer Prize) given for some of these books. Many have been made into plays and movies. As we know, some of these books are true stories about people's lives. It's very interesting that a movie based on a true story, has a greater impact on people's lives than a fictional story. Every kind of book that you could possibly think of has been written. But the book that we want to get into today is — the Book of Life. We want to enter into the extraordinary understanding of what the Book of Life is — and that you are becoming the Book of Life!

"God has His own book. The book that God has is not the Bible. The Bible has been written from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, which God has given to man. But this book is to point you to THE BOOK — which is THE BOOK OF LIFE! God wrote the book in the beginning and in the Book of Life is God's plan. In the Book of Life there are certain names written. God has written His book and no one can contaminate it. Nobody can put their doctrines into it. Nobody can put their beliefs, ideas, concepts, or anything else into it. Man will never be able to contaminate the book that God has written!

"God is the author of His book. In His book He wrote His plan with many scripts. God's book is the Book of Life, which is Christ Himself. 'And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.' God wrote His plan, and nobody can change His plan. However, you can change the script — and I will get into this later on. I want to talk about the first individual that had the understanding that God had written His book. He also understood that his script had been written, and that God had written every one of his days in His book. All the days of his life had been written in the Book of Life! When Jesus came into this earth, every one of His days had been written in God's book. He is the book. The Book of Life came, the bread from heaven came, THE WORD (BOOK) WAS MADE FLESH! He had to walk out the script and the plan of God on earth. He only tried to change it one time. He learned obedience through the things that He suffered. I know that He struggled with the script for a while! I know that He was tempted in every area, just like you and me. But He passed all the tests, and overcame all the temptations. He said, 'It is written...' — it is written in my Father's script — it is written in my Father's plan — I cannot do that — I cannot yield to my self-will — I will not change the script — I must follow the plan of God, because I came to do the will of my Father!

*"So here He is — The Book. Each day of His life was unfolding. Everything that God had written in the very beginning was unfolding. His days were unfolding. His experiences were unfolding. Each day and each experience took Him from one place to another, all the way to the cross. He followed the script; He looked at it; He understood it; and He yielded to the Father to walk out that script. He walked out the plan of God. **Hebrews 12:2** says, *'...who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross.'* He endured the cross because of the joy that was set before Him — because He had the understanding that as He fulfilled the script and walked out God's plan each day of His life, He wasn't going to be just one book, He would go on to be many books!*

*"When the people killed Him, they thought they were getting rid of The Book. But they couldn't get rid of the script that God had written! No man can stop it! Jesus could have stopped it in the garden of Gethsemane, but He yielded to the Father, and said, *'Not my will, but thine, be done.'* He did not yield to His self-will, but He yielded to the will of God, to bring a fulfillment to the plan of God, the script that had been written for Him. No one could change Jesus' destiny except Jesus. But He didn't change it — He fulfilled it by walking it out. Even after all this, His life still wasn't over. The book wasn't finished yet! He wasn't the flesh man Jesus anymore, but if you can understand — here He is, the Book of Life, walking in the earth and everybody was looking at it, and reading the Book of Life! They were looking at and reading the Book of Life every day, and they saw what*

was in it. What they saw was God! This upset and angered many people. They hated the book, because it went against their book. It was against their lives, what they believed in; it was against their governments, their religions, and everything that they stood for, because they loved death more than they loved life!

“Jesus said, ‘This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.’ (Jn. 3:19) Again, ‘The people which sat in darkness saw a great light.’ (Mat. 4:16) They saw the book coming and it had light and life in it. The very life of God was walking and moving in Christ! And God was enjoying every bit of it! He said, ‘I finally have an individual that is yielding to my will, my plan, my script. He is studying my script every day. He is waiting upon the Holy Spirit to direct His path, so that He can walk out what I wrote from the foundation of the world.’

“When Jesus looked within in the garden of Gethsemane, He saw that God had written before the foundation of the world that the Lamb would be slain. It had already been written — but until that time Jesus didn’t have the full picture or understanding of what was going to happen on the cross. He had known it, He had understood it, and He saw it take place — before the foundation of the world, because the Father had shown it to Him. But the man Jesus had lost the full understanding of this event when He came into His flesh body on earth.. In Gethsemane He came into the full realization of what was going to happen to Him on the cross. He saw what He would suffer; the hatred and rejection that would come against Him; but He did not want to miss the script that God had written — He had to walk it out and fulfill even this part.

“The Father showed Him in Gethsemane that through the cross He was coming into a higher place, realm, or state of being. He showed Him that He was going to bring the entire creation BACK INTO THE BOOK! This is the reason He knew He had to fulfill the script. He also knew that this wasn’t the end of The Book. He knew that His life would continue throughout eternity in the hearts and lives of many people! They thought they had gotten rid of Him. But He came back on the day of Pentecost, and the Book of Life began to enter into many men — a many-membered corporate body — THE BOOK OF LIFE IN MEN!

“In chapter five of the Revelation we see a book in the right hand of the Father. The book had seven seals, and no man was found worthy to open the book. But I want to tell you — there was One that could open it, and He was the Lamb that was slain! The book with the seven seals is the sons of God that God had written before the foundation of the world. The seven seals are the perfection and completeness we are to come into, in God. God wrote this script; and He wrote your script in the very beginning! Jesus was the only one worthy to loose the seven seals and open up The Book because He had walked out and fulfilled all that God had written of His sons. After He had opened the seven seals, why do you think that immediately it talks about those that have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, and that He has made them kings and priests to rule in the earth? Because He is talking about the OVERCOMERS. And the overcomers are THE SONS OF GOD! (Rev. 21:7). The overcomers are those who will be perfected in every area of their life. This is why it is presented as “seven seals” — seven means completeness and perfection!

“So in the book that Jesus opens up are the scripts that God wrote for the sons of God. He wrote it in the very beginning. He wrote all the days of your life in the Book of Life in the very beginning — before the foundation of the world. He wrote everything that you would experience in your life to bring you to the point where you now are IN CHRIST! And all of these experiences that the Father wrote for you to walk out were to work the Book of Life into you, so that you would become the Book of Life! This is why Jesus said, ‘Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day...he that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.’ (Jn. 6:54, 56) Jesus knew that to eat of His flesh is to eat of the Book of Life; and that the Book of Life is within, where man cannot contaminate it, cannot touch it; and the script is God Himself in man! He has written it! Every time you go within and seek God for His divine counsel, instruction, and understanding, you are reading and coming into an understanding of what the Father wrote before the foundation of the world. He is enlightening it to you from within so that you can walk it out!

“Christ is the only One that can open this Book of Life because He walked it out. He walked out God’s script and God’s plan. In the natural, when an individual writes a play, he spends a long time thinking it through. I don’t know how long God spent thinking about His plan. I have no idea what it entailed — His plan is so awesome! When you start walking in God’s script the life within will swallow up all death. It will swallow up

any darkness. It will swallow up everything in you that is not like God. God will swallow you up into Him — in the Book of Life! We need to understand that we are here to be the fulfillment of God's plan! We are not here for our own purpose, we are here called according to His purpose! God's purpose is for His plan to be fulfilled in this day, and in this hour, in each and every son of God!" — End Quote.

In chapter four of the Revelation, every description of Christ is of Christ in His deity, Christ as God, sitting on the throne, the eternal Lord, God Almighty. But when we look at chapter five we find that every description of Jesus is Jesus in His humanity — the crucified One, the Lamb slain, the Lion of the tribe of Judah. It was the humanity of Christ that was of the tribe of Judah. It was the humanity of Christ that was crucified. It was the humanity of Christ that died — the Lamb of God. The things seen by John are symbols, pictures, terms of accommodation to help us understand the mystery. You see, my beloved, the true and full revelation of God could not come to man until it came in the man Jesus. Through His sinless life, through His sonship walk, through His death, burial, and resurrection God in man overcame sin, limitation, death, hell, and the grave. Through this wonderful work God took everything that was in deity and raised it up in humanity! Therefore the Lamb is worthy! He is worthy to take the book! He is worthy to open the seals! He is worthy to raise up in mankind the full revelation of God in man! Jesus the Lamb, Jesus the Man, taking the book out of the hand of the Father, is just a picture of this transferal of divine, incorruptible life and glory from the realm of pure spirit into the world of humanity! It is in and through Jesus the Lamb that this has been accomplished! Isn't it wonderful!

Who is worthy? In the natural there is none worthy. But when we begin to look into the spirit we see that there is One that is worthy. The One who has prevailed to open the book is the Lion of the tribe of Judah — that signifies Jesus Christ in strength and victory. This Lion is a slain Lamb — for He conquers not by brute force but by the power of His poured out life! The wonder of it is that THIS LION-LAMB IS WITHIN US! The worthy One is within! When we begin laying hold upon the One within us, the One within us begins unsealing the book within. Out of that unsealing comes the triumph of the Christ in every dimension of our lives. He makes war against every false and fleshly thing that there might be the revelation of Jesus Christ in us. There will be the expression of what is true in us coming forth into manifestation in our outer realm. It is not a nature that ignores the corruption of our outer man of flesh — it is a nature that is fully capable of dealing with the corruption of the outer man that the spirit be revealed. Oh, that our eyes be opened to behold HIM! HE is worthy to open the book, now to fulfill in us all the reality of our redemption! It is the Christ within who opens the seals and it is the Christ within who is the book revealed. In absolute power He shall reign until the Christ is fully and forever formed in us, formed from the inner to the outer — the image of God!

There was a day when a man could arise and be used of God, but in the book of Revelation it is the Lamb who is used. He must be the central One, releasing the fullness of the Spirit of God in all His majesty and power from within. Even though we are kings and priests and have authority to reign on the earth, we are not worthy to open the book, neither to look thereon. Recently I felt a deep cry in my spirit and I said to God, "There is nothing more that can be done. I know of no prayer that can be prayed, no faith that can be exercised, no knowledge that can be revealed, no action that can be taken to bring forth the manifestation of this sonship, this is as far as we can go." There comes a time when our pressing into the kingdom does no good. There is no one in heaven, or on earth, or in the underworld that has the ability to even look upon the book, much less to open it. Here is a realm that is shut up to God Himself! It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing. The fullness, the life, the immortality, the manifestation of power and wisdom and glory will never come until we first see the One who is triumphant, even the slain Lamb, the One who is central to the purposes of God and the One who has the seven horns of power, the seven eyes of omniscient vision, and the seven spirits of God. Many "sonship" preachers and teachers apply every scripture and revelation to themselves, to the many-membered body, ignoring completely the Head of the body. But our Lord Jesus Christ is the rightful One to look upon, the One who is worthy to look upon, to loose the seals, to open the book, to bring forth the manifestation of God's nature, glory, and power out of our lives, and then to receive all the honor and glory and praise. "Thou art worthy!"

It is God who has highly exalted Jesus, and given Him the name that is above every name in heaven and in earth! If you live in heaven today, my brother, my sister, Jesus bears the name that is above your name! At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue confess. And what shall they confess? That

JESUS CHRIST IS LORD, to the glory of God the Father! If Jesus has been given THE NAME that is above EVERY OTHER NAME, would it not be proper to say that this puts Jesus in a prominent position, to say the least? No other man who ever lived or does live has occupied such prominence as this! There is absolutely no other person who has been exalted so high! And notice, my beloved, it is not at the name of “Christ” that every knee shall bow and tongue confess. It is not even at the name “Lord” that they shall bow. It is not at my name, or your name, or the great apostle Peter’s name, or the mighty Paul’s name, nor yet at the name of the “cosmic Christ” or the “Christ consciousness” or someone’s “higher Self.” Oh, no! It is at the name of JESUS that every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess! (Phil. 2:6-11).

Jesus was placed so low in the estimation of His own creation that they cried out saying that they would rather have Barabbas, a robber and a seditionist turned loose, than to see Jesus free. Because of that, God has highly exalted Him above all others! (Phil. 2:6-9). He is the real, true, and perfect revelation of God, the true God-man. He was the very man that God set forth in our midst to be the perfect revelation of the man that He has purposed for each of us to be, and we are predestinated to be conformed to the image of God’s dear Son. He is the Forerunner, the Captain of our salvation, and the Apostle and High Priest of our profession. Never forget it! Worthy is the Lamb that was slain! He is worthy to open that book which you are, and He is worthy to open that book which I am. And no one else can do it!

Truly the Lamb was slain for us two thousand years ago. Yet, is it not true that the Lamb in us is likewise being slain, for we are partakers of Christ’s suffering as the apostle said, *“Even now I rejoice in the midst of my sufferings on your behalf. And in my own person I am making up what is still lacking and remains to be completed of Christ’s afflictions, for the sake of His body, which is the church.”* (Col. 1:24) The slaying of Jesus as the Lamb on Calvary is historical fact, and by that slaying He purchased us with His blood and has made us kings and priests unto God. That’s the historical fact. Yet, I do not hesitate to tell you that the thing that will be worthy in our own experience is for us to experience the slaying of the Lamb within ourselves! The Lamb must not be merely historical, for the Lamb is in the midst of the throne where we are seated in Christ! The Lamb in the throne is a slain Lamb! He is slain, and yet He is standing! Oh, the mystery of it! You see, the Lamb must become a present experiential reality. As we experience the slain Lamb within ourselves, we will discern the One standing in us who is worthy and has power to open the book of His life within us!

With the above thought in mind, I will close this message by sharing a testimony from our dear brother **Bennie Skinner** which so beautifully expresses the truth of which I now speak.

“Forty years ago a minister got me into his car. This was a minister I had labored with in the gospel. I won’t mention his name, because I don’t want to embarrass him, and I’m sure that what he did God ordained, but it was not very nice and I didn’t appreciate it, but I took it. He got me in his car and he ‘read my title clear.’ He told me things about myself that I didn’t even know! In fact, he told me things that I still don’t believe he saw, but he thinks he did. He told me my faults, failures, weaknesses, mistakes, errors, and shortcomings — I mean he laid it on! I sat there as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, I opened not my mouth. When he finished, he said, ‘Now that I’ve gotten this off of my chest, maybe you have some things you would like to get off of your chest, too.’ I responded, ‘I have nothing to say.’ No defense, no accusation, no denial, no retaliation — nothing. I just got out of the car and dragged myself up the driveway and up the stairs into our apartment.

“When I walked in the door my wife took one look at me and said, ‘What has happened?’ I told her. But I didn’t defend myself. I went to bed and went to sleep. I wasn’t angry — but I was hurt. I was killed. Yet I fell asleep. In my sleep I had a dream. I saw a lamb hanging by its feet upside down. It had been skinned, its head cut off, and all the insides had been cleaned out. I saw the process of it done. Then out of that, after the process was completed, came the most beautiful music I have ever heard! When I awoke I was filled with the Holy Spirit and I knew that God had showed me something. The Lamb in me, in that sense, had been slain! Through that experience that I had the Lamb had been slain. And as a result of that, in retrospect I now understand that even then one of the seals was ripped off of this book that I am!

“I’ve had a few other experiences since then that I think may have torn off a seal or two! And no doubt I will have some more experiences that will finish tearing off the seals so that what is written within may be clearly

read and known of all men. Can we not see that when the Lamb is slain within us, it brings the release of the nature of the Lamb within us! I'm telling you something that is profitable for you today. I'm telling you something of the deep working of God in your life. It is the slaying of the Lamb! And let me tell you this — 'Worthy is the Lamb that is slain — not just was slain, but is slain — to take the book and to loose the seals thereof.' We are coming to the place even now where we are experiencing daily in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our flesh (II Cor. 4:10).

"I am stirred today at the depth of what I am talking about. I don't think that I even know myself the depth of what I'm speaking of, I think I am speaking by the Spirit that is beyond my understanding, beyond my experience even, beyond my ability to comprehend, but God is going to make it real to all of us. And we will come to the place where we embrace that cross and we will bless that cross upon which we daily die, upon which the Lamb is slain within us, for out of that experience shall come forth resurrection life! So don't try to run from anything, because the thing God is after will be there when you get there anyway. God will be able to set up just the right circumstances to get all that thing He is after — to reveal His Son in you and as you. Amen!" — end quote.

To be continued...
J. Preston Eby

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 79
THE SEVEN-SEALED BOOK (Continued)
BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART SEVENTY-NINE

THE LAMPKIN
SEVEN SPIRITS WENT FORTH INTO ALL THE WORLD

"And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain." (Rev. 5:5-6)

The elder came to the weeping John and said, "Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah... hath prevailed to open the book." What did John have every right to expect to see? There is only one answer. He had the right to expect to see a lion! If I am driving with my grandchildren and say to them, "Look at the mountain," they would expect to see a mountain and not a river. Were I to point them to a mountain which they could not see, they would ask me to explain what I mean! If I were to reply, "I mean that river," they would have every right to say, "But Grandpa, why are you calling a river a mountain?" In the book of Revelation, this book of symbolic language, such a change in symbols is of supreme importance! John was told to behold a Lion, but when he looked he saw a Lamb. What is the explanation?

John understood, as we also must understand by the Spirit! The lion is a noble, majestic and kingly creature, strong and courageous, fearing nothing, and so fierce and powerful that no other animal can stand before him. Mankind from the dawn of history was impressed by what he saw and knew of this awesome and terrible beast and so awarded it the title, "king of beasts." And this is the image we are called to contemplate in John's vision describing the character and majesty of our Lord Jesus Christ in connection with the loosing of the seals of the scroll and the clearing of our earth from all enemies and usurpers. It is the king of beasts in the jungle who typically represents the King of kings in His triumph over all things!

The One who is able to accomplish so mighty a work within us is the LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH. And the Lion of the tribe of Judah is CHRIST THE KING! When the dying Jacob blessed his sons, he prophesied to his son Judah that he would be a lion, whom his brothers should praise, whose hand should be in the neck of his enemies, and before whom his brethren should bow (Gen. 49:8-9). What he spoke to Judah indicated Judah's warlike and victorious energy which was afterward demonstrated in that tribe. In Judah's illustrious descendant, David, the lion-nature was strikingly exhibited, and his boast in the Lord was, *"I have pursued mine enemies, and overtaken them: neither did I turn again until they were consumed. I have wounded them that they were not able to rise: they are fallen under my feet. For Thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle: Thou has subdued under me those that rose up against me. Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies, that I might destroy them that hate me. I beat them small as the dust before the wind: I did cast them as the dirt in the streets."* (Psa. 18:37-42)

While David penned these inspired words out of his own experience as a warrior, they are also a messianic prophecy looking forward to a still mightier King who "sprang out of Judah" as David's lineal descendant and heir, who at once is David's Lord and David's son, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, who is also the Root (ancestor, father) and the offspring (descendant, son) of David. Why David? Why not Moses, or Abraham? David is the representative of Royalty. Moses is the representative of the Law. Abraham is the steward of the Promise. Here we are viewing the authority, dominion, and majesty of the Throne. Christ is both the Root and the offspring of David — of the Royalty of God raised up in His kings and priests who are the sons of God! He is the might and majesty of the tribe of Judah and the honor and glory of the house of David!

The elder, who knew the awesome power of God's Christ, took the strongest objects in the vegetable and animal kingdoms to represent His power — the root and the lion. Massive rocks are torn asunder by the

noiseless power of the root. Hidden beneath the soil its power is mighty. This is the One from whom King David derived his great power of warfare! In like manner, the power of the Root of David, hidden in the heart and spirit of man, can break the strongest bands of carnality, flesh, corruption, sin, and death. The Lord Jesus spoke of those who had “no root in themselves” as not being able to endure tribulation. The Root of David bears the tree of righteousness. None can be trees of righteousness who have not this pure and holy root hidden in the soil of the heart! The Root of David produces the character of David within every son of God, the might and overcoming power of Christ in His kingship!

Yet — the Lion is a Lamb — for He conquers not by brute force but by the power of His poured out life! John saw by the spirit of revelation that the only way to power was the way of sacrificial love — that is ultimately the only power in the universe. We would have thought that in calling our Lord “the Lamb” this name would have been used only in respect to His humiliation and death in His earthly walk. However in scripture it is most often used in reference to His eternal glory in the heavenlies! Peter saw Him as the Lamb foreordained before the foundation of the world. John saw Him as a Lamb that had been slain from the foundation of the world, highly exalted, standing in the midst of the throne. This slain Lamb is in the midst of everything: in the midst of the throne, and of the four living creatures, and of the elders. This Lamb is peculiarly the One who is in the midst, just as the tree of life was in the midst of the Garden of God. As the Lamb stands in the midst of each one of God’s called and chosen elect we are enabled to express and manifest, out of our innermost being, the life, nature, and power of the God of the throne!

The term “Lamb” is used of Christ no less than twenty-eight times in the Revelation, and has two vital characteristics. Christ is the sacrificial Lamb and the conquering Lamb. He is seen as slain yet standing in the midst of the throne. And throughout the book of Revelation it is the Lamb who overcomes and conquers all! It is the Lamb who gets the victory over the beast, and the false prophet, and the whore, and the dragon, and the kings of the earth; over the flesh, the world, the devil, death, hell, and the grave! So glory to God and to the Lamb forevermore! The Lamb shall have the victory! Christ is Lord over them all, for He was slain before they were, and will be reigning when they are gone!

The Lamb has conquered and shall conquer all who rise up against Him. For seventy years the ruthless, atheistic communist regime in Russia blasphemed the Lamb and jailed, tormented, and killed all who proclaimed His name. They planned and purposed to eradicate His kingdom from the earth! Today the communist government no longer exists in Russia and it is ironic that the Russian government, through its ministry of education, invited a consortium of sixty American evangelical groups and Christian colleges to train educators in 120,000 Russian public schools on how to teach Christian and spiritual principles. In commenting on the invitation, Evgeniy Kurkin, the Russian deputy education minister told U. S. A. Today on November 1, 1992: “Seventy years ago, we closed God out of our country and it has caused so many problems in our society we cannot count them. We must put God back into our country and we must begin with our children.” Oh, yes! The word of the Lord is sure: *“These shall make war with the Lamb, and THE LAMB SHALL OVERCOME THEM: for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful.”* (Rev. 17:14) This is the great and beautiful message of the book of Revelation, and this is why the Spirit witnesseth, *“Blessed (happy!) is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein.”* (Rev. 1:3)

The wonder of it is that THIS LION-LAMB IS WITHIN US! The worthy One is within! When we begin laying hold upon the worthy One within us, the One within us begins unsealing the book within. Out of that unsealing comes the triumph of the Christ in every dimension of our lives! He makes war against every false and fleshly thing that there might be the revelation of Jesus Christ in us. There will be the expression of what is true in us (the Christ within) coming forth into manifestation in our outer realms. It is not a nature that ignores the corruption and the faulty understanding and perception of the carnal mind and human consciousness — rather, it is a nature that is capable of dealing with the falsity and weakness of the outer man that the spirit of the Lamb in the midst of us be revealed. Oh, that our eyes might be opened to behold HIM! HE is the most powerful, terrible, courageous, bold, daring, self-confident, composed, majestic, and yet kind, gentle, gracious, loving, and life-giving Lion-Lamb of all! HE is worthy to open the book, to fulfill in Himself all the requirements, and now to fulfill IN US all the reality of our redemption. In absolute power and strength He shall reign with

love, mercy, grace, and goodness until every enemy in us is destroyed and the Christ is fully and forever formed in us, formed from the inner to the outer — the image and glory of God in human flesh!

Thus, the tremendous unveiling in the form of symbols and signs that came to the prophet on that far-away Isle, is today fulfilled spiritually within the people in whom the Christ dwells. Let all who read these lines know for a certainty that it is the glorious Christ within who is the Lion of the tribe of Judah and the slain Lamb that lives in the throne! You will never understand the mystery of the Lion and the Lamb until you understand that Christ is in heaven, and heaven is within us, for the Christ of glory eternally and gloriously lives out His life in His body, His people. It is within His elect that He must come forth as both the Lion and the Lamb in the midst of the throne, in the power of the kingdom of God within! The Lion is the omnipotent power and the sovereign authority of God in manifestation, whereas the Lamb is the inward quickening and sustaining life of God by the spirit.

There is therefore a two-fold working of God in the lives of the Father's apprehended ones. First, Self must be dethroned, and in the accomplishment of this Christ is a Lion, clothed with power and majesty and terribleness. As the Lion He will crush every bone in the body of your Adamic nature and human consciousness and tear away and consume every morsel of your carnal flesh. The Lion of Judah is king over all the beasts of human nature! He springs to unscanned heights and to unfathomed depths, to exercise His majesty in all realms. But as the Lamb He wondrously imparts the quickening of His life that you may live by the spirit. The Lion is Christ warring, devouring, conquering all that pertains to the old mind and nature of Adam. The Lamb is Christ as our Life that we may appear with Him in glory!

But further — these same qualities and characteristics are being fulfilled in the elect as we are conformed into His image, made one in Him. The company of the sons of God shall bear both the image of the Lion and the Lamb! The kingly strength and regal authority of the Lion nature shall function through the sons in perfect unity with the gentle and ministerial character of the Lamb. These two streams of the divine nature, working together as one, in both judgment and mercy, shall flow mightily and great, and will cause the very earth to shake, will move heaven and stir hell, and bring the triumph of God's kingdom among men. When the effective dealings of God through the Lion are balanced by the merciful, gracious, quickening, transforming administrations of the Lamb, the Lion and the Lamb then lie down together in the kingdom of God where there is peace, joy, and righteousness for evermore. Thank God! He is preparing His LION AND LAMB COMPANY; those blessed ones made one with the Lion of the tribe of Judah and the Lamb upon mount Zion. This glorious ministry shall prevail in the earth and restore all back into God again. Aren't you glad!

Stripped of symbolic language, this means that power alone, wisdom alone, righteousness alone, could not make man all that he was to be. Only a God who is love, who gives Himself to the uttermost, who spared not His only begotten Son, but delivered Him up for us all, who pours out His own life into man, only such a One, and by such means, is able to make man all that is in him to become. That is the teaching of the fifth chapter of the Revelation! And in this manifestation of redemptive love there was released in history the greatest power that humanity can know. The Lamb is, therefore, the symbol of power — vast spiritual power — power that no earthly power can overcome. The Lamb in His weakness — the weakness of self-sacrifice — is the source of the creative, healing, restoring, redeeming power of love in the world: love that delivers men out of the power of darkness into the light of Life, love moving redeemed men ever higher in their pilgrimage toward the City of God.

The message is just this. Not power, crushing and compelling, even were it the power of God Himself, can bring to pass the purpose of God. But the slain Lamb, and all that the Lamb stands for, and all who possess the spirit of the Lamb, are lifting up man from the depths, and bringing to reality all God's gracious purpose concerning him. The slain Lamb, by His poured-out life, melts the stubborn hearts of men, and takes them willing captives. The highest power of the Godhead is manifested in the Lamb that was slain!

THE LAMBKIN

Called upon to behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah the Seer turns and sees none other than the slain Lamb in the midst of the throne. It had been slain — the marks are there on its throat to show how decisively the knife

had done its work — but now it was standing erect. It had seven horns of power and seven eyes of omniscient vision. In the light of the truth we are now studying many things take on new meaning. I would draw your reverent attention to the fact that in the Greek text the diminutive form for “lamb” is used, indicating that it is a “little lamb.” Truly this is Mary’s Little Lamb! The use of the Greek diminutive Arnion, the “little lamb” or the “lambkin” is the only word used in the Revelation for the Lamb. It is the contrast between the first little lamb and all the other lambs who follow with Him. It is a reminder that Jesus is the “firstborn” among many brethren, the “forerunner” of all who enter in to that which is within the veil, and the “first begotten” from the dead. Jesus Christ is the HEAD of the body, *“for in all He shall have the pre-eminence.”* (Col. 1:18)

Yet — the Head also must have a body — so unto Him is added the rest of the firstfruits company. Even now as Christ sits at the right hand of the Father, He reigns in virtue of the fact that He is a Lambkin. He reigns as a Lambkin-King, because God is raising up lamb-kings in the earth, and it is the work of the Holy Spirit to establish in each member of the body of the Lamb in the earth the nature, and the character, as well as the authority of the Lambkin in the throne. *“He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.”* (John 16:14) It is the work of the Holy Spirit to inwork in each son of God all that pertains to the exalted Lambkin, that He might be here in the earth to be to you and me, yea, to be through you and me everything that Jesus is upon the throne!

The “lambkin” as a figure of Christ is indeed complete and perfect; yet it is a type of Christ in a limited measure and at the same time in the greatest measure. That is the mystery. How strange that sounds to our ears, how curious to our minds! In relation to the Lord Jesus Himself, He is not limited at all, but as far as our experience of Him is concerned, there is such a limitation. When we come to the Lord and receive Him as our Life, the Christ we receive is whole, complete, and perfect; but in our appropriation of Him our experience of Him is only a small measure — at first just as the little lamb of salvation. From the time we first experienced Christ as the Lamb, as our Life, we have steadily been growing, increasing, progressing, and advancing; we have continually grown and increased in our experience of Christ and received of Him more and more. This does not mean that Christ has become greater and greater. Oh, no! Christ is the same, He changes not! But as we grow in our appropriation of Him, the increase of His life, the maturity of His nature, the development of His mind, and the strengthening of His power, He becomes greater and greater to us and in us. Day by day our experience of Christ is becoming greater and greater! At the stage of our experience in which the total triumph of the Lamb is achieved within, Christ is unlimited to us, He becomes ALL IN ALL. It is His almighty strength in the heavens revealed through our humanity on earth — the TRIUMPHANT LAMBKIN! That is the revelation of Jesus Christ! And that is the manifestation of the sons of God!

Thus we see Him in **chapter fourteen**, *“A Lambkin stood on the mount Zion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand.”* It does not say, “And with Him a hundred and forty-four thousand men.” Oh, no! There stands a Lambkin on Mount Zion and with Him a hundred and forty-four thousand — what? The Greek construction indicates that it is in very fact a hundred and forty-four thousand lambs! The Little Lamb has become many lambs! We see a similar type, only in the negative realm, in the little serpent in Eden which grows through Adam, and increases within men over the millennia to become in the book of Revelation a great red dragon. As the subtle serpent came with stealth into the Garden of Eden defiling with selfhood the hearts of the parents of the human race, making a murderer of Adam’s first son, so has he developed in mankind from that small and unimposing beginning to become a monster of gigantic dimensions filling the whole world with religious delusion and fleshly corruption. In Genesis Satan entered Eden as a cunning little serpent, but in the Revelation he has grown into a monstrous fire-belching dragon in the earth and in the sea. In Genesis Satan is an enchanting serpent indwelling a mere handful of people, whereas in the Revelation he is a “great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns,” a composite of peoples, nations, institutions, and governmental authorities.

In like manner, my beloved, the first Little Lamb was none other than our Lord Jesus, the Christ. The spirit of the Lambkin was poured out upon a little company of people on the day of Pentecost, the first of a new spiritual race of men destined to fill the earth and conquer the dragon. The Lambkin has developed in the saints of God from that small and unimposing beginning to become a vast company of lambs upon the pinnacle of mount Zion! To see such a company that shares and ministers His life to all creation does not magnify man, nor does it detract from Christ; for they are all totally conformed to HIS IMAGE and are partakers of HIS DIVINE

NATURE. HE is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and joined to Him is a lambkin company! Truly these are the kings and priests of God, a kingdom of priests to reign on the earth and restore all things into God again!

It is my deep conviction that within the Lambkin, as we see Him again and again in the Revelation, is converged the reality of the four living creatures (kingship) and the twenty-four elders (priesthood). He brings kingship and priesthood together within Himself. He is the spirit of the Lamb (priesthood) in the midst of the throne (kingship). He is the Lambkin (priesthood) standing upon Mount Zion (kingship). Can you not see the mystery? The four living creatures, the twenty-four elders, and the seven spirits of God are all rolled into One and represented now as the Lambkin! He is the embodiment and personification of them all! It is appropriate to refer at this point to the words of another ready writer who said, *“Freely, gladly, joyfully Jesus Christ faced the hour of sacrifice, pouring out His life, that it might be diffused and spread over the whole earth. Now God’s elect are being brought to the same consecration, so that they give everything, for the joy of beholding His life quicken those around them. Willing to spend and be spent, until HIS LOVE THROUGH THEM has conquered all, and creation is restored into perfect harmony with its Creator. There is a work that is totally of The Christ, finished at Calvary, which does not have to be re-enacted or duplicated. He gave His life for the world! Now, this lambkin company, can freely share it with creation”* — Ray Prinzing.

SEVEN SPIRITS SENT FORTH INTO ALL THE EARTH

“And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.” (Rev. 5:6)

In the book of Revelation are revealed a new name (nature), a new song (revelation, message), a new Jerusalem (people), a new heaven (government), a new earth (order), and finally it is proclaimed, *“Behold, I make A-L-L T-H-I-N-G-S NEW!”* Hallelujah! The whole purpose of God in this book is to declare the eternal passing of all that is of the old, and the establishment of ALL THAT IS NEW.

Then what is here? The seven spirits! There is a Lamb with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God. The Lamb has seven horns, which are the seven spirits of God. Before the throne are seven lamps of fire, which are the seven spirits of God. Around the throne is a rainbow of seven colors, which are the seven spirits of God. We only see the Lamb upon the throne with the seven-fold intensified spirit! That is all. All the utterances of this book are made by the seven-fold spirit and all reveal that which is entirely new and fresh. There is nothing old, nothing dead, for the first has passed away; the stars from heaven have fallen, the moon turned to blood, the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, every mountain and island were moved out of their places, the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together, great Babylon was burned with fire, and the beast, the false prophet, and the dragon were cast into the lake of fire. Now everything is spoken by the living spirit in a new and living way! There is only the new creation!

Furthermore, every utterance to the body of Christ in this book is the utterance of the seven-fold spirit. It is always the seven-fold spirit who is speaking! *“Yea, saith the spirit.” (Rev. 14:13)* *“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches.” (Rev. 2:7)* Seven times in chapters two and three we read that it is the spirit who is speaking to the churches. How different from the prophecies of the prophets who prophesied, “Yea, thus saith the Lord...” How different from the utterances of the apostles who wrote, “This I (Paul) say...” or “I (Peter) exhort...” Here in the book of Revelation it never says, “Thus saith the Lord” or “This I say,” etc. This is not men speaking for God out of an in-part realm. Oh, no! This is God speaking directly out of the fullness of Himself. So it says, “The spirit saith, the spirit saith, the spirit sayeth!” This very same sentence with the very same wording is repeated seven times: *“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit sayeth unto the churches.”* Why is this repeated seven times? Because of the seven-fold spirit! HE WHO HEARS THE SEVEN-FOLD SPIRIT WILL BE AN OVERCOMER! HE WHO OVERCOMES WILL BE A SON! HE WHO IS A SON SHALL INHERIT ALL THINGS! HE WHO INHERITS ALL THINGS RECEIVES THE SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD! Isn’t it wonderful!

Because the seven-fold spirit is bestowed upon the overcomers, eventually the entire book is concluded this way: *“And the spirit and the bride say...”* (Rev. 22:17) Oh, the mystery of it! We read in the beginning of the Revelation that the spirit is speaking to the churches. But by the end of the book the spirit and the bride have become one — they speak together. The spirit and the bride in this verse is a compound subject. The two have been compounded — the two have become one. The overcomers are one with the seven spirits, and the seven spirits have been fully inworked into the overcomers. This is the ultimate consummation of the work of God in His called and chosen elect! In the maturity of sonship one no longer prophesies in the third person, “Thus saith the Lord” or “Yea, the Lord would say unto thee.” A mature son, filled with the seven spirits of God, speaks as Jesus spoke, *“Verily, verily I say unto you.”* Never once did Jesus say, “Thus saith the Lord” or “Yea, the Lord would say unto thee.” He spoke as the Lord, out of the spirit without measure.

Let us consider now another aspect of this beautiful truth. *“And I saw the seven angels which stood before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.”* (Rev. 8:2) Now notice, there are seven horns and seven eyes in the throne, which are the seven spirits of God. These are horns of divine power and authority. They are the horns of the Lamb! These are seven eyes of vision and perception. They are the eyes of the Lamb! There are seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, and these are the seven spirits of God. These are the seven lamps of illumination and revelation. Now there are seven angels with seven trumpets, and they are standing exactly where the seven lamps of fire were standing before the throne, and the trumpets are sounding forth a message. Can you not see that the seven angels are also the seven spirits? The seven spirits are sent forth into all the earth and here the seven angels are blowing the seven trumpets and their sound is going forth into the earth! So the seven trumpets are also the seven spirits! They are the voice of the Lamb, the word of the Lamb sent forth to change and quicken all things. When you follow these seven angels all the way through the book, you find that they are related to everything that happens on earth. They sound the trumpets that affect the earth-realm. They pour out the vials that affect the earth-realm. Those seven angels are identified with everything that affects the earth-realm! We are living in the day when the seven spirits of God in the fullness of divine wisdom and revelation, power and authority, judgment and wisdom will be manifested.

So you see, in the throne the seven spirits are the seven horns and the seven eyes. Before the throne the seven spirits are the seven lamps of fire. But when they are sent forth into all the earth the seven spirits are the seven angels and the seven trumpets. It is all the seven spirits of God! There is movement from one to the other. The movement is always outward. First of all there is emanation from the throne to the realm before the throne. Then there follows movement from before the throne outward into all the earth. This is the activity of God by His spirit towards mankind! All things flow from the throne poured out upon the earth, until the knowledge of the glory of the Lord covers the earth as the waters cover the sea. The reality of God is sent forth into all the earth. This means that God purposes for His elect to move in the fullness of the revelation and power and wisdom and judgment of the triumphant LAMB OF GOD! All praise to the Lamb who has the seven spirits!

You will never in a million years find the seven spirits outside of the Lamb! If you would have the seven spirits of God your identity must be lost in the Lamb. You must live in the nature of the Lamb. He must be your hiding place. He must be your sphere of existence. You must be filled with the spirit of the Lamb. Not just the spirit of God, but the spirit of the Lamb, the spirit of love, humility, mercy, compassion, self-sacrifice, and a poured-out life. It is from the Lamb upon the throne that the seven spirits are sent forth into all the earth. The seven spirits are associated not only with the Lamb, but with the throne. All who have received the call to sonship are called to be associated with the throne of the Lamb! We are moved to be often and long before the throne. That necessitates consciously abiding in the holy presence of the Lamb. It means that we open our heart and life to the judgment of Him who sits upon the throne. It means submitting our mind, heart, and will to the transforming power of the Lamb. It means repentance and humbling, waiting and worship, prayer and praise before the throne!

Let all men know that the seven spirits of God do not come from the Christ of Bethlehem, nor from Jesus of Nazareth, nor from the Christ of the mighty signs, wonders, and miracles by the sea, nor yet from the cross of Calvary. All these manifestations and works of Christ are but vanity except the sacrificed Lamb arose as the triumphant Lion, victorious over all enemies, including the last enemy, to ascend up far above all heavens that

He might FILL ALL THINGS! How positively true are the words of Paul, *“If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.”* (I Cor. 15:17) And the words of John, *“For the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.”* (John 7:39) The spirit comes from the throne, from the risen, ascended, glorified Christ, pouring forth the victory, glory, and triumph of the Lamb! Now God is bringing many sons to this glory where they shall totally express the ministry of Jesus Christ in every aspect, where the fullness of the seven spirits of God shall find expression. When all the holy sons of God are manifest and the whole body of Christ moves in the fullness of the seven spirits, we will fulfill the promise of Jesus. He was only one man in one place, living and moving and ministering out of the spirit without measure; but when you have ten thousand over here and twenty thousand over there, and thousands more everywhere across the earth, every member of the Christ body functioning in the fullness of the seven spirits, it will bring to pass the Lord's words, *“The works that I do shall ye do also, and greater works than these shall ye do, because I go to the Father.”* (John 14:12)

As the firstborn son of God has the seven spirits of God as seven eyes and sees and knows all things, so the sons of God are experiencing the *“eyes of enlightened understanding”* to *“know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward them that believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand.”* (Eph. 1:18-19) As the firstborn son of God has the seven spirits of God as seven horns and has all power and authority in heaven and in earth, so the sons of God shall likewise have the fullness of power and shall do the “greater works.”

As the anointed body of Christ enters into the fullness of the seven spirits of God in this new kingdom day, great and glorious blessing shall surely pour forth upon the earth-realm. The hour is nigh at hand when the sons of God shall minister as none has ever ministered! What will make their ministry so unique and transcendent? The operation of the seven spirits in and through them! It matters not whether the sons simply speak the word or whether they appear before men in the power of resurrection, from them shall flow forth the mighty, deluging, irresistible floodtides of divine life, power, and glory upon all the ends of the earth. Little wonder that this day is described by the apostle Peter as *“the times of the restitution of all things.”* We have seen the gifts of the spirit in operation, and how we bless and magnify God for them, limited as they have been; but soon you will see the seven spirits of God begin to operate in the manifest sons of God! We have not yet seen this, despite the claims of some who presume that they have already entered into the fullness. I have heard all the claims of those who proclaim that they have arrived in the highest heaven and all their lower heavens have now passed away; those who declare that they have fully come out of Babylon and now stand on the heights of mount Zion, and all lesser realms and days are forever over; those who say they have experientially entered the fullness of the Day of the Lord, and they now dwell in the brightness of a full revelation and word; those who say they have already put on life and immortality and will never go by way of the grave; but I do not hesitate to tell you that I have not seen either in their lives or in their gatherings even one thing I have not seen in Pentecost for seventy years, nor have I heard one word of teaching or revelation that I have not heard a hundred times before in various “sonship” groups since the days of the Latter Rain outpouring in 1948. The rhetoric is powerful, but the manifestation is weak and beggarly! Yet, for those who meet the conditions and qualify for that mighty company of overcomers there awaits the spirit, given without measure to them, and the unimagined and yet incomprehensible ministry of the seven spirits of God!

The seven spirits of God are the seven spirits of sonship! They are the seven-fold intensified spirit of the Lord that rested upon the firstborn son of God. The seven spirits of sonship are enumerated by the prophet Isaiah who prophesied of God's Christ, Head and body, *“The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord...and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears: but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth...the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den... for THE WHOLE EARTH SHALL BE FULL OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD, as the waters cover the sea.”* (Isa. 11:2-9)

As the seven-fold intensified spirit of the Lord flows over the earth from the many-membered body of Christ, what peace, what joy, what blessedness this will result in for the earth-realm! What changes shall be wrought, what altering of attitudes, what changing of personalities, what transforming of lives! Imagine the human personalities and characteristics that are here symbolically likened to the wolf, the leopard, the lion, the bear, the asp, the cockatrice! And while God could certainly alter the whole constitution of the animal kingdom should He so choose, our present application of the type must be to the peace and life of the kingdom of God on a higher level where men of the most corrupt, wicked, and fierce dispositions have their natures so entirely transformed by the matchless grace and redeeming power of Christ that they live in love and righteousness with the meekest of men and those who formerly were an easy prey. Christ, who is our peace, came to establish PEACE IN THE HEARTS OF MEN! Thus the asp and the cockatrice (poisonous serpents) cease to be venomous, so that parents let their little children play with them. In other words, a “generation of vipers” shall be so converted and made a “seed of saints” that the “little ones” of the kingdom shall be trustingly committed into their care! Matchless grace! Glorious triumph! Wonderful peace! Mighty victory! “The seven spirits of God SENT FORTH INTO ALL THE EARTH.” Who would not desire it?

The following words by **Paul Mueller** bear eloquent testimony to this beautiful truth. *“The coming of the kingdom of God to the earth is also the coming of the seven spirits of God to the earth. The coming of His seven spirits to the earth is also the coming of the presence of the Lord to the earth. And when the Lord’s presence comes to the earth, all the many millions of unbelievers and hardhearted Christ-rejecters in this world will simply melt in His presence. The hard, stony hearts of the unbelievers, skeptics, agnostics, and atheists will be melted by the presence of the Lord to become hearts of flesh. (Ezek. 11:19-20) Then they shall bow before the Lord, because of the greater power of the presence of the Lord, which has come ‘down’ to earth from the heavens of His Spirit. He who reigns over the multitudes of this world shall then be their Savior and their Lord, in truth and in reality. They shall then be transformed to become spirit, by the omnipotent Spirit of our God. This is not an impossible task, for we know His power! We know He is well able to do all this and more, for the seven spirits, which is all that He is, are greater than any other power!*

“Here is a cause and a purpose in God that is greater than the church, greater far than any of the gifts of the Spirit, or a combination of them; it is greater than any of man’s ministries, and much greater than any personal call of God given to any individual. Here is a Purpose that demands everything from us, but which promises to return much more to us when it is fulfilled! Every apprehended and chosen son of God, within whose heart dwells the spirit of sonship, has been seeking for something greater than anything they have ever seen or witnessed in the past. I will never be proven wrong when I declare to you that THIS IS IT! The ultimate purpose and intention of our Father for the total control and dominion of this earth, and of the entire universe, is worth the absolute and complete surrender of our lives. And all who have received the glorious vision of the ever-increasing kingdom of our Father in the earth are making this positive commitment!

“I hereby renew my dedication to my Father in heaven! And I have purposed, by His grace, that I shall continue to walk this walk, and will talk this talk, writing the vision clearly, as the Spirit reveals it, so that all who read it may run with me to the appointed goal in Christ (Hab. 2:1-2). The vision He has given us promises absolute victory and involves no failure and no defeat. The reign of Christ on His Father’s throne in the kingdom of God shall triumph over all, to the glory of God! I want to be a part of that kingdom that shall overwhelm and overrule all the kingdoms of this world, and I know you do too!” — End Quote.

In the day when the fullness of these seven spirits of God is realized in the body of Christ it shall also come to pass that *“the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun (the glory of Christ) SHALL BE SEVENFOLD, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of His people, and healeth the stroke of their wound (removes the curse).” (Isa. 30:26)* What a promise! The glory of Christ, who is the “sun of righteousness,” will be seven times brighter and more glorious than any revival or moving of the Spirit God the church has experienced since Jesus ascended to heaven. God’s promise is the sending forth of the glory of Christ, not in the single light of the man Christ Jesus, nor in the double portion of the Spirit, nor yet in the former and latter rain in the first month, but AS THE LIGHT OF SEVEN DAYS CONCENTRATED IN ONE!

All of us are thankful to God for what we have known of His power, we rejoice with joy unspeakable for every evidence of His manifest glory today, and we honor everyone who is demonstrating any measure of the life of God and accomplishing anything to His glory; but to break the dominion of sin and Satan and ignorance and death over the nations in this hour of over-shrouding gloom and darkness will require a SEVENFOLD REVELATION OF THE LOVE AND POWER OF GOD! Nothing God is doing in the lesser realms today can get the job done. God intends to send forth this sevenfold brightness of His life, light, love, grace, glory, righteousness, peace, joy, and power. For this, my beloved, God is shaping the nations and preparing His elect in this great hour!

When the sons of God are manifested more people will come to Christ and salvation than have from Pentecost until now. As the new age dawns every village, town, and city in every nation will have been visited by the manifestation of the glory of God through His sons. Every living person will encounter the power of God! The knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth, and many entire nations will be converted to Him. As strange and impossible as it may seem today, the state of Israel and the country of Russia will be among the first to be transformed by the power of God's Christ! That is the clear word that God has spoken in my spirit. The magnitude of this sonship ministry cannot be measured by anything that has been before. Even nature itself will be infused with life and transformation as creation begins to be released from the bondage of corruption. These results will be obtained without church meetings, revival crusades, healing campaigns, deliverance services, television programs, outreaches, missionary projects, literature distribution, or any of the methods, teachings, and programs of the church systems. This ministry will not stand in the wisdom of men's words, but in supernatural power and unparalleled demonstrations of the Holy Spirit.

The sons will walk in unlimited power and authority. Men will no longer look back wistfully at the early church and historic moves of God because of the exploits of those days, beseeching God to "do it again." All will recognize that He certainly has saved the best wine for last! The most glorious times in the world's history lie just before us. The magnitude of this unveiling of the glory of God's Christ will astonish even the most optimistic believers. Miracles which exceed even the greatest Biblical marvels will cause whole nations to bow before the authority of God's sons! The sons of God will speak a word to men, or lay their hand upon them, and the power of God will come upon even the most ignorant, rebellious, or vile of men; they will tremble and shake and break and weep and magnify and glorify God as the revelation of the Christ of God is revealed in their minds and hearts. Habits and thought patterns and fleshly lusts and demonic bondages will be broken instantly as they are washed clean and made pure by the blood of the Lamb. The visible glory of the Lord will appear upon multitudes of people, and power will flow out from them to convict, deliver, and transform all who come into their presence. The cloud and pillar of fire that hovered over Israel in the wilderness will not even compare to the intense presence of the Lord in these days! Never has the Lord Himself been as personal and intimate with His people as He will be at this time. The whole world will stand on tiptoe continually, wondering each day what great wonders they will behold.

Wondrous things await the people of God, things that it is not possible for a man to utter. We do not know, we may not know all that awaits us. But enough is known, enough is revealed, to wean us from the things of earth, from the priorities of religion, from the concerns of time, and fill our souls with rapture on account of the extraordinary vision. For He hath *"made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him...that we should be to the praise of His glory...and...that in the ages to come He might show (display through us) the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Jesus Christ."* (Eph. 1:9-12; 2:7) We are now come to the dispensation of the fullness of times! This dispensation was yet future in Paul's day, he pointed to it and to the comprehensive work of restoration God would do in it; and we also know it was yet future in Paul's day because it has never yet come to pass. But it is now upon us with its power and glory! The world has never yet seen anything like that which shall take place when God's sons are manifest in this dispensation of the fullness of times! The transformation of the saints is the next event in the commencement of this Day.

I will close this message by quoting from a vision given to **Pastor John Hinkle** some years ago.

“On October 18, early in the morning, God gave me the most powerful vision I’ve ever had. Suddenly, I was in this gigantic football stadium with the game going on. I do not know where it was or who was playing. I only heard the announcer say that over 80,000 people were in the stadium. As I watched, in the next split second of time, the Holy Spirit came as Light (I believe this was the manifest sons of God — Preston) and seemed to stand beside everyone in that stadium. The Holy Spirit was not in them, but was beside them. Instantly, everything stopped. The game ceased, for in that moment God had shown everyone individually just where he stood on the pathway of life and eternity in relationship to the glory of God, or to evil and eternal darkness. It was so awesome. It is impossible to describe. The players, the officials, and everybody in the stadium were on their faces weeping and crying out to God, either for His mercy or for the joy of seeing the glory of heaven revealed, according to whether they believed or did not believe.

“Again, let me say, the Holy Spirit was beside each one, and He showed them exactly where they were on the pathway of their present life, moving either toward darkness or Light. It was as if God had caused time to stand still for a few moments and everyone looked into eternity. Everyone knew it was God, and they knew that they knew it! There was no doubt left anywhere. It was as if God stripped away every deception that man had let come into his life, and there he stood before the reality of life as revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord. There was no condemnation from the Lord and there was no judgment, but it was God reaching out to everyone in His love to let them see just where they stood on the true pathway of life, and whether they were going toward evil or God, and there was no doubt in anyone’s mind that it was God. I also knew at this moment that it was happening worldwide. No one looked to his right or his left. He was not concerned about anyone else, but only his personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. He knew in that moment beyond all shadow of doubt that Jesus Christ was King of kings and Lord of lords.

“The scene changed and I was looking at the stock exchange, and everyone in it was on their face before God, crying out either for mercy or for more of His righteousness and glory to rule in their life. Everything in the whole world paused for that moment! How long the pause was, I do not know. Just a few moments, I assume, but it was enough. The people on the streets of every city in the world were on their faces and everyone was shown that if they believed in less than Jesus Christ, they had been deceived. All shortcomings were exposed in the light of His love, and mercy and forgiveness awaited those who truly repented and wanted eternal glory in Him.

“Tens of thousands of people began to head for the churches, and the churches were filled to overflowing, but there were no services as we know them, because every minister, priest, and rabbi was on his face before the Lord, for he, too, had had his very soul exposed totally to the glory of God and he realized his own shortcomings and wanted more and more of the Lord Himself. Every person in the world knew in that moment that he had a choice to make. God did not force, and again, let me emphasize that there was no condemnation and there was no judgment. There was just the darkness of man exposed to the glory and the love of God for him.

*“Immediately following this, the Lord gave me **Isaiah 40:5** as a confirmation of all that was going on. It says, **‘And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together.’** All flesh was seeing it! Every believer’s heart was so lifted up because he had seen the glory of God that went beyond anything that he could even imagine or conceive, and he knew that it was the power of the Holy Spirit that was revealing it to him and calling him into a new righteous relationship with God. He knew that this was in spite of his mistakes and that the blood of the cross had set him free and would set him free to continue on.*

“It is my personal belief that this is going to happen soon for the whole world. God did not mention a date, but scripture speaks of it and I believe it will be happening soon, for I see clearly now that only the Spirit of the Living God can change the world. Jesus Christ is still King of kings and Lord of lords, and no matter how dark it looks in the world, the power of God can change it, and will change it in one great burst of His glory if He so chooses to do it that way. Praise God that we are all in the palm of His hand and the reality of Jesus Christ as our new life in Him is being revealed momentarily to every believer!” — End Quote.

Should any reader of these lines doubt that our God can or would manifest Himself in such a measure, let us remember Saul of Tarsus, on the road to Damascus, suddenly experiencing the brightness of the glory of the Lord! He was blinded by the dazzling glory and fell from his horse. He cried out, "Who art Thou, Lord?" And the voice came from the Light, saying, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest!" In a moment of time Saul was wonderfully and completely transformed to become perhaps the greatest apostle of Jesus Christ during the church age! Brother Hinkle said later that in the moment that this great power of the Spirit came upon every person in the whole world, it was like each individual had an experience with the Lord. Oh, yes! If the Lord Jesus can change and transform one man through the revelation of His glory, is it an unthinkable thing that He could convert six billion people in the same way? Just as our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to Saul of Tarsus in the manifestation of glory, it is my deep conviction that this greater, worldwide manifestation of glory will come at the manifestation of the sons of God.

Isaiah looked forward to this Day with intense anticipation and described the glory of its dawning in this way, *"Then shall THY LIGHT BREAK FORTH AS THE MORNING, and thy health (full salvation) shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy re-reward."* (Isa. 58:8)

To be continued...
J. Preston Eby

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 80

THE UNIVERSAL SONG

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART EIGHTY

THE HARPS
THE SYMPHONY OF LIFE
GOLDEN VIALS FULL OF ODORS
THE NEW SONG

"And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb." (Rev. 5:8)

God's kings and priests fall down in adoration and worship of the Lamb, but beyond this they bow on behalf of all creation! "Break the seals, open the book, release the Christ within us, bring forth the manifestation of the Son, loose that sonship ministry unto which we have been called and destined" is the unutterable cry of their hearts. This longing of God's elect is graphically expressed in the words of the chorus given by the Spirit:

Thou mighty Christ, come forth in me;
My will, my way, I yield to Thee —
The barren sings a travailing song,
O praise His name, it won't be long!

THE HARPS

"And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps." (Rev. 5:8)

The Greek word translated "harps" is kitharan, a word which is etymologically related to our English word "guitar." It refers to an instrument which was triangular in shape, having from seven to twelve strings. *"At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto Thee." (PsA. 119:62)* *"I will also praise Thee with the psaltery, even Thy truth, O Lord my God: unto Thee will I sing with the harp, O Thou Holy One of Israel." (PsA. 71:22)* Arising at midnight while the earth was silent and still, King David would place his small wooden harp over his heart and gently put his ear to the wood. As he began to pluck the strings with his fingers, the vibrations echoed through the harp and into his heart, shaking loose the perception of distance between himself and God. Closing his eyes, he would begin to play whatever music came to him, thoughts and words moving through his mind in harmony with the melodies. This music came in waves from within his spirit and overflowed onto the strings of the harp, and from there out into the universe. He became one with the music, and one with God.

As a shepherd long before he became Israel's king, David had been known as "the sweet singer of Israel." His psalms were personal songs of faith and love in the darkest times of his life as well as the grandest. They were composed from the depths of his heart, and fortunately their words were written into the Bible, where we can read them every day. But what about the music? Can you imagine what it would be like to hear a recording of King David himself playing his harp and singing the psalms? The music, too, survived — for a while. King David's special melodies and words went on to be taught to the Levites who played in the orchestra of the temple in Jerusalem. They were played and sung faithfully, at least twice every day, for hundreds of years until the temple was destroyed and Jerusalem razed to the ground.

As sometimes happens after long periods of time, the instruments changed form. The kinnor (lyre) gradually changed into a violin, and the harp evolved into the large orchestra harp we have today, complete with gold leaf overlay and pedals. These are both very beautiful instruments with amazing sounds, but they are connected no longer to the intention and purpose of the original harps of Israel, which were tools for prayer, prophecy, and transformation.

We must remember, of course, that the vision John saw was given in symbols. This means that just as the seven horns on the Lamb declare that Jesus Christ has all power, and not that He has suddenly turned into a four-legged monstrosity with seven horns, so, here, there is a message in the fact that the four living creatures (kings) and the twenty-four elders (priests) have every one of them harps. *First of all this melodious instrument reveals the great truth that we, as God's elect, are called and chosen to be instruments of praise in which there will be found only perfect tuning.* There will be no more of the carnal discord of egocentricity, professional form, and fleshly zeal which has marred our praise. Our spirits, perfectly tuned to the will and way of our Father, will sound a perfect unison with all of creation. As we ascend into the throne zone in our high calling in Christ, there is no dissonance in that glorious rendition, for every fiber of our being vibrates with the praise of the Lamb who has redeemed us and made us kings and priests unto God!

Secondly, the idea is not that every one will one day go to heaven and learn to play a harp, but that there is a realm in God where our entire nature and being throbs with heavenly harmonies, for the strings of our inner son are perfectly in tune with the mind and heart of our Father, because of the mighty transformation wrought by the life of the indwelling Lamb. As this is accomplished in us we all begin to fulfill the injunction of the psalm which says, *"Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright. Praise the Lord with harp: sing unto Him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings. Sing unto Him a new song; play skillfully with a loud noise. For the word of the Lord is right; and all His works are done in truth."* (Psalm 33:1-4) You say, "But I can't sing and I don't know how to play the harp or any of those other instruments." That's not the message! The "harp" is a symbol of perfect praise pouring forth from all of God's elect. And not merely the act of praising, but the very becoming a praise and the being of praise, as it is written, *"Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."* (Isa. 62:6-7) Again, *"So have I caused to cleave unto me the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah (praise), saith the Lord; that they might be unto me for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory..."* (Jer. 13:11) Yet again, *"Having predestinated us unto placement as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself...to the praise of the glory of His grace...in whom also we have obtained an inheritance...that we should be to the praise of His glory."* (Eph. 1:5, 6, 11, 12)

Harps were used in Israel with singing and dancing to express joy in the presence of the Lord. One example of this is in the second book of Samuel where we read, *"And David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord on all manner of instruments made of fir wood, even on harps... and David danced before the Lord with all his might... so David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet."* (II Sam. 6:5, 14, 15)

The harp in scripture is also symbolic of the prophetic ministry. As the incense connects with the priest's ministry, so the harp connects with the prophet's! We read that the prophet Samuel informed King Saul, *"Thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place, with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a harp before them, and they shall prophesy."* (I Sam. 10:5) We read that king David set apart the sons of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, *"who prophesied with a harp."* (I Chron. 25:1-3) And in Psalms 49:4 we read, *"I will open my dark sayings upon the harp."* The harp, therefore, is symbolic of the prophetic ministry in the highest sense of the word! Thus, the holding up of these incense prayers and the prophetic harps together before the Lamb as He takes the book out of the right hand of Him who sits upon the throne is both the prayer and the prophecy contained in the new song which they sing, declaring their kingship and priesthood and the great truth that they shall reign over the earth (Rev. 5:10). It is also the prayer and the prophecy pointing to the universal song of all creation proclaiming blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever! (Rev. 5:13). It is the prayer and the prophecy proclaiming the great truth that God's company of king-priests shall bring the triumph of God's kingdom to pass in all realms of the heavens, the earth, and the underworld! It is truly wonderful!

It is interesting to note that when Israel was in the Babylonian captivity, their harps were silent. (Ps. 137:2) That the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders, God's king-priests, are seen bowing before the Lamb while playing the harps of God indicates the fullness of the joy of the Lord in their hearts, as well as their prophetic and creative word unto creation. By the victory of the Lamb they have joyfully and authoritatively entered into their ministry from the throne of God to deliver and restore all things. These victorious overcomers

are seen celebrating the true joy and power of the kingdom of God! They are experiencing within themselves the reality of the kingdom which is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost! With kingdom joy, vision, and power they are ready to reign!

The harp is mentioned several times in the book of **Revelation** and in **chapter 14:1-2** we read, *“And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father’s name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps.”* In this passage we find this great company standing with their Redeemer upon Mount Zion. Zion, of course, represents the very highest position attainable in the kingdom of God! Such are the ruling class in the capital city, the New Jerusalem, prefigured by king David who dwelt on the natural mount Zion of old. And this company standing with their Lord can represent nothing other than they who have followed the Lamb experientially all the way from the death of mount Calvary to the power and glory of mount Zion, and will now reign with Him upon His throne for evermore. (II Tim. 2:12; Rom. 8:17)

The hundred and forty-four thousand on Mount Zion are said to have *“His Father’s name written in their foreheads”* in distinction to those who, in **Revelation 13:16**, take the mark of the beast in their foreheads. The mark of the beast denotes that those who bear it have subscribed to the mind — the doctrines, ways, methods, spirit, blasphemy, idolatry, and nature of the bestial system of this world, including the carnal, man-made, religious systems. Therefore the mark which these hundred and forty-four thousand bear denotes that they are not defiled with the antichrist doctrines, philosophies, methods, and shame, but are in every respect perfected in the divine nature and the will of their heavenly Father.

Accompanying this company of the manifest sons of God is heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps. Just as in chapter five of the Revelation, these sons of God are filled to overflowing with the fullness of the joy of the Lord and the song of praise unto God and the Lamb! In all these symbols we see that joy, rejoicing, prayer, praise, and worship are all a vital part of reigning! We will understand the deep significance of this more and more as we look unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith *“who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”* (**Heb. 12:2**)

Some time ago the following prophecy came forth, declaring, *“For surely men fill balloons with helium, and the balloons rise, and bear men up into the air to great heights. And as they ascend, and cast out their ballast, they ascend even higher. What they have done, and the heights to which they ascend, is not because men have lost the pull of gravity, but because they have hitched themselves to a heaven-bound substance, and have cast aside the weights that hold them to the earth. So, my people, I would say unto thee, cast aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset, and hitch thyself to the heaven-bound substance that will bring thee into my presence. For I would say unto thee that praise is heaven-bound! It is directed toward the throne! It has a power and a force that will carry it to the throne! And in the midst of thy praise, thou shalt find thyself being lifted into the heavenlies, casting aside every weight, every condemnation and guilt. In the midst of thy praise thou art lifted into the heavenlies. I would bring thee up, and have brought thee into heavenly places where thou hast known in thy spirit newness of life, where thou hast found a new dimension of the Spirit. The hour is at hand when I have a people that through their praises shall rise into the heavenlies. And as they cast aside every weight, they shall rise even higher into the throne! And as their praises become heated up, ascending up into the heavenlies, SO SHALL THEY ASCEND HIGHER INTO THEIR GOD!”*

Before we speak further about reigning with Christ, let us open our hearts that God may speak to us and show us the ways of His throneship. Many years ago the Lord spoke suddenly and powerfully to me, saying, “I have N-O-T COMMANDED YOU TO PRAISE ME!” I was astonished, incredulous, speechless at His word! In my understanding I was absolutely certain that God had repeatedly commanded us to praise Him! I rushed home, got my Strong’s Concordance, and began a search of all the scriptures on praise. How clearly then the truth dawned on me! Yes — we are commanded to praise — but, with the exception of the first commandment (and we are not under the law of the ministration of death written and engraven in stones) the command was not issued by GOD! Instead, men of God, caught up in the Spirit of God, beholding in spirit the splendor, beauty, glory, and majesty of God, cried out in spirit, “Praise ye the Lord!” I quickly discerned the pattern. It is never

God speaking in the first person, declaring, “I command you — worship Me!” There is no such command anywhere in the word of God! God speaks of worship and praise, not in terms of an imperative. It is always the man of God, with the veil drawn back from his vision, getting a glimpse of the Lord of Glory, as the prophet Isaiah said, “In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord...high and lifted up.” He saw the Lord, high and lifted up! We can only ascend into the heights of God by first seeing our great and mighty God high and lifted up! As we see Him high and lifted up in the heavens of God’s Spirit, worship and praise are the natural response from every obedient heart. That, my beloved, is the beginning of all true worship and praise!

This is what is happening in the lives of God’s called and chosen elect in this significant hour! Have not the heavens been opened to us? Have we not beheld the beauty of the Lord, and have we not inquired of Him in His temple? Oh, yes! We have seen the Lord in and by the Spirit, high and lifted up, with His train filling the temple. We have beheld the beauty of the Christ within, and now we worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness! Notice especially the three ingredients in the new song sung by the hundred and forty-four thousand. *“And I heard a voice from heaven as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps.” (Rev. 14:2)* Many waters, great thunder, and the harping of harps! The many waters speak of volume, a great company of sons; great thunder speaks of mighty power, and harps speak of the prophetic flow in worship and praise. The message is clear — there is power in the prophetic praise of God’s elect!

In fact, the passage where those beautiful words are found, “Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,” is taken from the Psalm which describes a great thunderstorm that sweeps off of the Mediterranean and crashes over the hills of Lebanon and down into Judea, wrecking havoc on every side. David, the psalmist, tells us that here the majesty and the power and might of God was revealed in the crashing lightning and the clap of thunder. Here we see the power of God’s arm which is stretched forth through the prophetic worship and praise of His people! The many waters, the clapping thunder, and the harping of harps are all symbols of the power of prophetic praise! And it is this mighty power of prophetic praise that devastates the carnality of the earth realm in preparation for the revelation of the glory of God.

Let us consider again for a moment the fact that God does not generally command us to worship or praise Him. We could easily understand how God who made us could order us to do what He wants us to do. After all, He is our Creator! We could even understand how He could command us to say what we should say or even to think what He would have us to think. And He does, indeed, do that. The spirit of inspiration has taught us that every thought should be brought into captivity to the obedience of Jesus Christ. But, to go into that innermost closet, that deepest recess of the human heart of our love and affection and to say that we must love, and to say that we must praise, to command us to worship, seems to be a contradiction in terms.

Yea, it is more than that! Were God to force us to worship and praise Him He would thereby display the most proud, egotistical, conceited, self-centered, and vainglorious personality in the universe! Have you never met an egoistic, self-seeking person reeking with the odor of their own self-importance? I have known men who were obsessed with their importance and power who manipulated others to constantly fawn before them and heap flattery upon them. There is something in me that has always detested such and found them among the most despicable specimens of manhood. Shall we now attribute such contemptible characteristics to the great and glorious God? Can you imagine a man saying to his wife, “Thou shalt bow before me, thou must pay homage to me, thou shalt love me, thou must adore me, thou must obey me, and thou must rehearse in my ears continually how great and handsome and wonderful I am!” What kind of love and affection would a woman give to a man like that? Yet, we have heard the notion taught that God is good and He knows He is good; that God is holy and knows He is holy; that God is great and knows He is great; that God is omnipotent and knows He is omnipotent; therefore He is justified in commanding our respect, love, and praise. But what is worship? It is simply man’s response to the REVELATION OF GOD! When we truly see God as He is we will worship Him and our worship will be in direct proportion to the clarity of our vision of Him. God has no need to command us to worship — He reveals Himself for what He is! That is why the law covenant has been done away, it is weak through the flesh, and man cannot perform in obedience to an outward commandment. It doesn’t work! But the response of all who behold the King in His beauty is ever the same — the revelation redounds in blessing and honor and glory unto God because He is the all-glorious and altogether lovely One!

He is worthy! Worship is man's response, not God's command. And the response of the man to whom the Lord has truly unveiled Himself is as natural and spontaneous as breathing!

Contrary to what the great masses of Christians believe, praise is not an instrument by which we can "get" things from God — it is our response to His reality within ourselves. The Psalms are inspired songs of praise. Praise, not pity. That is the repeated message found in the Psalms! Praise for the goodness and greatness of God and for the constant care He gives His creation runs deep throughout the book. It carries, also, the spirit of a deep devotion to God, and a willingness to trust Him in any circumstance. It overflows with testimony of God's love, His faithfulness, His righteousness. The truths found in the Psalms reveal God's undying love and unfailing care for man. But they do it in a special way — through praise! As it says in **Psalm 107**, "*O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!*"

Praise, of course, is not something we plug into so that things will work out for us. The very thought, "Praise God!" recognizes the presence and power of God right where we are. As someone has written, "God is not moved by the breath of praise to do more than He has already done, nor can the Infinite do less than bestow all good, since He is unchanging wisdom and love." Praising God, then, isn't meant to persuade Him to help us. That is how little children think, and conspiring, manipulative women who through flirtations and flattery obtain favors from men. We do not approach God in that false, fleshly, devious manner! Praise, rather, lifts our burdens by opening our eyes to God's presence within us, and we gain a fresh perspective by discerning the true character of our heavenly Father.

Can praise actually help us in practical ways? Not if we're trying to use praise as a technique. But if our praise is the spontaneous outpouring of joy and gladness as we become more and more conscious of God's Life, Light, and Love, then praise does have a practical impact on our life, for God inhabits the praise of His people and there is the revelation of HIMSELF! Praise does its work in us, not in God! As we ascend into the heights of God on the wings of prayer and praise we begin to "*Praise the Lord from the heavens and praise Him from the heights.*" (**PsA. 148:1**) It is in our ascension to the throne zone, where we join in the voice as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder, and as the voice of harpers harping with their harps, that we begin to rule and reign as heavenly kings upon mount Zion, declaring that creative word of the Lord through prophetic worship and praise which has the power to break every yoke, delivering and transforming all creation. Oh, the wonder of it!

The inspired **Evelyn Isaacs** wrote, "*The land of the miraculous is our native land. If people would continue praising Him they would enter into the unceasing praise of the spirit. It is then, all the powers of gravity would lose their hold and men would ascend from plane to plane. There is no space in heaven, on earth, or underneath the earth where spirit is not! It has no dimension, and goes beyond the extremest point of the imagination. There can be no greater fullness than that of spirit, nor can there be any greater height or depth. No mortal mind or eye can scan immortal heights, neither can depths be plumbed. No substance can bring greater expression than that of spirit for its immensity and density are unscanned. No space is devoid of that which is substance, so we may cease reasoning with the finite mind and rise to the infinite. Those who are flooded with the spirit, are not ordinary men, and unless God's people are moved into the place to which they are called, they too will die.*" — **End Quote**

In another place in the Revelation (8:3-4) the voice of many waters, the voice of great thunder, and the harpers harping with their harps is presented under another figure, that of incense offered upon the golden altar, and the smoke of the incense ascending up before God. All the sacrifices of the heavenly realm into which God's elect are now translated are spiritual sacrifices. The altar upon which the spiritual sacrifices are offered is Christ Himself, as it is written, "*BY HIM therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*" (**Heb. 13:15-16**) The "sacrifice of praise" in no way infers that we must consistently and persistently mouth words of praise and thanksgiving unto God when we in no way feel like doing so. That is the idea many people have! They feel they must "wring" some praises out of their soulish senses in order to offer a "sacrifice" of praise to God. To the contrary, the sacrifice of praise must be the very BEST of our powers, like the lamb without blemish, painstakingly selected and carefully and reverently brought to the

Tabernacle door. In the awesomeness of His presence and glory we launch joyfully down our little rivulet, until we are borne out into the great ocean of praise, which is ever breaking in music around the person of Jesus.

Praise is one of the greatest acts of which we are capable; and it is the transcendent service of heaven and the throne. In that blessed realm of spirit God's kings and priests ask for naught, for they have all and abound; but throughout the cycles of glory the inhabitants of those bright worlds fill them with praise. We are the priests of creation; it becomes us to gather up and express the sentiments of the Father's will for all men and to speak them by the creative power of prophetic worship and praise. Mighty things begin to happen on earth when we speak out of the heavens of God's Spirit! *"And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices (the prophetic word of the Lord), and thunderings (the power of the word), and lightnings (the illumination of the word), and an earthquake (mighty shaking and change in the earth realm)."* (Rev. 8:5) The worship and praise of the order of sons is not essentially that which is offered in the assembling of the saints, in which much is often soulish instead of spiritual, but it is the constant outraying of the nature, love, grace, mercy, and power of God in all and unto all. This is the greatest of all spiritual sacrifices! And by the power of these spiritual sacrifices everything in our earth, and in that earth outside of us, shall be wondrously changed and restored back into God again!

THE SYMPHONY OF LIFE

A brother related the following experience. *"When I first went to Nashville, Tennessee, some friends, thinking they were doing me a favor, called me and said, 'We have tickets for the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra that's coming to town, and we want to take you as our guest.' Well, I love music, but I know nothing about it, and I can't sing it — I always help congregational singing by keeping quiet. Frankly, I couldn't think of anything more boring than a whole evening of symphony! But I had to go because they were so kind and I wanted to be polite, so I accepted graciously and went along.*

"I had never been to a thing like that before, and I was impressed by what I saw. We went in, took our seats, and in a few minutes there began to drift out from the sides the musicians. They were in shirt sleeves for the most part, and each man went up to his instrument and started tuning it. The fellows with the fiddles too big to put under their chins sawed back and forth — oh, it sounded terrible. The fellows with the little ones they put under their chins squeaked up and down with those. The ones with the horns — oh my, nothing was in harmony. It was a medley of discordant, confused noise. Then after they got through with that kind of a disturbance, they all disappeared again, went out through the wings.

"Another five minutes went by when all of a sudden the lights in the auditorium went off, the lights on the platform came on, and the musicians walked out. This time they had on their coats. My, they looked so nice. Each one came out and stood or sat at his instrument. Then there was a hush in the auditorium, a spotlight was focused on the wings, and the conductor stepped out. When he did there was thunderous applause for him. He bowed. Then he came to the podium and picked up a thin little stick. He turned around again to the audience and bowed, then turned his back to the audience, lifted that little stick — total silence came over the auditorium, you could have heard a pin drop — then he brought that little stick down. And, my friend, there were goose pimples all over me. I never heard such music in all my life. Oh, what harmony, what wonderful harmony there was!" — End Quote.

I tell you today God is preparing His sons for the greatest symphony the world has ever heard, a symphony of divine wisdom, omnipotent power, and unconditional, unbounded love. The sons themselves will be the symphony! All the chords of God's nature, wisdom, and power will be struck in them. At this present time, as God is fine-tuning our lives, it seems as if every man is tooting his own horn, everyone is playing his own little fiddle; it sounds like everything is out of tune, a medley of discord. But as God deals in our lives, teaching us His ways, writing His laws in our hearts, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, establishing His will and transforming our beings, He is creating within each of us a chord of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Our minds and our souls are now being renewed, through repentance, by the Spirit of God. Through the crucible of daily experience by the dealings of our Father we are learning to perceive and fully understand by the wisdom of the mind of Christ instead of thinking with old Adam's carnal mind. As God by

His refining fire purges out of us the trusting in our own strength, our confidence in the flesh, the inbred mentality of Babylonish religion, and the spirit of the world, what a raucous screeching is emitted from our lives!

We all seem so different, and Father's purposes in us appear disparate. What a motley crew the sons of God appear to be today! But you, precious friend of mine, are an instrument designed to be a channel of Life, Light, and Love. And Jesus Christ is the Master Conductor, and wants to play the strings of emotions and thoughts and desires and nature within you until you become a son indeed, the Song of the Lord in the midst of the earth. Your life, when it is hid with Christ in God, becomes a beautiful thing; your thoughts and actions all in unison with God are running along the lines that lead to God, for they diverge not. When the hour strikes for the unveiling of God's sons, Jesus Christ the Lord is going to lift His Scepter — oh, the harmony that will sound forth from all His many brethren! Then the world shall see the fullness of Christ, which includes Christ the Head, and Christ the body, in all the life and glorious harmony of the kingdom of God!

Every knee on this globe, and in the heavens above, and in the underworld, shall bow before the majesty of the glory of the Lord as they awaken to hear the pure melodies of the harmony of God in His sons. Never again will they be satisfied with the discordant notes of this world's pleasures and programs, nor the off-beat of the religious systems of man. As they hear the pure song that flows from the heart of God in His sons, all men shall hunger and thirst to be filled with the same, the harmonious chord of the righteousness, peace, and joy of the kingdom of God. We have not yet witnessed the glory of God's manifestation in the way it is going to be expressed! We have not seen the hand of God move in the way it is going to move! The Lord spoke through prophecy years ago, at the time of a mighty move of His Spirit, and said that He was moving by His little finger, and I tell you when He moved that little finger there were tremendous things that happened, glorious things took place. But now — just think of the glory that shall come when He moves by His hand and makes bare His holy arm!

I read the story of a young man who happened to visit a church one Sunday. He listened to the church service and heard an organ offertory played — a Bach toccata. When the service was finished, the young man inquired as to whether he could play the organ. "Oh no! Only our church organist is permitted to play that instrument." But the young man persisted. Finally, they agreed to let him play one piece of music. He looked over the stops, carefully set them, and then he played the same number that was played for the offertory, a Bach toccata. There were still people lingering around. They listened — enthralled, and when he finished, everybody applauded. The organist asked the young visitor, "What is your name?" He said, "My name is Johann Sebastian Bach. I wrote that music!" And the organist exclaimed, "Oh, to think that we almost would not let the master himself play the instrument! Only now have we heard the real music come out." YOU, dear one, are the very harp of God to be played from the theater of the throne of God! The Master Musician is now arising within all of God's sons. He offers us the harmonies that He alone can create. He, the firstborn Son, is leading us to Mount Zion where the divine symphony appears to fill the earth with the strains of the celestial song, and to fill all creation with the universal song. As we allow Christ His place within, every drop of blood is singing the praise of God; every pulsation of heart is a joyful harmony keeping steady time. The Conductor of this Symphony knows every part and every player and is able to execute all phases to its grand conclusion. Discord only enters when we take our eyes off the Conductor or mistake another player's notes for our own.

GOLDEN VIALS FULL OF ODORS

"And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints."
(Rev. 5:8)

The word translated "vial" is better rendered "bowl." The present day use of the word vial usually relates to a small, slender bottle. The word in the Greek text is phialas and refers to a flatish, and rather broad vessel, used for both drinking and priestly services. In the Septuagint the Greek word phialas is used to translate the Hebrew word for the flat bowls used in the tabernacle of Moses and the temple in Jerusalem. The throne room where this vision takes place is none other than the most holy place of the heavenly, spiritual temple of God by the Spirit! Therefore we may understand that these golden bowls which are described as being "full of odors" are the antitype of the utensils used by the priesthood to contain incense for worship. This is in keeping with

the definition of the “odors” spoken of in our text, for it is stated plainly that they are symbolic of the prayers of the saints. The “odors,” therefore, are the pleasant scents of the incense rising from the golden receptacle in the hand of the priest. Since the elect, represented figuratively in this vision as the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders, are a “royal priesthood” or a company of “king-priests,” this is in keeping with their possessing golden bowls that exude sweet incense. It is significant to note that in Luke 1:9-10 the incense was burned at the time of prayer, for incense is a type of the prayers of the saints!

In this connection the words of brother **Paul Mueller** are so filled with depth and inspiration: *“We are told that our prayers are kept and preserved as odors, or as incense, in ‘golden vials’ in the realm of the Spirit. Every prayer we have ever prayed by the Spirit and in the will of God, is preserved as incense in golden vials in the heavenlies. Some of us have come to the place, spiritually, where we have no words of our own to pray. We do not know what to pray for as we ought, so we allow the holy Spirit to pray for us. And when the Spirit makes intercession for us, we can only lament ‘with groanings which cannot be uttered.’ (Rom. 8:26) The Spirit is then making ‘intercession for the saints according to the will of God.’ (Rom. 8:27) And this Spirit-begotten intercession is being kept as incense in those ‘golden vials’ in the heavenly realm of the Spirit, to be answered in Father’s time.*

*“Perhaps the most urgent, spiritual prayer expressed by the intercession of the saints is this prayer from the words of Jesus: ‘Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.’ (Matt. 6:10) In this brief and simple prayer, every need of mankind and of the whole creation is presented before the Father. When the kingdom fully comes to earth, and God’s will is done everywhere and in every situation, there will be no need, no lack, anywhere. But all mankind and the whole creation shall then know the salvation of the Lord, and the peace, joy, righteousness, and love of God. Every need we have is met in the kingdom of God! This truth will be borne out and fully manifested when the will of God is done in all the earth. When we fully comprehend this great truth, we will cease our vain, religious babblings, and will then seek His kingdom, and for His will to be done in our earth, as well as in the earth all around us” — **End Quote.***

When by the grace of God the truth of this holy vision bursts upon you, you will know assuredly that every prayer you have ever prayed by the Spirit and in the will of God is preserved as incense in those “golden bowls” in the heavenly realm of the Spirit. They are not merely “preserved,” but are reserved unto the day when THEY WILL BE ANSWERED! Every one will be answered! God has a time for everything under the sun, and I can assure you, my beloved, matters not what thing, small or great, that you have interceded for in and by the Spirit — it shall be done! No matter whether it is done today, tomorrow, a year from now, twenty years from now, or in some distant time and age, every prayer is reserved in the golden bowl in the heavenlies, the incense arises continuously as a sweet savor in the nostrils of the Lord, and that word shall accomplish all that has been spoken. Some have prayed for the salvation of loved ones, for the move of God in some life or people or nation, or any one of a thousand other things, and the loved ones have died, and other situations look hopeless, yet our Father has every one of those prayers reserved unto His time for their fulfillment, and not one of them shall fail. Aren’t you glad!

THE NEW SONG

“And they sung a new song...” (Rev. 5:9)

There is a very real relationship between the golden bowls of incense which represent the prayers and praise of the saints, and the “new song.” In the temple worship at Jerusalem, in the days of Christ, there was a distinct relationship between the offering up of incense within the holy place and the worshipper outside. A word of command was given when the time of incense arrived and the worshippers fell in absolute silence before the Lord, spreading their hands in supplication and adoration. Then, as the priest offered the holy incense upon the golden altar, the priests and people in the outer court chanted the traditional prayer, *“It is true that Thou art Yahweh, our God and the God of our fathers: our King and the King of our fathers; our Saviour and the Rock of our salvation; our Help and our Deliverer. Thy name is from everlasting, and beside Thee there is no God. A NEW SONG did those who were delivered sing unto Thy name by the shore of the sea. Together did all praise and confess Thee as King, and say, Yahweh who saveth Israel shall reign.”*

“They sung” in the text should be rendered “they sing,” present tense, denoting continuous adoration and praise on the part of the redeemed. Every inner desire and outward act and expression rise like sweet incense in the presence of God and the Lamb. “A new song” designates a special song composed for some great occasion. The Spirit spoke through the prophet Isaiah, saying, *“Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them. Sing unto the Lord a new song, and His praise from the end of the earth.”* (Isa. 42:9-10) In this beautiful passage it was the passing of the former things and the declaring of new things that evoked the new song of praise unto the Lord! It bespeaks of a new order to begin with the unfolding of a new purpose in God.

Every time the Spirit of God unfolds new dimensions of truth to our hearts, effecting further transformations into His image, bringing us into a new place in God and a further appropriating of our inheritance in Christ, a new song is born! The old song was good and true for its time, but we can sing the old song no more, for a new day has dawned, a new word has gone forth, a new glory has arisen, a new reality has been birthed within, praise His name! While this is not all it means, yet it is true that many songs we sang in church when I was a boy growing up I cannot sing today because they no longer express what God is speaking and doing in my life. Some of them are so far from the truth as I now know it, that I cannot bear even to listen to them, much less sing them!

A song in scripture represents both praise and a message. It is praise that bears a message, or beyond that, praise which is birthed out of revelation and experience with God. You can tell the spiritual level of a person by the songs he sings! A person’s “song” will always express his depth of understanding and relationship with God. When we receive new revelation from the Lord, experientially inworked into our lives, a new song is created. I look back over old sermons, and sometimes I have to say to myself, “I could not preach that again.” Thank God, He has been teaching me through the years of my walk in Him, leading into a fuller knowledge of truth and a deeper walk in the Spirit. Oh, yes! There is continuously a new song — a new revelation, a new message, a fresh word, a higher experience in God for this day, and for all the days to come! Those who sing the new song have outgrown the old ones. They no longer express our experience or satisfy our needs.

God is even now preparing a people, a royal priesthood, sons of the most High; and while the church world continues on with its time-honored traditions and childish delusions, singing about flying away to cabins in the corner of glory land, or to mansions over the hill-top, a people is arising in the earth with a new and wonderful vision — to become kings and priests unto God — their hearts vibrating with the melodious strains of a new song, the song of a people with a purpose, a company gathered out of the generations, grown up into the fullness of Christ, conquering every enemy within and without, which in due time shall be led forth to be the manifest expression of His image, character, and nature, the revelation of His glory, power, and dominion, with an outflow of life and light and love sent to change the course of history, transform the nations, and restore all men and all things back into God. What a song!

Ah, those who receive this call, those who hold this vision, those who cherish this hope, indeed sing a new song which can be learned by none but those apprehended, the firstfruits of His redemption. This is the ineffable, preeminent Song; ineffable because it strikes a chord, the vibration of which cannot be discerned by the carnal man; preeminent because it is the Song of the Lamb who stands in the midst of the throne, the King of kings and the High Priest of our profession, who in all things has preeminence!

This “new song” is undoubtedly the truth of the divine purpose of the ages, or “present truth,” as we often call it. David, the sweet singer of Israel, wrote, *“O sing unto the Lord a new song...”* (Psa. 96) It is the song that God gave David at the time of the dedication of the ark of God on Mount Zion...and it concerned the “new thing” that God was doing then. But it was really prophetic of the “new thing” that God is doing now! In that day David had brought the ark to its place on the natural Mount Zion, but today the Lord is bringing His vast company of sons to the heavenly mount Zion in the Spirit! Our new song is the song of His glory, of His authority, of His dominion, of His throne, the song of His righteous judgments in the earth that bring His kingdom to pass in every tongue and tribe and people and nation.

Many of those who now read these lines sense the establishment of a new order by the glorious appearing of Christ within. Within my innermost being there is an understanding and a hope that refuses to be quieted or

stilled. It is the hope of overcoming all things, awaking in His likeness, with a greater glory and power than anything we have known in the past. My spirit sings the glad Hosannas of a new morning of joy, because of the vision of the greater glory and life of Christ now being raised up in His body on earth. And that song within persists until it purges out all the negative influences of the past, and cleanses me throughout. Ah, my beloved, does your spirit within you sing the glad Hosannas of this new day? Does this new song, this new word, this new working of life and resurrection power purge out all the error, carnality, sin, and death, making you pure even as He is pure?

This indeed is the glory of this new day to which we have come! The glory of Christ is now arising upon His elect sons. He is among us now in a new and greater degree of His presence and His greater presence within is imparting a new song of joy and victory. Our long battle for the land of our inheritance is coming to an end. We are approaching the heights of mount Zion where reigns the King! There is a new song within. There is a new hope within. There is the dawn of a new day within. It is Christ, the Captain of our salvation, who abides within. He is the voice within, the thunder within, the lightning within, the melody of the harp within! He is the High Priest of our profession within us, the firstborn among many brethren within us, the Forerunner within us, giving a fresh word of promise and fulfillment!

If we have learned this “song,” there is surely much cause for “abounding with thanksgiving,” for it means that our great and heavenly Father has taken us into His confidence and revealed to us the hidden things of His eternal purpose. Thereby He has dispelled the darkness with which we were surrounded, and brought us out of our Babylon of confusion. The many unanswered questions which raised only doubts and fears within, have been clarified by the clear revelation of the Spirit. Now we see His glory as it is made up of His infinite wisdom, almighty power, divine righteousness, and unconditional and abounding love. Truly the Lord has put a new song in our mouths! It is a song which grows more melodious as we continue to sing it unto the Lord and to one another, and ultimately to all creation! And what joy and peace that song will bring!

To be continued...

J. Preston Eby

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**FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, Part 80, The Universal Song
[J. Preston Eby] ~ BIBLE STUDY 10**

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 81 THE UNIVERSAL SONG (Continued)

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART EIGHTY-ONE

REDEEMED BY BLOOD THOU HAST MADE US KINGS AND PRIESTS THE SHAPE-SHIFTERS

"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood..." (Rev. 5:9)

Redeemed — what a glorious word! How deep, how high, how broad! Oh yes, it is true that we have been redeemed, but, like salvation, redemption is no single act or experience; as one has stated, it is "a crisis leading to a process" as we are progressively "loosed away" from one realm to another, from one mind to another, from one nature to another, from one state of being to another. Truly we are being freed from the dominion of the carnal mind, from a world of flesh-centered, self-assertive religious activities, and from the power of sin and death, first in spirit, working outward into the mind, will, emotions, and desires of the soul life, and finally in body by the mighty working of His power whereby He is able to change even our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His body of glory (Phil. 3:21).

The prefix "re" in "re-deem" means "again" (as in re-copy, re-wash, re-write). The main part of the word is from a root that means "to purchase, to buy." So an article that is left in a pawn shop can be redeemed by paying the money that was borrowed, plus the interest charges. The item is thus re-bought or bought back. The word is also used when a company finds it possible to call some of its indebtedness, pay the borrower, and cancel the obligation: this is the redemption of bond issues. Spiritually, it means a return to that place, wisdom, knowledge, life, glory, and dominion which we once had in God before the ages were framed, ere this present cosmos or world-arrangement began.

The English word "redeem" translates three Greek words, each of which has a rich meaning in connection with our salvation and transformation. One Greek word, apolutro, means "to loose, untie, deliver." Another Greek word used in the scriptures and translated by our word "redemption" is agorazo, the common Greek word for marketing. The noun agora means the market place, and the verb agorazo means to buy. In the New Testament the word is applied to souls. This would be readily understood in the ancient world, since there was a slave market that operated almost every day, and the traffic in slaves was very great. That Christ should have walked into the slave market and purchased, or redeemed, men who were slaves to the realm of carnality, sin, and death, would have been easily comprehended!

A missionary was working on a Bible translation for the Bambara people. Realizing that the idea of "being redeemed" might not mean much to them, he asked his Bambara translation helper, *"How do you say 'God redeemed us' so that your people can understand?"* *"Why, we would say 'God took our necks out,'"* the helper replied. *"But how would your people understand that?"* *"Oh, we remember that, long ago, raiders would come and take our people into slavery. They would put heavy iron collars on our people and chain one captive to the next in long lines to be taken to the coast. Sometimes a chief or friend would see a friend being led away and would want to free him, or redeem him. He could do this by paying the slave traders gold, silver, brass, or ivory. In redeeming his friend, he would 'take his neck out of the iron collar!'"* What a beautiful way to say that we are no longer slaves, unable to free ourselves from slavery to self, sin, and death! Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, has redeemed us by His own precious blood! He has taken our neck out of the collar!

There is another Greek word which gives additional light on the thought of redemption. The word is exagorazo (agorazo with the prefix ex), and carries the idea of buying something out of the market. There is a difference

between a purchase that is for resale and a purchase that is made in order to take an article out of commerce. For example, a dealer in rare books and works of art might purchase an item at a London or New York sale, and hold it for resale to a customer. Some pictures, books, manuscripts, and other art objects are bought and sold again and again. But finally, when a great work of art is bought by a museum, it is thus TAKEN OUT OF CIRCULATION PERMANENTLY.

In consideration of these facts which I have briefly stated there is another truth to which I would draw your reverent attention. The song of God's kings and priests proclaims, "Thou hast redeemed us to God..." Redeemed — unto God! We have been bought back to God as His own peculiar possession for a special and wonderful purpose. *"Thou hast redeemed us unto God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."*

You have read what the scripture says of Moses: *"This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? The same did God send to be a ruler and A DELIVERER by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush."* (Acts 7:35) We find that this word "deliverer" is the same Greek word which in its various forms is translated ransom, redemption, redeem, and redeemed. The question follows, How was Moses a deliverer, a redeemer, or a redemption-price for Israel in Egypt? Did Moses pay a price to Pharaoh for Israel's redemption? Did he promise Egypt anything in return for allowing Israel to leave? Absolutely not! Moses paid Egypt exactly nothing. And yet, he was a redeemer and redemption for Israel! How can this be? It was his own life which he poured out for Israel, it was the freely giving of his life to Israel which led them up out of the house of bondage.

This is the most beautiful type of Christ's redemption! When Jesus Christ became our redemption He didn't have to pay redemption money to God. He didn't take His blood and say, "Here, God, is a price for the people." Nor did He go to Satan and say, "Here, Satan, is a redemption-price, now you let God's people go." NEVER! He, like Moses, poured His life out and freely gave it to the people! *"I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I WILL GIVE FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me."* (John 6:51, 53-57) We are the ones who are receiving the redemption money, and receiving of His life we are able to get up and leave the filth of self, sin, and the world behind, and walk in the higher realms with Him.

Can you not see the mystery? In the natural the redemption price was paid to the slave owner or creditor; and it will clearly be seen that God operates by the same principle once we understand that that which had us bound was in very fact something inherent within ourselves. Paul goes into a penetrating discussion of this in chapter seven of the book of Romans. He talks about each of our experiences in which the good thing we want to do, we don't do, and the evil that we don't want to do, we do. He says that in me, that is, in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing. He goes on to say, *"For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin and death which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."* (Rom. 7:13-25)

Ah, the law of sin and death works within, the carnal mind operates within, and the devil himself is but a figure for the bestial spirit of this world which sits enthroned within the very nature and heart of man. People have painted Satan as a huge, ugly, impish personage with horns, bedecked with a red suit, having a long pointed tail and carrying a pitchfork. In our minds he belongs in dark pagan jungles where frenzied worshippers hysterically practice devil worship. He belongs in ancient voodoo ceremonies where primitive peoples offer human sacrifices to appease his anger. He belongs to the Garden of Eden, spoiling life for Adam and Eve; to the Judean wilderness, tempting Jesus; to Berlin during the 1930's and 1940's, possessing and using Adolph Hitler, masterminding history's great atrocities. Certainly Satan is present in the above listed activities. But may I hastily add that he is not present there one whit more than he has been in your life and mine! The pen of inspiration truthfully records the fact that *"You hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins:*

wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” (Eph. 2:1-2)

That ancient serpent slithers about in the lowest realms of man’s earthiness, in the crooked thoughts, perverted desires, and unbridled emotions of the carnal nature, in all the corrupt motions of the flesh. Within man lies the seat of Satan. We have been the captives of a power within us, slaves to our own bestial nature. So Christ did not pay a ransom to God in heaven, nor to the devil in hell, in order to redeem us and gain our release. Rather, He gave His life and poured it into us that the transcendent power of His Spirit within might break asunder the bands that bind us! Victory over the carnal mind is gained only by putting on the precious mind that was in Christ Jesus. Victory over the flesh is wrought alone by the mighty power of the Christ-life within. HE GIVES HIS LIFE TO US WHO ARE IN BONDAGE, AND THEN WE HAVE THE VITALITY AND STRENGTH TO ARISE AND RETURN TO FATHER’S HOUSE TO CLAIM OUR INHERITANCE. We cannot do it on our own, by any self-effort of our weak and helpless flesh, fettered by the shackles of our human consciousness and the power of sin and shame, but when He gives His life, and fills us with His strength, then through Him we are able to rise up out of our slave house and return to Father’s house. Praise God, His life is given as redemption TO US, so that, as the apostle says, *“Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us...REDEMPTION.” (I Cor. 1:30)* Hallelujah!

REDEEMED BY BLOOD

“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood...” (Rev. 5:9)

I am indebted to the writings of the saintly Andrew Murray for some of the thoughts shared in this portion.

What is this stream of life from the Lamb upon the throne with the power to redeem us? The wonderful answer comes, “Thou art worthy...for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us unto God by Thy blood.” It is the blood of the Lamb that bestows this worth upon Him. The blood of Jesus is the greatest mystery of the ages, the deepest mystery of divine wisdom. Let us not imagine that we can easily grasp its meaning! God thought four thousand years necessary to prepare men for it, and we must take time in His presence, if we are to gain knowledge of the awesome and marvelous power of the blood. I know of no word in the Bible or in human speech that contains such glories! This great and eternal truth shines with ever increasing brilliance from Eden’s fragrant garden of long ago to the jasper walls of the New Jerusalem descending from God out of heaven; from Adam’s covering of skins and Able’s humble sacrifice of the firstfruits of his flock to the very throne of God Himself where, glorious in power and might, the Lamb reigns and the seven spirits of His divine life are sent forth into all the earth.

The blood of Jesus is of such vast importance to God the Father that He has decreed that there shall be (1) no remission (2) no salvation (3) no atonement (4) no redemption (5) no propitiation (6) no cleansing (7) no justification (8) no peace (9) no new covenant (10) no sanctification (11) no reconciliation (12) no entrance into the Holiest of all (13) no sonship, without the blood of Jesus Christ whose blood is called by Paul THE BLOOD OF GOD. (Acts 20:28; Heb. 10:19-20)

Never forget, my beloved that Jesus came as THE PRICE WHICH COVERS, the substance in the scale that replenishes all deficiency. He shed His blood — His divine life — pouring it out for us. Life and blood are synonymous. Spirit and blood are synonymous. Spirit, blood, and life are all different names for the same element. Jesus performed His mighty works by the shores of Galilee, but then He died, resurrected, ascended, was glorified, and then returned in mighty spirit power to indwell His body and to be the miracle worker within. Nothing less must become ours, than His Life — the divine life He lived in human flesh. *“As I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me,”* Jesus said. The truth is so simple — He poured out His blood-life to us to quicken us again to the glory of God that belongs to man. When our spirit is quickened by His spirit we are brought to union with God! Christ gave Himself for us and to us. Our spirit must be quickened by His Spirit. THAT IS THE POWER OF HIS REDEEMING BLOOD, OF HIS LIFE THAT RESTORES US TO OUR TRUE IDENTITY AS SONS OF GOD. Oh, the mystery of it! That He might liberally

pour His dear-bought treasures into benighted human storehouses, was the inspiration of Jesus' intense human sacrifice.

Some hold not to this truth, choosing rather to believe that they are a self-sufficient god within themselves, needing no Redeemer beyond the development of their own inherent divinity. Thus they bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them (II Pet. 2:1). Do away with this wonderful stream of the precious blood of Christ as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, and every room within the towering temple of spiritual reality comes crashing down to earth! The love of God became a man, the love of God became human flesh, the love of God in Jesus Christ has flowed into our spirits and souls and bodies as the precious blood of Christ to wash away the veil of carnal consciousness and quicken us again to our true heritage in God. *“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed by such corruptible things as silver and gold from your vain manner of life received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”* Hallelujah for the blood!

Multiplied millions of believers in all lands hold the blood of Christ to be precious. The word precious means of great price or value, costly, of great desirability, honored, esteemed, or beloved. But there must be a reason why the blood is precious! Through many years of my Christian walk I never learned of any reason why it is esteemed except that God counts it to be the most valuable and precious of all blood to Him. I was never told whether it was intrinsically valuable or if it was valuable because of what it could and did accomplish. To be intrinsically valuable or precious means that it is of itself precious and does not necessarily need to accomplish any work to get its value. For example, the value of precious gems is determined not so much from their usefulness but from what they are within themselves — their intrinsic value — and that is why people desire to own them even though they can really do nothing. On the other hand, there are certain medicines, extracted from plants, which cost a thousand or thousands of dollars for one pill or injection. These actually have little intrinsic value, but their value is derived entirely from what they can do! My sincere prayer is that the spirit of wisdom and revelation may enlighten the eyes of our understanding so that we clearly see that the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ was and is precious both in respect to its intrinsic value (for it is the life of God!) and because of what it could and did and does now do!

In the blood of Jesus the power of the divine life dwelt and worked — hence its intrinsic value. He was a specially prepared body to contain a specially prepared blood that was to be the life of all humanity. This blood was precious from the fact that it was a unique blood which would do something for all humanity that no other blood could ever do. It was the Word that became flesh, who was made man. It was the life of God that dwelt in Him in a measure that no other man had known! God gave not the Spirit by measure unto Him! If the spirit in Jesus, which is the life and the blood of Jesus, was in no way different from the spirit or life of every other human being, then why is it that He was able to walk through this realm of sin and death and both remain sinless and manifest the very fullness of divine life on the human plane, while each and every other son of Adam has sinned and come short of the glory of God including you, my precious brother, sister, and including me! The fullness of divine life gave His blood, every drop of it, an intrinsic value. The blood of a man is of more worth than that of a sheep. The blood of a king is counted of more value than hundreds of common men. The blood of the firstborn son of God! It is in vain the mind seeks for some expression of its value; all we can say is, it is His own blood, the blood of the Son of God!

Oh, the wonder of it! Jesus Christ was the Word made flesh; He was not old Adam's flesh imbued with God's life. He was the second Man, the Man from heaven, the God-man, head of a new species of Men, a new creation of God in the earth, each member of which is a SON OR DAUGHTER OF THE MOST HIGH! The life is in the blood. As the value of this life, so the value of the blood. In Christ there was the life of God; infinite as God is the worth and the power of that blood! In Christ there was the life of man in its perfection; in His humility, and obedience to the Father, and self-sacrifice, that which made Him unspeakably well-pleasing to the Father. The blood of Jesus, God and man, poured out in death, was the perfect fulfillment of God's will, and a perfect victory over self and sin and death. Therefore it was, that in the blood of the everlasting covenant Jesus was raised from the dead; that in the power of that blood He entered the highest heaven; and that precious blood is now and forever available to us with all its incorruptible power. His blood is His divine spirit of life which has come into us, and he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. The precious blood of Christ is just Christ Himself, Christ in us — our hope of glory!

THOU HAST MADE US KINGS AND PRIESTS

“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us unto God...and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.” (Rev. 5:9-10)

Many translations use the word “them,” as this is the song of the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders. A number of Bible scholars disagree with that and confirm that “us” is the better and correct translation. Dr. Seiss in his “Lectures on the Apocalypse” gives the following explanation: “Some of the best manuscripts read ‘them’ in place of ‘us’; but the sense is not altered by it...for the subject is settled by the preceding declaration to be the persons singing the song, namely, by the phrase ‘redeemed US’; the genuineness of which must be considered established since the discovery of the Codex Sinaiticus.” It is therefore the four living creatures (kingship) and the twenty-four elders (priesthood) who are both redeemed unto God and made kings and priests unto God!

Never under the Old Testament Aaronic order of priesthood, apart from one example, do we find where a king exercised the office or ministry of a priest. In the Levitical order the offices of king and priest were separated, there were those who reigned as kings, and there were those who were the Lord’s priests. Kings could not intrude into the priest’s office, and priests could not sit on the throne. Judah produced the kings, and Levi produced the priests. On one occasion Uzziah, king of Judah, tried to assume the role of priest and “went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense” and was smitten with leprosy in his forehead (II Chron. 27:16-20). God had separated the two offices for that time, and the one was not to intrude into the other.

Melchizedek is the sign, the symbol, the first example of a priest designated in the word of God. He was called a priest of God long centuries before the Old Covenant order was established for the Levites to be the priests of Israel. Thus, the first or beginning example represents the pattern or true design of God for what He considers a priesthood. Melchizedek had royal blood in his veins, he claimed the title of kingship. The very meaning of the name Melchizedek is “KING of righteousness” and this righteous King was also the Priest of the Most High God. What was always kept asunder under the Law Covenant, by divine wisdom and purpose was united in Him who was “made like unto the Son of God.” Melchizedek was “made like” the Son of God, and we find in the book of Hebrews that the Son of God is made a high priest “after the Order of Melchizedek.” It is the glory of Christ and His many brethren as KING-PRIESTS that Melchizedek so wondrously prefigures! A new order has arisen in Jesus Christ. He is a King-Priest! And He has made us to be Kings and Priests, a Kingdom of Priests, a Royal Priesthood unto God! *“They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him...” (Rev. 20:6)*

The principle idea attached to the title “king” is that of authority and rule; to the title “priest” that of mediation, mercy, ministry, and reconciliation, drawing men nigh unto God, and God nigh unto men. Why is Jesus seated as a priest upon the throne of the heavens? It is that man may be blessed, and that God may be glorified in man! As priest He lives only for others, to bring them near to God. He lives as king only that He might reveal the kingdom — the power, authority, dominion, and glory — of God in and through us!

Deep down in the heart of men there is a strong and instinctive demand for a priest, to be a mediator, to lay one hand on man, and the other on God, and going between both to bring the two together into unification. This instinctive consciousness of the need for someone to help us to enter into oneness with God is the reason why all the ancient pagan religions had a priesthood. A priest or priesthood infers that there is a reason why such has been called into play. It denotes that there is an estrangement between God and His creatures and the priest ministers to bridge that gulf and bring about peace or at-one-ment. Many today proclaim that there is no estrangement, no separation between God and man that it is only a false sense of duality in man’s mind, that he has only to see that he himself is God, and as soon as his true identity is recognized, he can proceed to manifest out of his divine self. If that is the truth then man did not truly fall, there was no sin in Eden, and no penalty for that sin; God did not Himself drive man out of paradise, Adam just sort of stumbled out while sleep-walking, there was no need for Jesus to come to ransom us with His precious blood, and there certainly would

be no need for the Melchizedek Priesthood! Nor would there be any purpose in any scriptural teaching of forgiveness by God, atonement, justification, regeneration, new birth, or the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Jesus should have just come and told us who we really are, and explained to us that none of these things can add anything whatsoever to our inherent divinity, and gone back to heaven.

Webster's dictionary defines priest as: a mediatory agent between God and man. In the Old Testament the word priest is translated from the Hebrew word cohen, the root meaning of which is "one who stands up and draws nigh for another." The Greek word, in its root, means "to minister." Thus, a priest is one who "draws near and ministers on behalf of another." And the priest always draws nigh and ministers in two directions — drawing nigh to God on behalf of the people and drawing nigh to the people on behalf of God. The priest stands and ministers to the Lord on behalf of the people while, on the other hand, he ministers unto the people on behalf of the Lord. The ministry of the priest is an intermediary or go-between ministry. He reaches out with one hand and takes hold of God; he reaches out with the other hand and takes hold of humanity; and he brings the two together by virtue of his priestly administration.

"Thou hast made us kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." "Made us" are words pregnant with meaning. Let me give you an illustration. The name of the Son of God is Jesus. That is His correct name. That is His full name. The name of the eternal Word of God who stepped across the stars to the planet earth to be born in a stable in the village of Bethlehem, is Jesus. That is His complete, proper, full name. His name is Jesus! The angelic messenger appeared to the virgin girl Mary and announced, *"Thou shalt call His name JESUS, for He shall save His people from their sins."* (Matt. 1:21) Someone says, "But the angel didn't say His name was to be Jesus because that's English — His name was given as Yahshua." Incorrect. The common people of Galilee did not speak Hebrew in the time of Jesus. They spoke Aramaic. Undoubtedly the name was given to Mary in the language she understood. We know it in English as Jesus. And whatever language it is spoken in it still means the same thing, "the salvation of Yahweh." So when the mighty Gabriel appeared, he said, *"Call the child that which will be descriptive or characteristic of what He is going to be and do. Call His name that which will describe His accomplishment."* The messenger said, *"Thou shalt call His name Jesus, or thou shalt call His name Saviour, FOR He shall save His people...call Him God's Salvation because He is the Son of God MIGHTY TO SAVE."*

Since He would be the salvation of Yahweh unto His people, call Him Saviour. Some who read these lines are now saying, "Hold the fort, Eby; isn't His first name Lord and His last name Christ?" NO! Neither Lord nor Christ is a name. It is important that we understand that. Christ is not a name. Christ is a position. Christ is an office. Christ is a title, as also is Lord. Christ is a description of an individual who holds a particular office. If I were to say to you, "What is the name of the first man to hold the highest office in the United States of America," you would say, "His name was George Washington." And if I said to you, "What was his office?" you would say, "President." He was called "President George Washington." You understand immediately that his name is distinct from the title which designates his office. Now we might call him "Mr. President," but that's not his name, we're calling him by his office. His name is George Washington; his office is President. When I speak to you about King that is an office. When I speak to you about Prime Minister, that's an office. Christ is an office — it's not a name. Christ comes from the Greek Christos and means "anointed," or better, "The anointed One." When we're talking about the Son of God, we're saying that His name is Jesus — Saviour. His office is Christ — the Anointed One. Jesus is the Christ, the anointed One of God. And God has made this same Jesus to be both LORD and CHRIST. Made! Jesus was made Lord, and Jesus was made Christ. It is something He became after He was named Jesus. And now the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders proclaim, "For Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth!"

This passage is one of rare beauty. It is like a precious diamond, the effulgence of whose radiance dazzles the mind. It is a drop of pure distilled essence, whose fragrance fills the rooms of the heart of every man and woman who has been apprehended of the Father for His high and holy purpose. It is a joy forevermore and a challenge to all who comprehend its message. It must be engraved deeply upon every heart of God's Royal Priesthood. It exalts and glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. "THOU HAST MADE US!" THOU! There is so much depth to that word that I am afraid we often do not perceive it. It is like a beautiful star-studded sky on a bright clear night and one cannot even begin to grasp the vast depth that lies above us. So it is with these marvelous words: *"Thou hast MADE US TO BE KINGS AND PRIESTS!"*

Hear now the testimony of the prophet Isaiah. *“But ye shall be named the priests of the Lord: men shall call you the ministers of our God...for as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord will cause righteousness to spring forth before all nations.” (Isa. 61:6, 11)* The inspired prophet summed up in one bold statement what it means to be a priest of God. “Ye shall be named the priests of the Lord: men shall call you the ministers of our God.” There is a marvelous significance in that word “named.” Named! You shall be NAMED the priests of the Lord. This passage forcefully reveals the great truth that all who would be priests of God must be re-named, they MUST UNDERGO A CHANGE OF NATURE, to become priests by name, that is, by nature, so that priesthood is not merely a title given to them but a nature lived out through them. Oh, yes! If our spiritual minds can grasp the fact, to be named the priests of the Lord means to be natured the priests of the Lord, to be so imbued with the priestly nature until we become a priest in our very state of being. We think like a priest. We speak like a priest. We act like a priest. We love like a priest. We minister like a priest. We reconcile like a priest. We represent men to God, and God to men as a priest. This is what the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders are declaring, “Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests!”

Kings and Priests! Can you see the parallel between those two? It is the king who reigns and the priest who serves. All the holy sons of God shall reign as kings, and they shall serve as priests! These kings and priests “reign over the earth.” It is evident that our reigning as kings and priests over the earth is directly related to the fact that the seven spirits of God are from the throne of God sent forth into all the earth. These two statements are made in the same chapter, only four verses apart. Can we not see by this that the seven spirits of God are sent forth into all the earth through the agency of those kings and priests who are given authority over the earth and are made ministers of God unto the earth realm.

He makes us kings and priests! That is the present work of God in the life of each member of God’s elect who has received the call to sonship. Though in our natural constitution we may have had a very different disposition, God is breaking, purging, changing, and transforming us, working into us the character of a king and the heart of a priest! We may once have been vain, but God is making us solid, serviceable and useful! We may have been proud, but God is making us humble! We may have felt empty and useless, but God is filling us up and making us valuable! Some of us have been very weak, but the Spirit is now making us exceedingly strong in the Lord and in the power of His might! We may have once been ignorant and unlearned among men, but today the Lord is filling our minds and spirits with divine wisdom and spiritual understanding! Our nature may previously have been shy, cold, distant, and indifferent, but the fire of the Holy Spirit is making us bold, warm, concerned, caring, and out-going! Perhaps we were once critical, angry, hateful, or spiteful, but our Father is transforming us to be loving, kind, gentle, sweet, long-suffering, merciful, forgiving, and reconciling! It is indeed wonderful! Our mighty God is in this hour dealing with all His sons and truly He is making us to BE KINGS AND PRIESTS!

Jesus, the High Priest of our profession, and the King over all the kings, does His wonderful work within us. He imparts His own life, power, and ministry. We cannot have the kingship and the priesthood in full power except as the power of His Life is fully inworked in us. As we truly come to understand this, we then see what is meant by the fact that we are called to be kings and priests, because we have the very life of the King and the High Priest in us — not merely imputed, but the King of glory and the High Priest of the heavens Himself dwelling powerfully within us and working effectually through us, praise His wonderful name! This is something far greater and higher than my own “Higher Self.” This is His Spirit joined to my spirit — one spirit in the union of life.

Why is Jesus seated as a priest upon the throne of the heavens? He reigns as King to bring the dominion of His kingdom into our lives, and as Priest He lives only for others, to bless and lift us with His life, to bring us near to God. He makes us kings to give power and efficacy to the priesthood. He reigns as a priest! It is because of this that the idea of authority stands out so prominently. Jesus fills us with a kingly disposition; He enables us to rule over sin, over the flesh, over the devil, over the world, over MEN. In the midst of all circumstances and difficulties, of all opposition or cruelty, of all powers of the flesh, the world, and the devil, the son who yields himself to be made king by Christ lives in the joyous certainty that he is one with Him who has won the victory, and that He that is in him is more than conqueror!

He makes us priests that we might serve; that we might bring men near unto Him; that we might be filled with the fullness of the seven-fold intensified spirit of the Lord so as to be a channel for the outflowing of His glorious life unto creation. How else shall the creation be delivered from its bondage to corruption and find its identity in the glorious liberty that belongs to the sons of God? As priests through the blood of Jesus we live for others, to pray for them; to work among them; to love and bless them; to reconcile and redeem them; to bring them to God! To be a king is marvelous beyond words, but to be a priest is no idle self-seeking blessedness. It is a compelling power to enter into God's presence on behalf of mankind; the power to receive from the Lamb all the blessings, benefits, and provisions of His wonderful life, and to receive and carry and distribute them! *"And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne... stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns (power, kingship) and seven eyes (vision, discernment, communication, priesthood), which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth...and hast made us... kings and priests: and we shall reign over the earth."*

However clearly we see by the eye of revelation and faith the truth of this realm of kingship and priesthood, however earnestly we desire it, however firmly we think we grasp it by faith, all will not avail — GOD HIMSELF MUST DO IT! God Himself must admit us into His presence, and make His face to shine upon us. And as the path to kingship and priesthood, God Himself must write His law in our hearts, unfold in us the new divine nature in such power of the Holy Spirit that it is HE that works within us both to will and to do. God Himself must by the Holy Ghost so shed abroad His love in our hearts, that to love becomes as natural to us as it is for a dove to be gentle. God Himself must by the Holy Ghost so fill us with the nature of righteousness that to be righteous becomes as natural to us as breathing. God Himself must by the Holy Ghost so clothe us with the mind of Christ, that to think the thoughts of God becomes as natural to us as are the self-serving thoughts and desires of the unregenerated man. God Himself must by the Holy Ghost so make us vessels of mercy that to be merciful becomes as natural to us as the emotions of anger and retaliation are to the carnal nature. And God Himself must through the Holy Ghost give us His power!

Consider, dear brother, sister, is it not God Himself who has faithfully directed all your steps, who has initiated each circumstance of your life, who has given sight to your poor blind eyes and caused you to behold the majesty of His purpose? Is it not God Himself who has led you out of the blinding traditions and enslaving bondage of Babylonian religion, and nurtured you and brought you to the place in which you stand in Christ today? I do not hesitate to say that no more than you can save yourself can you make yourself an overcomer, bring yourself to perfection and maturity, or of yourself apprehend the beautiful ministry of kingship and priesthood to God! Those who apprehend in this hour are those who rest in His love, trust in His power, embrace His promise, and have no confidence in the flesh.

THE SHAPE-SHIFTERS

There is a teaching about "shape-shifters" that is prominent among certain occult, new age, and UFO cult movements. The belief is that there are certain "aliens" or "space creatures," namely those specified as reptilians, who possess the ability to shape-shift or change their forms to appear as humans or other entities. One writer **David Icke**, who is deep into this explains, *"Shape-shifting is the ability to change physical form, in this case between a human and reptilian appearance. The ancient Danaan brotherhood of initiates and magicians called Telchines on the island of Rhodes could shape-shift into any form, according to the Greek historian, Diodorus. Shape-shifting is a common theme in tales of esoteric 'magicians' and high initiates. I have been told by hundreds of people all over the world, from every walk of life you can imagine, about their experiences of seeing well known and less well known people transform into a reptilian form before their eyes and then go back again. There have been reports of shape-shifting reptilians for thousands of years. In the Indus Valley and Hindu culture their serpent gods called the Nagas were one example. The serpent 'sea' or 'fish' gods of Sumer and Babylon were said to be able to change shape and look human whenever they chose. Another version of shape-shifting are the so-called 'Men in Black' who appear and disappear according to witnesses. The story of Jekyll and Hyde is also symbolic of shape-shifting"* — **End Quote.**

Personally, I take such theories and claims with a very big grain of salt! Yet — there is a true realm and reality of shape-shifting! We see it in the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus during the forty days prior to His

ascension. Most of those who saw Jesus did not immediately recognize Him — only after some subtle familiar action were their eyes opened and it dawned upon them who this person was! In the garden of the tomb Mary had seen a “gardener.” Two of the disciples had seen and conversed with a “stranger.” The eleven in the upper room saw the Master as He formerly appeared. Later, a group of them saw Him on the lakeshore, and thought it was a “fisherman.” He was with them forty days after His resurrection, but they saw Him only on a few brief occasions.

The entire time that He was manifest to them, had it all been crowded into one day instead of being at intervals during the forty days, would probably have been less than twelve hours, or one-eightieth of that entire time. This being true, it is evident that He was present with them unseen about seventy-nine eightieths of that period of forty days. And even when they did have manifestations, they were not (except once, on behalf of the doubting Thomas) in a form exactly like the one they had known so intimately for three and a half years, and had seen but a few days before. It is not once intimated that they knew Him by the familiar features of His face, nor even that He was recognized by the same appearance as in other manifestations. Yes, He was different, so different that they were puzzled to understand Him, and to know just how they could still be His disciples.

“After that He appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.” (Mark 16:12) He appeared unto them in another form — not another Person. It was the same Christ and Lord! But there was some difference of manifestation. That is the plain truth coming to meet us out of the region of mystery where for us the final truth of things dwells. After His resurrection Jesus was still to His disciples Jesus — but with a difference. He was the same, yet not the same. There was something about Him which differentiated Him from the Christ of the garden, and the hillside, and the country road, and the seashore. The disciples never doubted that He was the same Jesus with whom they had passed through the corn-fields, and walked the highways, and sailed on the blue water of Galilee. But the human form which was soon to pass from their midst already seemed to be becoming less recognizable to their view. In a little while they would see Him no more — that is, as we see one another in the flesh. Soon the vision of the living and ever-present Christ was to be internalized, reserved wholly for the inward eye of every quickened and transformed spirit. But it seemed that already, in anticipation of this new order of things, the old order was changing, and the outward form of the Master was speedily becoming less and less the essential medium for the revelation and recognition of His unchanging personality.

The record of the appearances of Christ during those forty days before the ascension tells us that the spiritual senses were now predominating over the physical, and the spirit played an ever larger part in the realm of perception. It is abundantly clear that the Christ they saw and recognized was no mere apparition or illusion, but it is equally clear that those who sought to recognize the Lord in the same way they recognized one another now needed their physical senses to give way to the spiritual faculties of the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God, the eyes of their understanding being enlightened that they might truly KNOW HIM!

Form plays an important part in our physical and material reckonings, outward appearance is so necessarily the basis of our judgments in this gross material realm. But all who have been called to sonship to God are now learning the important lesson that, even as the same Christ came to Mary Magdalene, to the disciples by the sea, and to the two who journeyed to Emmaus in forms which they did not immediately recognize as Him, so that spiritual life which Jesus revealed in His resurrection, and which He revealed in even greater measure by His ascension and return as the power of the Holy Spirit, may express itself in more than one form of manifestation as it is raised up in the hearts and lives of God’s elect. “He appeared in another form.” He is always doing that! Would that we were always able to see and recognize Him! Would that our faith were deep enough, would that our love were broad enough, would that our insight were keen enough, to recognize Him in all the forms and fashions of His coming unto the children of men!

Some find Christ as Mary Magdalene found Him in an instant when He called her name. Some find Him as they are led in the paths of His will, like the disciples who cast their net in the Sea of Galilee, and found it was their Master and Lord they were obeying. Some take the journey to Emmaus — they meditate upon Him, converse with Him, and their hearts burn within them — then they discover Him in the breaking of bread by His

hand. At the center of all spiritual experience there lies the same eternal truth, for it is the same Christ who meets us all; but many are the forms we encounter as we each experience Him in a different way! Some may find Him in blessings and experiences, while others find Him with Job in the severity of testings and trials, being brought very low upon the ash-heap of stripping and desolation, tested to the uttermost until at last they break through the gloom and shout with the voice of triumph, *“I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee!” (Job 42:5)* Therefore let not the man who has met the Christ in the form of a gardener doubt that He was ever seen by the waters of Galilee; and let not him who has encountered Him on that dawn-lit beach think it improbable that He ever walked and talked with the travelers to Emmaus.

“HE APPEARED IN ANOTHER FORM.” That is Christ the great shape-shifter! It is the same Christ revealing Himself to men in another form. So, my beloved, as we ponder the mysterious manifestations of the risen Christ among the faithful and devout disciples, let us remind ourselves that this same Jesus is in our midst, and we must be ready to recognize Him as He becomes manifested to us from day to day, from realm to realm, from glory to glory, by the power of the Spirit. The Lord Jesus comes to us in different ways. There are many modes and forms of the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ! To those who suppose that they have attained to all God has for them, whether in the precincts of Babylon, in the deliverance of the feast of Passover, in the glory of Pentecost, or some who think they have already ascended into the highest heaven of their high calling in the feast of Tabernacles, to each I now say by the word of the Lord — we are going to have another manifestation! It is dawning. It has begun even now. It is the same Lord Jesus, yet even now His many brethren are beginning to behold Him in the glory of His Kingship and Priesthood, the Lamb in the midst of the throne, sending forth the seven-fold intensified spirit of God into all the earth, to be manifested in a further unfoldment of Himself, in the glory and power of manifest sonship!

All of us have this treasure in earthen vessels, and we are continually being changed from glory to glory! For years the Lord had put me on His potter’s wheel and made me a certain shape. For years I was an evangelist and, whenever the Lord wanted to move in the soul-saving, evangelistic realm, I was right there. No problem at all! I was in the evangelistic shape. My whole mind and desire was conformed to that ministry, my whole heart, everything. All about me was conformed to that. But if God wanted to move in any other way through me, He could not. That was my shape! If He came in that shape I said, “Come, Lord Jesus.” If He came in another shape I couldn’t handle that, so I said, “Go, Lord Jesus.” I had not yet learned about shape-shifting!

Most of us have had a certain shape and we have been hardened to that. The only way the Lord could appear to us and appear in us and appear through us, would be in that form. It has been the Baptist form, the Pentecostal form, or the Charismatic form. It has been the evangelistic form, the apostolic form, the prophetic form, the divine order form, the healing form, the deliverance form, the miracles form, the tongues-speaking form, the prophesying form, the worship form, the word of faith form, or a hundred other forms. But the highest glory of the ministry of Christ is embodied in those two wonderful offices: KING and PRIEST. He is indeed “the King eternal” and “a Priest forever” after the order of Melchizedek! And while we truly praise God for all the manifestations and ministries of this present “in part” realm, so graciously bestowed, yet our hearts cry out mightily for a greater reality and a higher ministry that proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb for the deliverance and transformation of the entire creation. Our deepest desire is that He may so thoroughly transform us into HIS IMAGE, so completely CHANGE OUR SHAPE until we fully become all that Kingship and Priesthood mean.

There is a wonderful contrast drawn in **Revelation 4:11 and 5:10**, wherein it is stated, *“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for Thou hast CREATED ALL THINGS, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created...and Thou hast MADE US unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”* Oh child of God, consider how great and full of meaning these words are! “Thou hast CREATED all things... Thou hast MADE us.” There is a world of difference between the terms “create” and “make.” Away back yonder in the dim and distant ages that are gone it was written, *“And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God CREATED AND MADE.” (Gen. 2:3)* The phrase “created and made” is a faulty translation, and it is so indicated in the margin of some Bibles. It should read, “which God created to make.” Young’s Literal Translation renders this verse, *“And God blesseth the seventh day, and sanctifieth it, for in it He hath ceased from all His work which God had PREPARED FOR MAKING.”* Another translation says, *“And God proceeded to bless the seventh day and make it sacred,*

because on it He has been resting from all His work that God has CREATED FOR THE PURPOSE OF MAKING.” In other words, God created the whole vast universe for the purpose of forming or making it into something He still had in mind!

And now comes the word — “Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood...and hast MADE US unto our God kings and priests.” Ah, “things” are created, but “kings” and “priests” are MADE! If you are a king-priest, there is something about you that is not ordinary; you have distinct and distinguishing characteristics. You are no longer a part of the problem — you have been so thoroughly transformed from the spirit of self and of this world system until you have become in your very state of being the solution to the problem. What is a king? What is a priest? Who are the king-priests today? They are those who are indwelt by the Christ and are living in the Christ and by the Christ to manifest Christ! None of us are the finished product, but, praise God, as this reality is raised up in us more and more God is MAKING US to be kings and priests unto Him!

“Make” means to alter the form or change thoroughly. There can be no kingship or priesthood without first a thorough change! Sin, self, greed, hatred, criticism, retaliation, ego, unconcern, immaturity, pettiness, unrighteousness, condemnation, all must be dealt with by the cross. Thus, we are not seeking just a salvation experience, the forgiveness of our sins, covering over the past, and hoping for the best in the future, but we desire that the Spirit of God, working mightily within, shall bring a thorough change in us, until every word, will, attitude, action, and reaction shall flow from His heart unto all about us. You can be a believer and die and go to heaven without such a thorough change, but you can NEVER BE A KING OR PRIEST WITHOUT IT!

“It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” (Phil. 2:13) “GOD working in you.” What a marvelous expression! We know how combustion works mightily in the cylinder, forcing up and down the piston, giving power to the engine. We know how sap works mightily in the branches, forcing itself out in leaf, blossom, and bud. We know of incidents where men were so possessed of devils that they spoke and acted as the inward promptings compelled them. These express but weakly the idea of the “inward working” of God, which towers infinitely beyond. Have we not all been conscious of some of these workings? We have known them when the breath of holy resolution has swept through our natures: every sigh for the will of God; every strong and earnest desire to be like Him; every appetite for spiritual things; every impulse to live and sacrifice and give for others; every aspiration to love and lift and restore the groaning creation; every prayer lifted heavenward in intercession for weak, needy, suffering and sinful humanity; every cry of the heart for the kingdom of God to come and His will to be done in earth as it is in heaven — all these are the result of His in-working and the promise of the Kingly and Priestly Ministry!

To be continued...
J. Preston Eby

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 82 THE UNIVERSAL SONG (Continued)

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART EIGHTY-TWO

WORTHY TO RECEIVE THE UNIVERSAL SONG

"And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands..." (Rev. 5:11)

What a vision greeted the enraptured apostle! Have you ever tried to figure out how many messengers were around the throne? Here is your answer: ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands — myriads of myriads! The number of those who join in the praise is beyond count! It might well be translated, "And the number of them was armies multiplied by armies, and armies of armies." These are all *messengers* of God, for that is the meaning of the word in Greek. They are not necessarily angels as we usually think of angels, but they are messengers of God, whether of men or any other order.

WORTHY TO RECEIVE...

"...saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." (Rev. 5:12)

The Lamb is here declared to be worthy to **receive power** — as well as wisdom, riches, strength, honor, glory, and blessing. Remember, the things John beholds in the visions of the book of Revelation are things that were yet future at the time he was shown them, the *"things which must be hereafter."* (Rev. 1:19; 4:1) How can Christ, who had already been given all power in heaven and in earth, **receive power**? We know that all power originates with God. *"God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God."* (Psa. 62:11) Fifty-six times the scriptures proclaim God to be THE ALMIGHTY. **Almighty means "all-ruling, all powerful, absolute sovereign, omnipotent."** The omnipotent God gave our Lord Jesus Christ all power in heaven and in earth! The question follows — How can Christ who has already been given all power now **receive power**?

The truth is, of course, that although God is the supreme authority and power of the universe He does not hold or exercise that power either arbitrarily or unilaterally. While man is not truly a "free moral agent," yet God does cede to His creatures the power of *choice, decision making*, and spheres of *authority and dominion*. From the very beginning God ordained that man should *choose* to eat or not eat of the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God did not interfere with man when he made an unwise choice for He had a great *purpose* in mind. The one question possibly asked more than any other is: Why did God permit the present reign of sin, sorrow, and death? Why did He permit the serpent to present the temptation to our first parents, after having created them sinless and upright in the image of God? Or why did He place the forbidden tree in the midst of all the others? Despite all the attempts to turn it aside, the question remains — Could not God have prevented all possibility of man's fall?

The difficulty arises from a failure to comprehend the plan of God! God *could* have prevented the entrance of sin, sorrow, and death, but the fact that He did not should be sufficient proof to us that its present permission is designed ultimately to work out some greater good. The problem lies not with God's wisdom or ability, but with man's denseness and dullness of understanding! The natural man lives in a fantasy world. There are many species of insanity. All sin is insanity, in different degrees. The carnal mind is an insane mind given wholly to destructive delusions. The natural man is mentally ill beyond comprehension. The carnal mind is spared from

this classification in our world, only because the vast majority of the inmates in this vast asylum called “society” is equally mad and in harmony with the delusion. There is a universal insanity of the so-called “wisdom” of this world, inherited from the deranged serpent in Eden. The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God! This mortal, this deranged mind of old Adam, must be put off, and the new man or real man, the sane man in the precious mind of Christ must be put on. The carnal mind is exceedingly stupid. Carnal reasoning is dull-witted, lame-brained, simple-minded, silly, and absurd! God’s plans, seen in their *completeness*, will always prove the wisdom of the course He pursues. Some inquire, Could not God, with whom all things are possible, have intervened in time to prevent the full accomplishment of Satan’s designs? Of course He could have! But such interference would have thwarted the accomplishment of His own wise purposes! His purpose was to make clearly and eternally manifest the *absolute perfection of His own nature and the integrity and correctness of all His ways*, and to prove to all men, angels, and creatures in all worlds and realms the unavoidable disastrous consequences of departure from them.

Sin, sorrow, and death are God’s great cosmic object lesson! God could have made all of us like robots, programmed to be holy and to act righteously at all times and under all circumstances. But should He have done so, the one thing we all would lack is *character*. We would be holy, but without the knowledge of why we are holy, or the understanding of the consequences of not being holy. We would not be holy because we *desired* holiness, or because, with knowledge, understanding, and wisdom, we *chose* to be holy. God didn’t want robots! He wanted sons and daughters! God, in His omniscient wisdom and knowledge, understood fully the difference between good, evil, holiness, and life. He planned for us also to understand! Not by being told, counseled, or trained like animals, but *by experience*. Oh yes, experience *is* the best teacher! Our heavenly Father purposed to take us a route through which we would learn experientially the true nature of all things, that through the interchange of good and evil, and the deep dealings of the Holy Spirit, every man and every creature ultimately would be brought to the place where they would knowingly, willingly, and eternally *choose* and *cling* to the way of life, light, and love! Aren’t you glad!

God deliberately gave to man an area of autonomy — self government — POWER. God not only foresaw that, having given man freedom of choice, he would, through lack of *full* appreciation of sin and its results, accept it, but He also saw that, becoming acquainted with it, he would still chose it, because that acquaintance would so impair his moral nature that the sense-consciousness of the flesh realm, with its ensuing evil, would become more agreeable and more desirable to him than the narrow way of life. Still, God subjected man to sin and death, while at the same time preparing the remedy of the sacrifice of Christ for man’s deliverance from its awful consequences — the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world!

God in His infinite wisdom knew that to subject the creation to vanity would be to lead mankind, through experience, through creation, the fall, redemption, and the restitution of all things, to a *full appreciation* of “the exceeding sinfulness of sin” and of the matchless brilliancy and glory of *God’s divine nature* in contrast with it — thus teaching him the more to love and honor his Creator, who is the source and fountain of all goodness, and forever to shun that which brought so much woe and misery upon the human family. So the final result will be undying love and overwhelming appreciation for our glorious Father, and eternal abhorrence and avoidance of all that is contrary to His nature and will; and consequently the firm and unalterable establishment of everlasting righteousness and spirit life throughout all God’s vast domains. Every creature in heaven, earth, and throughout the furthest reaches of the universe shall eternally profit from the demonstration God is now giving His creation through the permission of sin and all its attending evils and woes. What a plan!

God intended from the beginning for man to rule. “*Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and LET THEM HAVE DOMINION.*” (Gen. 1:26) The writer to the Hebrews wrote: “*What is man that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownest him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands.*” (Heb. 2:6-7) The expression, “Thou *crownest him*,” denotes clearly that God gave man KINGLY RULE and authority in the earth. The eighth Psalm reveals that man’s dominion is to eventually encompass the whole vast universe of galaxies, stars, suns, planets, moons, and all that dwells in them! God’s plan is to give man dominion over *all* the works of His hands, indeed, over ALL THINGS! But — God’s purpose is for man to exercise that ruling authority and dominion *in union with Him*. And this is what man departed from in the fall! Man chose to rule *independently* of God; to “do his own thing” apart from the life of the spirit. He rejected God’s authority and rule over him. The

carnal mind ever pursues an identity apart from God, proclaiming the ancient error, *“I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds: I will be like the most High!”* (Isa. 14:13-14) *“I will... I will... I will!”* So man, in his distorted consciousness, rules his own life and destiny apart from God, yea, in opposition to God! And the inevitable result of this course is confusion, chaos, sorrow, and death. How uncontrovertibly certain are the words of inspiration: *“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”* (Prov. 14:12) Yet — God has ordained this to be for an appointed time!

This brings us back to our question — If the Lord *HAS all power*, how is it that He *receives power*? The answer is to be found in that great sonship prayer which is commonly referred to as the Lord’s Prayer. Setting forth the great principles of sonship prayer Jesus taught, *“When you pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”* (Matt. 6:9-10) What does it mean for God’s kingdom to come? What does it mean for God’s will do be done in earth, even in this earth *which we are*, as it is done in heaven? Ah, I am the king of my life; I am seated upon the throne; I make the decisions; I do according to my own will. But when Jesus the Lord comes I must **abdicate my throne** and let Him sit upon the throne! The testimony of every son in the kingdom of God is: *“Till Christ was raised up in my life I was the Commander in Chief. Since I have been introduced to the Christ within He commands!”*

Oh, yes! THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH is something for now, not tomorrow, nor during the millennium, nor in the ages to come. You see, my beloved, when I (that is, my human consciousness, my Adamic identity, my carnal mind) resign from the dominion I have exercised in my life and *abdicate the throne*, in that same blessed moment the whole realm of dominion which I have usurped and reserved unto myself IS GIVEN TO THE LORD, THE SPIRIT! The power I once held in my own hands is yielded up to Him so that He now exercises the power and authority that I previously exercised. Thus, **HE RECEIVES POWER!** He receives the right to *rule* my life. He never took that right by force — but He receives the right when I yield it up to Him. All things shall be “subdued unto” the Son of God! That is the testimony of scripture. And that is how He receives the power, the riches, the wisdom, the strength, the honor, the glory, and the blessing! It is all the wealth and strength and glory of the kingdoms of this world yielded up to Christ the Lord. *“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever.”* (Rev. 11:15) Oh, the wonder of it!

We are to crown the Lord, the Spirit, as King in every place of our being, outer and inner. It was the humiliation of France, in the fifteenth century, that her king Charles VII, was not crowned in the proper city, where former kings were crowned. Joan of Arc, burning with the high resolve to resolve this dishonor, and have the king crowned in Rheims, emerged from obscurity, gathered an army, drove the enemy back from one point to another, until she dislodged him from Rheims. The king came then. The crown was placed upon his brow in the right place; and the fair maiden bowed at the foot of the throne, with tears of joy streaming down her beautiful cheeks. *Where are we to crown our King?* We are to crown Him in the most sacred and authoritative chamber of our nature, from whence proceed the impulses and propensities of spiritual life. The authority and dominion of life is in the *spirit*, in your spirit and my spirit. AND FROM THENCE HE WOULD BE CROWNED AND RULE IN LIFE OVER THE KINGDOM OF OUR BEING.

So, precious friend of mine, when you conduct the King to the place of crowning in your nature, you may have to escort Him down a winding passageway, intricate with illusions, imaginations, fears, errors, and distortions of the carnal mind, dismal with sin, sickness and weakness, bare and jagged with earthly consciousness and evil tendencies, on through the gloom and grind of carnality, corruption, and death, to the most sacred altar of your heart. There implore Him to arise and cleanse and purify all your entire nature every whit. Submit — trust all the powers of your being into His mighty hands that HE MAY RECEIVE THE POWER OF RULERSHIP in you and through you in the kingdom of God!

THE UNIVERSAL SONG

“And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands...and every creature

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, Part 82, The Universal Song

which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.” (Rev. 5:11,13)

As John goes on with his songs we might have expected him to say, “I heard,” but he first says, “*I beheld.*” This is a book of visions, and there are continuing references to what is “seen.” But he did also hear! Though there are many singers he speaks of *the voice*, which is the one voice heard through the many — the voice of the spirit, the voice of the truth and the revelation in the Spirit of the Lord. There is only one voice! Hearing the voice goes beyond the sound, beyond even the words. Jesus said, “*My sheep know my voice, and a stranger they will not follow.*” It’s not just that the sheep understand the words the shepherd speaks, but they *know* — recognize, discern, and perceive the *voice*.

There are various Greek words for “know,” each bearing its own shade and depth of meaning, in this case it is *oida*, denoting **absolute knowledge**. Praise God, there is a realm where you can have absolute knowledge of His voice — without doubt or questionings. I do not hesitate to say that such absolute knowledge comes as a result of prolonged and intimate association, communion, and relationship with HIM. I “know” my wife’s voice, not merely its sound, but also its meaning and intent. By each inflection of her voice I discern her attitude, determination, state of being, etc. Such knowledge has developed as a result of more than fifty years of being her HUSBAND! His sheep — His mature ones — shall come to the place where they unmistakably know His voice, not just hear it, but **know** it. It is precious as we tune out the voices of this world, and of our own carnal minds, and listen only to the voice of the spirit within; the more we do so day by day the stronger and more resonant and meaningful becomes His voice unto us.

There are many pitiful words and pathetic messages pawned off on God’s precious people under the guise of “the word of God.” But the Lord is bringing forth a people in this day who have gotten beyond dead doctrines and religious traditions. God is causing us to hear with our spirit the Voice of the Living Christ, for He is the Word of God, the Truth of God, and the Reality of God. I cannot emphasize too strongly that it takes more than sermons on sonship, and exhortations on perfection, and claims about our high attainments in God, and boasts about immortality to make truly manifest sons of God. We must HEAR HIS VOICE, for it is only those that hear His voice who shall live!

It takes more than having meetings, singing choruses, clapping hands, shouting Amens and Hallelujahs, prophesying, and preaching to one another about the deep mysteries of God to bring us to the knowledge of God and transformation into His likeness. We shall have to see Him and touch Him and hear Him and walk with Him as did John on the Isle of Patmos. We must hear His voice speaking to us in the deepest recesses of our being. We must commune with Him in the glory that radiates from the face of Jesus Christ. Sonship comes only by personal association with the living Christ! And think not, precious friend of mine, if you cannot now discern His voice amidst the confused babble of voices that fill the earth, that you will hear HIS SHOUT when He comes in that glorious Word by which He shall finally deliver us from the last vestiges of sin and death and present us faultless before His Father as holy sons of God *with power and great glory*.

In the heavenly mists of that long ago Eden Adam “heard the *voice* of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool (Heb. — *spirit*) of the day.” Every “day” has a *voice*! Every “day” of the Lord bespeaks of a season of a particular dealing and purpose of God in our life. The voice of the Lord is speaking in the *spirit* — anointing and purpose — of that particular day. All who have truly been called to sonship to God are now hearing the “voice” of the Lord God walking in the *spirit* — in the anointing and purpose — of **this new kingdom day** to which we have now come! We hear not just the message, for multitudes hear the message but never truly hear the *voice*. Because they do not recognize the voice they do not discern the importance and significance of the word they hear. It bears no fruit of righteousness and power in their lives. They continue on in their carnal ways, and often in the old-order religious systems of man, professing to embrace the revelation of this new kingdom day, but void of its transforming power. Those apprehended for this day are now hearing the voice of the Son of God and they that hear shall live! The voice is a tone, a note, a chord, a knowing, an inner hearing and quickening *beyond the message of the words*.

In our text above great pain is taken to declare another glorious day — a day when not a single creature of God, whether in heaven or upon the earth, whether in the sea or even the lowest realms of degradation “under the earth,” shall fail to bow the knee and joyfully proclaim the worthiness of the Lamb! This includes all men and all creatures of all worlds throughout the universe! This includes all angels, holy and fallen, and includes the devil as well! “And *every creature...heard I saying...*” It means that absolutely everything that has life or breath will, in that great day, rejoice and exult and jubilantly cry, “Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever!” Praise shall be universal for the Lamb, for He is worthy indeed!

John beheld in spirit the wonder of a day when the universe shall be free from sin and sinners, and a universal song of adoration goes up to God and the Lamb. It is futile to attempt to apply this to the church in its present state, or to any time in the past since Adam fled from the garden of God. At the time of which John speaks, **every creature** in heaven and on earth and under the earth without any exception sends up its anthem of blessings to God and the Lamb! While we praise God for every moving of His Spirit and every step of His all-wise plan, the fact remains that none of the revivals of history has ever once-for-all defeated Satan, sin, and death. No revival at any time in any land has ever turned the whole world to God! No dealing of God with humanity has ever brought to pass the **total triumph** of His kingdom in all realms! Sin and death still stalk across the earth, the vast masses of humanity held tight in their terrible clutches, with sorrows beyond description. Is there no deliverance for these?

How truly the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now! And creation waits — not for another Luther, nor another Paul, nor another Finney, nor another Peter, nor another Moody; waiting not for another Pentecost, nor for another evangelistic crusade or healing campaign, nor for another prophet. “*For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD.*” (Rom. 8:19) And why does all creation stand in the wings waiting with bated breath, crowding the door and standing on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of God’s sons coming into their own? “*For the creation itself ALSO shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God!*” (Rom. 8:21) Think about it!

Thank God, **Daniel 7:27** is really true! “*And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom, under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and ALL DOMINIONS SHALL SERVE HIM!*” Thank God, **Ephesians 1:10** is actually the fully inspired word of God! “*And this is in harmony with God’s merciful purpose for the government of the world when the times are ripe for it — the purpose which He has cherished in His own mind of restoring the whole creation to find its one Head in Christ; yes, things in heaven and things on earth, to find their one Head in Him.*” (Weymouth translation).

What love! What wondrous love! What victory! What an unspeakably glorious consummation! The might of God’s strength which operated in Christ, raising Him from the dead, was sufficient to exalt Him to the highest pinnacle of the universe, thus ensuring that all His enemies would be reconciled to Him, that every opposing power would be made subordinate to Him, that all sin and death in every realm and in every man and in every creature throughout all the unbounded heavens would be so swallowed up of HIS LIFE until God would be ALL IN ALL, bless His glorious name! The gospel of the grace of God! Truly it is not just for this age, but extends to all ages and realms, for every creature cries blessing and honor and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb “*for the ages of the ages.*” That’s how it reads in the Greek! May it flood our hearts that they may, indeed, be illuminated with the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ!

The redemption of God’s elect, men *out of every tribe, tongue, people, and nation*, is far from being the whole story of Christ’s reconciliation and redemption. John hears the choirs of heaven joined by the voice of *the whole creation* in a universal outburst of praise to God and the Lamb! Hear it! “*And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever!*” (Rev. 5:13) Such is the universality of Christ’s achievement that His victory cannot stop short of universal response. No wonder that the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders

sing a new song proclaiming the worthiness of the Lamb to take the book and open its seals! No wonder an innumerable company of angels round about the throne take up the refrain: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!" No wonder that every created thing in heaven and in earth and throughout the underworld unites in the great chorus of blessing, glory, honor, and power unto the Lamb!

This is the very music of heaven! As we look at the praises rising up out of chapter four and chapter five of the Revelation, it can be seen that they comprise in substance two great oratorios — the Oratorio of Creation in chapter four, and the Oratorio of Redemption in chapter five. It is interesting to note that an oratorio is a musical composition in which solos and choruses combine to the accompaniment of instruments. Here the voices of angels and the living creatures and the elders with their harps form an immortal choir, chanting celestial praise. As one writer has pointed out, the arrangement of these musical numbers is most artistic. The worship begins with a quartet as the four living creatures sing the seraph's song, "*Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty, which is, and was, and is to come!*" This is followed by the choir, consisting of the twenty-four elders, which continues the praise of God, "*Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou has created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created.*"

Then are heard the solo voices: "*Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?*" Then comes the response: "*The Lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed to open the book and to loose the seals thereof!*" Then as the Lamb takes the book out of the hand of Him that sits upon the throne, there is heard the unison of the quartet and the choir of elders singing the new song concerning the worthiness of the Lamb, "*For Thou hast redeemed us unto God by Thy blood...and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth!*" Scarcely had the quartet and the choir finished this ascription of praise, than with thrilling crescendo the climax and grand finale are reached. The limitless expanse of God's universe became vocal, and, led by the unnumbered angelic host, the infinite reaches of creation, filled with its myriads of worlds and suns and these all peopled with the creatures of the mind of God, joined the sublimest anthem of praise to the Lamb that divine ears will ever hear. The strains of this mighty coronation song swell until their echoes fill all the ceaseless ages of eternity with unspeakable melody! Then, as the tumult of universal praise dies away, there is heard the sound of a grand "*Amen!*" It is from the lips of the four living creatures. A breathless silence follows, and the elders fall down and worship. Such is the Universal Song — the Celestial Song of Creation and Redemption!

The following is a beautiful writing which appeared some years ago in *The Sharon Star*. No name of an author was attached to it, so whoever the author is, deeper than the human heart can fathom is the meaning and mystery of the words he shares. I quote:

"Many centuries ago there was a Greek musicologist named Boethius. Boethius theorized that there were three main levels of music, and he gave each level a name. The lowest form of music was what he called **musica instrumentalis**. This referred to audible music, either sung or played, performed mainly for entertainment purposes. This is the kind that all people are most familiar with. As we all know, there have been countless works of music written and played over the years which have been and still are incredibly beautiful but which still belong to this category.

"The second highest level of music, according to Boethius, was what he called **musica humana**, which was an audible music, but referred only to that which existed between God and man. It was not intended to be entertaining, but the music was spiritual in nature. The song being sung could be a prayer, an exhortation to people, or it could even be a prophetic song. We, of course, are familiar with and thankful for the gift of spiritual singing, that of singing a higher song in the Spirit that has never been sung before.

"But Boethius recognized that there existed music of yet a far higher nature. He recognized that there are symphonies that have always been playing in a realm that far transcends our natural ears. He recognized that the earth, nature, the atmosphere, and all of Creation are lost in melodies far, far more beautiful than any human ear can hear, but which can be heard only by those who have spiritual 'ears to hear,' those who listen to the voice of the Spirit. He called this level of music **musica mundana**, also given the names 'Music of the Cosmos,' 'Harmony of the Spheres,' or the 'Symphony of the Universe,' which referred to this very vibration of all celestial and terrestrial bodies and all of Creation. The scriptures declare that even the very elements give

glory to the King of kings! (Isa. 55:12; Job 38:7; Isa. 44:23) Yes, there is indeed such music saturating even the air all around us. But only the sons and daughters of the living God can tune in to that higher frequency and sing its melody, for these are they WHO ARE LED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD!

“This music is more than just sound. There are not necessarily any words with it. It is not learned in words, nor does it depend upon words. But it is a living, throbbing vibration of all that God is, which is felt and released from the very center of the spirit! This music is the beauty and glory of the Resurrected Christ! It is the unbroken communion between Christ and His Church, between the Bridegroom and the Bride, and between the Creator and His Creation!

“The source of power behind this Song of Songs is not musical overtones but SPIRITUAL VIBRATIONS of Perfect Love, Life Everlasting, Joy Unspeakable, and unending expressions of Praise and Thanksgiving, springing up from deep within a heart that is filled with all the fullness of Him who reigneth forever and ever! It is a song BORN OF LOVE! It doesn't just tickle our natural ears, but it pierces the heart and spirit of men! The Song actually operates on a Love so great that men's hearts shall be opened and melted as they hear! The Day shall come when they shall respond to the quickening power of that Song and join their voices with all the angelical host and sing and sing with such a lyricity of heart, mind, soul, body, and spirit until they become enraptured into the beauty of *infinite harmony!* Creation shall then be truly lifted! Chains shall be broken! Captives shall be liberated as the Resurrected Christ is made alive!

“We, as members of this glorious body of Christ, are called not only to sing that Song, but to BECOME that Living Song of Songs! ‘And give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.’ (Isa. 62:7) It is when we BECOME this precious melody of love that its power is made manifest. We then BECOME this rhythm of glorified life, yea, earth's heartbeat of Joy. I pray that we all put on ‘ears to hear’ and join our voices with all the myriads of angels and become that Song. For each individual who develops the power to hear it with spiritual ears can send it on and lift the burdened hearts of a weary world! Hallelujah! For, ‘Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound...!’ (Psa. 89:15)

“As the never-ending fire of God which cannot go out, this Song has always been ringing throughout Creation and it cannot die. Its melody of Life, Love, and Praise DEMANDS expression! Some men may slam their doors, and try to drown it out, but all their noise cannot smother the living crescendo of Love! Its power and impact are too great; it cometh from above” — **end quote.**

*Some time ago a word from brother **Carl Schwing** crossed my desk and I was especially impressed by the following testimony: “Some nights ago, upon my bed, as my thoughts were upon the Father, my spirit was carried away to the KINGDOM OF THE ELEMENTS...I felt the strong wind blowing against my face, I reached out to touch the rain and snow, I could hear the heaving of the oceans, and the song of the four seasons; I heard the clapping of the trees, I heard the mountains shout for joy and the valleys sing, and the song was always the same: ‘Christ is Lord! Christ is Lord! Christ is Lord!’ I remained in that realm for an hour or so, as my body was in a state of perfect peace. Tonight I understand more deeply what I experienced: The Kingdom of God had visited the kingdoms of the earth (not of the world), for as He had created these kingdoms before creating man, so now they are first to receive the ‘Knowledge of the Lord’ (the awareness of His presence). My brethren, can you not see how close the Hour is? The Father is walking amid His creation and all creation is being shaken by His presence...and we, O sons of God, are being changed in a ‘moment, in the twinkling of an eye’ by His presence!” — **end quote.***

*Some years ago **Brother Paul Mueller** shared the following illuminating experience in one of his papers. “To help us understand this truth, I would like to share with you a wonderful experience I had while in Nigeria, West Africa thirty years ago. One afternoon the Lord appeared in my room, and said to me, ‘The Kingdom of God is at hand!’ As soon as He said that, He immediately turned away and left the room. Needless to say, I was surprised and amazed by that visitation. As I thought about it later, I began to doubt that it was of the Lord. Since I saw no other manifestation of the Kingdom, I thought the whole experience should be questioned. A few days later, as I was walking down a path from our house to the Bible School where I taught Bible classes, the Lord again got my attention. This time, as I was walking through the lush Nigerian bush, I heard the leaves, the shrubs, and the plants singing a combined song of praise to the Lord, and of travail for the Kingdom of*

God. I stopped to listen! The sound of it all was so arresting that my attention was fixed for a few minutes on the awesome, majestic wonder of that scene. The sound was so awe-inspiring, I thought it to be a most heavenly sound. The whole creation around me came alive with that combined song of praise and travail. In fact, the creation is always singing and travailing (Rom. 8:22), but for those few minutes I was given ears to hear it! As I stood there transfixed by the wonder of it, the Lord spoke again and said, 'Now do you doubt me when I tell you the Kingdom of God is at hand?' I replied, 'No Lord, help me never to doubt your word again'"
— end quote.

A distant relative of mine, **Dr. Richard Eby**, was accidentally killed a number of years ago when he fell to the street from a three-story building. Instantly he was conscious in the realm of the spirit. One moment he was conscious with a flesh-restricted mind, the next moment with a spirit-released mind whose speed of function was that of light. He was instinctively aware that the Lord of lords was everywhere about him, though he did not at that time see Him. Hours later he was raised from the dead, and of one of the wonderful experiences encountered in that heavenly sphere, he says, *"Music surrounded me. It came from all directions. Its harmonic beauty, unlike earthly vocal or instrumental sounds, was totally undistorted. It flowed unobtrusively like a glassy river, quietful, worshipful, exceedingly edifying, and totally comforting. It provided a reassuring type of comfort much like a protective blanket that whispered peace and love. I had never sensed anything like it! This music was sounding within my head, not from an eardrum. Obviously it was not airborne. Most unusual to me was the absence of any beat. Then I realized that without time this heavenly music could have no beat which is a measure of time! I was hearing harmonic perfection, undistorted by any interposed medium between me and its source, as heard mind-to-mind."*

Richard Eby explains that since God is the Creator of the universe He is the Composer of the Song of Creation. This universal Song is the prime communication of worship, praise, and thanksgiving. Music became the resulting harmony from all creation, both of matter and energy. All resonated in unison with the Spirit. It is like a triad of sub-electronic particles with and around which God constructed everything in the universe. The wave-forms we call Light; whereas the material forms we call earth and water and air. The original creation mirrored the composition and perfection of Person-God. All things vibrated in unison with Him! There was total accord and harmony everywhere as the whole cosmos was *resonating with* and *in* God. Each separate thing or being thus carried out an appointed task in His scheme for the universe. A celestial-form of music resulted as the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy! **Dr. Eby** adds: *"The music around me suddenly seemed louder. I rushed to a nearby tree and grasped its trunk to my ear; it was singing! I lifted my right elbow to my head; it too emitted the same joyous, beatless melody. Excitedly I stopped to pick some flowers, and found them already in my hand. They too were 'playing' the tune!"*

There is a story of the *Lost Chord* that has been told in exquisite verse, and in rapturous music. Perhaps you have heard of the lady who in the autumn twilight laid her fingers on the open keys of a great organ. She knew not what she was playing, or what she was dreaming then; but she struck one chord of music, like the sound of a great Amen. Something called her away, and when she returned to the organ, she had lost that chord divine. Though she longed for it and sought it earnestly in unnumbered hours of practice, it was all in vain. It was a *lost chord*.

And so in our world today a voice of longing cries out of every human soul in surges of incomprehensible yearning. It is a voice that is felt, not heard. None has ever walked the pathways of this planet who has not felt the haunting refrain of that "Lost Chord" moaning out its unutterable lamentation. And one and all try to silence that plaintive cry as it sobs forth its heartbreaking sorrow beneath the burden of a faint glimmer from some long forgotten memory...or world...or lost existence. Whenever I hear the story of that Lost Chord it reminds me of the lost memory, the lost understanding, the lost knowledge, the lost joy, the lost peace, the lost power, the lost glory, the **lost life** that has fled from mankind. That whining refrain of sadness, darkness, and death, echoing weirdly out of each man's soul, is but the fragmented, scrambled notes of the great Lost Chord, as they are released with *harmonic dissonance and discord*. It is like the exquisite notes of a masterpiece sounded forth indiscriminately without harmony at the hands of an unlearned child. The notes may all be there but there is no lovely melody, only a raucous racket.

There is recorded in the book of Job the statement of a glorious former time when *“the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.”* (Job 38:7) That exquisite harmony was muted when man was lowered out of the realm of pure spirit into this gross material realm, and then muted further by sin and the subjection of creation to the bondage of corruption, as mankind became overwhelmed with the consciousness of this dense realm of the earthly, material, and temporal. But through the quickening of the Spirit of the resurrected and ascended Christ A NEW SONG IS ARISING — the Universal Song, indeed, the Lost Chord begins to vibrate and sing within our hearts again!

Down in the human heart, crushed by the tempter,
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore,
Touched by a loving heart, wakened by kindness,
Chords that are broken will vibrate once more!

There is a glorious company that stands upon mount Zion with the Lamb, they are of the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north (Isa. 14:13; Ps. 48:2), brought there by the transforming grace of God, and they sing as it were A NEW SONG before the throne, which no man (earthly realm, carnal mind) can learn. It is called “as it were” a new song because though it seems new, it is not new at all! It is the same song Creation sang in that long ago beginning when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy! It is heard through the celestial realms again as the **new morning stars** take up that lost chord and express the Life and Glory and Reality of God in spirit and in truth. Well did **Ray Prinzing** write, *“Thrilling to note that the word ‘song’ is the Greek word for an ode. An ode isn’t the same as a hymn which is a song composed and sung, whereas an ode is a spontaneous outflow of melody and praise that finds its expression in song by the Spirit’s inner prompting. Now a morning star means the first, early, or foremost one. And it is given as the herald or messenger to announce the day which is coming forth. The night might seem dark, but the morning star shines out to announce that the GREATER LIGHT OF GOD shall soon be seen over all the earth. Truly ‘the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea.’ Ah, this gives new hope for coming days, His lighted stars betoken the victory” — end quote.*

I cannot tell how all lands will worship
When, at His bidding, every storm is stilled;
Or who can say how great the jubilation
When all the hearts of men with love are filled.
But this I know, the skies will thrill with rapture
And myriad, myriad human voices sing;
And earth to heaven, and heaven to earth, will answer,
At last the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is King!

Thirty centuries ago the **Psalmist** cried out in spirit, *“Praise ye the Lord. Praise the Lord, O my soul. I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.”* All the way through the book of Psalms, even in its most sorrow-laden passages, you feel that you are walking in a smoldering volcano of praise, liable to burst out at any moment into a great flame of thanksgiving to God. And as the book draws to its close, the flame leaps high from the crater: here you have praise, and nothing but praise! You have perhaps watched a great conductor bringing every member of his orchestra into action towards the close of some majestic symphony; have seen him, as the music climbed higher and higher, signaling to one player after another, and always at the signal another instrument responding to the summons and adding its voice to the music, until at the last crashing chords not one was left dumb, but all were uniting in a thrilling and triumphant climax.

So these final Psalms summon everything in creation to swell the glorious unison of God’s praise. They summon symbolically to the sun riding in the heavens, “You come in now, and praise Him!” And then to the myriad stars of night, “You now, praise Him!” Then to the mountains, piercing the clouds with their summits, “Praise Him!” Then to the kings and judges of the earth, “Praise Him!” Then to manhood in its strength and maidenhood in its grace and beauty, “Praise Him!” Then to the multitude of the redeemed in earth and heaven, “Praise Him!” The crescendo continues until the whole wide universe is shouting with every voice the praise of God alone. The Psalms in their sequence show forth the redemptive progression that can only end when every

heart beats in unison with the heart of God; when every mind shall harmonize with divine wisdom and purpose; when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father! The loving, praising, worshipping attitude of the whole universe is to be complete and perfect. Thus all the ends of the earth shall offer up their praise and thanksgiving to Him for His great love, salvation, and inflow of life. What a THANKSGIVING DAY that will be! Every knee on this globe, and in the heavens above, and in the underworld shall confess the Lordship of God and His sons. What a TESTIMONY MEETING! There has never been one like it. The summing up of the universe is the revelation of harmony. It is not that the harmony comes at the end, but that the harmony is *revealed* at the end. The universe is all music, but it is not all music to our ear. We only hear a few chords, and they are most often minor chords. The minor chords seem discords when we hear them in their fragmented position; they lack the full symphony to bring out their symmetry. Often our hearts cry out that we are living in a world filled with discords. The Father must teach us that we are living in a world of perfect music, but we only hear a small portion of the music. Sorrow, pain, disappointment, heartaches, frustration, and travail, not to mention sin and death, seem to our ear sad and discordant notes. Often we feel that the coming melody shall atone for the grating chords. Nay, my brother, my sister; say rather that the grating chords themselves shall be revealed as parts of the completed harmony. Then shall we fathom the depths of the wisdom and knowledge of God! Then shall we understand His ways that are past finding out! Then shall we see just how it is that *all things work together for good!* The melody is not to come, it has come already; it has only to be completed to be revealed, and then the harpers shall stand upon the glassy sea.

To be continued...

J. Preston Eby

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, Part 82, The Universal Song
[J. Preston Eby] ~BIBLE STUDY 10

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 83

BREAKING THE SEALS

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART EIGHTY-THREE

REMOVING THE COVER

"Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah... hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof. And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne." (Rev. 5:5, 7)

As dew distilling from the heavens comes the revelation of Jesus Christ from every page of John's vision. It is the drama of God's great plan of the ages wrought out first in His called and chosen elect, then in the nations, and finally in all the vast creations of God. Everything is viewed from the divine and heavenly perspective. It is not the history of Satan's activity in men and upon the earth, but the all-conquering power of God's Christ! It is the *spiritual drama* of Father's dealings in our lives. It is preeminently *the revelation of Jesus Christ*. The word "revelation" means to *unveil, uncover, or take the cover off*. The *unveiling* of Jesus Christ — that's what is happening in God's elect! That is what is taking place in the earth today! That's what the book of Revelation is all about! As that which has been hidden in Jesus Christ is revealed, uncovered, brought out into the open and exhibited, the glory of Jesus Christ is shining forth from His body in all the earth. Christ is *in us!* The revelation of Jesus Christ must, therefore, be *in us* and *out from us!* Christ *in you* IS the hope of glory, as the apostle wrote!

In one of his *Twice-Told Tales* Nathaniel Hawthorne describes how a much beloved Puritan minister conceived the weird idea of concealing his face with a veil, and how his people were affected with a sense of painful mystery as he went in and out among them with covered countenance till the end of his days. The girl to whom he was engaged to be married forsook him; the bride trembled before him when he performed a wedding; children cringed when he walked by them on the road; people whispered as he passed. One realizes in an instant, as he imagines the scene, how much the confidence and joy of life depend on our beholding one another, literally with open face! Imagine the change and horror, if one morning every man's face was covered with a dark veil and impenetrable to his neighbor. Laughter would cease on earth; who then would have the heart for joy and rejoicing under such a cloud? None would be able to comfort his friend, for none could estimate his brother's sorrow! Neither tears, smiles, joy, pain, sadness, disappointment, appreciation, fear, hatred, or love would ever be discernible! Conversation would languish, for it would have no visible response. Love itself would die when every emotion was masked. The very power of association and the instinct of trust would be destroyed when every man had withdrawn into darkness. Were there no revelation of the face, personality, and character there would be neither faith nor fellowship possible on earth!

With these thoughts in mind we can better understand the vast importance of *the revelation or unveiling of Jesus Christ!* It is abundantly clear to every spiritual mind that one of the great reasons the world has not found the *living Christ* is because He has been concealed behind the blinding veil of religion, beneath the restricting façade of tradition, static creeds, lifeless forms, powerless rituals, empty ceremonies, and the corruption of the flesh and the carnality of the natural mind.

The fifth chapter of the book of Revelation represents a scene in heaven — the realm of Spirit. A book is held in the right hand of Him who sits upon the throne of Omnipotence. The scene is purely symbolic and spiritual! God is omnipresent *spirit*. God never sat on a throne. He never held a book in His right hand. The One on the throne did not have an image. Even though He did not have a physical figure, John could see Him in and by the Spirit! And in and by the same Spirit John could see a book in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne. The book is the symbol of the revelation of Himself in and through a people!

Multitudes of Christian ministers today are ministering from the lowlands of religious traditions and carnal church creeds and programs. God's elect has a higher calling in God! Only as we ascend into the heavens of

God's Spirit and minister unto the Lord and for the Lord from the realm of His greater, spiritual presence in the most holy place of His throne-ship, shall the blessings and benefits of His heavenly kingdom continue to change us and the world. Since heaven's greatest desire is that the sons of God be *manifested*, let us understand that **we are the book in the Father's right hand** and we must be "taken" by Jesus Christ the Lord; He must rip off the seals from that book which we are so that there shall be a *revelation* of the life of God that is written within! Father has raised us up into a unique place in this spiritual temple of the body of His sons. Our hearts cannot settle for anything less, for we yearn and long and pray and seek His will to be done in earth as it is in heaven. Nothing else will satisfy! Those who are called to sonship are experientially ascending in the spirit to the high places in God. They are recognizing and taking their rightful place on the throne of the Lord, by the Spirit, where they shall reign with Christ. Today we are living in momentous times. Christ is opening the seals of that book which we are to bring forth the revelation of Jesus Christ in us!

The Father also designed that when the time came to open the seven-sealed book, there would be a careful process connected to exposing the contents. The process is **the progressive and ultimately full disclosure of all that Christ is!** Christ Jesus possesses every power that the Father has, for the deity in Jesus *is* the almighty Father! However, the full glory and authority of Christ has been hidden beneath the veil of *our flesh*, for we are the body of Christ and the temple of God. The restoration of all men and all things to God requires the *full disclosure* of Jesus Christ *in and through His body on earth*. That is the message of the book of Revelation! So, the opening of each seal is connected to the removal of some aspect of our outer life of flesh and a brighter and clearer revelation of all that Christ in us is! As each seal opens *less of us* is seen and *more of Christ!* This is the revelation of Jesus Christ! Can you not see the mystery?

A further confirmation that this is precisely the meaning of the seven-sealed book is found in the events that transpire as soon as the book is taken from the hand of the One upon the throne — a paean of praise breaks forth as the four living creatures (kingship) and the twenty-four elders (priesthood) cry in rapturous exaltation, *"Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou was slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."* (Rev. 5:9-10) You, precious child of God, are the epistle of Christ, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart (II Cor. 3:1-3). Therefore *you* are the book held in His mighty right hand, and every day **God is writing in your book!** He's not writing for nothing — for your book is to be opened! And there is only One who is worthy to take the book and loose the seals thereof, and that is the Lamb in the midst of the throne. The Lamb! The opening of the book is the unveiling of the life of the Lamb, the revelation of His life written and engraved in the minds and hearts of those who share His nature. He is the One who is worthy to take each one of us and open us up! And it is only through Jesus Christ our Lord that we can be opened up as the Book of the Life of the Lamb!

There are seven seals to be broken. The number seven gives me the understanding that contained within this book is the totality of God's character and the complete revelation of His will and purpose. As these seals are loosed within God's people they begin to experience and express the fullness of all that God is. There has never been an expression of God at this level in the earth at any time except in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, for it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell. There was mighty power and glory in the early church in the days of the first apostles, but there was not the revelation of God's fullness, for they moved under the anointing of the "firstfruits" of the Spirit. That's why the blessed apostle John saw this book as something *yet to be opened!* But now there is a people that has been sealed unto the day of redemption and as the Lamb opens the seals there is going to be a many-membered expression of God at the same level of the fullness of God in Jesus Christ! That is *manifest sonship!* That is the *revelation of Jesus Christ!* We shall see Him no longer through a glass darkly, nor at a lower level of consciousness, nor in the in-part realm of Passover and Pentecost. This book of the Lamb's Life tells a complete story! Now, in this new day of the kingdom, God is taking all the experience and wisdom and knowledge and grace and power and glory that was and is revealed in Jesus and is incorporating it all into a company of sons and is about to stand this company up as the full and complete and total revelation of His personality in the earth! The opening of the book, the unfoldment of the Christ within, is not our work, it is HIS. Only the Lamb can break the seals! Only the Lamb can open the book! The Lamb has the seven spirits and each spirit unlocks a seal, until all seven are released and Christ is fully revealed in us. It is indeed wonderful!

It is only a tiny rosebud —
A flower of God's design;
But I cannot unfold the petals
With these clumsy hands of mine.
The secret of unfolding flowers
Is not known to such as I —
The flower God opens so sweetly
In my hands would fade and die.
If I can't unfold a rosebud,
Flower of God's design;
Why do I think I have wisdom
To unfold this Christ-life of mine?
So I'll trust Him for His leading
Each moment of every day;
And I'll look to Him for guidance
Each step of this kingdom way.
The pathway that lies before me
The Lamb on the throne knows.
I'll trust HIM to unfold the glory
Just as He unfolds the rose!
--anonymous

REMOVING THE COVER

There is a cry deep within the heart of every son of God, *"Oh God, unveil my mind, unveil my eyes, unveil yourself, unveil your nature, unveil your glory, unveil the mysteries of your kingdom, unveil your power, unveil the book of your life within us! Take the cover off, that men may see Christ in all His beauty!"* If any who reads these lines has never prayed like that you should begin to pray like that for the time of the unveiling is come. Everything is gathered before an unveiling! Everyone is in expectation! All the people are congregated, then finally the long-anticipated moment arrives when the veil is removed and the statue is brought into view. Today I say to you by the word of the Lord, the hour of the unveiling of God's Christ is nigh at hand!

The importance and magnitude of this unveiling is first seen in Jesus Christ. At the dawn of history man knew God and knew his own identity as a son of God. The grandest of all truths is that **CHRIST IS THE IMAGE OF GOD**. If you want to know what God had in mind when He said, *"Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness,"* you have only to look at Jesus Christ. **That is what God meant!** *"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost (who know not who or where they are): in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of CHRIST, WHO IS THE IMAGE OF GOD, should shine unto them." (II Cor. 4:3-4) "In whom we have redemption through His blood...who is THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD, the firstborn (prototype) of every creature" (Col. 1:14-15)*

How totally inadequate do our words become in the light of words of such wonder as these! Jesus is the *prototype* of what God intends man to be. He is God's finished product, God's perfect man, God's full-grown son; what every son and ultimately every man will be! Deep within every man there is a secret sanctum where dwells the mysterious essence of his being. This inmost reality is that part of a man which separates him from every other living creature and makes him uniquely mankind. The deep-in human entity of which I speak is called in the scriptures *the spirit of man*. *"For what man knoweth the things of man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." (I Cor. 2:11)* As God's self-knowledge lies in the eternal Spirit, so man's self-knowledge is by his own spirit, which is the offspring of God (Acts 17:28-29). I cannot overstate the importance of this in our forward walk into our destiny as sons of God! This truth denies that man is an earthly, physical being having a spirit and declares, rather, that he is *a spirit having a physical body*. That which makes a man a human being is not his body but his spirit, in which the image of God originally lay.

The life of Jesus is the life of God transmuted into the form of our human life, so that we may see, touch, hear, know, understand, and experience the very being and nature of God in human terms. The natural mind cannot understand such a truth as this, but, as I have pointed out, this is what God meant when He said, *“Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness.”* CHRIST is the image of God and God meant for every man to look and speak and act and be just like Jesus the Christ! Can you not see the mystery? *This is the value of man’s life in redemption*, for God sent One who was all that man was meant to be to purchase us — not to harps and golden streets and fluttering wings in some far-off heaven somewhere — but back to relationship with God as sons in His very own image.

As we consider the wonderful advent of man created “in the image of God” we can only conclude that this is a SPIRITUAL MAN brought forth out of the very spirit-substance of God almighty, and bearing His own divine nature, character, power, and attributes. The “image” of God is the nature of God who is spirit reproduced in man in the earth. Thus, man is the true image of God! The divine nature was best and fully expressed in the man Christ Jesus who shined upon mortals the truest revelation of God and lifted man’s sights higher than their poor thoughts would allow. Jesus revealed to men their true origin, heritage, and destiny. He came to show man what man really is, was intended to be, and through redemption and so great a salvation shall be — THE IMAGE OF GOD. That is why God commanded, *“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness...”* The only “image” of God there can be is *man Himself! Man is the image!* Christ is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. In Jesus Christ you see man as he was in the beginning, and as he ever shall be world without end — THE IMAGE OF GOD WITH DOMINION OVER ALL THINGS!

When our first parents sinned by disobeying God, immediately they changed the way they acted — they hid themselves from the presence of the Lord. Ultimately they were driven out of the Garden... that is, out of fellowship with God, blinded to the consciousness of who they really were, and separated from their ability to walk in and appropriate their heritage in Christ. From that day on, the human family began to lose sight of God — to forget who He was and what He was really like. As the years and centuries went by, man created a picture of God that was so distorted and mistaken as to be but a grotesque caricature of the reality, and very few really understood His nature or His great plan and purpose. In the eloquent words of Paul the apostle: *“When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.”* (Rom. 1:21-23) This explains the origin of all the pagan gods of the ancient world! I like the way The Living Bible expresses **verse 21** — *“And after a while they began to think up silly ideas of what God was like and what He wanted them to do.”* In effect, man created a **mask** — grotesque and corrupt — and used it to cover the face of God. And darkness again covered the earth and the lives of men.

It was then that God chose to reveal Himself afresh and anew to all mankind. Paul Scherer described “the night of all nights when God came down ‘the stairs of heaven with a child in His arms’” Throwing aside the crude mask that man had placed upon Him, the Father sent His Son, Jesus, from heaven to earth — to once again walk among men and show them who God is and what He is like. So Jesus came, ministering to the poor, teaching the principles of the kingdom, healing the sick, casting out devils, raising the dead, with power over the very elements, and pouring out boundless love to all men! “Do you see me for my works?” He asked. “Then understand that this is the nature of God. For when you see me, you see the Father.”

Oh, my beloved, the joy of seeing the Father... of having fellowship with God! This is the secret of true self-discovery! For as you find out who God is and your eternal relationship with Him in Christ, you will suddenly see yourself in a new light. AND THEN YOU CAN STRIP AWAY ALL YOUR MASKS AND FACES AND GO FORTH IN YOUR NEW IDENTITY — AS A SON OF GOD! At the fall we lost our identity. Not knowing who we were, neither did we understand who our Father was. We are all here by choice, and have forgotten why we came! In Christ God is now giving us back our true identity, and we are waking up to our true nature. *“Wherefore He saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light!”* (Eph. 5:14) We do not awaken all at once, however. Most who read these lines have been awakened to the glorious and eternal realities in the Spirit little by little through manifold experiences over the course of many years. And

now we can understand that there are *seven seals* upon that book of the Christ-life within! And the seals are not all removed at one instant of time or in one great experience in God. Oh, no! The seals are removed one by one, through a definite *process* of unveiling. Some today do not believe in “process,” they only embrace the so-called “finished work.” Well, I have news for you my precious brother, sister, — regardless of the finished work there will still be no revelation of Jesus Christ out of your life, or mine, until **all the seals have been broken!**

That which the Lord has to get rid of in us is the covering of the old fleshly nature and carnal mind which conceal and mar the beauty of the Christ within. What our Father is doing when chastening and scourging us, is stripping away our old self-nature which obstructs the glory of the divine life within. This covering of the old flesh must be *removed* to let the glory of the Christ shine forth! This God is doing with His chastening rod and His scourging whip; removing the filthy film of our old fleshly nature and religious ways, taking the hide of carnality off, until our vessel shines with the beauty and glory of Christ and is made useful in the kingdom of our Father. This wonderful truth is expressed so beautifully in **Ray Prinzing’s** poem:

O flesh so arrogant and proud,
Self-centered ways that clamor loud,
Your days are numbered, fading fast,
Your vaunted image cannot last.
The cross shall deal its deathly blow,
Humiliation lay thee low,
Till Christ alone shall be revealed,
The inner man, so long concealed.
And then true grace and mercy give,
Forgiveness births a hope to live,
With neither malice nor ill will,
But joy and peace the earth to fill.

There are very special dealings of God within each of our lives in relation to the unveiling and release of the Christ-life from within. The Lord Jesus put it this way: *“I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit”* (John. 15:1-2) Every branch that **beareth fruit** — He **purges** it! The purpose of purging, or pruning, is to effect a concentration of the life. When all the branches of the vine are permitted to grow unrestricted there is a resulting debilitating or weakening of the life. It is like diluting a chemical — the more water you add, the weaker it becomes. The nourishment and vitality of the vine are sapped by all the multitudinous branches, shoots, and tendrils, and utilized to keep them alive and bearing abundance of foliage rather than being channeled into producing fruit. Thus, with the excess of branches and shoots cut away, the life becomes more concentrated and stronger in those remaining, and the clusters of grapes become more rich and full. The true life is then revealed in the fruit! In like manner it is necessary that our natural tendencies, actions, and desires, with all carnal religious activities and exercises, must be *cut away*, that the virtues and powers of our Christ-life be wrought and manifested in us. It has been my experience that God not only prunes away the sins of the flesh and the emotions of the soul, but a great deal of religiousness and those involved with it, as well. All this “cutting away” represents an aspect of the “breaking of the seals” that the inner life may come forth into full revelation and manifestation! When Jesus speaks of “bearing fruit” He is not talking about “winning souls,” as good as that is; rather, He is speaking of the raising up in our lives of **the fruit of the spirit within** which is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. All these are the nature of Christ within us, and the breaking of the seals makes way for this fruit to be borne outwardly through our lives!

Revelation is an unveiling. Unveiling is a removal. It means the separation of *everything* that obstructs the radiance of the glory of Christ! And the mystery of it is that the revelation of Christ is not bringing Christ within us to His fullness, it’s not *adding something to* the Christ that is in us. You can’t add anything to Christ. Christ *is!* It’s not the *production* of Christ, or the *increase* of Christ, or the *maturing* of Christ, or the *formation* of Christ, but it’s the **uncovering** of the Christ who is already there! Christ is in my spirit. I can’t add anything to my spirit! I may say, “Oh God, I’m seeking a greater manifestation of Christ.” But by that I don’t mean that I’m

looking for Christ to become something that He isn't, or something more and greater than He already is. Oh, no! What I'm after is the revelation, the unveiling, the uncovering of the Christ who *is all that He is* within my spirit.

Someone has put the proposal to us like this: If you had Rembrandt in you, just think what a painter you could be! If you had Beethoven in you, just imagine the sort of music you could write! If you had Einstein in you, consider what recognition as a scientist you could gain! Well, you cannot have Rembrandt or Beethoven or Einstein in you — but you have Christ! Consider what sort of life you can live, the words you can speak, the works you can do, and how magnificently you can love! Yes, we have Christ in us and we have come to the hour of His unveiling in us!

Now if you want to understand all the wars that are in the book of Revelation, and all the judgments in the book of Revelation, and all the plagues and the vials, all the thunderings, lightnings, and earthquakes, the islands fleeing away, the mountains shaken down, the heavens departing as a scroll, the stars from heaven falling, the trees and grass burned up, the rivers, fountains, and even the sea dried up — if you truly hunger to understand these things, then know, O son, O daughter of God, that all these are but the movements of God within us to bring a separation between everything we have thought, everything we have known by tradition, by religion, by education, by the carnal mind, by human understanding, by our natural senses, by self-will, to bring a separation from all the exterior, from every impurity and mixture of the flesh so that what is really true in our spirit may be raised up, released, to bring the life and light and love of God to creation!

The truth is that every revelation or unveiling of Jesus Christ is just that. The revelation of Christ in each of us when we first awoke to our life in Christ was not just the generation of Christ within us, but it was a removal. Let me illustrate. All life begins in a seed, whether it be the life of a vegetable, the life of a tree, the life of an animal, or the life of a man. The life is in the seed, or the acorn, or the sperm and ovum. All the genetic code is there in the seed. Everything the towering oak will ever be is contained and concentrated in the little acorn from which its life originates. You take that seed, plant it in the earth, and in an appointed time God sends two elements that bring forth the revelation or the unveiling of the oak tree within. He sends the rain upon it and then causes the sun to shine on it. Soon there is a stirring of that life which is on the inside, and suddenly what hid the life, the outer shell that concealed the life, begins to break. It bursts open and the revelation of that life that is in the seed comes by the *removal* of that outer part of the seed. It has nothing to do with adding something to what's on the inside! The genetic code is intact, complete. Everything that tree will ever be is right there, but there has to be a release, and the release comes by a removal of that which conceals and restricts it. Can you not see the mystery?

The seed of Christ is mighty within every elect son of God, and God has an appointed time for that life to be revealed. God has planted that seed in this earth *which we are*, and now God sends the rain of His quickening life and the sun of His illumination and He rains upon that seed and He shines upon that seed. There is a stirring of the life that is on the inside, and suddenly the shell of our natural, human life that concealed the greater life of Christ within, begins to break. It bursts open and the Lord begins the process of removal of the outer shell with all its delusions, weaknesses, corruption, carnal knowledge, fleshly wisdom, religiosity, self-righteousness, greed, and all its false ways. It's an on-going process! There are *seven seals*! Our self-life is a complete, total, radical, and powerful obstruction to the indwelling Christ. Every step of the revelation of Christ is an unveiling! God removes, and removes, and removes, and when He removes, we behold more and more the wonder of the mighty Christ within. Some of us were in churches, in denominations, in the religious systems of man when God began to stir us. He burst the cocoon that we were in, so that the work He had done in us could break forth and stretch its wings and fly away into the heavens of God.

Have you received the call to sonship? Then be assured, dear one, that the entire genetic code of manifest sonship is right there within your spirit today! All the potential, the reality, the substance, and the life of sonship is contained within your regenerated spirit. Christ is in you as the Son of God in all the power of His resurrection, ascension, and throneship! Oh, yes! And now is the hour of the unveiling. All those things that you have struggled with, that you have fought with and battled about and done warfare against, all the questions, doubts, fears, frustrations, habits, bondages, weaknesses, failures, limitations, and all the lack that you have sensed and felt as an impenetrable wall about you, a barrier to Christ being revealed in your life, the hour has

come for the mighty dynamic of the spirit of life within you to burst asunder the bands and the bars, that there might be an outflowing of the life and the glory and power of your **inner son!**

One brother shared the following illustration. “I once watched as a cicada took off its ‘old self’ and put on its ‘new self.’ Its beetle-like back split open and something five times its size slowly crawled out of the shell that had once been its ‘skin.’ It was as amazing a miracle as I have ever witnessed! I watched that insect split open in what appeared to be agony and then *crawl out of itself*, devoting every bit of its energy to *revealing its new self.*” What a word that is!

David Sebren shared this with us:

I'm a nothing, a nobody,
As people can plainly see...
Yet I'm sometimes great within my thoughts
With some great fantasy.
But Someone lives inside of me
Who's powerful, there is no doubt...
And He's trying to move ME out of the way,
So HE can come on out!

Ah, God has a wonderful plan and purpose for the life of every son of God. The Bible is full of this thought, that for each of us there is a course, a race, a work, a divine plan to be unfolded and fulfilled. To this end we have been birthed on this planet and for this purpose there is ample provision of grace, revelation, and power. Never forget — you were born to be victorious and to achieve something transcendental. Just as the scientist and poet can look down on the lower animals and say, “Poor things, if only you understood the glory of this world of mind and intellect, of wisdom and knowledge, of harmony, beauty, and purpose,” so the son filled with the inner spirit, with the mind of Christ and the nature of the heavenly Father, can look upon the poor worldlings, the rich and the famous, the great and the powerful, philosophers, scholars, politicians, and say, “Oh, poor things, if only you knew the purity, the peace, the joy, the interior brightness, the vastness, the sacred secret, the divine purpose, the heavenly glory, the sweetness and the divine personalities that I see and enjoy and respond to — ah, if only you *knew!*” And of course they shall, in God’s due time!

This is the spiritual vision where our spiritual nature, with its inner senses, unfolds to the heavenly world. The Holy Spirit, quickening our spirit, opens our inner eyes and ears and minds and reveals to us the vision of our high calling. This is the meaning of Paul’s wonderful prayer where he prays that the saints might have “the spirit of wisdom and revelation” through “*the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye might know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe...*” (Eph. 1:17-19) Another translation says, “the eyes of your *heart* being enlightened,” which is the very core of our being and the fountain of our thoughts and conception of divine realities. It is not through the intellect of the natural mind that God reveals Himself to us, but it is through our inner spirit, the seat of our spiritual consciousness — Christ in us!

Let us not rest contented with present attainments. There are *seven seals* to be broken within us to bring forth the full revelation of the Christ! Let us *go on* to perfection! There is a higher, fuller experience that awaits each one of us, where we shall express **all** the mind that was in Christ Jesus, **all** the nature of our heavenly Father, and **all** the power of the Holy Spirit without measure. This is the ultimate reality of the revelation of Christ in us! If the mere *confession* of the “*finished work*” would produce this in our experience, many who cherish the beautiful hope of sonship would already be manifesting the fullness. But there **is a process**, there **is an unfolding!** There **are** seven seals to be loosed!

Now let me give you an illustration. I suppose that many who read these lines have at some time in their life dreamed about what it would be like to win the lottery. The question always is, when someone wins the lottery, Are you going to keep working? The next question is, What are you going to do with all that money?

Let’s suppose, for example, that J. Preston Eby wins the lottery — and there are forty-two million dollars in the lottery! Now first of all, when Uncle Sam gets through with it, I’ll have only about twenty million. But, of course, I

would still be a multi-millionaire! So one day I receive notification that twenty million dollars have been deposited in my account at the Wells Fargo Bank. Now I'm a multi-millionaire. Let us further suppose that on my wife's birthday, shortly after the twenty million dollars have been put into my account, I go to the Dollar Store and buy her birthday gift. For her birthday dinner I take her to McDonald's. Then I give her seventy-five dollars that week and tell her to go to Wal-mart and buy groceries, because we can save a little by shopping at Wal-mart. Of course, I keep right on driving my Dodge Intrepid. When I need a new sport coat I go to Goodwill. A little later we plan a trip to Puerto Rico to visit where our son and daughter-in-law used to live, so I buy one of those discount tickets on Adios Airlines! What's wrong with this scenario? What's wrong with it is that I would be a multi-millionaire while living like a poor man. I would not be *appropriating my possessions!* There is a world of difference between *provision* and *appropriation!*

Permit me to carry the illustration a little further. We do have a son who, with his wife, lived in Puerto Rico. Occasionally we were blessed to fly down and visit them. One of the fringe benefits was getting to swim at one of the most beautiful little beaches in the Caribbean! Through our more than fifty years of marriage Lorain and I have been privileged to travel a bit, ministering in Canada, Mexico, and various other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. We also visited the sites of the seven churches of Asia which are located in the country of Turkey. While there we stopped by the isle of Patmos, where John received his revelation. Out of all the places we have visited one of the most beautiful, to me, is the area around Lake Tahoe, California. In my younger, more foolish days, one of my secret fantasies was to own a villa in the Caribbean and another on Lake Tahoe — a winter home and a summer home! Now — were I to actually win a forty-two million dollar lottery, what thought do you suppose might still pop into my head? It would probably occur to me that now I have the money to own that winter villa in the Caribbean and that summer home on Lake Tahoe! And I wouldn't travel back and forth on a discount ticket from Adios Airlines — I'd fly first class on American!

Spiritually, the elect of God has a *possession*, represented symbolically by the forty-two million dollars from the lottery. Oh, what a rich and glorious possession we have *in Christ!* When we see all the fullness of His grace and glory, all the fathomless depths of His wonderful love, all the rich provision of His great redemption, and all the possibilities of His indwelling life; once we catch a glimpse of what it means to be a *son of God*, and an heir of God and joint-heir with Jesus; when we truly understand the profound implications of what it means to be the temple of the living God; when we fully realize how awesome it is to have the peace of God which passeth understanding, the love of God which passeth knowledge, the joy unspeakable and full of glory, and the very power, authority, and dominion of Him who raised Jesus from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places; when with glory it breaks upon our spiritual consciousness that we have entered the never-ending Day where our sun no more goes down in sorrow, for the Lord is our everlasting light, and the days of our travail have forever ended; as we taste the exquisite delight of the life of Jesus in our mortal flesh, as an antidote for sin, sickness, and death, and the very mind of Christ by which we think the high thoughts of God; in a word, when we see, as Moses saw, the good land which the Lord our God hath given us, shall we not quickly arise and, casting all else behind, step our feet into the waters of Jordan and let nothing hinder us from entering into our full inheritance — POSSESSING OUR POSSESSIONS!

All that and more is truly our possession as the elect of the Lord! But let not any of us for one moment mistake the *possession* for the *appropriation* of the possession! Oh, yes! It is possible to possess twenty million dollars and still walk around in a coat from Goodwill! You see, my beloved, it's not enough to glory in what we *have* in Christ and in this new day of the kingdom. We must never confuse *revelation* with *possession* just as we must distinguish between *possession* and *appropriation*. *Possession* is the twenty million dollars in the bank. That's the activity on God's part. *Revelation* is the notification from the bank that the money has been deposited to our account. But now the time must come when we appropriate our possession. *Appropriation* is when we act upon our possession and buy a villa instead of a mobile home! I find multitudes of "kingdom people" who have received the notification — they have a great wealth of *revelation* — but how few of us are daily walking in the *appropriation!*

I hear many boasting that they have entered into the new day, they are dwelling in the most holy place, they are walking in the feast of tabernacles, they are seated and reigning in the highest heaven and there are no more heavens for them to attain to, they have received the final revelation and the greatest word and manifest sonship is not off somewhere in the future, but they are already manifested — NOW! That all sounds so good

and so great, but there is only one problem. There is no *manifestation* of that sonship out of their lives to *deliver the groaning creation from the bondage of corruption!* They continue on in the same little religious format they have had for fifty years, gathering, singing a few songs, worshipping and praising, and then *preaching to one another* about how great they are and to what depths and heights they have attained in God — yet, apart from their revelation (reading with glee the notification from the bank) NOTHING IS HAPPENING THAT HASN'T HAPPENED IN THE PAST FIFTY YEARS. I am not claiming that I am a manifest son of God, while these precious brethren are not. Oh, no! What I am saying is that some have *mistaken* the possession for the appropriation! They have made a premature declaration of their own sonship, rather than waiting for all the seals to be opened at which time the Father Himself will declare His sons! When the Father declares the sons, it will not be just a declaration to them, but a declaration to the whole multitude standing on the banks of the Jordan! As soon as the Father makes His declaration the “many brethren” will come forth *in the power of the spirit of sonship* and all creation will know that at last the sons of God HAVE APPEARED! Isn't it wonderful!

That we might comprehend, at least in part, the all-embracing purpose of sonship, let us explore the depth of meaning in Paul's words wherein he writes, *“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.” (Rom. 8:16-17)* Heirs of God! That's the forty-two million dollars in the bank. Isn't that a wonderful place to start! Now, there's a possession! Heirs of God — that's everything God *is*, and all that God *has*. You can't expand it any bigger than that! If we can understand the infinity of God and the substance of God; if we know the infinity of all that God is and of all that God has, then we know the scope and the substance of our possession.

On the basis of this vast inheritance Paul goes on to say, *“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.” (Rom. 8:18)* What is that glory which *shall be revealed*? Let me put it this way. If there is *any degree of glory* that we are not walking in and manifesting today — that is the glory that is *yet to be revealed!* Any portion of this vast, infinite inheritance that is not expressed through us at this time is an as yet *unrevealed glory*. Methinks this glory is exceedingly great and fabulous beyond anything we have seen or witnessed up to this day! The very fact that there is a glory yet to be *revealed* speaks the great truth that none of us has yet *appropriated* the fullness of our inheritance. It's in the bank, dear ones, but we haven't written a check large enough to use up the inheritance!

Because there is a glory yet to be revealed in us, Paul continues setting forth the wonderful *result* of this inheritance once the sons of God have fully appropriated it. *“For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD.” (Rom. 8:19)* What is creation waiting for? Creation is waiting for the sons of God to appropriate their inheritance! Creation is waiting for you, for me — to cash in our ticket on Adios Airlines and get a first class ticket on American. Creation is waiting for us to stop eating at McDonald's and reserve the world's finest gourmet restaurant and invite every hungry and thirsty soul in the whole vast universe to the supper of the Lord. I'm speaking *spiritually* now! That's what manifest sonship means. It's not something for *us*, it's for *creation!* Creation is standing on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of God's sons coming into their own. You see, if I were to win forty-two million dollars and all I did was buy lavish villas and lounge on the beautiful beaches of the world, I would be a most self-centered and selfish man. What a world of good that money could do to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and meet the desperate needs of my precious brethren who are suffering. That is what the money should go for! In like manner, the *glory yet to be revealed in us, the remainder of the inheritance we have to appropriate, is not for us, it is the Father's grace through us to bless, lift, deliver, redeem, and restore the whole of creation back into God again!* Oh, the wonder of it!

Is that not precisely why Paul continues his inspired thought with these significant words: *“Because the creation itself ALSO SHALL BE DELIVERED from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.” (Rom. 8:21)* There it is! There is no “mystery” about it. It is our Father's plainly revealed purpose to flow His inheritance through the manifest sons of God for the blessing, deliverance, and restoration of the whole creation back into the life and fullness of God. The creation itself is to share in the possession! The possession is all that God is and all that God has. And that's the glory that shall be revealed in us! They now earnestly wait in expectation, anticipation. This is what all creation is waiting for!

One of the deepest cries of my heart in these days is that we would not so “water down” what manifest sonship is until it means nothing and makes no difference. I hear these starry-eyed people proclaiming the dizzying heights they have attained in God, yet I am compelled to just *take their word for it*, as there is no manifestation out of their lives or experience that is changing anything in this dark world. I know that Jesus Christ was the first manifest Son of God, the firstborn among many brethren. And I know that His life, His words, His works, His power, His glory ***made a difference!*** He lived the life of God, exhibited the nature of God, did the works of God, expressed the wisdom of God, and demonstrated the power of God on a level never witnessed before or since. Is He not the *prototype* of what manifest sonship is all about? Who can deny it! I know that He brought His body out of the tomb, He resurrected, He was changed, He ascended, He was glorified, He was enthroned. If you want to know what manifest sonship is, that is it! It is everything Jesus experienced, did, expressed, manifested, demonstrated, and accomplished. That’s what it is! Don’t let anybody tell you sonship is anything less than this! I do not hesitate to tell you that anyone who claims to be a manifest son of God while still walking in a Passover anointing or a Pentecostal anointing — or who no longer possesses even what they had in Pentecost, nor yet do they manifest anything *greater* than Pentecost — that person is either self-deluded or a liar.

Stand with me for a moment with bowed head and reverent heart while we consider the greatness of this Christ within! We have an inheritance in God and it is all God is and all God has. He has come into us to be all that the Son of God is! The outer man of flesh that restricts, restrains, bridles, hinders, obstructs and prevents the outflow of Christ in the fullness of His glory must now be removed. Christ in us shall be *unveiled!* There are *seven seals* upon the book of Christ within us. The release of this reality, glory, and power out of us — that is the manifestation of the sons of God! That is the breaking of the seals and the opening of the book! May God make it real to your heart and finish the work in all who read these lines. Amen!

To be continued...

J. Preston Eby

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, Part 83, BREAKING THE SEALS
[J. Preston Eby] ~BIBLE STUDY 10

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 83
BREAKING THE SEALS (Cont'd)
BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART EIGHTY-FOUR

REVELATION — INITIATION — CONSUMMATION
LITERAL or SPIRITUAL

"Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah...hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof. And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne...and I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals...and behold a white horse...and when He had opened the second seal, there went out another horse that was red...and when He had opened the third seal, I beheld, and lo a black horse...and when He had opened the fourth seal, I looked, and behold a pale horse..." (Rev. 5:5, 7; 6:1-8)

The legendary Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are, to most minds, one of the Bible's greatest riddles. Nearly two thousand years ago the apostle John recorded the details of their grim ride, and ever since scholars and ordinary believers alike have wondered what they represent. Much has been written concerning the Four Horsemen, much of it misapplied to struggles between nations and would-be world conquerors, or to the horrors of tribulation under the antichrist. Actually, however, the book of Revelation is not concerned with worldly kingdoms and empires, or outward wars, strife, famines, and pestilence, except as they become linked with the affairs of God's people. The book of Revelation, as we have repeatedly pointed out, is a **spiritual revelation**, even the revelation of Jesus Christ. Thus, the Four Horsemen and the Four Horses represent, like the figures in the rest of the book, aspects of the on-going revelation or unveiling of Jesus Christ in and through His body. These are spiritual realities, touched and known only "in the spirit" and "by the spirit."

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are among the most significant of the great symbols in the word of God because they give the key to the processings of God within us. When we have grasped their full significance, by understanding how the scriptures speak of horses, in order to teach spiritual truth, we then have gained an appreciation of Bible symbolism. The Bible is not written in the style of an ordinary book. It has a method all its own of conveying spiritual realities through picturesque symbols, which is the language of **spirit** communicated to the mind of man, wisdom expressed in terms comprehensible by people in all ages and in different parts of the world and of different degrees of spiritual development.

The symbol of horsemen is a strange one to the Western mind. We associate horses with useful labor and sport, but the Eastern mind associated the horse and his rider with war. The horse is without equal for beauty in the animal kingdom. His body is alive with rippling muscles. His mane and tail are items of extreme beauty. The horse is among the most intelligent of animals and few creatures can equal his strength and swiftness. No animal is of greater service to mankind. For pleasure, for work, and for war the horse exceeds them all. In Bible days the strength of armies was often reckoned by the number and greatness of their horses and chariots. In his prophetic account of the spiritual army of the Lord, Joel declares, *"the appearance of them is as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run" (Joel 2:4). "The horse is prepared against the day of battle." (Prov. 21:31)* It is significant that in the scriptures you do not find horses mentioned in connection with agricultural purposes, but for riding or drawing chariots, and for use in battle.

It is significant to note that the term "redemption" means in the Greek "loosing." Can we doubt that the "loosing" of the seven seals is related to God's great work of redemption? We are now entering the day of loosing (redemption) and our spirit joined to the Lord's spirit is beginning to express more of His life than ever before. The only hindrance is the dominion of the soul and body — *our* will, mind, emotions and desires. In order for Christ to be fully revealed in us, these negative attributes of the carnal nature and human consciousness must be effectively dealt with. Before the One who has purchased us for the base of His operation can take full

possession of His inheritance in us there must be the dispossession of all that *hinders* the expression of the spirit. Just as the children of Israel were commanded to utterly destroy the inhabitants of Canaan — those occupying the land belonging to another — so must the giants that possess *our land* be conquered and driven out! This, dear ones, IS THE MINISTRY OF THE FOUR HORSEMEN! The events surrounding these four horsemen all portray conflict, war and destruction. *The Four Horses are war horses — and are sent forth into our earth to dispossess the usurper — the carnal mind, the will of the flesh, the desires of the flesh, the emotions of the flesh, and the works of the flesh.* It is the taking possession of our earth by the life of the Christ within! There is an application to the outer world, and universally, but all that transpires out there must first take place *within us*, His firstfruits. That is the mystery.

The Four Horses and their Riders present a picture of God's dealings, strippings, purgings, prunings, processings, impartations, and transformations by which we are reduced to God. Swift, powerful, irresistible ruin is visited upon our outer world of human consciousness and identity, and our inner heart of deceit. As the seals of the revelation of Himself are opened, we note that what comes forth represents that which is within us — the power of life symbolized as horses. These are figures of great strength, power, and overcoming (Zech. 10:3; Joel 2:1-6; Rev. 19:11-14) *"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."* These things begin to happen when we discover the book within, when we lay hold upon the Spirit realm; then there follows a breaking of those seals that have been closed so long, and as the seals are broken there is an unfoldment of the triumphant nature of the Christ within. As the outer dimensions of our life are stripped away, the inner vitality of the Christ emerges into view. HE becomes revealed! This is God's intention — not to rapture us away to some far-off heaven somewhere, but to unseal the book of life within us, for we have this treasure in an earthen vessel and this earthen vessel has veiled the reality, beauty, glory, and power of what lies within — the fullness of God in Christ within us!

As the Father opens His Book of Life — which Book *we are* — He is actually sending forth the Spirit of His Word in a triumphant overflowing which will not cease until every valley has been filled and every hill has been made level, till our heavens and our earth have been purged from every stain of pollution and every heart beats in unison with the heart of God. This is CHRIST THE CONQUEROR!

Let us then stand assured of this significant fact: *there are seven seals to be broken, and the seven seals denote a process.* If there were no *process* then one seal would be sufficient! From the very heart of events from the morning of creation there can be observed a *gradual development* of everything that came from the hands of the omnipotent Creator. From the lips of the almighty Elohim came that irresistible command of the word or God, "Let there be!" And there was. But it was not a single command; the heavens and the earth were not formed in an instant nor fashioned in one day, by one divine word. Oh, no! It was by the word proclaimed through *seven days* that the mighty creative work of God was accomplished. Again and again there issued forth the majestic proclamation, *"Let."* *"Let there be light."* *"Let there be a firmament."* *"Let the waters be gathered."* *"Let there be lights in the firmament."* *"Let the waters bring forth."* *"Let the earth bring forth."* *"Let us make man."*

Dispensations had come and gone with their Cain and Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and the prophets before our Lord Jesus explained to the Greeks who came to investigate His glory, *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."* (John. 12:24) And now through the dreary years of every century since Jesus died, was buried, resurrected, ascended, and came back into His waiting disciples in the power of His glorious life, birthing His anointed body in the earth, the blessed Holy Spirit has been planting within believing hearts the incorruptible seed of the word of God, and wonder of wonders, yet true to God's *progressive purpose of the ages*, that incorruptible seed is ready to bring forth a company of *sons of God* in the fullness of the nature, power, and glory of that firstborn Son and Christ!

It cannot be otherwise! All things have a beginning, followed by various stages of development, formation, growth, and increase until ultimately comes the fullness and perfection. Space travel did not begin by sending a man to the moon. Men first jumped off cliffs, trying to fly with crude, homemade wings. Then men flew in balloons. The Wright brothers invented the first airplane, and other types of aircraft followed until the Russians startled the world by sending their Sputnik into orbit around the earth, inaugurating the space age. Today we are

sending space probes throughout our solar system, and it is only a matter of time, if God permits, until Star Trek will move from science fiction to living reality. Can we not clearly see by this how it is that each and every step was *required* in the grand and epochal work of creation and redemption. For six thousand years the race has witnessed the natural evolution of civilization, human government, science, economics, medicine, and technology. Nothing ever happens overnight! Everything unfolds by a *process*! And all things move inexorably *forward*.

Remember — it takes nine months to grow a baby. It takes four months to grow corn. It takes one month for the moon to circle the earth. ***It takes SEVEN SEALS to bring about the unveiling of Jesus Christ!***

When you uncover a thing you don't have to bring it from some other place, you only need to remove the cover, because what is under it is already present. The book of Revelation reveals to our wondering spirits that Jesus Christ doesn't have to come crashing down through the clouds from outer space in order to be revealed on earth! He is here — covered up, His glory concealed in this world by a fleshly, religious mind; His grace and mercy are concealed by a harsh, legalistic mindset that thunders right out of mount Sinai, and is full of death; His love is concealed by the false church doctrines of divine vindictiveness, judgment, damnation and eternal torture for billions in hell fire; His righteousness is concealed by human good works, self effort, and outward laws and traditions of men; His truth and purpose are concealed by natural, carnal understanding; His power is concealed by soulish religious exercises, rituals, ceremonies, programs, and promotions; His holiness is concealed by the corruption of the human heart which is the man of sin. To be *carnally minded* is death, but to be *spiritually minded* is life! The Lord is the Spirit! The Lord, the Spirit, dwells within us! To uncover the real Christ has nothing to do with Christ coming from heaven, or us going to heaven — He must be UNCOVERED WITHIN US! ***“But...it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb (the old-order religious system), and called me by His grace, to reveal (unveil) His Son in me...” (Gal. 1:15-16)***

The veil that hides Him is upon the mind and the heart. It is not something apart from us or away from us. The veil must be removed from where the Christ is concealed from us within ourselves, for we are the body of Christ, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. The Lord is not hidden in some far-off heaven somewhere! Those who are walking with the Lord in the light of this new Day know that the unveiling is the uncovering of the full reality within ourselves of Him who *is our life*. The veil has been upon our minds, when we saw Him we looked through all the distorted trappings of religion and concepts of men who know Him only after the flesh. The veil is also the flesh itself, the outer man with all his carnal-mindedness, worldly wisdom, and fleshly desires, ambitions, actions, and propensities for corruption and evil.

The mystery of Christ is the greatest mystery of all the ages, this mystery which is “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” HIS LIFE, which is *our life*, shall not forever be concealed within, for I testify to you that we are soon to see it unfold! ***“When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in the splendor of His glory.” (Col. 3:4, Amplified)*** Ah — there shall be ***a revelation, an unveiling*** of His life, His glory, His people, and because we have long been hidden ***in Him***, we shall also share in that revelation — partakers of the divine glory. When all the mixture of flesh and spirit which would manifest through us in gross confusion, carnality, and religiosity has been sifted, purged, separated and brought to death because we share the awesome “fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death,” then shall HIS LIFE be finally unfettered, unhindered, unobstructed, and HE SHALL APPEAR in all the fullness of Himself and WE SHALL APPEAR WITH HIM in the splendor of His full-orbed glory! Our life shall not always be hid. He who is our life shall be manifested! Our Father has an appointed hour, and when His hour strikes, then our time will have come — and He will not be glorified apart from us!

Just as gold is purified by fire, so are we purified by the fiery trials the Lord sends into our lives. Like the intense heat that causes the impurities to rise to the top of the molten gold, so the many tribulations we face in life, and the blazing fire of God's dealings that accompany them, draw from us those things that pollute the pure nature of God within our spirit. One pass through the furnace is never sufficient to remove all the impurities in gold, neither can we become pure in one season of testing. God ordains that we be tested and tried by the Holy Ghost and fire for however long it takes because He wants us to be pure vessels to manifest His glory. Those who hunger and thirst for Him will not be devastated by this fire, but purified. They are those who heed the apostle Paul's

warning to examine the materials with which we are building as the temple of God is raised up within us, for *“every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; for the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.” (I Cor. 3:13)*

Gold fully tried in the fire is *pure gold*. The gold of the tabernacle in the wilderness was required by the Lord to be *pure gold*. The gold in Solomon’s temple was also *pure gold*. The gold of the New Jerusalem is likewise described as *pure gold*. (Rev. 21:18, 21) That is what God is after! That is why the horses are galloping through our land! To be “pure” means to be “unmixed, single, free of anything that adulterates or taints; containing nothing but its own reality.” *Pure* water is water without any contaminants; *pure* air is free from any pollutants; *pure* silver is refined until it contains no tinge of alloy, no trace of impurities, no residue of dross. The Lord has promised to purge, refine, and remove *all mixture* from the lives of those who become His kings and priests, called and chosen to restore creation unto God. The word is sure, *“The Lord...shall suddenly come to His temple...and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi (His priesthood), and purge them as gold and silver...” (Mal. 3:1-3)*

The Lord, when He comes to His temple of living stones and purges the sons of Levi, or His kingdom of priests, He first of all purges out *one man* — old Adam! He comes to cleanse us from the carnal, Adamic mind, nature, and ways. He comes as a consuming fire to burn out of us all that is contrary to the righteousness and wisdom and purposes of the Lord. He is coming to each one of us, His elect, in this new day of the kingdom of God and is purging the old fleshly nature and worldly ways out of us! On a corporate level He is also coming to those who have received the call to sonship and is separating out all who *talk* the kingdom but do not *walk* the kingdom! Only the ones who have truly surrendered to His will have walked in His ways, obeying each sound of His voice, who have clean hands and pure hearts, will reign with Him in the kingdom.

How can anyone be placed in a position of authority and power in the kingdom who has not come to the place of exhibiting only His nature? He will purge the sons of Levi, the kings and priests of His kingdom, disqualifying those who cannot be trusted to do the will of the Father and cooperate fully in the administration of His grace and glory. In this important hour the ways of Babylon and all the flesh-centered appeals of the carnal church systems is being thoroughly purged, the attributes of the carnal mind are being cleansed, all self-hood is being burned out, and all desire to make a name for ourselves or to gather men around ourselves rather than unto the Christ is being consumed. Thank God, HE IS DOING IT! The Horsemen are riding through our land!

God is unveiling — taking the cover off! Some say there is nothing to remove, to get rid of, because the old man is dead and all that is necessary is to know, believe, and confess the truth that the old man *is dead*. Yet I have heard all the excuses people make for why they are still the way they are, why they still do all the carnal and even sinful things they do, even though their old man is dead. The favorite cop-out seems to be that they just don’t *know* the old man is dead so they continue to act the way the old man used to act! It must be something like *phantom pain* — even though the old man is dead and gone they still *feel* carnal and fleshly, and unrighteous patterns of behavior are so ingrained and habitual that they must be re-programmed to act out of the spirit. I’ve got news for you — dead men don’t continue to act the way they used to act just because they don’t *realize* they’re dead! Dead men don’t continue to act the way they acted when alive because it has become a “habit” they can’t easily break! And it is futile to try to re-program dead men!

Let’s suppose that uncle Joe just died. He was an irresponsible, hot-tempered, ungodly scoundrel. You walk up to the coffin and stand there and “cuss him out,” ridicule him, slap his face and remind him of what a dog and a devil he was, how many people suffered because of him, and how much you hate him and hope that he burns in hell. Uncle Joe will not strike back! He will not turn red with rage. He will not jump out of that casket and grab you by the throat, because He *is dead!* Dead men don’t *do anything!* You can try the opposite approach and flatter uncle Joe, rehearsing all the nice things he ever did and enumerate all his wonderful ways. You can eulogize him right into heaven. And while you speak all these good things poor old Uncle Joe doesn’t puff up with pride. He gets no smile on his face, no sparkle in his eyes. His ear doesn’t begin to twitch. Oh, no! Uncle Joe *is dead*, unconscious of the world around him and unresponsive to anything at all.

So — if our old man is dead, what's our problem? Paul talks about it at length in chapters six through eight of Romans. He says that there is a condition where we do the things we don't want to do, even the things we hate, and then find ourselves unable to do the things we want to do. He says that in this state it is no more "I" that do it, but "sin that dwells in my members." Now if I do what I would not, it is no more "I" that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. (Rom. 7:15-23) You see, my beloved, "I" am dead, the old me that *delighted* in sin *is dead*. "*For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.*" (Rom. 7:22-23) Now LET US UNDERSTAND! My old man is dead — but I still have a physical body (my members) which has the *law of sin within it*.

What is this physical, flesh body? Paul speaks of it and cries out, "*O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*" The "body of this death" is simply a "dead body." So your old man is dead — where is his body? The body you are carrying around is his *dead body!* Let me show you what Paul is really saying. Near Tarsus, where Paul was born, there was a tribe of people who inflicted a most terrible penalty upon a murderer. They fastened the body of the victim to that of the killer, tying shoulder to shoulder, back to back, thigh to thigh, arm to arm, and then drove the murderer from the community. So tight were the bonds that the criminal could not free himself from this corpse that was tied to him, and after a few days the death in the body communicated itself into the living flesh of the murderer. The stench filled his nostrils, the bodily fluids ran down his garments, and he stalked the land with "the body of this death" or this "dead body" attached, and there was none to help. He had only the frightful prospect of gangrenous death. He well could cry in horror in the natural, in the same way Paul cried out spiritually, "*O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*"

Oh, yes! Your old man is dead. How wonderful it would be if that was the end of the story! None of us would have any problem. We simply would not have the capability for any lust, anger, cursing, malice, pride, ungodly habits, fleshly attitudes, sinful actions, self-righteousness, or any other thing — **IF the old man being dead was the end of the story!** All that Paul describes in chapter six and seven of Romans is the corruption of that old dead body we are carrying around! Sometimes methinks this is worse than the old man being alive! So we cry out with Paul, "O unhappy and pitiable and wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the shackles of this body of death?" Then comes the answer echoing through the corridors of the soul, "*O thank God! HE WILL through Jesus Christ our Lord!*" (Rom. 7:25)

The breaking of the seals is the *disposing of the dead body of old Adam!* Who breaks the shackles of the body of death? JESUS CHRIST THE LORD! Who looses the seals of the book? JESUS CHRIST THE LORD! He is the One who conquered both sin and death, He has prevailed, and He alone is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals thereof! Isn't it wonderful!

REVELATION — INITIATION — CONSUMMATION

The central portion of the book of Revelation, to which we now come, may be likened to a drama in three acts — the Seals, the Trumpets, and the Vials. Each act of the drama brings us to a view of the same landscape, but every time we come afresh to it the view is widened by the fact that we regard it from a greater height and further stage of development. With the breaking of the **seventh seal** we expect the **end**, for now the book of Life within us is fully open and all the seals are broken! We would suppose the work of God is now fully accomplished, yet the end does not come. John pauses but for a moment before launching on a new series of visions introduced by the **seven trumpets**, which in turn are followed by the pouring out of the **seven vials** and the events which follow. We must pause, too, and ask what we are to make of this unique scheme of things!

We would deprive ourselves of infinite treasure should we refrain from investigating the deep meaning of the three series of visions — the seven Seals, the seven Trumpets, and the seven Vials. Does series follow series merely for emphasis, or can some difference be discerned between them? There is a remarkable difference! The breaking of the seals is an *unveiling*, thus denoting **revelation**. It should be observed that with the breaking of the respective seals, nothing is said about *reading* anything from the book. The events which accompany the breaking of the seals one after another are not represented as read — they are dramatic scenes vividly enacted

before the Seer's vision opening to his mind and spirit the *revelation* of how, the *revelation* of the process by which, the Christ is brought forth into full manifestation in and through each member of God's called and chosen elect. The Lamb in proceeding to break the seals begins His work as a **revealer!**

Thus the seals are the *revelation* of how the Lamb brings forth the manifestation of the Christ life in the experience of each member of the body of Christ. Actually, as I see it, nothing really *happens* when the seals are loosed except the dawning of *spiritual understanding* within ourselves. Here the revelation, the blueprint, of God's great and glorious purpose in us is made known to us! This is purely *revelation!* The seals then give us the introduction to the Lord's work in us, rather than the completed work. Beyond the seals lie the trumpets, contrasted with the seals in their nature; and beyond the trumpets lie the vials which also may be contrasted with the seals and the trumpets. The opening of the seals is the key to the book, for when they are opened, the book is. Yet we have merely seen by revelation what God is **going to do!** They only set us upon the threshold of great and mighty events which must transpire in each of our lives to bring us to the complete work of God, conforming us to the full stature of manifest sonship. The seals break to us the *revelation*; the trumpets then usher in the *initiation* or *inauguration* of the work within to raise up in our lives the reality we have so clearly seen by revelation; the vials then bring us to the *consummation* or the *completion* of the work, producing the FINISHED PRODUCT! Therefore we may say that John beheld the seals of *revelation* opened, he heard the trumpets of *initiation* sounding their herald, and the vials of *consummation* bringing an end to all that opposes the kingdom and establishing within the nature, glory, and power of manifest sonship. What a mighty God we serve!

You see, my beloved, no man can appropriate experientially anything of which he has received no revelation or understanding. No man can come to Christ and trust Him as Saviour until first he has received *by revelation* the awareness of his need and God's gracious provision of Jesus as his Saviour. Very few have received healing, miracles, answers to prayer, the baptism in the Holy Spirit, gifts, or any other blessing or benefit until first the *revelation* was quickened within their spirit of the availability of these provisions. All things are received by faith, and faith comes only by *hearing the word* of God. The principle is clear — the man who has received no *revelation* of sonship will never *become* a son of God! God has a beautiful plan for everything. *Revelation* is the prerequisite for *initiation*, as *initiation* is the harbinger of *consummation!*

What awesome **power** there is in revelation! It is the power revealed in the scroll with the seven seals. It is the power that comes out of the seals in the form of the seven trumpets. It is the power that comes out of the seven trumpets in the form of the seven vials. The seals of the scroll are the *revelation* by which the *initiation* (seven trumpets) of the work of God in us takes place, which in turn gives birth to the *completion*, *perfection*, and *consummation* (seven vials) of Christ formed in us.

Having said that the seven trumpets denote the initiation or beginning of Father's work in each of us, let us consider how this is so. A contractor preparing to build a house first secures an architectural drawing, a blueprint. Everything that will go into that house is in the blueprint! The carpenters will use the blueprint, the plumbers will use the blueprint, the brick masons will use the blueprint, the electricians will use the blueprint, the finishers will use the blueprint. When every worker has fulfilled the message in the blueprint the house is finished. The blueprint represents *revelation* — it encodes all that the house will be! Yet we know that a blueprint is not enough, it is not the house! So the next step is *initiation*. The land is cleared, the slab poured, the framing erected, and the roof is put on. Now you have the *form* of the house, the work has begun, but it is still not ready for occupation. This second step is merely the initiation of the work. How much more remains to be done! Eventually, after the electrical and heating has been installed, tile laid, cabinets built, painting done, and all the other minute details, you have *consummation* — the FINISHED PRODUCT. God is building a spiritual house of sons! I do not hesitate to tell you that **spiritually He builds in the same way!** The seals of revelation, the trumpets of initiation, and the vials of consummation raise up in the earth the living temple of God! Oh, the mystery of it!

Comparing the trumpets with the vials it is enlightening to observe the parallelism between the two. **The first trumpet** affects the earth; so does the first vial. **The second trumpet** affects the sea; so does the second vial. **The third trumpet** affects the rivers and fountains; so does the third vial. **The fourth trumpet** affects the heavenly bodies; so does the fourth vial. **The fifth trumpet** brings darkness and torment, so does the fifth vial.

The sixth trumpet concerns the great river Euphrates; so does the sixth vial. **The seventh trumpet** brings great warfare and victory for the sons of God; so does the seventh vial.

Yet — it is significant to note that under the trumpets *nothing is complete, whole, or brought to fullness*. In fact, everything is affected in only *one-third* of its existence! Under the first trumpet hail and fire mingled with blood are cast into the earth and *one-third* of the trees are burnt up (Rev. 8:7). Under the second trumpet a great mountain burning with fire is cast into the sea and *one-third* of the sea becomes blood (Rev. 8:8). Under the third trumpet a great burning star falls upon *one-third* of the rivers and fountains of water, making them bitter (Rev. 8:10-11). Under the fourth trumpet *one-third* of the sun, moon, and stars is smitten and turned to darkness (Rev. 8:12). Under the fifth trumpet mighty powers are released from the pit, but they do not complete their work (Rev. 9:1-12). Under the sixth trumpet a mighty army is prepared and released, killing *one-third* of men (Rev. 9:13-21). Under the seventh trumpet the great dragon is cast out of heaven, but not out of the earth or the sea. It is not my purpose at this time to expound the meaning of all these wonderful symbols, that is reserved for another time; I only seek to point out that ONE-THIRD does not denote a **finished work!** It is but the **initiation** of the unfolding work of God for the spiritual transformation and perfection of His king-priest company!

The next and final phase of God's dealings in our lives is through the *pouring out of the seven vials*. The vials sound truly threatening and ominous, but they are menacing only to the natural man, the carnal mind, and the fleshly nature! The vials are no friend of old Adam and his nature or his aspirations, plans, and activities. They are only the friend of the Christ within! When the vials have finished their work the entire human identity, the man of flesh with all his carnality, limitation, darkness, and death is forever swept away! The seven vials are the picture of **swift, uninterrupted, and complete execution**.

Let me cite only a few examples. *When the second vial is poured out upon the sea, the entire sea becomes as the blood of a dead man, and every living soul in the sea dies.* (Rev. 16:3) *When the fourth vial is poured out the entire sun is affected to scorch men with fire.* (Rev. 16:8) *When the fifth vial is poured out it is upon the seat of the beast so that the ax is laid to the root of the tree, dealing completely and permanently with the bestial nature of man.* (Rev. 16:10) *When the sixth vial is poured out the great river Euphrates is completely dried up.* (Rev. 16:12) *When the seventh vial is poured out great Babylon falls, every island flees away, every mountain disappears, and there comes a great voice out of the temple in heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is finished!"* Can you not see the mystery?

LITERAL OR SPIRITUAL?

There is great truth in the words of a **preacher from the 19th century** who wrote: *"Suppose the book of Revelation to be a great palace, with its royalty, royal children, servants, and subjects. You desire to go through it and view it intelligently, and to understand all about its inhabitants and laws of government; now to do so you must have keys, and you must learn who is who, their place, authority, and work. If not so qualified, you could not pass from room to room, and you might confound the King with some servant and visitors might be mistaken for the children of the household. Thus your ideas would be considerably mixed; you would be guilty of talking about the King when you really meant some servant, and of prophesying for the royal children in the name of the visitors. The years would come and go, but events would not happen as you had prophesied, only confusion and disappointment would ensue."*

God is giving understanding of the things written in the Revelation in this hour. While we have read this Revelation scores or even hundreds of times, yet today we are approaching this book with a fresh, open view towards allowing its words to speak to our minds and hearts without the inhibitions of Babylonian superstition, legend, folklore, myth, or tradition. The Revelation deals with the appearing of Christ. And that is something every person called to sonship is involved with! There is no doubt that there are sincere and earnest-hearted people in churches everywhere awaiting the appearing or return of the Lord Jesus Christ. The book of Revelation is written specifically for that end — to bring about *apocalypse*, to bring about metamorphosis, to bring about transformation, to bring about the unveiling of Jesus Christ! It is our lot in this significant hour to be involved, by the work of the Spirit, in the unveiling of Jesus Christ in all His fullness within His people.

The message of the book of Revelation does not reveal doctrine; it reveals essence, nature, substance, purpose, dealings, energy, and generation. It reveals not just a word about God, but it yields the experiencing of Him. The book of Revelation shows us the only thing that is going to be revealed, and that is the person of Jesus Christ! It is not the teaching of a doctrine, but the unveiling of a Person! This can only be done by the Spirit! Christ is a spiritual reality, therefore the book of Revelation is a SPIRITUAL BOOK!

A tough store manager was walking through the packing room one day when he saw a young man lounging on a shipping crate, whistling and relaxing. He asked the young man how much he was paid. The young man answered, "\$200 a week." At that, the manager took out his wallet, grabbed some bills, and said, "Here's a week's pay. Get out!" The manager immediately found the department head and demanded to know who hired the young man. He replied, "We didn't hire him. He was just here to pick up a package." The lesson is just this:

Those who do not understand this as the revelation of Jesus Christ, *assuming* the interpretations and speculations of carnal-minded theologians and Bible teachers, view the white horse of chapter six of the Revelation as the antichrist, the red horse as war, the black horse as famine, and the pale horse as pestilence, poverty, and death. But how can that be when this book is to make us *blessed*, when the message and events of this book are given to make us *happy*? If this is the unveiling of Jesus Christ — are antichrists, tyranny, wars, bloodshed, torment, famines, pestilence, poverty, and death what Jesus Christ is all about? Is that the *revelation of Him*? There is no way this book can be interpreted according to current events or what is happening out there in the world that doesn't even know Jesus Christ!

World events, and men's speculative interpretations about "the antichrist," are always changing. The so-called "antichrist" is not the same person they said he was when I was a child and first heard sermons on the book of Revelation. The beast has changed, the ten horns have changed, the false prophet has changed, and the mark of the beast has changed numerous times through my brief life time! If you try to interpret these things in the light of external, literalistic world events, you are going to be kept very busy! And in the end you will be proven *wrong*.

It is easy to anticipate, call for, and predict the manifestation of divine wrath upon men and nations. Most Christians certainly believe they *deserve* the outpouring of divine judgments! And it plays perfectly into our fears, as well as our vindictiveness against the wickedness of men. But it is not the spirit of the Lamb of God — Jesus Christ the *Saviour*! Once we adjust our perception to expect doom and gloom, religious zeal conjures up all sorts of apocalyptic visions of the "end times." I have heard hundreds of "doom and destruction" prophecies over the past sixty years. *None* of them has come to pass! Why? Simply because those who said, "Thus saith the Lord" had not heard from the Lord. They were only parroting the theories of the carnal church systems and speaking out of their own imaginations and fears. They predicted all sorts of horrors to come upon mankind, and completely *missed* the great work God is doing today by His Spirit as He deals with His elect to bring *many sons to glory*!

The reason we have so many men that go around preaching doom and gloom is because they are not listening to what God is saying. They do not hear God by the Spirit! Our message transcends what men say. For example: Economists put out reports that the economy is going bad. Gold does not back our dollar anymore, the national debt is too high, the trade balance is out of kilter, we are headed for economic collapse. A carnal-minded economist dispenses this information. Then a carnal-minded *preacher* takes it up and tries to show how this is fulfilling some prophecy in the Bible. Carnal-minded men that produce carnal-minded reports give these carnal-minded thoughts to carnal-minded preachers, who pass them on to carnal-minded Christians! Some of these carnal-minded preachers have told the people to sell their property, get out of debt, get their money out of the banks, move to some "safe area" and become self-sufficient, living off the land. And people get scared and do it! Why? Because they are listening to carnal-minded reports of carnal-minded men! Of course, some day it *could* happen. Economic collapse has happened to many nations throughout history. But who cares? People say, "But will you be prepared?" Listen! True preparation is *only in the spirit*! We'd better get hold of God in the spirit — not for burying our treasure in the earth someplace. The government is going to find you out there in your little "safe place" anyway! Only as we are led by the Spirit are we able to know the times and ways and will.

If the events of the book of Revelation are *literal* then it follows that there are blacksmiths in heaven! In Revelation 19:11-16 we read that heaven is opened and the Lord Jesus comes out of heaven riding upon a white horse. Then there are the armies from heaven which follow Him, all riding upon white horses. Many years ago I visited a church in Florida and the pastor was teaching from this passage. He said, “The book of Revelation is to be taken literally. God means what He says! If it says horses, then it means horses! If Jesus wants to come riding on a horse He certainly has the ability to do so!” But you see, my friend, if this is *truly literal* then the horses are not spiritual horses or some sort of celestial horses — they are just ordinary *horses*! And if they are really horses then someone in heaven must have a blacksmith shop somewhere along Hallelujah Boulevard for shoeing the horses in heaven. In that blacksmith shop there would need to be a forge, an anvil, a hammer, nails, and a blacksmith shoeing the horses in heaven, getting ready for the great battle of God Almighty.

David Ebaugh once related the story about a meeting he attended where the minister was teaching on the Revelation. *Someone asked the preacher about the horses, and just like the preacher I heard, he replied, “It’s literal horses. Does it say horses? Then it means horses. That settles it!” One lady in the congregation began to cry, with uncontrolled weeping and trembling. In any group like that if someone begins to cry and sob and cause a disturbance, the speaker will stop to see what the problem is. So the preacher looked at the woman and asked, “Sister, what’s wrong?” She answered, “Oh, my little dog.” Then she cried and sobbed and shook some more. He said, “What’s wrong with your little dog?” She said, “Well, it tells us in the Bible that outside the gates of the City are the whoremongers and the dogs and the sorcerers!” She figured that meant that outside the City was hell, so all the dogs had to go to hell. If it said dogs, then it meant dogs. “Oh, my little dog!” Can you not see the folly of such a literal interpretation of the book of Revelation?*

There is a world of difference in the outcome whether the book of Revelation is understood *literally* by the carnal mind or *spiritually* with the mind of Christ. It reminds me of a story I read once which pointed out the importance of being careful about details. A wealthy woman who was traveling overseas saw a bracelet she thought was irresistible, so she sent her husband this e-mail: “I have found a wonderful bracelet. The price is \$75,000.00 May I buy it?” Her husband promptly e-mailed back his response which he intended to be, “No, price too high.” But in typing the message he failed to put in the comma, making the message read, “No price too high.” Elated, she purchased the bracelet. Needless to say, at her return her husband was dismayed. It was just a little thing — a comma — but what a difference it made! What a little difference there may seem to be between the words *literal* and *spiritual*. But believe me when I say that the result of whether the events of the Revelation are literal or spiritual is of far greater import and serious consequences than the \$75,000.00 spent for a bracelet!

Take, for example, a man in West Africa. He had heard about the importance of building his home on the solid foundation of the word of God. And so, when he started to build his house, he rounded up some Bibles and placed them squarely among the mud bricks in the foundation of his home. Then he finished the house. Now this man built his house on the Bible, but it didn’t help him any. He totally missed the point of Jesus’ words! All who interpret the book of Revelation literally make the same mistake this poor brother in Africa made! It’s just as simple as that.

Never think that the book of Revelation is merely a book of prophecy. It does say in **Revelation 19:10** that *“the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”* There is no doubt that the book of Revelation is a book of prophecy, but we must not merely seek for the prophecy and miss the *spirit*! I would rather miss the prophecy and touch the spirit! When you come to this book, don’t try to analyze and understand it. Just say Amen with your spirit to every word; then you will be endued with the *spirit* of the prophecy. That’s what the Lord is talking about! The testimony of Jesus is not a prophecy, it is the *spirit* of the prophecy. That is why the prophecy is *spiritual*, not *literal*! On the other hand we could say that the *spirit* of the prophecy is the *testimony of Jesus*; that is, the spirit testifies of Jesus, or Jesus testifies in and by the spirit. To be concerned with the prophecies is one thing; to find the spirit of the prophecies is another thing! And if you miss the spirit of the prophecy, you miss Jesus!

Now let us return to the thought of the Four Horses. As I have pointed out, the symbol of horses and horsemen is a strange one to Western minds. We associate horses with labor and transportation, but the Eastern mind associates the horse and his rider with *war*. For this we have the special term “cavalry.” Any one who knows even a little bit about the Old Testament can readily understand these horses. The wise man says, *“The horse is*

prepared against the day of battle.” (Prov. 21:31) In the inventory of Job’s wealth horses are not included, and the same is true, I believe, of Abraham, for they were not men of war. Horses meant not wealth and happiness and blessing, but chariots, soldiers, and the aggression of empires such as Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, and Rome. Pharaoh had horses. Many were drowned in the Red Sea at the Exodus. But the kings of Israel were warned not to amass horses. (Deut. 17:16) The ox and the ass did the useful labor in Israel, but the horses were held for destruction and devastation, for the conflict and carnage of opposing hosts. When Jehu led a rebellion, he gathered horsemen, mounted a chariot and drove furiously. Look at your equestrian statues — in nine cases out of ten, it is a soldier who sits in the saddle.

Translated into spiritual language, the four horses and their riders present a picture of Christ riding out of our spirit into the earth *which we are* to make war with the flesh, the carnal mind, and the natural man! The four horsemen portray the warfare, calamities, destruction, and death visited upon man’s fleshly ways. These four horses are *war horses of God* — manifestations of Him *“who is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war.” (Rev. 19:11)* They are sent into our personal earths to destroy every enemy of the rule of God within us. They destroy the usurper, the serpent of the carnal mind, the will of the flesh, the lusts of the flesh, the emotions of the flesh, the works of the flesh, and the religious pretense of the flesh. Simply speaking, these horsemen conquer and destroy everything that finds its strength and activity in the flesh!

Even so, come Lord Jesus!

To be continued...

J. Preston Eby

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 82
BREAKING THE SEALS (Continued)

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART EIGHTY-FIVE

THE WHITE HORSE

"And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, and one of the living creatures saying, Come and see." (Rev. 6:1)

The first seal is the first or outermost of the seals, and its being broken would permit a certain portion of the scroll to be unrolled and read. The breaking of the seal, and unrolling of the first portion of the scroll, is an emblem signifying that by this act the revelation of Christ in us would begin to be unfolded. We have studied the first five chapters and have begun to understand the great significance of John's tremendous vision of the unveiling of Christ in our experience. On the one hand, the events are in chronological order, but on the other hand, they are eternal things; that means, they are spiritually already in the present! John sees everything at once, but he can only describe it to us successively, one thing at a time. For that reason we cannot separate chapters four, five, and six from each other.

When the first seal is opened John hears as it were the noise of thunder. The word "noise" is from the Greek phone meaning "tone, address, saying, language, voice — a disclosure." Thus, it is a voice of revelation! Thunder denotes that it is a powerful voice of revelation. It is the voice of the spirit of revelation that brings the unveiling!

The first horse is introduced by "one of the four living creatures." The living creatures represent the spirit of kingship, for they are in the midst of the throne. The voice of the living creature is the spirit of His kingship within us crying out for the unveiling of the Christ in our lives! The attribute of majesty speaks! Some have said that it was the lion that spoke, but it is not said which it was. Neither does it matter, for all four are equally involved, and successively speak precisely the same thing. I would point out in passing that where the living creatures and the elders speak separately; there is a distinction between them. When the subject concerns priesthood, the elders speak; but when it concerns kingship, and the going forth of power, the living creatures speak. Since it is the four living creatures that announce the four horses and their riders, the horses bespeak the coming forth of Christ in mighty authority and power to conquer everything within us that hinders or opposes the Christ-life, and to change and transform us into conquering ones!

"And I saw...one of the four living creatures saying, Come and see." (Rev. 6:1)

The cry itself is very brief — "Come!" It is not "Come and see" as we have it in the King James Bible, but just "Come!" There is a variation on this reading in the ancient Greek manuscripts. Codex Sinaiticus has a double imperative, "Come and see," as though the command is addressed to John. Codex Alexandrinus, which is the text which shows the least evidence of alteration, has the single imperative, "Come," as a signal for the horseman to ride across the stage of activity. Furthermore, John was already on the spot, beholding all that was transpiring, and did not need to be called any nearer. If John had needed to approach closer in order to behold the activity of the first horseman, he would not have needed to do so for the other three horses; yet we find the same command repeated in each successive instance. Most Bible scholars agree that the words "and see" should be omitted.

Whom do the living creatures call? Hear the cry of **Revelation 22:20**, "*Surely I come quickly.*" And then **John** responds to the words of the Lord, saying, "*Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!*" Hear the echo of **Revelation 1:7** wherein John exclaims, "*Behold, He cometh with clouds!*" It is my deep conviction that the call is not addressed to the prophet John, but to the Lord Himself. The word Come therefore embodies the hope and

desire of every son of God for the Christ to come forth as the mighty conqueror within us! This is the cry of every man and woman called to sonship to God, the earnest longing for the manifestation of the Lord in all His glorious fullness. The word “come” is addressed in each instance to the riders of the different horses; and it is a call for the Lord to come forth in the various dealings and workings of His Spirit and power to accomplish in us the work of the unveiling of the Christ.

Traditional teaching has led the Lord’s people to think in terms of the first coming of Christ and His second coming, whereas the scriptures speak in terms of the progressive revelation of Jesus Christ. The Bible nowhere talks about the “first coming” and the “second coming” as if these two embody the fullness of His coming. People use those terms as though they are found everywhere in the word of God! Yet the truth is, they are found nowhere! If I were to request a preacher to preach a sermon on the “second coming” of Christ using only the scriptures that mention His “second coming” it would be a short sermon indeed! In fact, the meeting would be canceled. We could just turn out the lights and all go home. The term is not in the Book. Neither is the term “first coming” in the Bible. These are unscriptural and extra-biblical terms. Those who use them have invented a theology all their own which is foreign to the scriptures.

What the Bible does talk about is the progressive revelation of Jesus Christ, the unveiling of the Son of God, and many different “comings” of the Lord. The Holy Spirit records, *“But thou, Bethlehem of Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me who is to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting.”* (Mic. 5:2) Notice His “goings forth.” The plural is used. The goings forth of the Lord speak about the Lord Jesus Christ! Now, the idea of “goings” has to do with the onward marching of God — the unfolding of the purpose of God, step by step. This is what is indicated here. This is what history is all about, the progressive revelation of the Christ, the marching forward of God, the ever-increasing of the unveiling of Himself to man!

We dare not lose sight of the fact that our Lord has already had many comings, many appearings. We have limited the comings of Christ strictly to two because of our unscriptural terms “first coming” and “second coming,” but the truth is that He came; He continued to come; He comes; He continues to come; He will come; and He will continue to come! There are numerous “comings” and “appearings” of the Lord in the New Testament, BUT THEY DO NOT ALL REFER TO THE SAME EVENT. *“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty messengers, when He shall come to be glorified IN His saints, and to be admired IN all them that believe in that day.”* (II Thes. 1:7, 10) Jesus Christ is coming again, and He is coming to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all the holy sons of God who by His grace have been conformed into His image throughout the age. These “many brethren” are the body of the Son of God! This is the fullness of God’s Christ!

Not for the world nor all that is in it would I for one moment miss the glory of the age and the ages which are to come! To reign with Christ and with Him usher all creation into the glory of God, which has been the vision of the prophets, the dream of the sages, the cry of the sons, the purpose of God, and the longing and expectation of all creation is a prize of far vaster worth than all the power and glory and wealth of all the nations of earth combined. Though God’s Christ is One, it will take the ages to come to reveal His manifold beauty and graces. He is the one Christ, yet His body is made up of many redeemed souls. He is the true Vine, yet there are many branches. He is the only begotten Son of God, yet He is leading many sons to glory! He is the only Saviour, yet He is bringing a whole company of saviours up on mount Zion!

Like the sound of many waters, the testimony of the word of God records with abundant and stunning and inescapable evidence that the coming of Christ is not one single event, or two great events, but includes many different manifestations. His coming to us and in us is a many-faceted experience! To multitudes He appears as Saviour. They find Him at the crossroads of their lives. They invite Him to “Come into my heart, come into my heart, Lord Jesus!” And this coming is just as real and meaningful and powerful as was His coming long centuries ago! To multitudes He becomes their salvation, and in this experience they become “acquainted” with Him, but they have only a superficial knowledge of Him. They never venture any deeper to know Him intimately.

To others He appears as Bridegroom. "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!" is the cry that meets the ears of the virgins waiting for His appearing. And for those who were unprepared, whose lamps had gone out and they had no oil, He came "as a thief" and they missed their hour of visitation. But for those who are prepared, they hear His voice and are moved by His love, and follow on to know Him in deeper measures of intimacy and union. To others He appears as a Refiner's Fire. *"The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple...like a refiner's fire...He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver...He shall purge the sons of Levi (priesthood), that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."* (Mal. 3:1-3) This is a coming of the Lord that the "second coming" preachers miss altogether! The Lord comes to His priesthood company consuming their hay, wood, and stubble, eliminating by the spirit of burning all that is of self and not of God. These are but a few of the many "comings" and "appearings" of the Lord revealed in the scriptures. The coming of the Lord is as many-faceted as the most dazzling crystal of earth! In the book of Revelation especially we hear the cry for these comings of the Lord.

The Christ within our spirit shall charge through the earth of every man conquering until He is truly, in the most real way, King and Lord of all! Jesus taught His disciples to pray, *"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."* (Matt. 6:10) So then the kingdom of God originates in the heavenlies, in the realm of the spirit, and finds expression in the physical realm, in the earthlies. It is established in the believer's heart. He takes unto Himself His mighty power and subdues all things unto Himself, not outwardly with tanks and guns and bombs, but inwardly by the power of His life. He goes into the soul, conquering and to conquer, until He has put all things under His feet.

We are praying for the time when God will give every unbeliever in the universe to Jesus Christ for His inheritance. We pray for the day when the uttermost parts of the earth will come under His dominion and possession. We pray for the day when all kingdoms will bow before Him and all nations shall serve Him. We pray for the day when the mountain of the house of the Lord, His government of kings and priests after the order of Melchizedek, the many-membered Christ of God, shall be established everywhere. We pray for that day when the fullness of the Gentiles shall come in and all Israel shall be saved. In that day it shall be seen that Christ is King over the whole earth! He will appear to every soul on earth, in heaven, and in hell as the King of kings and the Lord of lords. It is proper for those who love Him to seek His appearing that He may appear to and in us in all the mighty workings and manifestations of His life, power, and glory. Everyone should pray that His kingdom, the kingdom of life, light, and love, would come quickly and swallow up the kingdoms of the flesh.

For the elect of God the Day has dawned! The Sun of Righteousness has arisen within our hearts! We see Him no longer through a glass darkly, but face to face! Our old heavens and our old earth have passed away! We live now in a New World, we sing now a New Song, our night has turned to Day! Darkness has flown away, sin and sorrow and death are swallowed up, God has wiped all tears from off our faces, we are living stones in the City which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, and all things are made new! This is the present glorious and eternal reality of the sons of God in this wonderful Day of the Lord! This is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory of God within His chosen ones!

If I did not believe in the ultimate triumph of the kingdom of God in all realms and everywhere and over everything throughout the vastnesses of infinity, and if I believed that this world was to continue to be misruled and misgoverned as it is; if I believed that sin and sorrow and death and wicked men and vile institutions were to continue unto the end, I should despair of humanity and God, and I should certainly tear I Corinthians 15:20-28 out of my Bible and burn it on the trash heap. But God never gives up! God reigns! The good news which our Lord Jesus the Christ came to preach is "good news of great joy to all people." Praise God for the good news! Praise God that it is to all people! God reigns! — that is the good news. Neither the will of man nor the power of Satan shall prevail. God shall be Victor! He shall put every enemy under His feet and under our feet! The horses are galloping and Christ is riding forth conquering and to conquer! Aren't you glad!

THE WHITE HORSE

"And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer." (Rev. 6:2)

Bear in mind — the Revelation is not a re-viewing of history, or a pre-view of future world events. Rather, it is a super-view of the unfolding of the spiritual life of every son of God! The book of Revelation is the last book of the Bible, not because it is the end of any revelation from God, but because it carries us into the revelation process as far as any outer scripture can. After this, it becomes one's own unfoldment and one's inner knowing and hearing of the Father's voice that becomes his scripture. The Bible is actually a book about this inner scripture, the nature, life, mind, and power of the Christ within, and this is as far as any book or teacher can bring us: to the realization that the revelation is a process taking place within us! Let us then reverently take our places beside the astonished prophet and watch as the Lamb of God unrolls the scroll.

Everything I was ever taught about the horses of the Revelation, commonly called "The Four Horses of the Apocalypse" was always frightening, full of fear and dread. They always started out with the white horse rider being the antichrist. One preacher, showing where his faith lies, goes all the way and declares that the antichrist is "the only person who could accomplish all these feats!" From there things got worse and worse and by the time they finished with that chapter I was scared to death, the hair bristling on my neck, goosebumps pulsating on my skin, and chills running up and down my spine. They gave an altar call and we all hit the altar weeping and wailing, getting right with God so we wouldn't miss the rapture and meet those four horses!

No interpretation of the white horse can be correct which does not recognize the connection with the similar vision found in chapter nineteen, though the two are not identical. The difference is that the vision there is the end or consummation of Christ's warfare, as He and all the sons of God ride forth to subdue all things everywhere to their reign; but the white horse of chapter six is just the beginning or commencement of Christ's warfare as He rides forth in our individual lives to subdue all things within our personal earth. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the ending. Here in vision He appears as "the Alpha," that is, "the first," riding forth out of the inner sanctum of the spirit of each of us, conquering and to conquer; but in chapter nineteen all those He has so conquered now ride with Him, we see the Rider on the white horse followed by the armies of heaven (sons of God) on white horses, going forth to subdue the nations and all things unto God's Christ.

My heart's desire is that all who read these truths may be filled with the divine conviction that God our Father is preparing a people to share the manifest image of Christ and reign with Him in His kingdom. Herein is to be found the real meaning, yea, the vital difference between the ministry of the Rider on the white horse in chapter six and the Rider of the white horse in chapter nineteen. The Rider of the white horse in chapter six is a solitary Rider, crowned with a single victor's crown, whereas the Rider on the white horse in chapter nineteen is crowned with many crowns and is accompanied by an immense and powerful army astride a host of horses out of the heavenlies. It should not be difficult for any to understand that the solitary Rider wearing the single crown is none other than the forerunner, our Lord Jesus Christ, in His singular victory over sin, death, and hell — riding forth as the glorious Captain of our salvation to extend that victory into the consciousness and experience of each member of His elect body, the sons of God. He must complete His conquest within our mind, heart, and life before we in Him can press the battle onward to creation!

When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in chapter nineteen He does not come alone. Long millenniums ago Enoch prophesied of this appearing of the promised One, saying, "*Behold the Lord cometh WITH TEN THOUSANDS OF HIS SAINTS (or, holy myriads of Himself) to execute judgment upon all...*" (Jude 14, 15) John with wonder beheld the scene and wrote, "*The armies, the ones in the heaven, were following Him upon white horses.*" (Rev. 19:14) Christ Jesus is the Head and the Leader as He goes before; His holy ones follow in His train, for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God; and these are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. They are represented as armies! They come forth as a body of warriors! He has many under His command! The armies of the heavenlies are His, and He does battle with them, by them, through them, and as them, even "the called, and chosen, and faithful." There is no infantry. There really is no cavalry, for all the horses are white, and every one who follows Him is of exalted rank. It is an army of princes, a host of mighty dignitaries. He is the Leader, yet as He is, so are we! It is the corporate Christ! It is one new man, one glorious Head and body! It is not Christ and us — it is simply Christ! Moreover, they have no weapons, except the sharp two-edged sword that proceeds out of HIS MOUTH, which

is the Living Word of God. His Word is our Word, and we have no Word except that which He is and which we are! Oh, the mystery of it!

In both cases the color of the horses is white, an emblem of Christ's purity and divine holiness. Every other place throughout the visions of John it stands for righteousness and purity. And in **Zechariah 14:20** this purity is connected to horses. *"In that day shall the bells of the horses (that is the strength of all) ring out, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD."* White also bespeaks of light — illumination. These are the qualities that characterize, not only the firstborn Son of God, but also His many brethren, the sons of God. In the messages to the seven churches, the out-called, challenging them to overcome, we read, *"I counsel thee to buy of me...white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed."* (**Rev. 3:18**) This is naught but the transfiguring glory of Christ, as it is written, *"And He was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light."* (**Mat. 17:2**) The light is the robe of divine majesty, the incorruptible life of God in the spirit emanating from the nature of absolute holiness that illuminates and quickens spirit, soul, and body. This is the Spirit by which Jesus was raised from the dead, even the spirit of holiness (Rom. 1:4). It shines out through these vessels of clay and transforms us into the incorruptible nature of the indwelling spirit! In this very hour every one who is called to sonship to God is beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and we are being changed, transformed, transfigured, metamorphosed even as by the spirit of the Lord! (II Cor. 4:18).

Clearly from a comparison of Revelation 19 with Revelation 6:2 the Rider is Christ Himself; here He has a bow with which to shoot the arrow of truth deep into our hearts, whereas there He has a sharp sword going out of His mouth, that with it He might smite the nations and rule them with a rod of iron. In either case it is the same power of His word going forth, but in different administrations. I would remind all who read these lines that the Rider in chapter nineteen is named "The Word of God," and the sword going out of His mouth is the truth going forth to battle. The sword is an instrument of war, and so is the bow! And what is the bow? The inspired prophet tells us in these words, *"Thou didst ride upon Thine horses and Thy chariots of salvation. Thy bow was made quite naked...even Thy word."* (**Hab. 3:8-9**) Can we not see by this that both the bow and the sword are THE WORD OF GOD! And then "there was given unto Him a crown." The Greek word for crown in Revelation 6:2 always indicates a crown of victory, while the word in chapter nineteen denotes a crown of royalty. In chapter six the crown is given after the Rider's appearance, whereas in chapter nineteen they are already worn. At the commencement He wears a single crown, bespeaking the individuality of His conquest within each of us. But then at the end He wears many crowns — representing the crowns of all the sons of God who reign and conquer by Him!

The Word of God comes riding upon a white horse, and the army of the sons of God follow Him, all riding upon white horses. What a scene! The horse is an animal that men ride. It is like a car — it's a vehicle. The horse in scripture is a symbol for THE BRINGING OF GOD'S PRESENCE AND POWER IN WARFARE. It signifies STRENGTH AND SWIFTNESS IN BATTLE. The old Roman conquerors, when celebrating a brilliant conquest, rode down the avenues of the imperial city upon a snow-white steed, and received the plaudits of the people. The Lord is described as the Word of God emblematically riding on a white horse; it is the image of aggressive action, of a prosperous conquest over all His foes. It means victory! The horse in scripture represents strength, and fearlessness to accomplish its task. Of the horse it is written, *"He paweth the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men. He mocketh at fear, and is not affrightened; neither turneth he back from the sword. He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage; he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting."* (**Job 39:21-25**) *"I have taken away your horses (strength)."* (**Amos 4:10**)

On the negative side, whenever the word horse is used in relationship with fleshly humanity it signifies human strength. **Isaiah 31:1-3** informs us: *"Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots (that is, human strength and human ability), because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong...they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord!"* Again, *"Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses are fleshly (strength), and not spirit."* *"For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; in returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not. But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses (human strength) and confound the riders on the horses (those who trust in human ability)."* (**Hag. 2:22; Zech. 10:5**)

On the positive side, whenever the word horse is used with righteousness, or divinity, or the Lord, or things heavenly, it means heavenly, divine, or spiritual strength. *“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war...and the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses.”* (Rev. 19:11, 14) That is, they followed Him in heavenly, divine, spiritual strength! In **Habakkuk 3:14-15** the prophet, reminiscing about Israel’s deliverance from Egypt, extols the triumph of Yahweh, exclaiming, *“You pierced with his own arrows the head of the enemy’s hordes...You have trodden the sea with Your horses, beside the heap of great and surging waters.”* The meaning is clear — You have trodden the sea IN YOUR DIVINE STRENGTH! Egypt had abundance of horses, swift and strong, but God had horses out of the spirit world! Not literal horses, of course; they represented the STRENGTH AND MIGHT OF GOD IN BATTLE! They signify the almighty POWER OF THE SPIRIT in all His manifestations. With what simple words does the Holy Spirit teach us that the strength of the Spirit always exceeds and excels over the strength of the flesh! Thus, horses are symbols given to us that denote the nature and work of the anointing that rests upon the sons of God. Horses are figures of overcoming, invincible strength and power, signifying that wherever these horses go, **WHATEVER IS IN THEIR WAY IS OVERCOME BY THEM!**

Wonderful visions passed before the rapt gaze of the Seer on Patmos’ lonely isle. And none could have been more thrilling than the vision we are now considering. In the far upper spaces, midst the maze and whirl of mist and cloud, and vast throngs of beings, and reverberations of great rolling noises, appears a snow-white horse, which immediately attracts the attention of the apostle. Its arching neck clothed with thunder, its tossing mane, its dilated nostrils, its deep chest, its flashing eyes, its superb grace as it pranced before him, made it the noblest horse and most magnificent which he had ever beheld.

But his glance passed swiftly from horse to rider; and though the snow-white charger eclipsed any animal John had ever seen, yet it was mounted by a person who, in form and feature and bearing, surpassed any man he had beheld, and his gaze was riveted by the unrivaled charm of his person. As John watched him, he saw him move irresistibly along a path of conquest. And, as he gazed, he recognized the rider as being his own well-beloved friend and master, Jesus Christ, whom he had so devotedly followed when, on earth, He walked slowly and wearisomely from place to place. Now, instead of being a pedestrian he was an equestrian, and instead of meekly submitting to His enemies He was overcoming them by the tremendous might of His powerful advance. It was a vision very real to the apostle; but it was recorded to teach, in symbolic form, the warrior spirit of Christ, and the great campaign upon which He has entered to conquer the hearts of men! The sphere of His movements, as perceived by the apostle, was this earth; and the time of His advance was over the globe throughout the church age unto the establishing of the kingdom.

Furthermore, this One goes forth “conquering and to conquer.” Special attention must be paid to the peculiar statement of the elder in Revelation 5:5 that the Lamb has “prevailed” to open the book and to loose the seals thereof. The use of the Greek verb “to conquer” occurs more frequently in John’s writings than in any other of the books of the New Testament. This is the word here rendered “prevailed.” It is the same word used when the Rider on the white horse goes forth “conquering and to conquer.” It is the same word used repeatedly in chapters two and three of the overcomer where at the termination of each of the messages to the seven churches the Spirit proclaims, *“To him that overcometh...”* *“To him that conquers!”* Ah, the Rider on the white horse is going forth overcoming and to overcome, prevailing and to prevail, conquering and to conquer! The term denotes grammatically **AN UNENDING SERIES OF CONQUESTS, UNINTERRUPTED BY ANY DEFEATS, WHOSE VICTORIES SHOULD LAST FOREVER!**

And so Jesus Christ, astride of the snow-white charger, is put in a position where He is perpetually celebrating a victory. His march is a victorious march! His movements always meet with success! His plans are fulfilled, and His campaigns unfurl to the breezes the banners of triumph. Jesus Christ is going forth as a conqueror, and He does so with great swiftness, rapidity, and power! The action in which He is engaged requires the greatest power, even the power of the spirit; and His movements are energized with tremendous force. Ah, precious friend of mine, are there things in your life that seem insurmountable and unconquerable? Have you struggled with attitudes, fears, lusts, emotions, circumstances, weaknesses, habits, and shortcomings? Have you despaired of ever truly being conformed to the image of God’s son; have you questioned whether you can really share in the glory of manifest sonship? Hear the word of the Lord today! It is Christ Himself who is

taking up the battle within you — it is Christ the Lord who is galloping through the battlefield of your heart, soul, and body. Here in the saddle He is roused, every faculty excited, every source of strength summoned, and He is bearing forward for the purpose of conquering every foe within you! He that is within you is mighty! Expose yourself to His wonderful presence, yield yourself to His powerful word, cast yourself upon the pathway of His conquest — He is moving down upon the enemy, charging upon all opposition, overcoming by the impetuous energy of His movements within your life! It is indeed wonderful!

The purpose of your quickening by Christ was to make you consciously a part of Himself, to give you a calling to glory, to a place where God by His Spirit can express Himself through you, so you can bring righteous judgment to the earth. That's what this white horse is all about! Your life and everything that happens to you is given to train and equip you for a royal position in God. The only reason the heavenly Father sent you here from the realm of spirit, lowered into the bondage of corruption, was to process you, to groom you for a position in God, to be one in the Saviour and to become a saviour. This is the day when everything we have hoped and dreamed of in God will be realized in our experience! We have so limited God in the way we have thought about Him. I'm telling you that we stand on the threshold of an outworking of God that is so powerful that it will bring an absolute end to the downward spiral of sin and death in humanity. It will put a blockade in the road to the flesh.

The manifestation of God through His sons which is immediately before us will turn creation around! We shall manifest unto mankind a life and victory and power that will shake the very foundations of the earth, an action that will alter the course of the world, bringing correction and righteousness. A people in this hour is being raised, not out of the cemetery, but out of the grave of their mind, out of the tomb of carnal, mortal consciousness, out of the crypt of religion and vain traditions, raised up to the place where they can be the manifestation of the totality of the personality of God. We are being raised to become the expression of the substance of His Person. This company is Christ the Head riding forth upon a white horse followed by Christ the body, all the sons of God riding with Him upon white horses — by the strength of righteousness — bringing the rule of the kingdom of God among men.

But when the Rider of Revelation six comes there are none with Him — He rides alone. Ah — is it not within the corridors of your own soul, my beloved, that you must hear the hoofbeats of this great white steed thundering! He must ride right into your earth, even that earth which you are, conquering all the territory and every stronghold of your land. Don't you hear the clatter of the hoofs of that gallant charger as He bounds through that world which you are, carrying its Rider to grand battlefields and glorious victories within? Christ the conqueror goes forth to conquer! He hath a bow, and His bow is bent still and He is riding the white horse, and the arrows of Divine Truth are piercing our hearts, and every enemy within spirit, soul, and body falls down before Him; all opposition is shattered to pieces; the strongholds and defenses are torn away as paper walls; the radiant brilliance of His glory flashes its dazzling light upon the eyes of the understanding, piercing effectively every cherished tradition, human interpretation, and carnal concept; swallowing up even every sin, all sorrow, pain, sickness, fear, and death.

I see Christ conquering! Though all men are His by right of creation and redemption, yet He must do battle to make conquest of the human heart which has been occupied by the enemies of His mind, heart, and life. He must fight His way inch by inch into the human soul until He possesses that which He purchased, until the citadels of mind, will, emotion, and desire have been taken and brought under the dominion of Truth. His victories are victories of peace over conflict, of joy over sorrow, of faith over fear, of righteousness over unrighteousness, of love over hate, of truth over error, of holiness over sin, of health over sickness, of power over weakness, of the image of God over the subterfuge of self, of life and immortality over corruption and death. Of the triumph of His life within the overcomers the Lord says, *"I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from my eyes."* (Hos. 13:14) God is the enemy of death. And He is the enemy of the grave! God right now is waging a war against the death and the grave that is in your mind, dear one. *"For to be carnally minded is death."* (Rom. 8:6) The Spirit of the Christ within witnesses, *"Grave and death — you're not going to have any victory!"* *"For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. And the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."* (I Cor. 15:25-26) The last enemy that shall be destroyed in you and in me is death!

When the Lord prophesies this victory over death in **Hosea 13:14** He closes His statement with these words: *“Repentance shall be hid from my eyes.”* God says, *“There is no way that I am going to change my mind about my purpose — when I come forth out of the realm of Spirit and commence making war with death and hell I will not stop until every foe is vanquished.”* In Himself the victory is already attained, fully and forever! “I am He that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.” God is not turning back, the hour for the manifestation of sonship is nigh at hand, and He that hath begun a good work in us shall complete it. The day of death is over. It’s time to live! Hallelujah!

This is the conquest that is going on right now in that inner world of our hearts, minds, and bodies. May the blessed Holy Spirit deeply impress upon all who read these lines this unalterable truth: **YOU WILL NEVER CONQUER UNTIL YOU ARE CONQUERED!** You see, in the army of Christ all the vanquished have enlisted, and all of those who were once enemies, such as Saul of Tarsus who once opposed Christ and who now is one of the leaders of that army beyond the veil. As we look at the triumph of Christ we see that the vanquished and the conquerors merge as one. Saul of Tarsus went forth to war against Jesus, but he was struck to the ground outside Damascus, the sword was smitten from his hand, and he was conquered by the Son of God. But in that conquest Paul was to realize his greatest victory and he, too, was to become a part of the ongoing triumph of Christ — a triumph which is even now proceeding into the heavenly city.

We don’t have to wait until “some glad day after while” because the battle is going on right now! **GOD ALWAYS CAUSETH US TO TRIUMPH IN CHRIST.** (II Cor. 2:14) I want to tell you that is a life-changing concept and, yet, some who read these words have never yet even begun to touch the hem of its garment. Our Captain, our King, our General has won the victory! He has conquered death! He has conquered hell! He has conquered all the powers of the flesh and of evil! And now He brings that triumph to us! And we can receive the spoils of His warfare! How can we be winners and partakers of that victory? First of all we need to know that we can never be part of those that conquer with Christ until we have been conquered by Christ. Therein lies the difference between the white horses and their Riders in chapters six and nineteen of the Revelation. It was not until Saul had been knocked to his knees in the dust and all his own struggles and battle had been lost, that he entered into the victorious army of Jesus Christ. In that conquest Saul of Tarsus was slain and Paul the apostle rose up to take his place. Perhaps you are struggling in your spiritual life, trying to overcome, but the problem is you have never completely surrendered to Jesus Christ. That surrender cannot be merely by word. It must be in reality! There are those who offer Christ their praise and speak great swelling words of revelation in the gatherings of the saints, but go out and know that their life is not conquered by Christ the Lord.

When Cornwallis surrendered to George Washington he came up to Washington and his aides, each dressed in their finest military garb. Cornwallis began to extol Washington’s virtues as a commander and military strategist and told him how impressed he was with the incredible maneuvers he had used. He continued in this way until suddenly Washington interrupted him and said, “Your sword, sir!” At another time, in another place, after the Hellespont was crossed, and he was making ready to march through Thrace, the king of Sparta commissioned heralds to the authorities of the countries through which he was about to move, asking them if he should come as an enemy or as a friend. “By all means as a friend,” replied nearly every one. The king of Macedon, however, answered, “I will take time to consider.” Immediately the king of Sparta sent the message, “In the meantime we march; we march!” So the great King of kings sends us His heralds as He approaches, and asks, “Shall I come to you as a friend or an enemy?” Gladly He would be your friend! Most of us say with whatever we can muster, “Let Him come as my friend.” Some may say, “We will take time to consider.” Others will say, if not in words, truly by actions, “I want Him to come as my friend — to bless me — but I reserve the rights to this or that area of my life.” In the meantime the great King marches toward us. He is coming! He is coming conquering, and to conquer! He will conquer you, my friend! He will ride into your world swiftly and powerfully and will shoot His arrows into your heart until every knee bows and Christ is Lord of all! We will not experience the victory until first we have been vanquished by Christ and have surrendered our carnal weapons. The power of His kingdom must reign supreme within. Our hearts are the seat of the throne of God, because there He reigns! The royal seat is the image of God in the spirit; and where this throne is established in the heart it extends over the whole soul and body.

You who have not yet surrendered to Him as King of kings, you who know Him as Saviour, as Healer, as Baptizer, as Blessor, but have not crowned Him as Lord of all within, don't you hear His trumpet pealing in your ears, sounding down through all the chambers of your soul's fortress? You who have tried to be a good Christian, faithfully performing the religious activities of the man-made church systems, but have not hitherto heard the call to "come out of her" and come up higher into the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus — why do you stand out longer? Why not draw in your colors this day, and invite HIM to the supreme place in your heart and life, and enroll yourself among His followers from henceforth, to follow Him to the heights of mount Zion; and then, when He celebrates His last victory, be among those who come with songs and everlasting joy to share the fruits of His victory and show forth His praise forevermore. Amen!

The kingdom of God is the rule and reign of God over all. The foundation of this kingdom is in the human heart. "The kingdom of God is within you." The world has not yet witnessed anything like the total and absolute government of God, except in the life of Jesus. But there has been an increase of His kingdom from generation to generation and from age to age. A new order is now coming forth in the earth! The hour of the completion of the body of Christ that has been forming in the earth for the past two millenniums is now at hand. The age of the reigning of Christ through the perfected, matured, empowered manifest sons of God is now ready to be revealed.

I say to you by the authority of God — if God's kingdom is coming in you, if His government is increasing in you, then His government is absolutely capable of ruling in righteousness and peace and power over every situation and circumstance. I do not say it will all happen overnight or tomorrow. But nothing is too hard for the government of the almighty Christ! You do not have to settle for things as they are. YOU can change them! He that is in you is mighty, and He will make you an overcomer right where you are. You must overcome within yourself before you can expect to see changes in those about you. You have been apprehended as a king-priest after the order of Melchizedek! You have power to conquer, power to possess, power to inherit, power to bless, power to reconcile, power to redeem, power to change and transform all things! Oh, yes! When we have fully possessed our own land and claimed our own inheritance we shall then be qualified to rule nations and worlds and galaxies!

The reign of Christ in our lives is being confirmed as Father changes us, renews our minds, increases our vision, strengthens our faith, and transforms our natures. When He removed all the old religious traditions and doctrines and ideas that were not of Him, our Father was preparing us for the pure and holy and righteous reign of God in us and through us. In this new Day the love of God and the power of God shall prevail! The elect of God who are beholding the face of the Lord and being changed into His likeness are the highest expression of the kingdom of God in the earth. To them shall be given the fullness of what sonship is — the kingdom and the dominion over all things that they may reign in love, mercy, goodness, reconciliation, power, and righteousness, not forcing men to obey, but imparting to all men the transforming grace of God in the power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost without measure!

The SPIRIT OF MIGHT that rests upon the Rider on the white horse, and which shall rest upon all of God's sons, is not the same kind of might known by the people of this world; it is not the might of force, of marching armies, of clanging swords, of tanks and bursting bombs, for these exist only in the realm of carnal might. The might of God and of God's Christ is spiritual might. If our eyes have been opened by the Spirit of God we will see that the nature of all our work in the army of the Lord is spiritual! The power of the kingdom is spiritual power, its citizens are a spiritual people, its ministry is a spiritual ministry, its authority is spiritual authority, its conquests are spiritual conquests, its dominion is spiritual dominion, its laws are spiritual laws, its weapons are spiritual weapons, its priesthood is a spiritual priesthood, its sovereignty is a spiritual sovereignty. Many of the Lord's precious people are no further advanced in their understanding than were the fleshly-minded Jews of Jesus' day who looked for the Messiah to deliver them from Rome — as if being free from Rome would change everything! The work of the kingdom is the work of rescuing men out of the power of darkness and the bondage of the flesh and the carnal mind that they may be gained for God. It is the work of imparting unto men the very life and Spirit of the Lord that men may be gained even more and more by God until He truly becomes "all in all." Thus shall the whole creation be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God!

Praise God for the exalted road that leads to Zion, no ravenous beast shall trod the path that the vultures eye has not seen. These are glorious days indeed for the army of God, a great people, there has not even been the like thereof unto the years of many generations. There is a mighty stirring in the spirit as the army of the Lord musters for battle. Truly the white horse is riding triumphantly through our land, conquering every enemy within, and announcing to us that He reigns in a voice of thunder from His throne. May He reign and speak through us even as He reigns and speaks within us in the great Day of the Lord! The weapon of Him who rides through our land is the bow of His word sending Truth into our minds and hearts; the weapon of the army of God is the sword of the Spirit, the sharp two-edged sword of the Living Word of God — a sword to smite the nations, not with the carnal force of merciless slaughter, but with the life-changing properties of TRUTH AND LIFE. The battle fought by the Christ of God is a spiritual warfare, combat between light and darkness, between spirit and flesh, between truth and error, between righteousness and evil, between life and death, between the customs and ways of this world and the principles of the kingdom of God.

Ride on, O Horseman! Ride on, O Horsemen!

To be continued...

J. Preston Eby

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, Part 85, Breaking The Seals
[J. Preston Eby] ~BIBLE STUDY 10

**FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 86
BREAKING THE SEALS (Continued)**

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

**KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES
"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."**

PART EIGHTY-SIX

**TAKING PEACE FROM THE EARTH
A SWORD TO KILL ONE ANOTHER**

"And when He had opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, Come! And there went out another horse that was red..." (Rev. 6:3-4)

As these seals are opened, as the clatter of the hoofs of the horses is heard, as we experience these wonderful unveilings of Christ charging into our land to accomplish their purpose in us, let it be said, these are not haphazard, unplanned, or hit-and-miss dealings, these are processes and experiences, instruments and forces that have been prepared, working progressively, steadily, and meticulously to accomplish the plan and will of God in our lives. The white horse is Christ riding forth out of the inner realm of Spirit, invading the outer realms of soul and body, initiating His march of conquest to subdue our whole being to God. He enters our domain first in the dazzling whiteness of light and illumination, sending the arrows of Truth into our heart, quickening our spirit by His Spirit, giving the understanding that comes from the light of His countenance.

The horse is the embodiment of speed and strength. He who is mounted can get over a greater distance, do quicker work, than on foot. Thus with Jesus Christ. By the strength of omnipotence He carries on His conquests with great rapidity and power! With great vigor and velocity He moves down upon the enemy; and wheeling His forces into line, charges upon the opposing ranks of flesh and carnality, overcoming them by the impetuous energy of His movements, before they have recovered themselves from the surprise of His sudden and swift attack. And no sooner does He attack upon His white horse of illumination and quickening, than He appears upon His red horse, pressing the battle ever forward.

Words utterly fail me to describe the scene of the Rider upon the red horse! It is so heavenly, so divine and wonderful, so terrible and awesome, that it completely defies all human description. [The Christ pursues His battle upon a magnificent red horse — not the color red, as paint or dye — for the Greek word is purrhos meaning "flame-like" or "flame-colored."](#) It denotes no color at all, but an appearance, a condition, a manifestation of fire or flame. Purrhos is from the root pur — the Greek word for fire. It is interesting to note that a derivative of this Greek word for fire (pur) is the Latin word pyra meaning "pure" and the English word "pyre" — the place for the burning of a corpse. "Pyrex" also comes from the same root, pyr or pur, meaning a fire, and rex, meaning a king — that which is king, thus ruling over the fire, hence a "heat-resistant" glassware. All our English words having to do with that which is pure are related to the Greek word pur, indicating clearly that that which is pure is so because it has been cleansed BY FIRE! Consider: PURE, PURify, PURification, PURitan.

OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE, the scriptures affirm. I understand not why fire has been represented to us as something so terrible, so frightening, so hideous that we should try to avoid it. If our approach back to God is through fire, as revealed by the flaming sword placed at Eden's gate, why do we always try to evade or get out of the fire? Why expend such energy and effort to try and pray ourselves out of the fire? [Fire, in the scriptures, symbolizes two primary things: judgment and cleansing.](#) But God is not schizophrenic in His nature — one side of His character disposed to forgive, redeem, deliver, save, heal, and restore, while the other side of His character is bent on vengeful destruction and sadistic torture of His enemies. His action in fire, like His action in grace, is pure, harmonious, purposeful, and balanced, directed towards the purification that leads to restoration. The fire of God cleanses the believer that he may qualify for God's highest! His activity by fire towards the unbeliever is to the same end, conditioning and preparing that one for good results, when, having been broken and purged from pride and rebellion, he bows low before the Saviour, penitently receiving the

gracious gift of life. The fire does not save him, but it removes the hindrance that separates him from appreciating the kind mercy and goodness of the Lord!

It is the Lamb of God Himself that rides forth on the fiery horse! The Lamb nature is not a weak, trifling, spineless little nature. Oh, no! If the Lamb nature were weak the Lamb would not dare to open the seals of the book and unleash all the portentous activities of the horses and their Riders! The nature of the Lamb is the nature of an overcomer, one who cannot be offended, one that can look upon the sin and evil in the world and not become religiously self-righteous but can love the creation to correctively, effectively, and redemptively deal with it. The Lamb is the Lion of the tribe of Judah who has prevailed! Divine judgment is not unto destruction, but unto redemption. Fire appears terrible only to the man who is unprepared to pass through it!

When of old God came down on Mount Sinai, its upper peaks were veiled with impenetrable billows of smoke, like the smoke of a furnace. And in the heart of the smoke there was the appearance of devouring fire. There is dread here! Bounds had been set to keep the people back; but a special message was sent to warn them against breaking through to gaze, lest the fire should break forth upon them. But there was no harm as long as they kept within the barriers; and when Moses entered into the very heart of it, it did not singe a hair of his head, and injured him no more than when it danced around the fragile acacia bush, which burned with fire without being consumed — not a leaf shriveled, not a twig scorched. Yes, our God is a consuming fire, and there is comfort and hope and blessing in the thought! When we yield to God's love, and open our hearts to Him, He enters into us, and becomes within us a consuming fire; not to ourselves, but to the flesh, carnality, and evil within us. So that, in a very deep and blessed sense, we may be said to dwell with the devouring fire, and to walk amid the age-lasting burnings!

Nothing is more certain than the fact that Jesus Christ has already ridden, or shall yet ride, into the world of each of us in FLAMING FIRE! Because of the gross misunderstanding of almost all people concerning the fire of God, I would draw your reverent attention to the natural process of fire. In the book of Revelation we have the horse of flaming fire; but later on the Holy Spirit also describes the manifestation of God as fire under another remarkable symbol. *“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the LAKE WHICH BURNETH WITH FIRE AND BRIMSTONE...” (Rev. 21:8)* The word “burn” means combustion, or to consume. To consume does not mean to annihilate, for there is no such thing as annihilation. You can annihilate a form, but not a substance.

When fire consumes a log in your fireplace it does not destroy any of the elements within the log, it merely changes their form. Combustion is the process by which chemicals combine to form new chemicals. For example, a tree may be cut down, sawed into firewood, and burned. In the first place, the tree was formed by drawing chemicals out of the earth and air and rearranging them into the form of a tree. Now, when the wood burns the heat causes those same chemicals to vaporize, mixing with the oxygen in the air to form new chemicals, including water and the gas carbon dioxide. So what was formerly a tree can no longer be identified as a tree, but the substance thereof is now simply changed, transformed into a DIFFERENT FORM! Thus, to burn means to change. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that fire does not burn down; it always burns up! It seeks the highest level. And all that it consumes (changes) truly “goes up in smoke” to exist in a new form in a higher dimension. Even if you take a pot of water and place it over a fire, before long the water will take on the property of the fire and will begin to go up in steam. To burn means to change, and the change is always upward in motion!

“Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple...behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? For HE IS LIKE A REFINER'S FIRE, and like fuller's soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall PURIFY THE SONS OF LEVI, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.” (Mal. 3:1-3)

One of God's promises concerning the Lord who comes to His temple to sit as a refiner's fire is that He shall “purify the sons of Levi.” The “sons of Levi” in the days when this prophecy was written, were the priests and ministers of God. The “sons of Levi” in these days of the greater spiritual temple of living stones are likewise the priests and ministers of God. Prophetically speaking, the sons of Levi refer to all who have received the

call to the Royal Priesthood of Christ after the Order of Melchizedek, which is after the power of an endless life. *“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house (temple), an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises (virtues) of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” (I Pet. 2:5,9)*

The Lord comes to those elect sons of God who belong to His Priesthood, not first with visible blessings and manifestations which inflate the ego, but as a refiner’s fire to purify and refine them, even as gold and silver are refined. In olden times, the refiner of gold and silver would sit over the burning crucible until the dross and impurities in these metals were completely separated and removed. Not until he could see his face mirrored in the molten metals did he declare them to be pure. So too with us! The Holy Spirit brings to light and deals with every aspect of our lives, separating and removing all that is alien and opposed to God’s nature and character, until the image of His Son Jesus is formed and mirrored in us. Only then will we be able to offer Him those offerings and render Him that service which is pleasing and acceptable in His sight, which will also bring deliverance to groaning creation. The Lord never removes or destroys something without replacing it with something greater and better! He sets us apart, like the sons of Levi, and subjects us to an intense discipline and purification that we might become His Royal Priesthood in the earth.

Every son of God has to be cleansed and purified from the carnal mind which is contrary to the nature of the Lord and is an enemy of His life, filled with all unrighteousness, and is not subject to the will of God and never can be. As **William Law** wisely said, *“SELF is the whole root, branch, and tree of sin.”* So for us to be His Priesthood, demonstrating His virtues, expressing His wisdom, pouring forth His love, and manifesting His power, this thing that stands in the way of the priestly heart, nature, and ministry, must be dealt with and taken out of the way. We must be emptied of self and everything that pertains to the earthly-consciousness and Adamic identity, so that only the pure and loving and powerful nature of the divine Christ within may reveal His glory in all its beauty and majesty. All carnality must go through the fire! None can escape it! There is no detour around this lake of fire if we are to arrive finally at the safe harbor of perfection in God.

The sons of Levi in this new Day of the Lord have felt the intensity of that purifying fire! It is not just those “dirty old sinners” out there that must pass through the lake of fire, but truly it is the fear in us, the unbelief in us, the abominable thing in us, the murderer in us, the whore-mongering in us, the sorcery in us, the idolatry in us, and the liar in us that must pass through the fire! Oh, yes! Its burning has roused each called and chosen son of God from his lethargic ease as he drifted along the stream of peace with the world; its clear flame has lit up the dark recesses of the carnal mind and the deceitfulness of the human heart, revealing the stark reality of the man of sin sitting in the temple of God; and its blasting flame has separated us from the fleshly follies of the carnal church systems of man. In all who follow the Lamb the fire is effectually doing its purifying work! We have begun to fulfill the prophecy and to “offer unto the Lord and offering in righteousness,” praise His name!

How long will this process continue? I would like to offer you some respite, but I dare not. By inspiration the Psalmist wrote, *“The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.” (Ps. 12:6)* *Seven is the number of completion and perfection.* It reveals the great truth that God’s own nature will be revealed in the fire! He heats up the furnace until we have been perfectly cleansed and purified, nothing remaining but HIMSELF. That which the Lord is receiving unto Himself, and for His holy kingdom purpose in this hour, cannot be of an inferior quality to Himself. The gold — ah, it is HIM! The silver — truly, it is HIM! The life of sonship is pure spirit, divine nature. How marvelous is the grace that birthed us out of His own spirit-substance, for He is the Father of the spirits of all flesh. But there can be no mixture! Only the dross must be removed. Thank God that the Christ comes to us not only on the white horse, but also on the red horse to carry the issue onward to victory! The question follows — Who may abide...endure...wait for...the day of HIS COMING? For He is like a refiner’s fire! Ah, this is not just the blessing realm, it is something beyond the gifts and benefits obtained by faith. This is the purging, cleansing, purifying realm! It is the place of qualifying for sonship, of preparation for immortality, of readiness to rule and reign in the kingdom with Christ as a King-Priest after the Order of Melchizedek. And who shall stand — or who can withstand — who can stand against it, who can stop or prevent His appearing as the refiner’s fire? No one, may I answer, shall be able to withstand or stand against His coming when He appeareth!

Charge on, O horse of fire!

TAKING PEACE FROM THE EARTH

“And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth...and there was given unto him a great sword.” (Rev. 6:4)

As we have seen, the red horse is a “flame-like” or “flame-colored” horse. It bespeaks the work of Christ within us as a refining fire! Refining is essentially a separating process by which the dross and all impurities are separated from the metal so that the metal will be pure or unmixed. This obviously leads us to the next stage described by John in these words, “and power was given unto him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth.” This denotes a separation! We understand each of these horse riders to represent different aspects of our Lord’s dealing in our lives. He comes to thoroughly purge His floor with His consuming presence, yet in the process He comes in a working to expose and separate the soulish and fleshly from the spiritual. There can be no removal until first there is a separation! There are areas of our soul and body realms that, once exposed by His glorious presence, we gladly lay down. Ah, but there are also areas with which we are at peace, to which we cling, and do not want to give up. Now we find this red horse Rider comes to rob us of our peace! That is a necessary part of the process! No longer will we be able to live at peace with these soulful and fleshly attributes. He comes with that great sword of His quick and powerful word, dividing asunder between soul and spirit. This disturbs the peace and contentment we had with the carnal mind and the flesh, and there arises in us a dissatisfaction with anything that is not of His Spirit. The deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt and their eventual conquest of the promised land is without doubt one of the most awe-inspiring, marvelous, and concerted revelations of God’s redemptive program, His aim, intent, and objective; His purpose, processings, and dealings; His design, out-workings, and goal that has ever been revealed to mankind. It is not my intention to elaborate upon this, merely to point out in passing the significance of Egypt in scripture. Egypt represents the place of being separated from the life, rule, and blessing of God, and of being oppressed under the dominion of the flesh, the world, and the devil. There is a remarkable word of profound significance which the Lord spoke to Israel regarding their relationship with Egypt. *“If ye say, We will not dwell in this land, neither obey the voice of the Lord your God, saying, No; but we will go into the land of Egypt, WHERE WE SHALL SEE NO WAR, nor hear the sound of the trumpet (calling to war), nor have hunger of bread; and there will we dwell...” (Jer. 42:13-14)*

Think of it — Egypt is the place where there is no war! All is peace and tranquility in Egypt. There is security and provision in Egypt. Spiritually this is not speaking of a country in the Middle East, nor about any natural war! It is a reference to people who are experiencing no spiritual warfare in their walk. They do what comes naturally, and there is no opposition to the way they think, act, or live. This is the normal state of the natural man before Christ rides into his life upon His war-steed! Those who have not been quickened (awakened) by the Spirit from above do not hear the sound of the trumpet — the sound of God’s voice mustering to battle across the land. Vast multitudes of these lifeless ones fill the pews of the world’s churches Sunday after Sunday, but there is no thirsting after God, no hunger for spiritual things, no comprehension of His purpose, no vision of the power and glory of His kingdom, no discernment between the precious and the vile, and no glint of sword to circumcise mind and heart. Ah, but when God’s hour arrives for such an one to be apprehended of God, suddenly into his or her peaceful world charges Jesus Christ the conqueror — and He enters with great swiftness and power. He has a bow, and the bow is bent, and immediately the arrows of divine conviction and revelation pierce the heart, and He presses the battle to make conquest of the soul. He fights His way into the human heart until He possesses that which He has purchased, until the fortresses of mind, will, emotion, and desire have been taken and brought under the dominion of Truth. He first shoots the arrow of light and illumination, quickening unto God. Then quickly He wields the sword which “takes peace from the earth” — the very earth which He has illuminated, for the battle must be pursued until man is fully conquered and all enemies concealed within have been routed, exposed, and vanquished.

It is the almighty Lord Himself who declares war and fires the first shot. HE it is that initiates the battle! *“I am come,” said He, “not to send peace on earth, but a sword.”* Or, stronger still in the original, *“Think not that I come to cast peace on the earth; I come not to cast peace, but a sword.” (Matt. 10:34)* Who holds the sword? Who is to wield the sword? Who is to stir up the fight? Who is to “take peace from the earth?” The Lord Jesus Himself, and the sword is the sword of the Lord! Sometimes people speak about “sweet Jesus.” This Jesus

offers sugar, not a sword. He tastes good but hurts no one. When life tastes bad, sprinkle on a bit of His sweetness. The Rider on the red horse is not so sweet! Jesus Christ is a warrior, fierce and frightening.

F. B. Meyer once wrote, “When Christ is born, there is always trial. What trouble the New-born brought into this world! There was trouble for Mary! She was living a happy, peaceful life in Nazareth, when the sword began to penetrate her soul, and she was called to endure an agony of misunderstanding from those who loved her best. There was trouble for Joseph, who was afflicted by startling fears, roused suddenly from sleep, and bidden to leave all and flee. There was trouble for Herod and the Jews. *‘He was troubled and all Jerusalem with him,’* at the story of the new-born King. There was trouble also in a multitude of Jewish homes, entered by brutal soldiery, who tore the babes from their mothers’ breasts and tossed them on their sword-points. Wherever Jesus comes, trial follows. He comes to send, not peace, but a sword; and one who knew well of what he affirmed said: *‘I am crucified with Christ — I die daily — I am delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake.’* These inward trials often spring from the unwillingness of our nature to yield to the will and way of God. A man’s foes are they of his own household. Sometimes, also, when we have begun to live the new life it seems as if the box of Pandora were opened, and all the winds had escaped, each eager to outdo all the rest. But out of the trouble will rise the fairest, strongest life! By and by some watcher on the battlements of heaven, beholding our approach, will cry, *‘Who are these arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?’* and this will be the reply: *‘These are they that came out of great tribulation’* — for tribulation is education misspelt” — **end quote.**

There can be no warfare as long as our will is uncontested. There is no war while our desires remain unopposed. There is no conflict when our ways are unchallenged. There is no battle as long as the Adam nature and its activities are not crossed, confronted, or assailed. Our carnal life is at peace within itself until the red horse rides in and TAKES PEACE FROM OUR EARTH! The red horse never enters our land until we have been quickened to higher and holier things, brought into living fellowship in the Spirit. The world is at peace with itself, unconvicted of its course of carnality, ignorance, and shame, content in the frivolous activities of the earth-life. There is a war which rages within me and every saint of God which causes far more trouble than any conflict I face without. My number one problem is neither men nor demons, but myself — my own limited, self-centered, deceiving, delusional, conniving, mortal mind!. My flesh nature is the greatest enemy, for it is the enemy of Christ!

For years I blamed everything on the devil and his demons. Then to my astonishment I discovered that all my spiritual battles were right within myself! I didn’t have to look far to find my greatest foe. I found that I face him in the mirror every morning. But I had never experienced a spiritual battle until I met Jesus! When He came into my life He at once declared war! Immediately the flesh rose up in hostile opposition to the divine Invader and the flesh and the spirit were at war, one with the other. Whether or not our “old man is dead” the incontrovertible truth still remains that *“the flesh warreth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other” (Gal. 5:17)* Again Paul says, *“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the spirit the things of the spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” (Rom. 8:5-8)* **J. B. Phillips** graphically translates these verses: *“The carnal attitude sees no further than natural things; but the spiritual attitude reaches out after the things of the spirit. The former attitude means, bluntly, death; but the latter means life and inward peace. And this is only to be expected for the carnal attitude is inevitably opposed to the purpose of God, and neither can or will follow His laws. Men who hold this attitude cannot possibly please God.”* If they are doing the fighting, what is the fighting over? When two people or two nations fight, they are contending over something. They fight to possess something, to hold on to something, to have ownership of something, to have legal access. They fight for territory or control. There is an object of their affections that they are fighting for. In like manner, the spirit seeks control over our soul and body, and the flesh wants to control them — soul and body are the object of their affection! Soul and body are the “land” being fought over! Each, the spirit and the flesh, seeks to rule! Whoever controls our soul and our body controls us — the land! The conflict is on and the judgment is in humanity.

When Christ enters into our land upon the red horse, He disturbs our comfort zone. Once we are quickened by the Spirit of God, once we are awakened to our true identity, once we stand up as a new creation, we are no longer comfortable with the things of the old creation. Within us have been awakened new longings, new

potentialities, new hopes, new ways of thinking, new perceptions of reality, new understanding — a new nature, a new mind, a new heart. Now we are not comfortable with the things we were comfortable with before. In the old creation we were at home with worldly atmospheres, carnal understandings, and fleshly activities; but now that the mind of Christ has been awakened in us peace has fled from our earth, from our soul.

Oh, what a wonder this is! What it means is that all the peace, pleasure, and joy of the earthly, natural, carnal life is taken away. The more we are awakened to the beauty and glory of life in the spirit, the more our earthly state of being is perceived as a vile abomination compared to it. We rejoice in the burning, purging fire of the red horse which comes to cleanse our land from every contemptible, fleshly thing. As the hoofbeats of the red horse echo through our earth all peace is taken away from the earthly life so that the carnal mind is bereft of all content and satisfaction in the things it formerly enjoyed with unrestrained abandonment.

Gary Sigler's testimony is so very enlightening and instructive on this point. He says, "All across the country people have said to me, 'How do I know if I'm really saved?' You know, I didn't know that myself. I went to pastor after pastor, I answered altar call after altar call, because I didn't change all that much after I accepted Christ. I didn't think I was saved! The preachers would tell me, 'You know, after you've come to God you can't live like you're living any more. You have to stop that!' So, if I saw Billy Graham on the television, I would kneel down in front of the television — I'd do anything, because I just didn't know if I was saved.

"I'll tell you how you can know whether you're saved. I will tell you how you will know if you're regenerated. The moment the spark of His life is regenerated within you, there begins a conflict in your life. If there is no conflict there is no knowing of God in reality. Now, you may have heard a message that stirred you, you may have gone to an altar, you may have tried to accept Jesus out of fear — but if there is no conflict, there is no regeneration. I'll tell you why! When you are regenerated, the spiritual person that you are begins to awaken. That is God in the flesh! That is God once again being birthed in humanity! That is once again an incarnation of the most holy One! And He is very holy, high, and lifted up. That new life, that new person has never known sin, has never been touched by the fall. That person only knows the hunger that he has for God. And that creates a great conflict within you — in your flesh. Have you experienced that conflict? Then you're regenerated!

"So — when you experience conflict, when sin gets the best of you, when habits sometimes pull you down and you fall, you should rejoice that that bothers you! You shouldn't fall under condemnation; you should say, 'Thank God, there's something in me, there's another force within me, there's a life within me that does not want to do that!' But at the moment of regeneration that life is so weak. And your natural man is so strong! That's why Peter said, '*As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby*' (I Pet. 2:2). Babies aren't strong. But, you see, your pastors and teachers (in the church systems) will tell a new baby that's just been regenerated, 'You can't do that any more! God won't love you if you do that!' I heard a famous preacher on the radio one night as I sat reading the Bible and smoking a cigarette. This famous preacher said, 'You can't blow smoke in Jesus' face and make it into heaven!' Because I had a lot of faith in that preacher, that destroyed me for a long time. That's what religion does — it aborts the baby! It kills the baby. It doesn't give it time, it doesn't give it life — it gives it rules and regulations. Would you take a natural baby at its birth and begin to teach it to live like that? That's ridiculous! Yet, that's what our spiritual leaders have done to us. They've given us no time to grow up and become powerful, spiritual men" — **end quote.**

Let us examine how a war between two nations comes to an end. A French statesman once pointed out that there were only two types of peace that ever followed a war: A peace imposed upon the defeated by a conqueror; or a peace accepted by the defeated through surrender. There is a vast difference between the peace which is imposed or the peace which one accepts. It should be evident that if there is to be peace between a man and God, the terms must be imposed by God Himself. God, the eternal God, omniscient and omnipotent, must have His way — it is the only right way in the universe! Every other way is the self-will of the creature, the way of earth, the way of empty, vain delusion, the way of limitation, blindness, finiteness. Every soul has been at war with God; in order for reconciliation to take place, there must be a cessation of the warfare, the hostilities, which exist between Adam in the flesh and Christ in the spirit. "*God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself...now then we are ambassadors for Christ...we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God!*" (II Cor. 5:19-20)

The battle is between two natures, two minds, two wills, two kings, and two kingdoms. The flesh nature we took upon us when we were born into this world. The spiritual nature came alive in us when we were born again of the incorruptible seed of the Word of God. *“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.” (John 3:6-7)* Regeneration, new birth, sons of God — these are all terms with which most Christians are familiar. The beautiful analogy is accepted by everyone. But all this means to the average Christian is that he conjures up the nice religious feeling of thinking of himself “as if” he were an “actual” divine son of God, as Jesus is. The average Christian has absolutely no idea of the transcendental implications of birth into the family of God, the God-family, or the family which is God! Most think of being a child of God as sort of an “honorary” title conferred on them by an indulgent God who accepts them as “little adopted children” to whom He plans to give as their reward or inheritance for accepting His gift of eternal life, a beautiful park, a celestial playground called “heaven.” This heaven is designed for them to enjoy for eternity, playing, loafing, running, shouting, fellowshiping, rejoicing, singing, strumming harps, waving palm branches, and doing whatever other sinless thing their hearts may desire.

But let us understand what it really means to actually be born into the very family of GOD! I like to turn the phrase “family of God” around, in order to better grasp its significance. Instead of saying that we are born into the family of God, it is just as correct to say that we are born into the GOD FAMILY! I may say, by way of illustration, that I was born by natural birth into the family of Eby. But this also means that I was born into the EBY FAMILY. I am the EBY KIND. I AM EBY. Not only are men born into the family of God, but they are born into the GOD FAMILY, the family which IS GOD. We are the GOD KIND. And startling as it may be, this GOD FAMILY is the ELOHIM of the scriptures! And to be born into this Family means that we have the awesome potential to become all that He is! *“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.” (Eph. 3:14-14)* The new birth is nothing less than the quickening of our spirit which is the offspring of God, the quickening of a God-being, the awakening of a Christ-creature, the arousing of a God-kind, of a God-species, an actual heavenly being, a son of the heavenly Father, who is as ageless and deathless as is his immortal Parent, a brother by birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, destined to grow up into the fullness of His own divine Being, to be like Him in all the majesty that He is!

In the light of the truth we are now considering, so many things take on new meaning. Can we not see that when the red horse gallops into our land, awakening within us the consciousness of who we are and to what potential and destiny we are called, immediately a warfare begins for identity. The Lord Jesus Himself explained the nature of this warfare when He told Nicodemus, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” This is the fundamental principle of the warfare that rages within us! The word flesh is a comprehensive term that includes all that a person is through his or her natural birth: intellect, emotions, consciousness, will, body, expression, identity. The flesh is Adam! The flesh nature is dead to God, but very much alive to the world. The spirit nature, once quickened, awakened, aroused within is dead to the world, but very much alive unto God. This sets into action two competitive forces within man: one born of the flesh, the other born of the Spirit; one of the first man who is of the earth, earthy, the other of the second man who is from heaven; one minding earthly things, the other minding spiritual things.

It is precisely at this juncture that Christ, the Rider of the red horse, bounds into our land with power to TAKE PEACE FROM OUR EARTH! Since many saints do not understand what is going on within, they vacillate back and forth between Adam and Christ, encountering “mountain-top experiences” and then being plunged into “death-valley experiences.” The death-valley experiences occur when the old nature greedy for personal gratification and fed by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, dominates the spiritual nature.

Here I would share some pertinent words from the pen of **Paul Mueller**. *“Two natures within us manifest the character and manner of each: Adam within us is that mystery of iniquity that curses and brings forth the iniquities of the carnal man. Likewise, Christ within us blesses the Father, declares the truth and mysteries of God, makes known the manifold wisdom of God, and lifts us up and causes us to walk in the high places in Him. As we give the preeminence to the Christ within, Adam within shall be subdued and conquered so that our spirit, soul, and body is ‘preserved complete and found blameless at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He who calls you, and He will also perfect His work.’ (I Thes. 5:23-24)* When the perfect

man comes forth in the image and likeness of Christ, fully adorned with the garments of His salvation, we shall no longer express the dual natures within us. Then, the perfect man, the Christ-body, shall express only the Truth, Love and Life of the Father! Our mind shall be the mind of Christ, a single mind in a fully redeemed body. O the wonder of this so great salvation reserved for those who love His appearing!" — **end quote.**

Yes, my beloved, there is a great warfare raging within, and Christ has pressed this war upon us, His conquest is going on right now in that inner world of our hearts, minds, and bodies. The battle of the ages, the famed Battle of Armageddon, portrays no literal conflict with carnal weapons. It is not on any battlefield on earthly ground that the glorified Redeemer confronts the banded hosts of earth and hell. We cannot go to the pages of Josephus or Tacitus or Wells, or any other historian, for the events which correspond with these symbols. Nor shall we find the grim ride of the Four Horses of the Apocalypse in the headlines of the Washington Post, USA Today, or Newsweek magazine! The scene reveals one sublime and divine truth: CHRIST SHALL CONQUER! The kingdom of Christ is not of this world, its weapons are not carnal, He does not conquer by blowing away millions of helpless souls with bullets and bombs and bloody savagery. Oh, no! It is within the corridors of our own soul that we must hear the hoofbeats of the Four Horses thundering! He must ride into your earth, my friend, taking peace from your earth, then conquering all the strongholds of your land. The end of the warfare brings peace and life fully and forevermore!

The Bible is a book of war. *"The Lord is a man of war."* (Ex. 15:3) Heaven is a realm of war, as well as the earth. "And there was war in heaven." (Rev. 12:7) Jesus is a man of war. *"Think not that I am come to send peace of the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword."* (Matt. 10:34) *"These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them."* (Rev. 17:14) David was a man of war. *"Thou (Absalom) knowest thy father (David) and his men that they are mighty men, and thy father is a man of war."* (I Sam. 17:8) David faced Goliath and took his sword. He was a man of war before he met Goliath. David is a type of Christ. His followers were men of war. *"And there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: but David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker."* (II Sam. 3:1) The sons of God follow a man of war! Thank God! as the battle rages the Christ within is waxing stronger and stronger, and the kingdom of the flesh is waxing weaker and weaker. So shall it be fulfilled — the natural man shall be subjected to the spiritual, the flesh shall be ruled over by the spirit, and then shall we see *"all things in subjection under His feet."* (Heb. 2:8)

A SWORD TO KILL ONE ANOTHER

"And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword." (Rev. 6:4)

"Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword." (Matt. 10:34)

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Heb. 4:12)

"And take...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." (Eph. 6:17)

When the legionnaires of Caesar girded on their belts and fastened their breastplates in position and took upon themselves their helmets and picked up their shields and swords, they were going forth to conquer as a conqueror, to travel across the face of Europe for Imperial Rome, and to conquer all that came before them. How does Christ conquer? By His WORD! Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Word of God, the sharp two-edged sword, even the great sword with which He takes peace from the earth, held in His mighty hand as he rides astride the red horse. Multitudes cling to the superstition that the Lord desires only to love us by showering wonderful gifts, blessings, and benefits upon us, and never pierce our soul or slay us with the great sword of His authoritative word. This sword is not made of fine ground and polished steel, but the Living Word made flesh and manifested as the Son of God within each of us.

The word "sword" is found in the Bible over 400 times. That indicates the tremendous importance the Spirit of God attaches to it. There are both positive and negative connotations. The Lord's speech, the sword of the

Spirit which is the Word of God, is the expression and influence of His indwelling life accomplishing His mighty work within us. It is interesting to note, as someone has pointed out, that the sword in scripture is continually used to divide as in the beginning. The first mention of a sword was when Adam and Eve were driven from the Garden, and the Cherubim were placed at the gate with the flaming sword dividing the Garden of Eden from Adam's world. The Cherubim bespeaks a realm of authority and dominion by a flaming word! Then we see the sword dividing the nation of Israel from the heathen round about. Later the sword was used to divide one kingdom from another beginning with Saul's kingdom, and then that kingdom used the sword against David. David used the sword to conquer all his enemies and take the stronghold of Zion, keeping his nation high and lifted up in the name of the Lord. David's son, Solomon, used the sword as an instrument of judgment, dividing truth from lies as in the case of the two women who both claimed the same child.

Now we find a statement connected with the peace that is taken from the earth, and the great sword in the hand of Christ, which is most perplexing to the natural mind, and can only be understood by the quickening of the mind of Christ. John says, "and power was given unto him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another." What words are these! How will they kill one another? Ah, with the "great sword," the "sword of the Spirit" which is "the word of God;" by speaking the fiery word of the Lord that consumes the flesh, killing and destroying all the essences of the Adamic life! It is Christ the Lord in His rising life riding forth out of the inner sanctum of our spirit enabling us to subdue, conquer, and kill the outer flesh nature, which is the beast in us. Someone objects, contending that our "old man" is already crucified with Christ and is dead. That is true, but it must be proven that the "old man" and the "flesh" are one and the same! According to Paul and other New Testament writers WE ALL HAVE FLESH AND THE POTENTIAL TO WALK AND LIVE AFTER THE FLESH. How could the flesh war against the spirit if the flesh is dead and non-existent? It is not my purpose to enter into a discussion of the old man at this time, but every honest soul who reads these lines will be quick to admit that there is definitely something in our lives that needs to be dealt with, killed, and destroyed, and not just ignored by confessing that it doesn't exist!

Henry Drummond tells a remarkable story in one of his books. It is a true story. He was in India for quite some time. He had a friend who lived in a little cottage on a knoll in a valley. During one terrible flood, he got on the roof of his cottage. In the darkness of night, he heard something climb onto the roof with him. When daylight came, he was shocked to see, lying on the roof, only a few feet from him, a Bengal tiger! He knew that it would be days before the water would recede, so he carefully reached to his side and took out a gun that he always carried. He put it to the head of the tiger and pulled the trigger, killing it.

Sometimes the question is not, "Is it wrong to kill?" The real question is, "Who will have the privilege of continuing to live?" *"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through (the sword of) the Spirit do mortify and put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live."* (Rom. 8:13) There isn't room for a tiger to live on the roof of a house with a man. Many of the Lord's people are trying to live with a tiger in their head! The bestial nature of the flesh stalks about in their minds, emotions, desires, and actions. It is flesh and it will kill you by taking away your freedom to LIVE ABUNDANTLY AND VICTORIOUSLY! That's what this battle is all about!

At first only our "peace," because of our state of duality, was taken from us — our comfort zone was disturbed! But now there is action — it is time to begin to deal with the earthly life and to "mortify" the deeds of the body and to "mortify" our members which are upon earth (Col. 3:5). God has brought into our lives a great sword, the Living Word of God, that with it we may slay the flesh in one another by the authority and power of the word of the Lord! Even this message which I am writing at this very moment is as a great sword to assist in slaying the beast in those into whose hearts it pierces by the power of Truth. Isn't it wonderful!

To be continued...

J. Preston Eby

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**FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 87
BREAKING THE SEALS (Continued)**

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART EIGHTY-SEVEN

BARLEY AND WHEAT

"And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, Come! And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine." (Rev. 6:5-6)

And now we come to the third horse — the black horse. Horses, as we have noted previously, are symbols of overcoming strength and power — whatever lies before these horses is overcome by them. Color in scripture denotes the presence and operation of God by the Spirit. The color reveals what the horse is doing to you or producing in you. In the process there is both life and death, death to the Adam man and the apprehension of life in the Christ man. The first horse was white — the expression of life, illumination, and revelation. When light comes forth you see your first beginning. In the beginning God said, *"Let there be light!"*

Prior to this pronouncement the "earth" was "without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep." This is a perfect description of the earth man before God's redemptive, reconstructive, and restorative work begins upon him. Before God's word is heard, before His light of truth and revelation shines, the natural man, who is of the earth earthy, is spiritually void and formless, an unknown deep within. Upon this deep all is darkness; yet, praise God, God's Spirit is brooding there! The natural man is alienated in his mind from the life of God, shut out from the spiritual world, blind to reality and truth — yet God is very near. In relation to spiritual life this man begins nothing, continues nothing, perfects nothing. The wondrous change is wrought by the power of the word of God! Life and power are in the Word. "God said" — this is the means — just as God formed the first creation in that long ago, so He now fashions the new creation. In both the initiative is on God's part!

When all was void and formless and shrouded in darkness and hopelessness and nothing moved, "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." God speaks and light breaks forth upon the void. The first step in the new creation is the awakening of man to spiritual consciousness, the dawning of light in his mind and heart, his perception of Truth through the quickening of his spirit. Light is understanding, and just as the first creative day brought light to the darkened world, so the first horse, the white horse of illumination and revelation, brings the light of understanding to our hearts. Light represents intelligence and life — darkness represents ignorance and death. Symbolically these are "day" and "night." Understanding and illumination quicken and enlighten the mind, heart, and soul, and man comes face to face with God to be transformed by His glory. Those in whom this work goes on, know that each succeeding step is entirely the work of God!

The second horse was red — and when Christ enters into our land as the red horse, He takes peace from our earth, that is, He disturbs our comfort zone. Once we are quickened by the Spirit of God, once we are awakened to our true identity, once we stand up as a new creation, we are no longer comfortable with the things of the old creation. Within us have been awakened new longings, new potentialities, new hopes, new ways of thinking, new perceptions of reality, new understanding — a new nature, a new mind, a new heart. Now we are not comfortable with the things we were comfortable with before. In the old creation we were at home with worldly atmospheres, carnal understandings, and fleshly activities; but now that the mind of Christ has been awakened in us peace has fled from our earth, from our soul. What it means is that all the peace, pleasure, and joy of the earthly, natural, carnal life is taken away! The more we are awakened to the beauty and glory of life in the spirit, the more our earthly state of being is perceived as a vile abomination compared to it. The red horse brings a sword causing division between soul and spirit, between the natural life and the

heavenly life. He also ignites within us a burning, purging fire to begin to cleanse our land from every contemptible, fleshly thing. Oh, what a wonder this is!

When the black horse invades our land, great darkness falls upon our earth, on the natural man, the carnal mind, the fleshly nature. Black is the absence of light and color. It denotes a condition of no light, no understanding, no expression, and no perceptible substance. The anointing of the black horse is a revelation of darkness — the knowledge of just what is in the natural man, the carnal mind, and the fleshly nature — the clear and perfect understanding of what they are how they work, their utter futility and worthlessness in the light of Reality and Truth that the Spirit brings. We will never let go of the valueless things of the earth realm until once we see them for what they really are, and the true riches.

There is a beautiful portrait of this truth in the Song of Solomon. It is called *“The Song of Songs, which is Solomon’s.”* Just as the “Holy of holies” was the holiest of all holy places, just as the “Heaven of heavens” is the highest heaven of all the heavens, so the “Song of songs” is above and beyond all the songs that have ever poured from the human heart and human lips. This is the Song that is above all other songs; a Song sent down from the courts of heaven, from the throne of God; a strain from the celestial choir. “Song” in the symbology of scripture means “a message.” So the Song of Songs is the Message of messages, indeed, the Revelation of revelations!

There are two principle characters in the drama. First you have “my Beloved” who is representative of HIM, the Lord Jesus Christ who dwells in our spirit. Then you have “my Love” which represents a woman — the soul. This is the ineffable, pre-eminent Song; ineffable because it is a celebration of true marriage, a portrait of our personal relationship with Christ, as well as a picture of the love relationship between Christ and the church. Ultimately it is also a representation of the relationship between the corporate man, the manchild, or the manifest sons of God, with the bride of Christ. On the personal level she, the soul, becomes awakened to Him, the inner son which is our spirit. These are internal realities! The Christ to whom our soul awakens, and whom our soul seeks and loves, is not the Christ in some far-off heaven somewhere, but Christ in our spirit, and as our spirit, for he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

Some of the thoughts in the next several paragraphs are gleaned in part from C. H. Macllrahy’s excellent book CHRIST AND HIS BRIDE.

When the soul awakens to the glory of the Christ within, when she once beholds HIS beauty, HIS majesty, HIS riches, and smells HIS oils, she is filled with great desire and she cries, *“Draw me and we will run after Thee!”* **(S. of S. 1:4)** Her heart goes out that she may rise up and run after Him. She feels she is helpless in herself, but that He has power to draw her, and He alone can do this. She longs for the kisses of His mouth (S. of S. 1:2) those tender, intimate moments of fellowship and communion in which His love is revealed. When God pours into us a love for our Beloved, and begins to reveal more clearly our potential in Him, we rejoice with great joy and gratitude to God! If He did not put into our hearts the longing to know Him in deeper measures and have His very best, we would be satisfied with the least we could have and still be saved, and become spiritual paupers in the kingdom of God. How wondrous are the workings and drawings of God upon a human soul! How little do we behold or know that which He is doing as day by day He works down in the depths of our being. The most favored place a child of God can be in, is to continually feel the drawing of God urging and constraining him to greater desire and to greater abandonment to Him.

In the moments of ecstasy in His presence she (the soul) catches a glimpse of the inner sanctum of the spirit, the most holy place of His brilliance and glory, and she cries, “I want more!” But in His presence she also receives a startling revelation — *“I am black but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar...”* **(S. of S. 1:5)** She receives the understanding of how carnal she is! You can never become spiritual, precious friend of mine, until the Spirit has shown you your carnality! It is not the sinner who says, “I am black.” Oh, no! It is not when the heart is untouched by the grace of God, that the stain and blackness, which carnality has wrought upon the soul, can be seen by the unquickened one. It is when the power of the Spirit strikes the believing soul, that the soul perceives her blackness; it is when she gets a vision of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ that she sees herself as black as the black goat-hair tents of the Bedouin — the tents of Kedar. When Lorain and I were in Israel a number of years ago, from our vehicle window we could see the black goat-

hair tents of the Bedouin still dotting the landscape after all these thousands of years since Solomon penned these words!

When the soul has commenced to enter into a closer and deeper walk with the spirit, the beauty which she thought she had, she sees wither up and drop off. The natural attractions in which she had rejoiced — the wisdom of this world, the empty religious exercises, the pleasures and pursuits of the flesh — disappear under the searching light of His holy presence. With clearer vision than ever before she now sees the emptiness, the vanity, the futility and frustration of all earthly things. It's a revealing — "I am black — but comely!" You see, beloved, when the red horse came into our land there was warfare — the flesh exerted itself against the new life of the spirit and hostilities broke out! What struggles we experienced as the flesh warred against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh! But now, when the black horse gallops through our mind and heart we begin to see the flesh for just what it is — and we are able to confess its weakness and worthlessness.

It is here that we get a revelation of the carnal mind, not just that it exists, but how it works. We begin to discern that the wisdom of men is truly foolishness with God. We understand that the flesh is concerned only with the perishable things of the physical realm, which things lead only to death and corruption because there is no lasting value and no life in them. We also receive the perception of the incredible darkness of the religious realm where the children of God are so occupied with soulish zeal and carnal efforts! They are running here and there, busily initiating flesh-appeal religious activities of all kinds, as though the Lord could not get along without their officious help. One would think that the Lord is not as interested in His own vineyard as they are. They are organizing and bringing together all kinds of machinery to run the Lord's business; they are inventing intricate and clever systems to get men saved, and to entertain them so they will stay saved. Everybody feels they should be doing something for God. But when the black horse comes with his penetrating revelation, for the first time we actually see the thoughts, schemes, ideas, plans, purposes, promotions, empty rituals, lifeless ceremonies, vain traditions, worldly programs, and religious zeal of the carnal mind for what it really is!

This is when we begin to leave everything that we can leave, and we get still before the spirit, waiting upon God in earnest, sitting at His feet in holy submission and sweet communion, learning of Him, that He may speak to us and work in us, and for us, and through us, to His glory. Then we begin to go forth with the presence and power of God upon us! And while we shall now be used of Him with those around us, we have learned to watch for His movings and dealings upon our souls, and to always yield to Him to work in us first. Thus shall our hearts become truly pure, unmixed with fleshly zeal and scheming of the carnal mind.

The black horse reveals the black — the substance of all carnality. One can never be an overcomer until he deals with the subtleties of the carnal nature! The carnal mind is the consciousness, reasoning, ethics, philosophy, religion, and character of the natural man. But God doesn't only reveal that to us — He reveals our comeliness at the same time! "I am black — but comely!" What a word that is! What beautiful balance there is in the wisdom of the Lord! I am black — fleshly, carnal in my outer natural man; but comely — with the nature of God in my inner spiritual man! It is this balance between the negative and the positive in God's dealings that accounts for the black horse having a pair of balances in his hand. The comeliness of those pressing on into God's fullness is revealed in the further ministry of the Rider upon the black horse. All is not negative, for there is great spiritual wealth and heavenly glory revealed there! There is an unmistakable sequence in every unfolding of divine activity at the opening of each of the seven seals. Yet the carnal mind never sees it, for it can be perceived only by the spiritual mind of the Christ within!

BARLEY AND WHEAT

"And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures say, a measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine." (Rev. 6:6)

A voice spoke, and the location of the voice was in the midst of the four living creatures, showing that it is not the voice of the Rider on the black horse. Neither is it the voice of one of the living creatures. As we have seen in chapter five, there is One in the midst of the living creatures and He is the Lamb that was slain. Thus it is the Lamb who makes the announcement of the wheat, and the barley, and the oil and the wine! The slain Lamb bespeaks a poured out life, His life given to us and raised up within us. Wheat, barley, oil, and wine are

likewise symbols of that which gives us life. These are aspects of the life of the Lamb communicated to us from experience to experience as we grow up into measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ!

Before we consider these commodities let us look at the background behind them. There are many types of the kingdom of God in the Old Testament. The broadest and most all-inclusive type is the land of Canaan. The land is frequently referred to as the good land. The Lord called it “a good land” and “an exceeding good land.” What a beautiful description that is of the spiritual territory of the kingdom of God! What is the goodness of this spiritual “land” of the kingdom of God? The land is good in many aspects. There is neither time nor space to explore the manifold characteristics of the land — for that would make a book in itself. Briefly we will consider the aspect that relates to our subject at hand — the unsearchable riches of the land.

The land is good in its unsearchable abundance. First of all it is rich in water. *“For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills.” (Deut. 8:7)* These waters are types of various kinds of supply of the Christ-life out of the inner sanctum of our spirit. Jesus said that He would give us water to drink that we never thirst again, and that this water would be in us an artesian well of water springing up unto eternal life. On another occasion the Lord tells us that this living water would flow out of our innermost being as the rushing of mighty rivers. This is the supply of the Christ-life, the spirit within as living water! Early in our experience we realize we are thirsty, not thirsty in our body for natural water, but thirsty in our soul for the water of life! When we are thirsty it means that our soul is dry, there is a lack of quality of life. But when we come athirst to the spirit and contact the spiritual life of God in the spirit, we are refreshed and quickened — we are watered! The deep and terrible thirst in our soul is quenched! We are refreshed by the life of the spirit more than by any cold water or beverage on earth!

As we drink of the life-giving spirit there is released a stream that flows forth from us — an emanation, the overflow of His life unto creation. We become a fountain of water, a mighty river of living water! In this land there is not only one stream, but many springs, fountains, streams, and rivers. What a rich land it is! The spring (spirit) is the source; the fountain (soul) is the reservoir; and the stream (ministry) is the overflow. Within the kingdom people there are many streams, streams of wisdom, streams of peace, streams of joy, streams of righteousness, streams of power, streams of revelation, streams of glory and many more. How many streams are there within you, my beloved? As sons of God we are called to love and bless all of creation as a living stream of divine life flowing forth!

*“Stretch forth your hands, and heal the nations;
Speak forth the Word, and give them life.
This is the day, that God has chosen;
And as He is, so are we, in this world!”*

What a wonderful source we have! What a good land this is! The sons of God are the people of the kingdom of the most High, the joy of the whole earth, the hope of all creation — they are the good land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills. What richness there is in this land!

Not only is the spirit of Christ within us the living water of this land, but He is also the bread of the land, the bread of life. Something to drink always accompanies food. Water is refreshing and quickening; food is strength and sustenance giving health and growth. So in chapter eight of Deuteronomy the very next verse says, *“A land of wheat, and barley, and vines (grapes, wine), and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of olive oil, and honey.” (Deut. 8:8)* There are seven food items in all — the perfect, eternal food! There are two kinds of grain mentioned — wheat and barley. Two other items in the list are oil and wine! What is the meaning of all these things?

These words — barley, wheat, oil, and wine are code words. They refer to the produce of the land of Canaan, but more specifically to the three feasts of Israel. The seasonal observance of the feasts is a perfect allegorical type of God’s redemptive processes. And these three feasts serve as the background for the work of Christ as the Rider upon the black horse! Most commentators have missed this beautiful truth altogether. Notice the spiritual sequence: after the initial revelation of Christ riding into our earth upon the white horse, beginning His conquest of our land (life) for God, the red horse gallops in bringing the awareness of our duality, the duality of flesh and spirit; and in the struggle that ensues between these two natures peace is taken from

our earth. Following this it is time for the springing forth of the Christ-life within so that Christ may begin to be raised up in our experience as life, power, and victory. This is accomplished through the celebration of the three spiritual feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles!

The three feasts of Israel are spoken of as *“appointed times of the Lord”* and as *“set feasts or appointed seasons of the Lord”* in both the New American Standard and the Amplified translations of the Bible. Under the Old Testament economy of God, these appointed times, or set feasts, or appointed seasons of the Lord were prescribed by Yahweh to take place on specific dates that corresponded to the phases of the moon and the agricultural seasons of the year. At those times the people gathered before the Lord in the city where Yahweh had placed His name, and celebrated His feasts there in His presence. But in the New Testament economy of God, those set times and appointed seasons of the Lord have been raised up to the new and higher sphere of the Spirit! This reveals the great truth that those times and seasons of the Lord are now experienced spiritually in our lives, as we partake of Him as our life, and bespeak stages of our growth and experience in God, rather than our natural progression through the literal seasons of the year.

How precious the knowledge that we have a God who hungers, thirsts, deeply desires, to feast with His people — a God who from the beginning has tried to show us that His greatest delight is not in showing His authority, but in enjoying intimate and close fellowship with His own. He set a feast of fruits before Adam and Eve, the likes of which man has never been able to reproduce, and then He walked with them in the Garden in the spirit of the day and communed with them face to face. He ate with Abraham in his tent at noonday. He spread a table in the wilderness for the entire nation of His chosen, and He gave them the very bread of heaven.

Jesus performed His first miracle at a wedding feast. He fed five thousand on a hillside. He did not hesitate to attend feasts of all kinds, and ate and drank with men until He was called a glutton and a wine-bibber. He went up to Jerusalem to celebrate the feasts of Yahweh. And He has established the new covenant with a feast, a great spiritual feast, wherein He has given the redeemed His own body (word) for their meat and His own blood (spirit) for their drink, that death might be swallowed up of life. He has promised through the prophet Isaiah that in the latter days He will make a great feast of spiritual blessings and benefits for all nations and all mankind upon His holy Mount (Isa. 25:6). And the greatest feast of all — the marriage supper of the Lamb — ushers a people into the most intimate and eternal relationship with their Lord! It is not in meetings, preachings, teachings, prophesyings, singing, or any outward exercise that we enjoy the marriage supper of the Lamb; it is at the marriage union of our “soul bride” with our “spirit bridegroom” that we discover within ourselves the glorious marriage feast provided by our Father!

Israel’s economy revolved around agriculture. The primary feasts of Israel were agricultural festivities. Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, were each formal announcements of distinct phases of the harvest season. That agricultural symbol is a picture of you and me — the earth that we are, receiving the incorruptible seed of the word of God planted in our field. In type, Israel harvested that planting in three phases in relationship to their spiritual calendar. Israel had two calendars, the civil and the spiritual. The spiritual calendar began with the month in which the feast of Passover was celebrated. The grain fields had been planted in the fall, in late October. With the arrival of spring in April, the grain was not yet fully ripe. At that time the people of Israel celebrated the feast of Passover. Passover was celebrated in two stages — Passover itself, with the slain lamb; then the feast of Unleavened Bread which commenced the day after the Passover and lasted for seven days; and in connection with this, the feast of the Firstfruits.

Passover was observed on the 14th day of Nisan. The following day, the 15th of Nisan, which is the first day of the feast of Unleavened Bread, was declared a Sabbath. Then we read, *“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for (as) you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.” (Lev. 23:9-11)* In Bible times barley was the principle crop and it was sown in October. Because of the many fall rains and the early spring rains, the barley grew very rapidly. Sometime around the first of April, grain fields around Jerusalem would begin to have ripened barley. So it was “on the day after the sabbath,” or on the 16th day of the first month of the spiritual calendar, that a sheaf of the first ripened grain of the barley harvest was collected out of the field and brought to the priest. Only barley could be used, because the wheat and other crops had not yet ripened at the time of Passover. Even the barley crop

had not fully ripened — only a small portion from which this “firstfruits” was selected and brought to the priest. The priest then waved the sheaf of firstfruits before the Lord and it was accepted by Him. The field of barley represented the redeemed people of the Lord! This was a symbol of their acceptance by the Lord — but the acceptance first of only a sample, a firstfruits, indicating that the remainder of the grain was also accepted by God, but would ripen and be harvested afterwards in its own time.

This is very interesting! Jesus is the first of the firstfruits. He is the firstborn among many brethren (Rom. 8:29). He is the firstborn from the dead (Col. 1:18). He is the firstfruits of them that slept (I Cor. 15:20, 23). Therefore our Lord Jesus Christ is the sheaf of the firstfruits of the barley harvest that was gathered and waved before the Father! We know that our Lord died on the Passover, for *“Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.”* (I Cor. 5:7) He died on the afternoon of the Passover as the sacrificed Lamb of God. He remained dead and buried in the grave until the day after the Sabbath, the 16th of Nisan, when suddenly He arose from the dead as the firstfruits of the new creation! He ascended to the Father that same day (John. 20:17) to be, as it were, waved before the Father as the first sample of full redemption — and the waving of the sheaf was fulfilled!

The waving of the barley sheaf pictured the resurrection of Jesus from the dead! It portrayed the acceptance by God of the offering of the firstfruit! And the firstfruit is accepted on behalf of the whole creation! And how beautifully this grain from the first harvest pictured our Lord Jesus, and also pictured all men when redemption is complete! The barley sheaf was free and unpossessed — not from any one man’s field. It was pure, untainted in any way by man’s arrangement of things — just loosely put into a sheaf. It was representative of all the fields which would, in due time, ripen into the same image of the firstfruits. Oh, the beauty of it!

What then, does barley represent? THE RESURRECTED CHRIST! When the harvest time came the firstfruits of the harvest must be offered to the Lord, and the firstfruit was clearly the barley. And so it is written, *“But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that slept.”* (I Cor. 15:20) The firstfruits of the harvest typify Christ as the firstfruits of the resurrection. How clearly this shows that barley represents THE RESURRECTED CHRIST! Yet, the soul-gripping truth is just this — it is not merely Christ raised out of the tomb two thousand years ago — it is Christ resurrected and raised up in us, the body of Christ! The barley represents the beginning of the resurrected Christ rising up within the body of Christ to show forth the beauty and glory and power of His life within. As this work is completed first in God’s called and chosen elect, we also become a part of Christ the firstfruits in all the glory of His resurrection! That is exactly what the apostle James had in mind when he wrote, *“Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.”* (James 1:18) The beloved John beheld this many-membered firstfruit company standing with the Lamb upon the heavenly mount Zion, and he heard a voice out of the heavenlies as the voice of many waters, saying, *“These are they which were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.”* (Rev. 14:1-4) And that is what the three measures of barley speak to us, for barley is resurrection life and three is the number of RESURRECTION! The black horse reveals to us the darkness and carnality of the flesh man within each of us. But the Rider on that horse has a pair of balances in his hand, and the cry goes forth, “Three measures of barley for a penny!” What an offer! Ah, there is the answer for the carnal mind and the flesh man, there is the power to fully and completely redeem us “from among men” — the living reality of resurrection life raised up within us by the power of the spirit! Can you not see the mystery?

Regardless of the problems and pressures that hedge you in and shut you up, irrespective of the circumstances and conditions that appear to confine and limit and prevent you from the fulfillment of God’s purpose in your life, let me assure you — a barley sheaf is within you! It is the sheaf of the resurrected Christ who has overcome all things! Apply HIM to the situation. He can never be exhausted! With the life of the resurrected Christ within you, you can live out the life of the unlimited God and gain the victory over every limitation of the flesh. You can do all things through Him who strengthens you, because He is resurrected in you and He is rising up out of your innermost being in almighty power. The experiencing of Christ as barley is the beginning of our journey into the depths of the almighty Christ. He is unlimited and all-powerful, yet we do not know Him in that measure at first.

Barley was eaten only by the poorest. It was considered a cheaper grade of food than wheat. The Greek word translated “measure” denoted the allowance of food for a common soldier or a working man for one day. It was actually about one and a half pints. A denarius (penny) was the ordinary wages for a full day’s labor. And when three “measures” of barley costs a denarius, it is as much as a man can do to earn the bread he and his

family consumes, leaving nothing for clothing or any of their other daily needs. The message is just this — to eat the bread of God, to eat the flesh of Christ which is life eternal, to put on the mind of Christ, to truly experience the spiritual life of resurrection glory and power, will COST YOU EVERYTHING YOU HAVE AND HOLD DEAR! Oh, yes! It will cost you your past, it will cost you your associations, it will cost you your friends, it will cost you your carnal ways, your fleshly will, your natural way of thinking, your earthly manner of living, your worldly hopes and ambitions, your religious traditions, and a whole world more!

Many have seen in this passage (Rev. 6:5-6) nothing but famine. The vast majority of expositors interpret the black horse and its rider as a symbol of famine. This interpretation is based on the balances, or scales, the rider has in his hand and the high cost of wheat and barley. They claim that the scales for weighing, carried in the hand, and the announcement of the extreme costliness of the grain, shows that the rider of the black horse personifies famine. But, of course, these expositors are interpreting on a natural level by the carnal mind, and they fail to see the deep spiritual truth revealed in the scene. Their interpretation is, I believe, a mistake — rather it points to a principle of inflation — the high price of commodities, so that just the food one eats costs his whole living. Of course, the meaning is spiritual! This is the word of the Lord to His elect! It has nothing to do whatsoever with natural famine, inflation, money, grain, or the food supply!

Buying and selling in the spiritual sense has naught to do with the principles of commercial trade. The prophet Isaiah faithfully exhorted God's people, *"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price"* (Isa. 55:1). The prophet made it plain that he was not talking about worldly commerce, but about "paying the price" for the "milk" of God's word and the "wine" of His unspeakable joy and abounding life. The wise man counseled: *"Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding."* (Prov. 23:23) To "buy" the truth means to PAY THE PRICE to embrace and walk in the truth, and I have learned through many years of experience that the "price" of truth is oft times to simply be willing to "give up" or "sell" an error! To the church at Laodicea, that prided herself that she was rich and increased with goods and had need of nothing, but knew not that she was wretched, poor, blind, and naked the Lord admonished, *"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich..."* (Rev. 3:18) To "buy" gold tried in the fire means simply to pay the price to forsake the mind and ways of the flesh and walk out the divine nature of God in our lives!

There is a beautiful story in the second book of Samuel, chapter twenty-four, which graphically illustrates the price we are called upon to pay for the work of God in our lives. In the later years of King David's life he ruled in peace over Israel. His kingdom stretched from the river Euphrates to the border of Egypt, and from the Great Sea on the west to the great desert on the east. But even then, David again did something that was displeasing to God. He gave orders to Joab, the commander of his army, to send officers throughout all the tribes of Israel and to count all the men who could go forth to battle. It may be that David's purpose was to gather a great army for some new war. But even Joab, the general, knew that it was not right to do this, for God had commanded His people to trust Him and to hear from Him in all things, and not to trust in numbers nor lean upon the arm of the flesh. So Joab said to David, *"May the Lord God make His people an hundred times as great as they are; but are they not all the servants of my lord the king? Why does the king command this to be done? Surely it will bring sin upon the king and upon the people."*

But David was firm in his purpose, and Joab obeyed him, but not willingly. He sent men through all the twelve tribes to take the number of those in every city and town who were fit for war. They went throughout the land, until they had written down the number of eight hundred thousand men in ten of the tribes, and of nearly five hundred thousand men in the tribe of Judah, who could be called out to fight. The tribe of Benjamin on the border was not counted, because the numbering was never finished. It was left unfinished because God was angry with David and with the people on account of this disobedience and lack of trust. David saw that he had done wickedly, in ordering the census of the people. He prayed to the Lord, and said, *"O Lord, I have sinned greatly in doing this. Now, O Lord, forgive this sin, for I have done very foolishly."*

Then the Lord sent the prophet Gad to visit David. Gad came to David and said to him, *"Thus saith the Lord, You have sinned in this thing, and now you and your land must suffer for your sin. I will give you the choice of three troubles to come upon the land. Shall I send seven years of famine, in which there shall be no harvest? Or shall your enemies overcome you and win victories over you for three months? Or shall there be three days when pestilence shall fall upon the land, and people shall die everywhere?"* And David said to the prophet

Gad, *“This is a hard choice of evils to come upon the land; but let me fall into the hand of the Lord and not into the hands of men; for God’s mercies are great and many. If we must suffer, let three days of pestilence and death come upon the land.”*

Then the Lord’s angel of death passed through the land, and in three days seventy thousand men died. And when the angel of the Lord stretched out his hand over the city of Jerusalem, the Lord had pity upon the people, and said, *“It is enough; now hold back your hand, and cause no more of the people to die.”* Then the Lord opened David’s eyes and he saw the angel standing on mount Moriah, with a drawn sword in his hand, held out toward the city. David prayed to the Lord and said, *“O Lord, I alone have sinned and have done this wickedness before Thee. These people are like sheep; they have done nothing. Lord, let Thy hand fall on me and not on these poor people.”*

The Lord then sent the prophet Gad back to David and said to him, *“Go, and build an altar to the Lord upon the place where the angel was standing.”* So David and the men of his court went out from mount Zion, where the city was standing, and walked up the side of mount Moriah. They found the man who owned the rock on the top of the mountain threshing wheat upon it, with his sons; for the smooth rock was used as a threshing floor, upon which oxen walked over the heads of grain, beating out the kernels with their feet. This man was not an Israelite, but a Jebusite, of the race that had lived on those mountains before the children of Israel came. His name was Araunah.

When Araunah saw David and his nobles coming toward him, he bowed down with his face toward the ground and said, *“For what purpose does my Lord the king come to his servant?”* *“I have come,”* said David, *“to buy your threshing floor, and to build upon it an altar to the Lord, that I may pray to God to stop the plague which is destroying the people.”* Araunah said to David, *“Let my Lord the king take it freely as a gift, and with it these oxen for a burnt offering and the threshing tools and the yokes of the oxen for the wood on the altar. All this, O king, Araunah gives to the king.”*

“No,” replied David, *“I cannot take it as a gift; but I will pay you the price for it. For I will not make an offering to the Lord my God of that which costs me nothing.”* So David gave Araunah the full price for the land and for the oxen and for the wood. And there, on the rock, he built an altar to the Lord God, and on it he offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. The Lord heard David’s prayer and took away the plague from the land. And on that same rock stood the altar of the temple of the Lord which Solomon built on mount Moriah. (Adapted from Hurlbut’s Story of the Bible).

I love the integrity of David and my heart overflows with admiration for him as well as with thanksgiving that God is raising up a people in this day possessing the same heart as king David. Though he was king, and could have commanded anything by a word, he still did not wrest ownership from the Jebusite, but offers him the FULL PRICE. It is on that threshing floor of our commitment to God and His great purpose that the FULL PRICE must be paid as well! There are many beautiful promises to “him that believeth,” but manifest sonship is not one of them! He who believes shall be saved, the gift of the Holy Spirit is received by faith, and the list goes on and on of those things which are freely given to us by God. Yet, mystery of mysteries — sonship, the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, kingship and priesthood upon His throne — none of these are gifts and none of them are possessed only by faith! We must “apprehend,” that is, lay hold upon that for which Christ Jesus has apprehended us! It is not to him that believeth, but to him that overcometh that the Lord gives power over the nations to rule them with a rod of iron. It is not to him that believeth, but to him that overcometh that the Lord grants to sit with Him upon His throne, even as He overcame, and is set down with His Father in His throne. If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him, is the clear word of the Lord to all who are called to sonship. Sonship, together with kingship and priesthood, is not a gift, but an attainment. And there is a price to be paid!

You see, the place where the price is paid is at the threshing floor. That is where the altar is built in our hearts, and that is where the temple of God is raised up in us! Whenever God “gives us a good threshing” that becomes the place where we die to all that is not of God, and allow Him to resurrect or re-erect us as the temple of the living God. If there is no threshing, there can be no altar and no temple. Nor can the plague of sin and death be stopped! If there is no suffering, there is no glory. If there is no sacrifice, there will be no fire of God. If there is no death, there can be no life. If there is no overcoming, there can be no throne. The sons

of God shall come into the possession of the mount of the Lord, of the temple of God from whence flows the pure river of the water of life out from the throne of God, when the price is paid and it costs us something — the full price — yea, ALL THAT WE HAVE AND ALL THAT WE ARE! The old adage is wonderfully true, even in the kingdom of God — YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR! The Lord has brought His sons in this hour to the place where we will not sacrifice that which has cost us nothing, nor will we accept the high and holy place of God, and the ministry which flows from it, as a gift. Oh, no! David was a man after God's own heart, and every son of God is also a man after God's own heart, and we will pay the price, yea, even the FULL PRICE!

In the physical world, many attempt to dodge this issue, seeking to get something for nothing. Therefore, the bargain counters of life are always crowded. But, however successful we may be in our natural lives, we cannot ignore this significant truth and get very far in our spiritual growth and development. Those who seek only the gifts of God remain babes in Christ, for it is children who seek gifts. Gifts will not carry one to maturity! Strange, isn't it, that many of the things that cost us the most in time, in energy, and even in pain are the things that turn out to be what is most profitable to us? There seems to be a price to be paid for every step we take in the realm of achievement — be it physical, intellectual, or spiritual. All carry its price tag! At every step of the road, then, or at least at every crossroads, we must ever "count the cost" and ask ourselves, "How badly do I really want what I am pursuing?"

We send our children to school year after year that they may learn just the rudiments of life and be partially prepared to face the realities of this world. It takes many years of consistent study, effort, and hard work for them to thus improve their minds in order to be prepared to meet life's challenges. But there is a lot of nonsense and foolishness which they absorb outside of school without study, just as naturally as a sponge absorbs water. Even so it is in the spirit realm! True wisdom, knowledge, and accomplishment are attained only at a price, a very high price. And not one in a million among professed believers is willing to pay that price! Therefore they drift hither, thither, and yon, carried about with every wind of doctrine that blows, by the sleight of men and their cunning craftiness and deceptions. Satan's lies and the imaginings of the flesh come to one naturally and without effort. But one who has paid the price for a higher walk and place in God, who comes to the popular church in her shame with the truth which has been purchased at so great a price, will soon discover that this is not wanted, not even possible of either comprehension or attainment by the masses of believers, because they have not and will not pay the price; they refuse to attend God's school! The foolishness of shallow thinking, darkened minds, and superficial experience is much more preferable; for it comes without effort.

All who desire to be prepared for the coming manifestation of the sons of God must realize that such preparation is costly and expensive! We must accept the fact that the "temple mount" and the "throne room" ARE NOT CHEAP. Seeking God is expensive because He is the most valuable thing in the universe! In the end it will cost you every thing you have. And all that you are. "Three measures of barley for a penny, and one measure of wheat for a penny." Oh, that I may KNOW HIM! Not just in a measure, but in His fullness. That, O Lord, is the cry of my heart! Have you counted the cost to so know Him, dear one? The price we might pay to so know Him is nothing compared to the glory to be revealed in us when we are filled with His fullness! It is as we seek Him and tarry long in His presence, doing all His bidding as He deals with us, that He pours the flask of oil of sonship anointing upon our heads in abundance, and all the character, wisdom, love, power, and glory we need to change our world and deliver creation. It is as we gaze into His face in the light that the Spirit brings, that His presence comes to rest upon us in fullest measure, so that all about can see His glory. Is there any price too great to pay to seek and find the riches of the glory and power hidden in His presence? Dare we not spend all that we have to buy this treasure? All who truly seek to be prepared for the next great move of God — the manifestation of the sons of God — are now putting aside every other interest and every other desire that would try to lure us away from undistracted devotion to HIM.

There is a further truth in this. As I mentioned, barley was a cheaper grade of food than wheat, just as wheat was less valuable than oil and wine. Our first experience of Christ raised up in our life is not as rich and full and glorious as the higher and deeper experiences that take place in our lives as we follow on to know the Lord. Our first experience of life in the spirit is like the cheaper barley, and then as we press on into God we experience Him in a greater way as wheat. Finally we come to know His life within in greater and greater measures, even as the oil and the wine! That is the progression. In the beginning of our walk our understanding of the ways and will of our Father was very limited, and we could receive only the smallest

amount and lowest level of the truth of God. We appropriated the word of God on a carnal plane and understood spiritual things in naturalistic and external terms of doctrines, traditions, rituals, ceremonies, ordinances, baptisms, communions, programs, outreaches, and flesh-appeal blessings, promotions, and activities of the old-order church systems of man.

Thank God, there are three feasts! Thank God, there is barley, and wheat, and oil and wine! The price is high, but what an unveiling they bring!

To be continued...

J. Preston Eby

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 88 'END-TIME' PROPHECIES – TRUTH REVEALED

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART EIGHTY EIGHT BREAKING THE SEALS (continued)

"And when He had opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, Come! And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and He that sat on him had a pair of balances in His hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures say, a measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine" (Rev. 6:5-6).

These words — barley, wheat, oil, and wine are code words. They refer to the produce of the land of Canaan, but more specifically to the three feasts of Israel. The seasonal observance of the feasts is a perfect allegorical type of God's redemptive processes within us! What most people miss about all this is that the feasts of Israel are not just an Old Testament observance — they are a New Testament experience! And these three feasts serve as the background for the work of Christ as the Rider upon the black horse! Most commentators have missed this beautiful truth altogether. Notice the spiritual sequence: after the initial revelation of Christ riding into our earth upon the white horse, beginning His conquest of our land (life) for God by quickening and awakening us to Truth, the red horse gallops in bringing awareness of our duality, the duality of flesh and spirit; and in the struggle that ensues between these two identities peace is taken from our earth. Following this it is time for the springing forth of the Christ-life within so that Christ may begin to be raised up in our experience as life, power, and victory. This is accomplished through the spiritual celebration of the three feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles!

In our last study we considered the sheaf of the firstfruits of the barley harvest that was waved before the Lord during the feast of Passover. We know that our Lord died on the Passover, for *"Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (I Cor. 5:7)*. He died on the afternoon of the Passover as the sacrificed Lamb of God. He remained dead and buried in the grave until the day after the Sabbath when the sheaf of the firstfruits of the barley harvest was waved before the Lord. Precisely at that time Jesus arose from the dead as the firstfruits of the new creation! He ascended to the Father that same day (Jn. 20:17) to be, as it were, waved before the Father as the first sample of full redemption — and the waving of the sheaf was fulfilled! What then, does barley represent? THE RESURRECTED CHRIST! And so it is written, *"But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that slept" (I Cor. 15:20)*. Yet, it is not merely Christ raised out of the tomb two thousand years ago — it is Christ resurrected and raised up in us, the body of Christ! The barley represents the beginning of the resurrected Christ rising up within each of us to gain the victory over the flesh and show forth the beauty and glory and power of His life within.

Now we come to the second feast, the feast of Pentecost. Pentecost is also a feast of firstfruits, even the firstfruits of the wheat harvest which ripened after the barley harvest was complete. The firstfruits of the wheat harvest were treated differently from the barley firstfruits. Instead of waving a sheaf of firstfruits, or the first ripened grain, the wheat was ground into fine flour and baked into two loaves along with leaven. Then, just as with the barley sheaf, the two loaves of bread of the firstfruits of the wheat harvest were taken to the priest and waved before the Lord. There was leaven in these loaves, which beautifully pictures the second firstfruit. Jesus, the first firstfruit of the barley sheaf, was unleavened. Leaven is a type of carnality and sin. Our Lord Jesus was sinless, pure, undefiled, and altogether holy! And so is the resurrected Christ raised up out of our spirit! Christ in our spirit, and as our spirit, is sinless, pure, undefiled, and altogether holy! That is the new creation within us. Yet as we follow on to know the Lord we find that there is still a mixture — flesh and spirit, our will and God's will, our way and God's ways, and even in our expressing of Christ and ministering of Christ, there is so often a mixture of the self of the flesh life and the pure spirituality of the Christ within!

The two loaves of the firstfruits of the wheat harvest also represent the greater measure of the Spirit raised up in our lives through the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The day of Pentecost represents the time when the Holy Spirit was poured out and raised up within the body of Christ in great power and glory. *“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:1-4).*

That is the power of a REAL PENTECOST! It is important that the feast of Pentecost occurred at a separate point in time from the Passover and was different and distinct from the previous feast. For the second time all males were to appear before the Lord in the place of His choosing (Deut. 16:16). Whereas Passover was held at the time of the barley harvest, Pentecost was held at the time of the wheat harvest (Ex. 34:22). Therefore, we see that the feasts were associated with a progression in harvest, and speak of the ongoing process of the development and maturing of His life within His people. There is a continuous process of sowing and reaping throughout our walk with the Lord! We do not receive the life of our Lord in full measure, or full blossom, or full fruitage at the time when Christ first begins to arise in our life at the spiritual feast of Passover, but we continually “put on the Lord Jesus Christ.” We are being progressively changed into His image from glory to glory until we finally arrive at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ!

It will be obvious to every spiritual mind that the feast of Pentecost is not the fullness of the Spirit anymore than is the spiritual feast of Passover. The feast of Pentecost was called “the feast of the harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours” (Deut. 16:9-12; Ex. 23:16; 34:22). Pentecost was the “firstfruits” of the wheat harvest, and under New Testament economy it is called spiritually “the firstfruits of the Spirit” (Rom. 8:23), the firstfruits of our inheritance. Christ’s coming in the feast of Pentecost saw Him descend on a little flock as the Comforter, which coming Paul tells us was but “an earnest” (or sample) of the Spirit (II Cor. 1:22; 5:5). “Earnest” means merely a pledge or first installment. The balance must follow! Just as when you buy a house or a car and put down “earnest money,” the fullness is guaranteed by that first installment or down payment! The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our full inheritance in God! *“After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest (down payment) of our inheritance...” (Eph. 1:13-14).* *“Who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest (down payment) of the Spirit in our hearts” (II Cor. 1:22).*

Jesus came to earth as a manifest Son of God and the scripture says that God did not give Him the Spirit by measure. In other words, manifest sonship means to have the absolute FULLNESS OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD! No son of God will be manifested to creation in either the feast of Passover or the feast of Pentecost, for both of these feasts bring forth within us the life of the Spirit “by measure.” There are two measures here, the measure of barley and the measure of wheat. Jesus said, *“I am that bread of life. This is the bread that cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die” (Jn. 6:48-50).* The living bread of God is measured out to man — there are three measures of barley, one measure of wheat, and then there is an unlimited supply of oil and wine! It is in the three feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles that we experience the life of God from measure to measure, from strength to strength, and from glory to glory. Is that not precisely what the Holy Spirit is telling us as the black horse gallops through our land and the Rider has a pair of scales in His hand, and the cry is, “A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny!” You see, it is all by measure! Yet, when we come to the oil and the wine the word measure is not used! The oil and the wine, as we shall presently see, are associated with the feast of Tabernacles, which is the feast at the end of the year, at the time of the ingathering of all the crops, when the vats are full and the barns are overflowing! This is the fullness of the Spirit, the Spirit without measure — the manifestation of the sons of God!

HURT NOT THE OIL AND THE WINE

“And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine” (Rev. 6:6).

These two principles — the wheat and the barley — are the very principles revealed under the third seal as the black horse strides across the scene. No sooner does the black horse gallop into our land revealing the

carnality in our lives, than the Rider of the horse follows this action with the provision of barley and wheat! There is a divine progression here. As we forsake the darkness and futility of the carnal mind (Egypt), there lies immediately before us the incredible fruitfulness and plenitude of the land of Canaan — the realm of the SPIRIT! As we enter into this land of His fullness and glory and unlimited power an injunction is laid upon us — “and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.” We are the people of His land, apprehended to be the priests of His temple. The oil and the wine are the fullness of God to which the barley and the wheat merely point. The sons of God who hitherto have feasted upon the barley and the wheat, are now becoming custodians of His priceless oil of sonship anointing and His precious wine of incorruptible life!

And yet — we do not enter into the fullness of the oil and wine in the feast of Tabernacles as quickly and easily as we received the blessings of the barley and the wheat! The truth of this is illustrated by the fact that the voice commands, “and hurt not the oil and the wine.” Do not open it, do not disturb it, do not use it! It means that the oil and the wine are there — but the time has not arrived for them to be opened, rejoiced in, and appropriated! You see, by beloved, there is only a small space of time between Passover and Pentecost, just fifty days, to be exact. They are close together because they are both feasts of the firstfruits. But there is a long space between Pentecost and Tabernacles — the space of five months! We cannot move swiftly from Pentecost to Tabernacles, for there are many experiences in between. Throughout the church age Passover and Pentecost have been experienced in the lives of the Lord’s people, and generally it has taken but a short time in our experience to enter into both experiences. But during the whole church age the people of God have not partaken of the feast of Tabernacles! “See thou hurt not the oil and the wine” signifies that once we have experienced Passover and Pentecost, we are still not yet prepared to lay hold upon the last, the highest, the greatest, the fullest feast of all — THE FULLNESS OF GOD IN SONSHIP! Throughout the entire church age it has been prepared for us, yet God reserved it for another day, and we could not enter in until the time appointed of the Father.

The feast of Tabernacles is the feast of FULLNESS! The natural feast in Israel was the culmination of all, coming at the close of the agricultural season, when all the products of the year, from field and olive yard and vineyard, had been gathered. It was also called the feast of the Ingathering, the last harvest festival of rejoicing in the bounty of God! The “present truth” is that spiritually God has brought us to this time! We have been moving through the feasts, and through the multiplied dealings of our Father between the feasts, and God has now brought a people to the threshold of the feast of Tabernacles. For a number of years now the Holy Spirit has been witnessing through His apostles and prophets that we have finally arrived spiritually at the seventh month, and we will now celebrate the final feast, the feast of Tabernacles. The Amplified Bible refers to this festival as “a holy feast.” And that “holy feast” of fullness has not yet been completely fulfilled, because for two thousand years the saints of God were restrained by the injunction, “and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine!”

The feasts are no longer kept in the natural, but are observed by the Spirit. Christ fulfilled every one of the feasts within Himself. In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily! He has already experienced and appropriated every blessing, benefit, and provision that God has ordained for mankind to come into. He has conquered all sin, sorrow, limitation, and death, and has ascended to the throne of the Father where He has been given all power in heaven and in earth! We have experienced victory over sin, we have risen above the storms and troubles of this life, we have been healed, spoken in tongues, prophesied, heard the voice of God, done signs, wonders, and miracles, and rejoiced in the wonderful gifts of God. All of these things pertain to Passover and Pentecost. The only feast not yet completely fulfilled is Tabernacles! This feast will be fulfilled when we have entered the power and glory of the kingdom of God in fully redeemed bodies. Then the feast of Tabernacles shall be fulfilled in the absolute sense as all power in heaven and in earth is given into our hands, for the Spirit without measure shall be poured upon us from on high.

The fullness of the Spirit imparted to the elect is the fulfillment of the feast of Tabernacles. Receiving the fullness of the Spirit also involves our bodily transformation, for the Holy Spirit, through the apostle Paul, has clearly spoken, saying, *“For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain (to be delivered from the bondage of corruption) together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption (placement as sons), to wit, the redemption of our body” (Rom. 8:22-23).* Again, *“After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest (down payment) of our inheritance until the redemption of the*

purchased possession” (Eph. 1:13-14). The “purchased possession” is the whole man — spirit, soul, and body! The scriptures show that the earnest of the Spirit has been given to us to lead us to His highest and utmost. By His Spirit we shall make it all the way into full redemption of the purchased possession!

Let men now cast aside their pride of attainment. Passover is not the fullness. Pentecost is not the fullness. Pentecostal people love to call themselves “Full Gospel.” There are people right here in El Paso who say, “We’re a FULL GOSPEL church!” No they’re not! I am asked the question sometimes, “What is the difference between what the Pentecostals and Charismatics preach and what you teach?” Indeed, there are vast and varied differences! But fundamental to them all is the fact that they preach two feasts, whereas we proclaim three. They preach two feasts and call them “Full Gospel.” The truth is, they are but two-thirds of the Gospel at best! Passover is not the fullness! It is but the beginning — the appetizer before the meal. It is the soup, the porridge made of barley! Pentecost is not the fullness — it is the hot wheat-bread with butter placed on the table before the main course!

There is yet another feast, the feast of Tabernacles, the feast of the FULL HARVEST AT THE END OF THE YEAR — the balance of the meal together with the oil and the wine! Tabernacles is the feast of ALL THE FULLNESS OF GOD at the end of the year, the final experience into which the Lord’s elect are graced to enter, at the conclusion of the age, all the power and glory and wisdom and majesty of God to be manifested in the sons of God. This feast will bring the fullness of our redemption in the whole man, and release to creation, with salvation and blessing to all the nations. The glory of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea! There will be a MIGHTY OUTPOURING, A TORRENTIAL DOWNPOUR OF OMNIPOTENCE! Praise God for the earnest — but let us follow on to receive the FULLNESS! Some profess to already be walking in the glory of Tabernacles, but I must sadly confess that I have not yet seen THE MANIFESTATION OF FULLNESS FROM ANY QUARTER!

Our heavenly Father has been gracious and faithful to give us our bread from day to day, from dealing to dealing, from realm to realm. He has called us to His feasts and has abundantly fed us in each. We were called to the feast of Passover and began to eat of Christ as barley, in the first rising up of His resurrection life within. Then He called us to the spiritual feast of Pentecost in the baptism in the Holy Spirit. How wonderfully He fed us there! We feasted at His table upon the living bread of His Word and His Spirit and partook of His power and glory in divers gifts of the Holy Ghost. But there is a third dimension in God where we move beyond new birth and gifts into the very throne of God. The sons of God are now called to the third spiritual feast, the feast of fullness! Blessed are they who are called to this great feast, that which supersedes Pentecost, that which is the BALANCE OF THE MEAL of which Passover and Pentecost were merely first courses! And the balance must therefore come, the remainder of the meal, which will give strength to the laborers to go forth and accomplish great and mighty things for the Master.

I believe I speak the truth when I say that many of us have reached the point of no return — there is nothing to go back to, not in the flesh, not in the world, not in the church systems; there is nothing out from which we have been drawn by the Spirit of God to which we would return; it is all so empty, so meaningless, lifeless, worthless; not worthless to those who still need those things, but worthless to us in our quest for the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus. Now we must FOLLOW ON TO KNOW THE LORD IN HIS FULLNESS! It is vain to come out, unless we are committed to enter in. It is not enough to come out of the flesh, out of the world, out of religious Babylon, unless we are prepared to cross our “Jordan” and possess the land of Canaan. We are committed to a course which cannot be altered, for it is fixed in its destination — His throne! *“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne”* (Rev. 3:21).

We do not desire the throne for what we can get out of it, for our own fame, interests, or fortune, but for the infinite potential it holds for blessing and restoring creation. Today the world is full of broken hearts, the hospitals are crowded, the cemeteries are being filled, sin, sorrow, warfare, poverty, and injustice abound, even nature itself is groaning. You go down to the seaside and you can hear the sob of the waves, you go to the mountains and you can hear the low sigh of the wind in the tree tops, you walk through the forest and you can hear the anguished shrieks of the animal kingdom. Creation is groaning, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God!

Some in this hour have watered down the revelation of manifest sonship, making it something less than what God intends. They have abandoned the hope that the sons of God will go forth in a ministry of signs, wonders, and miracles, touching men's lives with the power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost. They seem to think that we are just going to stand in our little sonship gatherings and "speak the word" and creation will be set free. But God has never done it that way! The firstborn Son of God, a manifest Son of God if there ever has been one, didn't do it that way! And that first manifest Son by His indwelling in His body throughout the age has not done it that way! These folks scoff at the idea that the sons of God will actually minister in the fullness of the power of the Spirit, and literally empty the hospitals, call men out of the funeral homes and cemeteries, deliver the creation from the bondage of corruption, reveal the secrets of men's hearts, break the power of sin and rebellion, convert the ignorant, the deceived, the hateful, the terrorists, the drug lords, and all wickedness of men, turn nations upside down, and transform the whole world, establishing the kingdom of God in every heart, in every people, and in every nation. Let me ask you — if the manifest sons of God don't empty the hospitals, doctor's offices, mortuaries, and all the hell-holes of this world, WHO IS GOING TO DO IT? CREATION WILL NEVER BE SET FREE FROM THE BONDAGE OF CORRUPTION UNTIL SOMEONE DOES IT! Let's get real!

There is a mystery about the feast of Tabernacles. It is the only one of the three feasts of Israel that as yet has not had an earth-shaking fulfillment. The fundamentalists know Christ in the feast of Passover. The Pentecostals and Charismatics know Christ in the feast of Pentecost. We ourselves have joyfully witnessed some of God's great deliverances, signs, wonders, and mighty acts in these realms! But who is there among us that has demonstrated a glory or power beyond Pentecost? Just having "deeper revelation" and "feeling something wonderful in the spirit" in a meeting does not mean you are walking in Tabernacles! Therefore, the feast of Tabernacles has not been celebrated in a spiritual dimension by the Lord's people the world over as has been the case with the other two festivals, those of Passover and Pentecost. Truly we can say — Passover has come, Pentecost has come, and Tabernacles must come, for each is a part of God's great plan for His people!

We have had the feasts of Passover and Pentecost and both of these feasts have been fulfilled IN THE NEW TESTAMENT AGE OF THE CHURCH, which is His body, and right here upon earth. For some strange reason men seek to postpone the last feast to some future age, or give it to the Jews, or relegate it to some beautiful "Isle of Somewhere," and consequently the real spiritual meaning and import of the feast of Tabernacles is completely obscured and lost. The grand truth is that like the others, the feast of Tabernacles will be fulfilled in the body of Christ RIGHT HERE UPON EARTH! It will be fulfilled individually, it will be fulfilled dispensationally, and it will be fulfilled in us as the Corporate Christ.

The grand truth of this has been wonderfully quickened by the Spirit of God to multiplied thousands of saints around the world in these days at the transition of the ages. All over the world at this particular moment in history, the Spirit of God is speaking to the elect about an imminent manifestation of Christ. The trumpet has sounded — the appointed time has come! Believers in every nation under heaven have heard the voice of the prophets, foretelling of this most awesome intervention of God's power that is about to sweep the earth.

The prophetic word of the Lord gives promise of a time to come when the Lord will move mightily by His Spirit. At that time the Lord will restore that which was lost all through the ages past and the long night of man's selfhood and rebellion. There is an event soon to take place that shall overshadow and eclipse all former, lesser, manifestations of God's glory and power in the earth. The glories of this great event will inspire, initiate, and bring to fulfillment the times of the restitution of all things. The grandeur, the splendor, the glory, and the great power of God to be manifest at the time of this great event is impossible to comprehend presently, for we are still living and moving, for the most part, under the economy of the "firstfruits" of God's Spirit. Therefore we press forward to partake of that greater and more glorious feast — with the oil and the wine!

What sets the feast of Tabernacles apart from all others is the abundance enjoyed during the feast. It's the fall harvest. At the celebration of Tabernacles, not only had the barley and wheat been harvested, but also all other grains, the fruit trees, the olives, the grapes, all that could possibly serve as food or drink. The harvest

was complete. On the spiritual plane this points to the fact that God has been using His people everywhere to whatever degree He has prepared the vessel for that revelation of the Christ. There has come a beautiful unfolding of His purpose, the outflow of His life, and the manifestation of Himself throughout this church age, right up to the present time. But there shall yet come the ultimate, the total, and complete revelation of Jesus Christ — not a narrow, limited thing, not to get a number of people saved and filled with the Spirit, and healed and blessed and used — but the kingdom of God coming with power and great glory! As an expression and a manifestation of God in His total capacity with no limitations, with all the power, with all the glory, all the might, all the majesty, all the authority, so that nations shall be swept into the kingdom of God, creation delivered, and the last enemy, even death, destroyed from off the face of the earth for evermore. What bright and glorious prospects loom before the vision of all who press on to the feast of Tabernacles!

Since the church's birth almost every generation has experienced something of an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Most of these moves would have to be characterized as something less than worldwide. They swept communities, cities, states, provinces, even nations at times, but few, if any, were global. But now, beyond the strength and influence of the feasts of Passover and Pentecost, there has been released from heaven in the last several years an intense sense of expectancy. It is the expectancy that ALL HEAVEN is about to break loose in the midst of the Lord's elect on a worldwide basis! Do you identify with that expectancy?

God is raising up voices in every hamlet and metropolis to say, "The earth is about to see the glory of God in a most remarkable way!" I am convinced that a host of heavenly messengers has recently been released to every corner of the earth bearing the message: *"And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all mankind together shall see it, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it!" (Isa. 40:4, NIV).* What I am proclaiming, announcing, and declaring is that there is a third experience in God! The Rider on the black horse has revealed that this feast of the oil and the wine would come to pass long after the feasts of the barley and the wheat had been experienced by God's people. But now the hour has come to "hurt" or "open" and "distribute" the oil and the wine — without measure! There is an appearing and manifestation of the Lord that is going to come to pass in the body of Christ today, right here upon this earth, and the implications of this feast go far beyond anything you or I could possibly imagine!

Oh, what a grand and glorious realm lies before us in the feast of Ingathering! As George Warnock has pointed out, it is the day of the full fruit of the Spirit! The day of Perfection! The time of full and complete redemption, spirit, soul, and body! The full and complete experiencing of HIMSELF! The fullness of Strength and Power and Glory! The Feast of feasts! The strange part of the whole thing is this, that the whole purpose and plan of God for this new day of the kingdom of God is completely obscured and lost amidst the shout and euphoria over the "firstfruits" of the Spirit which we received at Pentecost. Those who glory in the "firstfruits of the Spirit" do not even know what this day is about! They can see the healings, deliverances, miracles, prophecies, gifts...and so forth; and they understand not that it is God in His great mercy inviting His people to enter on in to their full inheritance. They do not realize that all this is but the foretaste, the appetizer, and the earnest of their heritage, and that God bids us arise and come away with Him to the great Feast that lies before!

God is speaking to His people today and saying to us as He said to Israel at mount Sinai, "You have kept the feast of Pentecost long enough... you have enjoyed this realm to the fullest. It is time to move! Pack up your tents and begin to move!" The church world today has no vision for what is about to happen. All it can think about is getting raptured away into the clouds. Our prime concern is to prepare the ground for the truth concerning the feast of Tabernacles, which surpasses the glory of Pentecost, as the noon-day sun surpasses the brightness of early dawn. Oh, how I yearn and travail for the manifestation of this new thing in God! Yes, there are many who claim to have already apprehended this high place in God, and I do not doubt their revelation; perhaps in some measure they have received the experience; but I do not hesitate to tell you that nowhere in all the earth, or in the lives of any of my precious brethren, have I seen the manifestation of Tabernacles!

When the saints catch only a glimmer of the glory of the feast of Tabernacles which even now looms before us, they cannot possibly cling to the stagnant remains of yesterday's visitations. If Passover was wonderful — and it certainly was — how much more wonderful has been Pentecost! And if Pentecost is glorious, how much more shall we expect Tabernacles to exceed it in glory! And even now as the first faint rays of this glorious

feast appear on the horizon, we have every reason to rejoice — knowing that the days of deliverance and restoration are here!

Although God has His “time” for everything, the marvelous reality is that in this hour the journey from the feast of Pentecost to the feast of Tabernacles is not primarily a matter of chronology of time or distance, but a chronology of experience! One does not get from the feast of Pentecost to the feast of Tabernacles by a date on the calendar or by a trip through space — we get there by an experience in God. It is not now a sequence of times or locations, but a sequence of growth, experience, life, and reality! God’s called and chosen elect is beginning to move into a new dimension in God, the veil is being drawn back, the seal is being loosed, and we are seeing that there is another whole realm of reality that we never knew about in the church systems. There is a whole other feast, food that we knew not of, an entirely other dimension of being in God, another vast realm of glory that brings us into the very fullness of God!

Passover and Pentecost have not delivered creation from the bondage of corruption. Our “revelation” of sonship, the most holy place, and the feast of Tabernacles has not delivered the creation either! Therefore creation still waits and groans and travails for the manifestation of the sons of God! We must have more than revelation, we must have more even than experience — there must be the MANIFESTATION! The book in the right hand of Him who sits upon the throne is a wonderful book, glorious things are written therein, but they mean nothing to us or to creation until the seals are broken and there is an UNVEILING, a MANIFESTATION. Only the fully manifest sonship ministry can save this old world, demolish the systems of men, transform the hearts of humanity, establish the rule of the Spirit, and break off from all men and nations the bondages of sin, sorrow, sickness, fear, deception, limitation, torment, hatred, tyranny, and death! Ah, my brother, my sister, we have only seen the edges of God’s ways, the borders of His mind, and the fringes of His power, until the fullness of His great redemption is raised up within us!

To be continued...

J. Preston Eby

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 89 BREAKING THE SEALS (Continued)

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART EIGHTY-NINE

THE FOURTH PART OF MEN KILLED

"And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, Come! And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him..." (Rev. 6:7-8)

There is a special significance to be attached to the description of the fourth horseman — he whose name is Death — and Hell followed with him. Death and Hell are specially linked in the Revelation. And since Christ came and abolished death (II Tim. 1:10) and destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil (Heb. 2:14), He now boldly proclaims, *"I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the KEYS OF HELL AND OF DEATH."* (Rev. 1:18) And since the Christ now possesses both hell and death, for He has conquered them and taken them unto Himself, neither of them ride anywhere except by His authority!

This fourth horse is identified in the King James Bible as a pale horse. The translators had a difficult time with this word "pale" because its simple meaning is "green." They couldn't understand green in relation to death and hell, so they used the word "pale." Other translators rendered it "ashy pale," "sickly green," "livid," "color of ashes," etc., in an effort to come up with something that would portray that which is sickly, hellish, or dead. One writer says, "The translation pale does not do justice to the horrible word used there! It is pallid or literally a greenish-yellow horse." But, I ask — is that true?

Strong's Concordance gives the meaning of the root word in Greek as simply "green." The actual form of the word used in our text is *kloros*. The best key to discovering the meaning of any word is usage. This Greek word appears in only three other places in the New Testament. Let us look at how the word is translated there, and what its obvious meaning is by its usage. When Jesus was preparing to multiply the loaves and the fishes to feed the five thousand, we read, *"And He commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green (kloros) grass."* (Mk. 6:39) Do you suppose Jesus was talking about pale grass, ashy pale grass, sickly green grass, livid grass, pallid grass, or ash-colored grass? I don't think so! Everyone knows that grass is known for its green color. The next two references are in the book of Revelation, the same book where the word is translated pale. Notice now how it is translated in the other two places! *"The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green (kloros) grass was burnt up."* (Rev. 8:7) *"And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green (kloros) thing, neither any tree..."* (Rev. 9:4) If this is such a "horrible" word, with such a "horrible" meaning, as the commentator above characterized it, why is all grass, trees, and vegetation of all kinds defined as being this color? Obviously, the word means green!

We meet the color green under another symbol in chapter four of the Revelation. Caught up into heaven, beholding the throne of God and Him that sat upon it, John said, *"And there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald."* (Rev. 4:3) Webster defines emerald as: (1) a green transparent variety of beryl used as a gemstone. (2) a clear deep green color. Ireland is called "The Emerald Isle" because of the abundance of lush dark green vegetation. The rainbow around the throne reveals the great truth that the throne is not a power of destruction, but the very power of life! While most rainbows have more than one color, this rainbow was in appearance like unto an emerald — accentuating only the color green. Green in scripture is the supreme color of LIFE! Yes, there is death to the old, but in the throne we ascend to the highest dimension of life — divine, incorruptible, immortal Life! John fell as dead before the face of the One sitting on the throne — his old Adamic life, identity, nature, and mind slain by the fiery glory of God! But let your heart consider the words of this glorious One when He says to John, *"Fear not. I am He who lives, and*

was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore!" In other words, "Don't be afraid to give up your will, John, your ways, your desires, your emotions, your plans, your hopes, your dreams, your thoughts, your carnal, human identity. *Don't be afraid," says the Lord Jesus, "for I had to give them all up when I walked in the flesh. I died! BUT BEHOLD, I AM ALIVE FOR EVERMORE!"* Therein is the power of both death and life! The consuming fire of God will absolutely destroy every vestige of the carnal mind and the flesh life. And then the rainbow of promise establishes within the covenant of divine, heavenly life and reality. Adam dies and Christ arises within us! This is the glory of sonship! We die to the old that we may live in the new! Thus, both death and life are wrought in us by the mighty Christ of God! Oh, the mystery of it!

Consider the scene! The green horse speaks of LIFE. Yet he who rides on him is DEATH! What a paradox! The purpose of the green horse's Rider is to kill. Death is riding on life! What can it mean? Ah, the answer is so very plain and simple. Death comes by life!

Many of us in our spiritual walk have been trying to "die" in order to live. We've had the idea that if we could overcome and conquer the death in us we would be able to live the life of Christ. But that is a contradiction of the law of life! Paul said it this way, *"For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."* (Rom. 8:2) The law of the spirit of life in Christ is the law of our spiritual life — and it supersedes the law of sin and death! You see, my beloved, you don't die in order to live — you live in order to die! It is the law of the spirit of LIFE that makes us free from the law of sin and DEATH. In fact, if you don't live before you die, you had better not die! If you don't have life before you die, there will be nothing left — not even a hope of resurrection, for it is the seed of life that guarantees resurrection. Do you know why Jesus was willing to die? He was willing to die because He could say, *"No man taketh my life from me — I lay it down; I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it up again."* The one who lays down his life must have power to take it up again. If you have not the power to lay your life down, and take it back up, then may God help you not to die! You must live in order to die, so that when you die you can still live!

Christ's life was secure in death because He had life before He died, and by that life He arose. Someone says, "But, I'm not going to die!" Well, do you know what the proof of me having life would be? The proof would be for me to say, "Go ahead, kill me...pull the trigger, man, because I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it up again." A lesser degree of life is required to live and not die, than to die and still live, and bring yourself back again. When I have a quality of life that IS, then I can lay it down and take it up. So the law of the spirit of life makes me free from the law of sin and death! Life makes me free from death, not the other way around. It is not getting rid of death that enables me to live. Oh, no! Only life can get rid of death! You don't destroy the death in someone to make him live, you give him life to swallow up the death! It is Christ in me that causes Adam to be brought to death, yet I live. I live and then die, and still I live. I'm not going to conquer something so I can have the victory — I must get the victory so I can conquer something! It is not victory that gives you power, it is power that gives you victory. GET LIFE, precious friend of mine, and all the death in you will take care of itself. Increase in life and you will decrease in death. These are divine laws, the laws of the kingdom of God!

While it is gloriously true that Christ has given His life to all men, to the whole world (John. 6:51), yet it is evident that there must be a progression in the development of that life in the experience of every man until every vestige of the death realm has been swallowed up, spirit, soul, and body. To those who walk in Christ there is an ever-increasing consciousness, growth, increase, unfoldment, maturation, and triumph of that life within. The mighty working of His power in us is followed by this very precious and understandable result: *"If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell (makes Himself at home) in you, He that raised up Christ shall also quicken (make alive) your mortal bodies by His Spirit which dwelleth in you."* (Rom. 8:11) I believe I now see more clearly than I have ever done why it was that Paul, who, as you and I do, still dwelt in the hellish bondage of a mortal body, cried out, *"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"* (I Cor. 15:53-57)

We are, indeed, terribly and horribly in bondage to the body of this death, and with us the whole creation is groaning, waiting for the day when the sons of God will deliver them from the bondage of corruption. I do not

need to argue with any man to prove our present mortality in the flesh. If you must sleep to live, you are mortal. If you must eat to live, you are obviously mortal. If you must breathe to live, you are unquestionably mortal. If an eighteen-wheeler were to hit you on the freeway at seventy miles per hour and you would splatter all over the road, you are definitely mortal. We are all aware of our constant and unremitting decay as the aging process etches its marks upon us. Our present mortality is naught but death, although we live in the spirit. Think of it! Meditate deeply upon it and cling to this realm of death no more. Reach up, dear one, with the blessed arm of faith and embrace that bright realm above where that which is true in our spirit reaches down and takes hold upon our outer man, where this mortal puts on immortality, where death in all its aspects is swallowed up of life, where in that final victory of His life within, the sons of God will upon this earth shout in triumph over both death and the grave!

Truly we yearn for this change, for our desire is not to be unclothed, but to be clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life (II Cor. 5:1-5). Yes, we groan inwardly for this transformation to take place! I continually meet up with brethren who confess that they have already put on physical immortality and incorruption and that they have already by-passed the grave and cannot and will not die. I must be very honest and frank with you, my beloved brothers and sisters. I have not one whit of a desire to live forever IN THIS BODY OF HUMILIATION. When this mortal puts on immortality there will be a mighty change! When Jesus was transfigured (metamorphosed) on the holy mount, and when He came out of the tomb in the power of resurrection there was a mighty change! There is no more frightening thought, no more repugnant possibility, than the idea that I might live forever in this present body of humiliation! Thank God, there is to be a change! *“Who will transform and fashion anew the body of our humiliation to conform and be like the body of His glory and majesty, by exerting that power which enables Him even to subject everything to Himself.” (Phil. 3:21, Amplified)*

The thought of merely adding deathlessness to this body of humiliation, with no substantial change, the very suggestion of such limitation, that I might have to daily bathe, use the bathroom, anoint my body with deodorant, brush my teeth, and rinse with Listerine throughout eternity — the hint that I might retain this base form, that I might remain as I am unendingly, falls as far short of what I conceive of a body transformed and fashioned like unto His body of glory and majesty as hell falls short of heaven! The body of incorruption shall resemble this vile body no more than does the oak tree resemble the chemical elements of the earth which were raised up into the substance of the tree by the mighty working of the subtle and mysterious life-force sown in the earth as a seed. The bottom line is just this — if you think you have an immortal body in your present form — FORGET IT!

Sons of God! If we would be fashioned like unto Him, co-sharers of His glory and power and wisdom as God-men, we must not simply rest content with the faith that trusts in the cross and its pardon; we must follow on to know the fullness of the New Life, the life of glory and power in human nature, injected into mankind through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, of which the Spirit of the glorified Jesus is the witness and the source. Now, practically everything in relation to our sonship depends upon the clearness with which this great truth that I have stated is recognized. The Holy Spirit of God inspired the message of these words, *“Much more than, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, WE SHALL BE SAVED BY HIS LIFE.” (Rom. 5:9-11)*

The double provision of Christ is here clearly set forth: reconciled by His death — saved by His life! Christ's death is the atonement, reconciling men to God, granting a full and free admittance back into Eden's lovely Garden from which our disobedient foreparents were once banished. But Christ's life is the tree of life in that Garden, the source of the life which shall work in us the complete transformation into the divine nature. Sin, sickness, sorrow, fear, and death are all part of a power in our life; let us fully understand that it can only be met by another higher power! The power of sin and death works all through our life. The death of Christ, which is the atonement, reconciles us to God; but only the life of Christ can come against the power of sin and death and deliver our life from destruction. Reconciliation places us, in God's eyes, back in Eden's garden; but the tree of life is the power that delivers our life from the dominion of sin and death! Remember — sin began in the Garden! Death began in the Garden! So just getting back into the Garden (reconciliation) is not enough! You can sin there and you can die there! We must eat from the tree of life! He redeemeth my life, by His life, from death! So Christ's life, not His death, living in our life, absorbing it, impregnating it, transforming it, causes

us to live! This is the meaning of that profound sentence in which Paul records the first work of salvation and pointedly distinguishes it from the second great work of salvation, saying, *“If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life!”* Aren't you glad!

Can we not see by this that the Rider on the green horse whose name is Death is, like all the other Riders, our Lord Jesus Christ. The Death is HIS DEATH! And His death rides upon LIFE! That is, His death reconciles us, but only His Life can swallow up the death in us! Death and Life! Death riding upon life is not the picture of some grotesque, hideous, morbid, ghoulish, macabre event to come upon mankind in the outer world during the great tribulation. Oh, no! Death and life are spiritual issues and they revolve around the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. DEATH COMES BY LIFE — that is the message! We cannot die to live — we must live in order to die!

THE FOURTH PART OF MEN KILLED

“And I looked, and behold a green horse: and His name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto Him over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.” (Rev. 6:8)

As the Lord, by the raising up of His life within us, brings death to our flesh man, we note that under this fourth seal, with it green horse and Rider, power is given to Him over the fourth part of the earth and the purpose of this power is to kill. Since this is the fourth and final horse, and seeing that after this fourth seal the symbols change abruptly, and there are no more horses, it becomes clear that this fourth horse is the concluding blow by which the Lord finishes His work in us to bring death to the carnal, natural man of flesh. The Rider of this horse is given power over the fourth part of the earth-realm, to kill with the sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth. How many horses are there? Four! What's being revealed here is that the first three horses have dealt with three aspects of our natural life, but there's a fourth part of our “earth” that still must be worked upon by the Lord. Now He comes into our experience to deal with the whole fleshly man, and when all four horses have completed their purpose in us a particular work within us is brought to consummation.

This “fourth part of the earth” is clearly that portion of earthiness not already dealt with by the preceding three horses. It bespeaks the conclusion, consummation, and termination of the process! It means the final subjugation of our soulical selfhood and everything within us that is contrary to the life of the spirit. And all the instruments necessary to accomplish this are in His hands and at His command! This is further confirmed when the fifth seal is opened, for there we see the finished product of this death! *“And when He had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that had been slain...” (Rev. 6:9)* The “souls” of them that had been slain — the soulical life done away, symbolically “under the altar” where the blood and ashes of the burnt offering are found! We are being “killed” as to our earth-life as these horses run through our mind, earth, and experience, but we are also being made alive unto God as the Lord breaks the seals off of the Christ in our spirit so that the life of the Lamb be revealed out of this book which we are. Though shrouded in symbols hard to be understood by the natural mind, these are all beautiful spiritual realities wonderfully fulfilled in each and every life of God's elect!

There are four instruments by which Christ brings the demise of our natural, human, Adamic identity. First, “to kill with the sword.” Here we do not read “to slaughter” as in the second seal, but to kill. Also the term translated “sword” is different. It is not the machaira but the rhomphaia. It is not the sacrificial knife or short sword but the long and heavy great sword, like the one with which David cut off Goliath's head. So how were those “souls under the altar” slain? Ah, the answer is found later on in the Revelation: *“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” (Rev. 20:4)* BEHEADED! Their carnal mind, their human consciousness, their Adamic identity, like the giant's head, was cut off! That is spiritually what God is doing in all of His sons! By this action He raises up within us another head, even the mind of Christ! It is indeed wonderful!

Secondly, “to kill with hunger.” It means that one of the Lord’s methods in dealing with the desires, passions, and lusts of the flesh is to “starve them to death.” We think we cannot overcome, that our own will is too strong, but as His life is raised up in us we find ourselves abstaining more and more from those things which are of the flesh, for they are overwhelmed by a greater desire and passion only for HIM. The more the presence and glory of God fill our lives the less the Adamic nature is fed and fueled by the influences of the world, until the desires of the flesh simply burn themselves out and now we hunger and thirst only after Him, and such, He said, “shall be filled.”

To walk both after the flesh and after the spirit is morally impossible. “No man,” as Christ so often emphasized, “can serve two masters.” And yet, as a matter of fact, here is the child of God being in relation to both worlds — flesh and spirit. With sin and purity, with light and darkness, with the carnal mind and the spiritual mind, with God and the devil, the confused and undecided soul is now in relation. What is to be done in such an emergency? How can the New Life find deliverance from the ever-persistent call of the flesh? The ready solution to the difficulty is — TO DIE! Not for our “old man” to die, for he is already crucified with Christ, but for us to die to sin, or to kill the evil desire lurking in our bodily members.

To die to any reality is to withdraw correspondence with it, to be cut off from all communication with it. If I cut my arm off from my body, so that it has no correspondence with it, nor receives anything from it, it will die. The solution to the problem is just this — for the spiritual life to reverse continually the processes of the fleshly life! The spiritual man having passed from death unto life — the fleshly man must next proceed to pass from life unto death. Regeneration of the spirit in short must be accompanied by degeneration of the flesh, the carnal mind.

Listen to the words of the apostle Paul as he presses this beautiful truth home to the hearts of the understanding saints in Colosse: *“If then you have been raised with Christ to a new life, thus sharing His resurrection from the dead, aim at and seek the rich, eternal treasures that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. And set your minds and keep them set on what is above — the higher things — not on the things that are on the earth. For as far as this world is concerned you have died, and your new real life is hid with Christ in God. SO KILL (DEADEN, DEPRIVE OF POWER) the evil desire lurking in your members — those animal impulses and all that is earthly in you that is employed in sin: sexual vice, impurity, sensual appetites, unholy desires, and all greed and covetousness, for that is idolatry...but now PUT AWAY AND RID YOURSELVES COMPLETELY OF ALL THESE THINGS...for you have stripped off the old unregenerate self with its evil practices, and have clothed yourselves with the new spiritual self, which is ever in the process of being renewed and remolded into the fuller and more perfect knowledge upon knowledge, after the image of Him who created it” (Col. 3:1-10, Amplified).*

Can we not see by this that as we nurture the new spiritual life, seeking those things which are above, setting our minds upon those higher things, the desires of the flesh are truly starved to death, they burn themselves out as they are overwhelmed by our greater desire and passion for our new heavenly life. Oh, yes, they are killed by hunger! Yet this is only one of the four instruments the Lord has in His arsenal to totally destroy the man of sin in our temple!

Thirdly, “to kill with death.” To kill with DEATH! How does one kill with death? What can this cryptic statement mean? It sounds contrary to the principle I shared earlier concerning living to die, instead of trying to die in order to live! Yet it is not contrary, but complementary. Both are true in their own order — the same truth from different facets, or the other side of the same coin. The simple truth is that if you are trying to die in order to live, then you are trying to commit suicide! That is the difference. We cannot kill ourselves, or bring our flesh nature to death by any self-effort. This work is wholly the work of God! HE is the only one who can do it. And what an ingenious process He has! To kill with death means a death by death. Later on in the book of Revelation the same great truth is presented thus: *“Death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.” (Rev. 20:14)* Now let us turn this around for clarity. “The second death IS death and hell cast into the lake of fire.” Therefore we have exactly the same meaning either way it is stated. What is the second death? It is the first death and hell cast into the lake of fire! *“Our God is a consuming fire.”* This fact is extremely important! The second death is not merely the lake of fire. Nor is the second death men being forever tortured in the lake of fire. Oh, no! The Holy Spirit has made it very simple and exceedingly plain. The

second death is the first death and hell CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE. That is the Holy Spirit's definition, not mine!

Can we now open the eyes of our understanding to see that everything cast into the lake of fire pertains to DEATH? Death itself is cast into the lake of fire. Hell, the realm of the dead, is cast into the lake of fire. And those whose names are not written in the Book of Life, that is, those who are dead in trespasses and in sins, who also inhabit hell, are cast into the lake of fire. I am not talking about the dead out in the cemetery, or the spirits of the departed, but those who are dead to God, dead to truth, dead to reality, dead to purity, dead to the life of the spirit — ah, that is every man who is living and walking after the flesh, indeed, it is the natural man, the carnal man, it is ADAM! It is my "lower self," the first man who is of the earth earthy. This man is dead! When death and hell and the dead are cast into the lake of fire, that is the end of death and hell and sin and sinners, for God shall destroy the whole realm of death in the lake of fire. He shall burn up hell in the lake of fire, He shall destroy death in the lake of fire, He shall consume sin in the lake of fire, and He shall get rid of old Adam in the lake of fire! Our God is that consuming fire, and the fire is the second death! It is the death of death! Oh, the mystery of it! Therefore the Lord Himself is the one named Death riding the green horse, for He is the consuming fire which is the second death which forever destroys the realm of death! That is the mystery.

How I long to see the end of sin and sinners and death and hell! The time is coming, praise His name! God's kingdom shall rule over all and God Himself shall be All-in-all. There shall be neither sin, nor sinners, nor death, nor hell. There shall not be one man abiding in a death realm, nor even one foothold of death in the life of any man. It is clear that God does not destroy men in the lake of fire, nowhere does it say that, for that would be a contradiction of terms. How can you destroy death by creating death? How can you abolish death by bringing men under the power of eternal death from which there is no escape? Oh, no, it is not men who are destroyed in the lake of fire — it is sin and death and hell and the dead Adamic nature that are destroyed. Oh, how wonderful that is! *"And the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." (I Cor. 15:26) "And there shall be no more death: for the former things are passed away." (Rev. 21:4)* Thus, the lake of fire is nothing more or less than THE DEATH OF DEATH! *"And power was given unto Him to kill...with death."*

The following words by **Ray Prinzing** give precious insight into this beautiful truth. *"The first Adam died to God and righteousness, and became alive unto sin. The last Adam died unto sin (Rom. 6:19), and liveth unto God, and so fulfilleth all righteousness. The first made all men sinners, the last makes all men righteous. The lives and the deaths of the two Adams are thus greatly contrasting the one to the other. The FIRST DEATH was a transition from life to death, the SECOND DEATH is a transition from corruption to incorruption, from mortality to immortality. Transformed from the carnal mind to the spiritual mind, which is life and peace, which transformation is wrought by a dying out to the one realm, to come alive to the higher realm. Because — the second death is prepared to purge out and burn away sin and its results, and so doing cleanse all of God's universe.*

"Death came minding self and flesh. Now God makes death overcome itself. It is by death that death is rendered powerless, and there arises an upspringing, a new life. It takes death to destroy death, and thus Christ 'did taste death for every man' — 'that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.' (Heb. 2:9, 14-15) Since we are all under the effects of the first death, it is appointed unto us to die once more — not physical death, we are already in a state of mortality — but now a dying out to this present death state. We conquer this death of the carnal mind (for to be carnally minded is death) by dying to it — only God could use such a process bringing victory, but praise God, He is destroying the first death with the second death" — **end quote.**

When the process is complete, and the last soul has emerged from the warfare of the Four Horsemen, fully yielding to the Lordship of our Saviour, then at last shall be fulfilled the wonderful promise: *"And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be NO MORE DEATH, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make ALL THINGS NEW. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful." (Rev. 21:3-5)*

There are a couple other aspects of death killing death that I would mention in closing. The first is the DEATH OF THE CROSS. Paul tells us something very striking about the cross. He says that *“the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.” (I Cor. 1:18)* How can the cross, which is an instrument of death, be the very power of God unto salvation? The death of the cross is in some mysterious and divine way the gateway to the life of the cross. The cross which is the power of God is certainly not the old rugged cross Jesus hung upon on mount Calvary. Only if we possessed an actual piece of the wood from that cross, and that wood possessed some magical, quickening powers, could we say that the wooden Roman cross upon which Jesus was crucified is the power of God!

That wooden cross no longer exists, having decayed back into the dust long centuries ago. And yet, all the handwriting of the ordinances of the law were nailed to His cross, the scripture says; but should you have been there on Golgotha's hill that day when Jesus was hung between heaven and earth you would not have seen the first five books of the Bible nailed to His cross! By His cross the world is crucified to us, and us to the world, but the whole world is not hanging somewhere today upon that cross, being crucified to us. Such literal thoughts are absurdities. The whole world is reconciled by the blood of that cross, yet not one of us has seen any literal blood by which we were brought into fellowship with God. That is the mystery. We are talking about things that exist in the spirit. Ah, the cross of Christ is something deeper, higher, grander, more transcendental than pieces of wood upon which Jesus hung!

When God brings the cross into our lives to deal with the death in us, He doesn't bring it to us out of two millenniums ago — He brings it out of the living reality of the dimension of spirit right now! When by the quickening of the Spirit you saw Christ dying, you did not see Him dying twenty centuries ago, but in spirit you beheld Him. God brought Him out of that long ago into your NOW. God brought Him into your present. And you saw Him bleeding and dying, not two thousand years ago, but right now in this moment you beheld Him by spirit. And in spirit Paul exults with unspeakable joy, “I AM crucified with Christ!” Not then — NOW! Not I was — I AM! It is neither history nor a future event. The cross did not begin at Calvary, nor did it end at Calvary! It's an accomplished fact in the eternal NOW.

It is a great and glorious fact that our spirit has not been crucified. If our spirit were crucified we could not say, *“I AM crucified, and I LIVE.”* When we speak of death and resurrection we speak of two corresponding principles in the present. I AM crucified, and I AM alive. That is how Paul stated the case. Those are dual, present, and continuous realities. I am and I am! I AM crucified, and I AM living. But what is crucified? Not my inward man — but my outward man! Paul put it this way, *“Though our outward man is perishing, yet our inward man is being renewed day by day.” (II Cor. 6:16)* The outer man, the sensual man, the soulical man, the carnal mind, the flesh — is perishing. He is not perishing because he is getting old and getting ready to go to the cemetery. Oh, no! He is perishing because of the work of the cross in us! This is a spiritual work!

“I am being crucified” is an alternate rendering of the Greek. The cross has very practical applications in our everyday lives. You see, my beloved, the Lord faithfully prepares the places, situations, circumstances, and experiences whereby our self-life is brought to the futility of itself and laid down. The cross is painful! This is no mystical, glorious experience by faith. The cross is the power of God working as death by actual crisis' in our lives whereby, like the prodigal son, we come to the end of our self, and we arise and go to the Father. When we forsake trust in the flesh and the way of the flesh, that the spirit might rule, death has been worked in us, releasing His life to be expressed as our life.

Now God's called and chosen elect have come to the place in consciousness in this great process of salvation where we understand that the mystery of self is the mystery of death. The way we can rid ourselves of the last enemy, and overcome the last enemy, which is death, is by ridding ourselves of self, denying our self, taking up our cross unto the perishing of the outer man with his desires and demands, by gaining the victory over our self nature. When this is accomplished completely, we will have victory over death, the last enemy! Someone says, “But, brother Eby, I thought you said we don't die in order to live, but we live in order to die.” That is true! But the mystery is in the cross — the cross that kills the flesh IS THE POWER OF GOD! The power of God is the life of God, the Spirit of God. Can you not see the mystery? The cross is not the old rugged cross, it is the cross in the heart of God, the eternal cross in the realm of the spirit, and that cross comes into our lives as HIS

DEATH IN HIS LIFE WORKING DEATH AND LIFE IN US BY HIS DEATH IN HIS LIFE, HIS CROSS IN THE SPIRIT! Understand that, my beloved, and you will understand a great mystery!

This grand truth is further portrayed for us in Moses' and Aaron's mighty acts before Pharaoh in the land of Egypt. Did not Moses and Aaron and the magicians of Egypt employ the very same signs and perform the same feats? Aaron threw down his rod and it was turned into a serpent. But then the magicians of Egypt were called in and they all threw down their rods, and their rods became serpents also. But Aaron's rod, in the form of a serpent, ran after them and swallowed them all; and then it became a rod again in Aaron's hand. It was a serpent destroying the serpents! Serpents destroyed by a serpent — that is the mystery.

Did not the Lord Jesus say, *“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up...and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw ALL MEN UNTO ME.”* (John. 3:14; 12:32) The Lord was referring to the time when Israel murmured against Moses in the wilderness, complaining that there was no food or water, and they were tired of the same old diet of manna every day. The Lord sent judgment into their midst in the form of fiery (burning) serpents and they bit the people, and many Israelites died. The people then repented and asked Moses to pray that the Lord would take away the serpents. So Moses prayed for the people. Then the Lord instructed Moses to make a fiery serpent of bronze and raise it up on a pole; and everyone that was bitten, when they looked at the bronze serpent attentively, expectantly, with a steady and absorbing gaze, were healed from their bites and lived. The Lord Jesus used this experience as a type of Himself being raised up upon the cross — all who have been bitten by the serpent that brings sin, sorrow, limitation and death — that ancient serpent which is the devil and Satan — by simply looking unto Him all are healed and given life!

Can we not see by this that the devil who lurks in the carnal mind of man is a serpent and the Christ became a serpent to deliver us from him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. The serpent is destroyed by a serpent! Can there be any greater mystery than this? The message is clear — Christ swallows up all the serpents of the adversary! Christ heals, restores, and gives life to all who have been injected with the venom of the serpent in the carnal mind, the human consciousness, nature, and identity. How do we overcome the devil who goes forth as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour? We send forth the Lord's powerful lion of the tribe of Judah to destroy it! How do we overcome the bellowing bulls of Bashan? We send the Lord's wild ox (unicorn) against them! How do we overcome the weakness of Adam's flesh in us? By the very indwelling power of Him who the Father sent in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, who overcame sin in the flesh, and sent the spirit of His victory into us, that we now may also fulfill all righteousness! You see, my beloved, we have not received the Spirit of the eternal God who can overcome all things. Oh, no! Rather, we have received the Spirit of God who came in the flesh of Jesus Christ and did overcome all things in the flesh! We have received within us the Spirit of the One who has overcome the flesh, the world, and the devil in a human body just like ours! It was by flesh that flesh was conquered! By the spirit in Jesus the flesh of Jesus was sanctified, separated unto God, and proved greater and more powerful and of more value than the flesh of Adam, so much that Jesus could say, “Except ye eat my flesh and drink my blood, ye have no life in you.” Can you now see the mystery? The Christ rides into our earth upon the green horse and kills the death of Adam's mind and nature through the life poured out by the death of Himself upon Calvary. He kills with death! Yet that death is truly a poured out life!

Now finally, we read that the Rider on the green horse was *“given power...to kill...with the beasts of the earth.”* (Rev. 6:8) The “beasts of the earth” are figures of the various aspects of the bestial (fleshly) nature within mankind! Ray Prinzing has pointed out that in a way unique, mysterious, and amazing the Lord is able to marshal the bestial nature of men about us, so that they are His instruments to bring to death in us things that are not pleasing to Him. These are all part of the testings, trials, temptations, and troubles that come to each of us as challenges by which we learn to draw upon the life of the Christ within to become more than conquerors in all things.

One of the fundamental laws of creation is that an opposing force is necessary for growth, and to produce strength, stamina, and endurance. Any living thing that grows up without any opposition is weak and powerless. God's new creation man must be strong and powerful, and any one or any thing that desires to be powerful must wrestle with some contrary force. Any man who wants to develop muscular power to be strong, must spend weeks and months and years in vigorous training doing heavy exercises, lifting heavy weights,

using the opposing force of gravity to develop his strength. A man who wants to be a great wrestler, doesn't just wrestle when he is in the ring. At his training center he has his wrestling partners with whom he wrestles by the hour. They are adversaries — but they are what makes him strong! If he didn't have them he would be weak and powerless in the ring.

A boxer has his punching bags and sparring partners, with whom he spends hours every day. Those opposing forces are indispensable to develop strength. A plant that grows in a greenhouse sheltered from the winds and rains, pampered day after day, may grow large, but it is inherently weak, and if suddenly exposed to the elements will wither and die. But a plant that is constantly exposed to the fierce winds and pounding rains, burning heat and chilling cold, is strong and not easily destroyed.

One who grows up in a sheltered environment, who is pampered all his life, grows up a weak, spineless individual. Adversity builds strength of character! If we were never exposed to trials and tribulations, to temptations and testings, to the conniving and evil and buffetings of men around us, we would spiritually grow up weak indeed! In "church" is not where one truly learns to live the Christ life! The more we are exposed to adverse circumstances, the more we have to wrestle with the allurements, enchantments, and hostilities of the world, the more we are challenged by the sin and death around us, the stronger we become. ALL THE SONS OF THE MOST HIGH MUST BE STRONG IN THE LORD AND IN THE POWER OF HIS MIGHT! Our Father wants us to be strong, so He has wisely given us wrestling partners to wrestle with, so we will become strong. These are the "beasts of the earth" by which the fleshly mind and nature within us is killed! These beasts of the earth represent men with bestial natures who are adversaries to us. How they tear in pieces and devour the flesh!

The Psalmist summed it up in these inspired words: *"For Thou, O God, hath proved us: Thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. Thou broughtest us into the net; Thou laidest affliction upon our loins. THOU CAUSED MEN TO RIDE OVER OUR HEADS; we went through the fire and through water: but Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place."* (Ps. 66:10-12)

To be continued...

J. Preston Eby

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 90 'END-TIME' PROPHECIES – TRUTH REVEALED

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART NINETY BREAKING THE SEALS (continued)

SLAIN BY THE WORD OF GOD

"And when He had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held..." (Rev. 6:9)

The end of the first four seals has now been reached, and at this point there is an obvious break in the hitherto harmonious order of the visions. No fifth horse and no fifth rider appears when the fifth seal is broken, and we pass from the process of conquering the carnal mind, the flesh nature, and the Adamic life, on to the full accomplishment of that work within us — one hundred percent death to self! Total death to our soulical selfhood and everything within us that is contrary to the life of the spirit is the conclusion, consummation, and termination of the process. Therefore the horses of conquest cease to gallop through our life! This is confirmed when the fifth seal is opened, for there we see the finished product of this conquest! "And when He had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that had been slain..." The "souls" of them that had been slain — the soulical life done away, symbolically "under the altar" where the blood and ashes of the burnt offering are found! How beautiful is this scene! How expressive! When the soul is destroyed by a complete, continual and total sacrifice, the "souls" of those who had been "slain" appear under the altar! We are being "killed" as to our earth-life as these horses run through our mind, heart, and experience, but we are also being made alive unto God as the Lamb breaks the seals off of the Christ in our spirit so that the life of the Lamb be revealed out of this book which we are. Though shrouded in symbols hard to be understood by the natural mind, these are all beautiful spiritual realities fulfilled in the life of each and every son of God!

In reading the book of Revelation we must bear in mind that everything recorded there describes scenes and events that transpire as the work of the Spirit within us. *"I was in the Spirit"* is John's clear affirmation in his opening remarks (**Rev. 1:10**). All that the apostle saw and heard was with his spiritual senses, for the realities of the Spirit can only be apprehended by our spirit. Thus, the expression "under the altar" indicates a condition in spirit rather than a place. It describes those who are under the absolute dominion of Jesus Christ! They are slain not for any personal wrongdoing, but that there might be a revelation of Jesus Christ. Moreover, they are not slain in body but in soul. All the keys to the mystery are right there in every line of every page of this wonderful book once we are able to see by the Spirit!

Without the understanding of the spiritual nature of this book, and that the whole is symbolical and visionary, men ask foolish questions when reading scenes like the one in our present passage. Based on this scene of the souls John saw under the altar some have asked whether it is really possible to see souls without bodies. But the question is absurd. John was in the Spirit, and in the Spirit he was in the heavenly realm. All that he beholds he sees in and by the Spirit and in a vision, so that the question whether in our present state we would be able to see souls may indeed be considered absurd. Then too, many carnal-minded people have used this passage in order to picture the abode of the dead after this life and before the resurrection. That thought is equally ridiculous for the same reason, namely, that the whole is visionary, symbolical, and spiritual!

That these slain ones are found "under the altar" shows how far removed we are from literal meanings. We are not to think that John had a vision of a physical altar with souls peeping out from underneath! There is a heavenly temple, and everything represented in the earthly temple was patterned after the celestial one. There is a "true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man," of which the tabernacle that Moses built was the material picture copy. As the writer to the Hebrews explained, *"Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly (spiritual) things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount."* (**Heb. 8:5**) The

altar we see here under the fifth seal pertains to that heavenly sanctuary whence the “pattern” of the earthly was taken. The earthly was the altar of burnt-offerings where all bloody sacrifices were made. That does not mean that there is a “literal, material” altar up in some far-off heaven somewhere where celestial animals are offered up. Oh, no! There is no actual altar in heaven! These are not literal but spiritual realities in the heavens of God’s Spirit! Nor are the righteous departed stored up there under an actual altar, nor do they cry for vengeance upon them who have persecuted them on earth, as we read in verse ten! Again, throughout this book of visions we are in the region of hieroglyph. The slain are so represented as “under the altar” because the altar represents sacrifice unto death!

No doubt the strangest feature of this vision is the position of the souls “under the altar.” For the people of Israel in Bible days the life or the soul of a person was in the blood. The Lord was very specific when He instructed Moses, *“For the life of the flesh is in the blood.”* (Lev. 17:11) The Hebrew word for life in this passage is nephesh, which is also the word used for soul. Life, blood, and soul are inseparably related throughout the scriptures. In sacrificing the daily burnt-offering, the priest had to perform several actions with the blood of the sacrificial animal. When he had done so, *“the rest of the blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt-offering which is at the door of the tent of meeting.”* (Lev. 4:7) This was to show that the life was wholly and forever given to God, for the smoke from the altar on which the animal was sacrificed ascended to God. The base of the altar was therefore always red with the blood (i.e. with the souls) of the sacrifices that had been offered upon it.

SLAIN BY THE WORD OF GOD

“I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.” (Rev. 6:9)

These souls have often been referred to as “martyrs” and indeed they are, but not in the outward, physical way men think of martyrs. The first physical martyr for Christ was Stephen who was stoned to death. Most of Jesus’ original twelve disciples were so martyred for the gospel’s sake. Tradition says that Peter, when he was about to be executed, requested to be crucified up-side-down, not feeling worthy to die in the same manner as his Lord. In the early days of the church untold thousands of people gave their lives rather than renounce their faith in Jesus Christ. Some were beheaded, some were crucified, others were burned at the stake, while others were fed to lions in the arena in Rome. In our day Russia and China, especially, have much blood on their hands from the many thousands of believers they martyred under the communist regimes. We would not for one moment depreciate or make light of any of these sacrifices offered up to the Lord in this way. I’m sure that their reward is great!

The vision that John saw, however, was symbolic. Notice that those of this royal company “were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.” On the surface, this may sound as though these were physically martyred for their faith in Jesus and their testimony of Him. But the spirit of the word points us to a truth much deeper and more spiritual! Keep in mind also that those who were already “slain” were told to rest for a little season, *“until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.”* (Rev. 6:11) Next, we need to understand HOW these elect ones are “slain” or “killed,” for the scripture clearly declares that they are all to be slain in the same manner. To be “slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held” bears a very special meaning in regard to their slaying. It indicates a special process of “death” that is different and unique.

The Greek word translated “for” in our text is *dia*, meaning “because of, as a result of, by.” In reading this superficially we might think it to mean that these souls were slain or martyred by enemies because they believed the word of God, but that interpretation misses the point! The truth is that they are slain either because of, or as a result of, or by the word of God Consider the scene! The white horse had approached, and the Rider on that horse had touched them. The result was that their inner being had been awakened and turned about. They had been regenerated by the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, and given a new and living hope. They had been called by His Word! They had been dealt with through the dealings of God under the ministry of each of the four horses, and given a vision of the kingdom of God coming with power. Thus the word of God had become their subjective possession. More and more they were motivated by that word, governed by that word, dominated by that word, subjected by that word, and subdued by that word. The word

of God was working mightily in them to bring to the death their human consciousness, their soulical life, and to bring forth the new man in the image of the Son of God!

Never forget, my beloved, that the word of God is a sharp two-edged sword that cuts deeply and powerfully, that divides asunder, severs, separates between soul and spirit (Heb. 4:12). Essentially then, we are not only slain because of, or as a result of, but truly by the word of God! Anytime we take the word of God and assimilate it into our life, all our old soulical thoughts, concepts, emotions, desires, and will are going to die! The living, energetic word of God working in each of God's called and chosen elect, puts all our selfhood to death. Our old human identity is slain because of, as a result of, yea, by the entrance of the word of truth by the spirit! Oh, the wonder of it!

That is the death or slaying that all of us have been going through. Like Paul, we are dying daily, not literally or physically, but mentally and spiritually. A unique process of death is working in us to bring an end to the Adamic nature within us and raise us to the fullness of the Life of Christ. And when the work is finished we join the souls "under the altar" as the slain ones of the Lord! There will not be a further activity for us until the rest of our brethren, who are to be killed as we are, has been fulfilled. Therefore it is my deep conviction that the Spirit of God in this very hour is completing this work in the entire son company, and shall complete it, before the glorious manifestation of the sons of God! It must be thus in order for God to be able to entrust into our hands THE OMNIPOTENT POWER OF MANIFEST SONSHIP AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD!

We are slain by the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. We may have read that beautiful passage ten thousand times, but today it holds new meaning. The black-covered book called the Bible is not the word of God. Now don't misunderstand what I say! The Bible is most assuredly the inspired and inerrant record of the words, plans, purposes, acts, and dealings of God in relation to His people. I don't think there is a person who reads these lines who could imagine that I have any disrespect of the Holy Scriptures. When you read my writings you get the scriptures over and over and over again. The very title of our message is KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES! We have quoted thousands of scripture passages in confirmation of the truth we speak in God. But our text is not speaking of the scroll; it is not referring to that which is written upon parchment or paper. It's talking about the Living Word of the Spirit of the Christ within! Every man and woman who has received the call to sonship is learning to tune in to that higher frequency where we hear His voice. Our very sonship depends upon it. Our destiny in God depends not on our ability to understand the outward letter of the word, but upon our being able to hear the voice of the Son of God within! The testimony of Jesus and the word of God is that voice which speaks on the inside of us out of the mind of Christ when the old head of Adam has been chopped off!

In the outer court, and even in the holy place, men take the Bible and declare, "This is the word of God!" But when we come to the most holy place there is a vital change that takes place. In the outer court and in the holy place we say that what is written in the external book is the word of God. But in the most holy place God speaks audible words from between the cherubim, over the mercy seat, and we hear the voice of God from out of that temple which we are — He speaks from within our innermost being, out of the inner sanctum of our spirit, the most holy place of our being. What He speaks to us is the word of God on a higher level than what is written. Jesus used the written words of God, and He used them quite effectively! But He didn't live by the written word. Oh, no!

In the hour of His temptation in the wilderness Jesus said, in effect, "Devil, I am not living by bread (the written word) alone; I am living by the latest word my Father has spoken to me. I live by that word that is proceeding and continues to proceed out of His mouth! The last thing my Father spoke to me was when I came up out of the waters of the Jordan and the dove lighted upon me. My Father spoke and said, 'You are my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.'" Jesus was saying, "Devil, don't you get it? I don't have to take stones (the dead letter of the word) and turn them into bread to prove to either you or myself that God is my Father. He spoke it to me! I live by every word I hear my Father speak!" And later, during His ministry, as He taught the kingdom of God, He said, referring to the scriptures, "It was said by them of old time... but now I say unto you!" In this day of our walk as sons of God it is what the Father is speaking out of His dwelling within us that causes us to live!

Before moving on from this thought I would speak concerning “the testimony which they held.” After only a casual reading we might also suppose that when John says that these were slain “for the testimony which they held” that they were martyred because they spoke of Jesus Christ, or because they passed out tracts, went door to door witnessing, or somehow shared with others their faith in Jesus. However, testimony means “evidence given.” The evidence we give is not by standing up in church and giving a verbal testimony, but the evidence is seen by the fact that our soulish life has died, that is, it has ceased to express itself apart from the spirit. Our soulical life is slain so that the evidence of the living Christ in our spirit may be fully revealed! Aren’t you glad!

Most believers do not realize that a martyr is one who is faithful in life, as well as in death — indeed he may never be killed and still be a martyr. [This beautiful truth has often been missed because we have not understood that the New Testament word “witness” is from the Greek martus which is translated “martyr” in Revelation 2:13 and 17:6.](#) When we think of “witnesses” we do not think of people who are being killed! At a trial the witnesses are those who testify for or against the defendant, and it is the defendant who is sometimes put to death — not the witnesses! But neither can we think of them according to the old religious idea of someone who goes door to door passing out tracts or one who makes it a point to speak about the Lord to everyone he meets. Such are often guided more by carnal religious zeal than by the leading and wisdom of the Holy Spirit. Scripturally and spiritually a witness is one who gives his life for the testimony he bears! And I dare say it requires an enduement of the Holy Spirit to enable us to so lay down our life for the message we declare that WE BECOME THE MESSAGE, OUR WHOLE LIFE SWALLOWED UP IN THE MANIFESTATION OF THAT MESSAGE. A state of being that proclaims the truth regardless of whether we speak it or explain it or not. To witness to the truth is to give your life to that truth, to thus become the truth!

It is instructive to note that a number of people are referred to in scripture as martyrs (Greek martus, martureo, a true and faithful witness), though there is no record of them being killed. It must be remembered that the word martyr has changed its meaning. It was not necessary in Bible days that a man should actually suffer in order to be a martyr. Sometimes he did suffer, sometimes he did not. Indeed, strictly speaking, it is not necessary today to suffer in order to be a martyr. Suffering never made a saint a martyr. Death never made a child of God a martyr. If a follower of Jesus is not a martyr before his death he is not likely to be after his death. A martyr in those early times was one who went before kings and councils with a willingness to endure affliction if need be. Oftentimes he did not suffer at all, but he bore witness, that’s the point. A martyr is one who bears witness to the truth! And often it was their very countenance, actions and state of being that witnessed louder than any word they could speak!

The question follows — in what manner are these souls slain for the word of God, and for their testimony? The answer is clearly given in **Revelation 20:4** wherein we read, *“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”* Some of the older translations say that these are the ones who were beheaded, who had their heads cut off. In some of the newer translations, one says they were executed for their testimony, another says they were cut with the ax; another, that they were executed with the ax. What does this mean?

As I searched the mind of the Spirit about this, it came to me so powerfully. You remember that Jesus said that he who would lose his life for His sake and the gospel’s, would keep it unto life age-enduring. The head of every man, to begin with, is that old self, the mind of Adam, the man of flesh. When I was in school I was taught that self-preservation is the first law of nature. And how we do try to take care of, and preserve, this outer flesh man! We live for him, for his needs, his wants. These are the things most men and even most believers are concerned about — what self thinks, wishes, and desires. If we are to truly become manifest sons of God, this old head must be chopped off and a new head take his place! That is the mystery. This old self must be put to death, with his will, desires, concepts, and values, and the mind of Christ have complete Lordship over our beings.

Merely believing on Him does not produce this, it requires complete and absolute surrender and consecration to Jesus Christ, the putting off of the old man, and the putting on of the new; forsaking the old mind and image of the flesh, and putting on the new mind and nature which, in the image of God, is created in righteousness

and true holiness. The Lord Jesus must become the new head. That is what it means to be “beheaded” for our testimony and the word of God! But notice, these are beheaded in soul. True, John the Baptist and others were beheaded physically, but here the beheading takes place in the soul. Strictly speaking, the soul does not have a head, but as the seat of man’s personality it embraces our will, intellect, emotions, and desires. To be beheaded in soul is to experience death to the self-life. Death to self is imperative upon all who shall have the revelation of Jesus Christ out of their lives!

In his letter to the Philippians the apostle Paul writes, *“If any other man thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law a Pharisee, as to zeal a persecutor of the church, as to righteousness under the law blameless. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as dung in order that I might gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through the faith of Jesus Christ.”* (Phil. 3:4-9)

This is also one of the greatest proofs that those who are slain, whose souls are under the altar, are not literal, physical martyrs. You see, beloved, ALL OF THESE SOULS ARE BEHEADED! The actual physical martyrs, from the time of Christ unto the present, have been killed in a variety of ways — they were not all, nor even were most of them, beheaded! Furthermore, if only those who have been physically decapitated shall reign with Christ in His kingdom, as stated in Revelation 20:4, then indeed very few shall reign! So this cannot possibly be talking about those who have laid down their physical lives for the sake of Jesus. Can we not see by this that to be beheaded means to have ones head cut off. One fact stands out plainly in this symbolic language — it cannot allude only to those who actually died physically as martyrs, for should that be the case even the beloved John would have no hope of reigning with Christ! However, John suffered more by living the Christ-life than if he had been actually beheaded. Legend tells us that he was once boiled in oil, but emerged like the three Hebrew children, unharmed. He was exiled to the isle of Patmos under the most harsh and primitive conditions, where he was given the Revelation.

When the blessed spirit of wisdom and revelation from God opens our eyes to comprehend the great truth of our spiritual beheading, we will have found the key to the very life of Christ. It refers to those who live as martyrs! A martyr’s grave was very often but a release from persecution, an easy way out. Martyrdom in the spiritual sense does not mean a violent, untimely death. The way into glory is through death; death to self, death to the flesh, death to the world, death to the carnal mind, death to the Adamic consciousness, death to the ego, death to our own way and will, death to the religious spirit — living the crucified life! It is the death process within us that removes from us all that is not of God. What a wonder that is!

You will understand a great truth when you understand that all death is not the same death. Many think that when the scriptures speak of death they always refer to the death of the body. The truth is, in the New Testament death only occasionally speaks of the death of the physical body. When Jesus says that we must take up our cross and follow Him He does not mean that we must construct a wooden cross, take it up as Jesus did, and have someone nail us to it. Jesus did physically die on the cross, the symbol and pattern of the death of old Adam. But Adam in us is not crucified by hanging on an outward, wooden cross. And in case you think you don’t have any Adam in you, let me ask you — do you have a physical body that was born of flesh parents who are biologically descended from Adam? And does that flesh part of your life even today have any desires, inclinations, urges, temptations, or propensities to express something other than the mind, wisdom, purity and power of Christ? Don’t raise your hand, I’ll let you answer that for yourself! Paul says, *“Mortify (kill, deaden, deprive of power) therefore your members which are upon the earth; sexual vice, impurity, sensual appetites, unholy desires, and all greed and covetousness, which is idolatry.”* (Col. 3:5) Paul said, *“I die daily.”* He said, *“For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”* In none of these passages is he talking about leaving this body and flying away to some far-off heaven somewhere. He’s talking about dying to that outward, that external, that carnal, that fleshly, that natural, that realm of corruption, that human consciousness and identity. For you see, my beloved, that’s not who you really are! You are really a spiritual being, born of God, the offspring of God, who is the Father of your spirit. The spirit of sonship is in your spirit! Christ in you is the value of your life and your true destiny. That is who you really are! Death to self is simply the renouncing of our carnal mind and fleshly life, choosing rather to yield to the mind and life of the spirit, to live out of that divine, incorruptible sphere of being.

That's why Paul is telling us that "to die is gain." There is no gain in going to the cemetery, but to die to the carnal mind is to gain the mind of Christ! To die to the natural is to gain the spiritual! To die to the earthly is to gain the heavenly! To die to the flesh nature is to gain the divine nature! Oh, yes! God gives us the opportunity every day to die. Are we taking up our cross daily and following Him to mount Calvary? "He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

The death of the cross was the death that was reserved for criminals and for the vilest of men. What would you think of a person who had a gold chain about his or her neck with a pendant of an electric chair on it? Or a hang-man's gallows? Or a guillotine? Or a gas chamber? Or a hypodermic needle? "How gross, how repugnant, how macabre, how gruesome, how insensitive!" you say. "How terrible to think that anyone's mind is that death oriented!" Let me tell you something, my beloved — in the day of Christ the cross was an instrument of execution, not one bit different than the gas chamber, electric chair, or lethal injection of today. It was the place where criminals were put to death! And Jesus said we are to take up our cross — our gas chamber, our hang-man's noose, our electric chair, our hypodermic needle — and follow Him! It is a place of execution. It is the place where we are brought to our extremity. And once we understand what the cross really means it becomes crystal clear why Jesus has prescribed it. ADAM IS A CRIMINAL! The carnal mind is the deceiving mind of a con man, deceiving the whole world with perverted logic, worldly philosophy, intellectual fiction, false values, and man-made religious ideologies, robbing men of Life! The flesh nature is responsible for all the bigotry, hatred, strife, wars, murders, sexual immorality, drug abuse, child abuse, spouse abuse, tyranny, slander, selfishness, greed, lies, misrepresentations, thefts, scams, and a thousand other ills that afflict mankind, including the people of God! Oh, yes, Adam is a criminal!

As we follow on to know the Father in sonship, the Lord is taking greater control of our lives. He who shall rule and reign over the earth and all the universe, must first rule and reign in the lives of His elect. Christ is indeed reigning in our lives, for we are aware that we are no longer in control of our lives! Another one, Christ, the inner son, now controls our lives according to His eternal purpose, and it is the Lord! You will know that Christ reigns in your life when you truly realize that you no longer control your own life. Your destiny and mine are fixed in God! Christ is now reigning in us in greater and greater measures as we grow up into the Headship of Christ.

Larry Hodges struck a deep chord of truth when he wrote, *"Remember! The soul is the seat and place of the emotions, the intellect (rational mind) and the will. We must lose our head-life so that the sun of reason is no longer the light by which we walk. The moon of the sense-life (emotions, how we feel) must be clothed as sackcloth and every starry imagination must be cast down and every thought brought into captivity to Christ. It is during this present time that we must learn to walk in that realm to which we have been raised!"*

Some time ago I read the following **news release**. *"Just when you thought you had heard it all...doctors have now taken the living head of one monkey, and transplanted it onto the body of another. Six hours after the surgery the monkey could hear, see, and taste, and had feelings around the face. One thing they have not been able to do yet is to re-attach the spinal cord, therefore the monkeys could not move their new bodies. Scientists feel they will overcome this problem possibly within a year. Doctors believe this operation could be successfully performed on humans by placing the head of a person who is dying on the body of a person who is brain dead. Dr. Robert White of Case Western University says, 'I'm talking about a procedure that could actually be done with appropriate practice and safeguards. I don't want to say tomorrow, but certainly within the year.'"*

Ray Prinzing expressed it so well when several years ago he penned these words, *"Even now they are contemplating the problems that might arise, and what would be involved if they tried to implant another's brain, another's mind. This totally staggers me, and I cannot begin to delve into such things, they are beyond me — but there are some aspects here that make for interesting allegories, parables, for being renewed into the mind of Christ. We cannot begin to speculate what it would mean to have a mind that is fully programmed in certain ways, to be placed onto our body, which would then have to respond to signals and thought patterns which are utterly foreign to us. The frustration, revolutionary changes, seeking to adapt to a whole new program, and the conflicts that this would create are unimaginable."*

“The Lord would implant of HIS MIND into us, and our poor carnal minds are so programmed toward the flesh, so that we find our responses to Him are somewhat mixed and confused at times. But the more HIS MIND takes over, and we are renewed into Him, the less conflict there is in us, and the more we possess His peace. It is worked into us by degrees! And I am certain that He is doing it just as fast as we can bear the process. Only in the measure it proceeds from the Lord can we be so changed, for it is to be HIS MIND, not the product of our own thinking, reasoning, etc. We may groan and weep because of the subjection to this bondage of vanity, but we are unable to change ourselves out of us. The mind for that is HIS, and we must be renewed into His mind, so that the directions are pure and true.

“Seems so easy to let our minds run through a whole scheme of reasoning, until we think we have it all thought out and have the right answers to a thing, and suddenly find that it is all contrary to what the Spirit is doing and working in a situation. And He has to re-program us into the mind of Christ! We have been so programmed into negativity, and it takes a lot of warfare to cast down all those negative imaginations, and begin to be CLOTHED WITH HIS POSITIVES. It is now an established fact that far more programming than we realize has already begun while the baby is in the womb. This mind of the flesh is so deeply rooted in us, that to be renewed into the mind of Christ often takes some very strong action by the Spirit, and some intensive processing with the tests and trials, to bring us to the end of man’s thinking, and into HIS mind.

“The tragedy is not just that we are so given over to the mind of the flesh, by all the natural programming that takes place from infancy on, but that even in religious realms Christendom continues to program men and women with negativity, sin-consciousness, devil-consciousness, traditions of men, etc., so that it requires some deep inworkings of the Spirit, and the illumination of HIS LIGHT in divine revelation, to burn out the old mind, and renew us into His mind and truth, changing us from minding the flesh, to minding the Spirit.

“In the natural medical realm of transplanting organs, one of the great problems that they face is that of REJECTION — the body rebels against the new organ and in doing so would actually destroy itself, but it needs that new organ to sustain its life. The body says, ‘I don’t want it, it is foreign to me,’ and if they cannot end this rejection, death will ensue. Jesus said, ‘If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. (Luke 9:23-24)

“To reject Christ, that we might continue on our own way, in our self-will, means certain death. It is a course of self-destruction! Therefore it is most essential that this rejection be turned the other way around, and we DENY SELF, and RECEIVE HIM, for in doing so, while we have lost our own self-life, we have truly been brought into HIS LIFE which abides. Just as the new organ accepted into the body means that person shall live, so also, WE MUST RECEIVE HIS MIND if we are to be programmed into the POSITIVE LIFE OF THE AGES. In the losing of the old diseased organ there is no real loss if there is the receiving of the new healthy organ to take its place. To lay down our own self-life is no loss when we are then brought into the fullness of HIS LIFE, it is ALL GAIN, it is so much higher, that the old is not worthy to be compared with the new. HIS MIND is complete, programmed for victory, enduring through all ages. Lord, renew me into your mind! Then shall we know what is that good, acceptable, and perfect will of God, and shall be able to live pleasing to Him” — end quote.

That’s the key — we have to be beheaded! John the Baptist came on the scene first proclaiming this message of the kingdom and his very first word was “Repent!” The word repent means a whole lot more than just changing our mind about a thing, or re-thinking things. The Greek word means the taking of a new mind and in order to do this we must be beheaded. Cut off the old head! The old head that contains Adam’s thought processes. The thinking of the carnal mind is perverted, erroneous, twisted, distorted, stupid, and insane, because that old head contains upon it the mark of the beast. It is a bestial mind! The mark of the beast is not something that comes to you, to Adam’s head — the carnal mind is already marked with it! John the Baptist knew that. Jesus knew that. They said, “Change your head...get a new head...repent! Lose the old head, cut it off, be beheaded — repent!”

The old way of thinking has been removed from the shoulders of every son of God who reigns with Christ in the kingdom! In the scripture passage I quoted earlier from Revelation 20:4, those who have been beheaded are the ones who sit upon the thrones! Those who sit upon the thrones are the ones that have put on the new

head of the mind of Christ! This is a conscious action on our part — we can daily choose to cut off the old way of Adamic thinking and put on the new way of thinking by the anointing of sonship. Oh, yes, we can!

We have believed the error that the Day of the Lord is nothing but blessing, that there is naught but light and life and glory, but the truth is this day will take your head, it will take your life. It comes with a sword in its hand and it comes to deliver you from the mind of Adam, from your human consciousness and carnal understanding. The word of the Lord comes to separate us from all corruption and mortality until we are no longer affected by the powers of this Dark Age. Paul was explaining why we must be beheaded when he said, “To be carnally minded is death.” Just as sure as I live and breathe, the sword of the Lord comes to each of us to remove the power of death from off our shoulders. Aren’t you glad!

The sons of God are becoming kings and priests and judges by the authority of the name of the Lord. The name of the Lord is His nature! Through the deep dealings and intense preparations of the Spirit, we are being delivered of the carnal nature and mind, and are receiving the mind of Christ. We are being *“beheaded by the witness of Jesus, and by the word of God.”* (Rev. 20:4). Oh, yes! It is not just “for” the witness of Jesus, and not merely “for” the word of God that we are losing our head, as the King James Bible expresses it, but it is truly BY the witness of Jesus within us, and BY the living power of His word within us that we are being changed! This means that we are being delivered from the headship of man, and are now coming under the true Headship of Christ. We have abandoned the judgment of our own mind, our own opinion, our own will, and we are now receiving His mind, His truth, and His Headship, to do only His perfect will.

Our beheading is a process, but we have already been beheaded in areas of our lives. We no longer worship the beast of man’s carnality and ego, or the image of the beast of the Babylon systems of this world; nor do we any longer feed upon the pronouncements of the false prophet, the erroneous and distorted message flowing from the religious systems, nor do we have that “mark” upon our foreheads (way of thinking) or in our hands (our service, actions). We are giving up our head, or the carnal mind, to receive the mind of Christ in and by the anointing within us.

As Jesus did the will of the Father by every word and deed, so shall every son of God do His will with every word we speak and in every act we perform. The works Jesus did and the words He spoke were never His. He saw the Father’s works in and by the Spirit, and then He performed them. He heard the Father’s words just as Samuel the prophet heard the audible voice of God, and He spoke only what He heard His Father speak. All His works and words were of the Father! Jesus said we would do greater works than He did, and we surely shall, for we are becoming the will of God in the earth. We are learning to hear and know His voice, and we are nigh the hour when He will begin to show us His works in that greater realm of fully manifest sonship. By His righteous, holy, divine mind, we shall also live and reign with Christ for a thousand years, that is, throughout the new day of the Lord! This greater and more glorious day of kingdom dominion is upon us! It is through the mighty dealings and transformations God is working in our lives at this present moment that we are now entering the kingdom in greater fullness. Jesus learned obedience to the will of God by putting on the Father’s mind and being filled with the Father’s life. And now God in Christ is in us! We are putting off the old man with his deeds, stripping away the Adamic nature, cutting off Adam’s head with his carnal, earthly way of thinking, understanding, and reasoning, and we are putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, putting on the nature of Christ, and putting on the new head of the mind of Christ. This is the day that the Lord hath made, and truly it is marvelous in our eyes!

To be continued...
J. Preston Eby

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 91 'END-TIME' PROPHECIES – TRUTH REVEALED

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART NINETY-ONE BREAKING THE SEALS (continued)

WHITE ROBES

"And when He had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that had been slain...and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Rev. 6:9-10)

When the fifth seal was opened John heard the voice of the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held, crying out loudly, *"How Long, O Lord, until Thou dost judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"* The way this is worded in most of our Bible translations it sounds like a cry for revenge. But I do not hesitate to tell you that there is no such cry heard in heaven! And most assuredly not from the people of God who have had their natural-minded, carnal, soulical heads chopped off! Furthermore, if this is the revelation of Jesus Christ, they are not saying, "Lord, just how long is it going to be until you really zap those people who have opposed us and who continue to walk in an earthly, fleshly, and religious mind-set?" That is not the revelation! We're not saying, "O Lord, how long until you get fed up with this foolishness and really give them what they deserve?"

We must constantly remember that also this fifth seal, as well as all the others, represents a vision. And therefore we are dealing with symbolism. As soon as we lose sight of this fact, we are apt to ask all kinds of carnal-minded questions. Forgetting the fact that we have a vision here, bespeaking a spiritual reality, we might, like most religious folks, conceive of these souls under the altar as glorified souls in heaven, and no more. Yet the question might be raised, do these saints in the glory of the heavenly temple cry out for vengeance? Is it not true that before they were thus "slain" they walked in the spirit of sonship as expressed by Jesus when He said, *"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the sons of your Father which is in heaven."* (Matt. 5:44-45). How then is it possible that now they invoke the wrath of God on them, and that too, after they have lost their old carnal mind! Is there then still carnality in the state where one has put on the mind of Christ? The question we must ask is this: what is really the meaning, what is the reality of the outcry of these souls under the altar? What is the essential idea of this symbolism? As we shall presently see, they do not cry for fleshly vengeance, but for the MIGHTY PASSIONATE MOVING OF GOD WHICH DEALS WITH THE NATURE OF MAN! This is in harmony with the whole book of Revelation, for the entire passage is visionary and symbolic.

We are the souls under the heavenly, spiritual altar who are crying out to the Lord, asking Him to bring forth true and righteous judgment, to vindicate through us and because of us, the mighty work He has wrought in our lives in preparation for the glorious manifestation of our sonship. *Most all Bible students have misunderstood the cry of these souls from under the altar because of the faulty translation of the Greek word ekdikeo as avenge — that is, retaliate with vengeance. The first and primary meaning of the word, however, is "validate."* In every language words carry various shades of meaning, they do not generally mean just one thing in one way. Let us always remember that it is usage that best determines the meaning of a word!

Now let me ask you. Have you ever felt yourself to be in the beautiful presence of Christ? Have you ever seen anyone in the spirit of the Christ who so loved the world, who gave Himself for the world, who reconciled the world, have you seen anyone in the spirit of that Christ threaten their tormentors with judgment, wrath, and personal revenge? Does the Christ who prayed in the agony of Calvary, *"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,"* now threaten vicious retaliation against those who oppose and persecute us? The very thought is an absurdity! It is Jesus Himself who taught us to love our enemies, bless them that hate us, and

pray for them which persecute us. That is the spirit and law of the kingdom! And now — shall those whose self-life has finally been completely slain within them by the very testimony of Jesus Christ pray for Him to avenge their blood on them that dwell in the earth realm? I don't think so! [In the light of these great truths it should be clear to every spiritual mind that the Greek word *ekdikeyo* must carry here its primary meaning of VINDICATE.](#)

[Let us now consider some synonyms of the word “vindicate.” It means to exonerate, justify, substantiate, confirm, authenticate, attest, and validate. Vindication is the proof of the value of ones innocence, cause or correctness. Vindication is furthermore a validation!](#) What these souls under the altar are crying out for is not revenge, but for God to make the price they have paid worthwhile, to show to those who dwell in the earth realm the true value and meaning of their lives, to validate their call, attainment, and place in God BY MANIFESTING THROUGH THEM THE POWER AND GLORY OF CHRIST TO DELIVER AND TRANSFORM CREATION. “Validate our blood on them” is the heartfelt cry of their hearts! Blood stands for life, for the life is in the blood. Validate our lives on them — let there be a transforming manifestation and ministry of life out from us by which all men will see and know that we have paid this price to truly be sons of our Father in order to be the salvation of God unto all the ends of the earth!

What a mighty word we have received from our Father! What deep dealings, what extreme processings, what intense preparations, what severe strippings, purgings, and refinings, what profound and crucial experiences, and what marvelous transformations we have passed through! And yet the world knows us not. For most of us even our next door neighbors are no more aware that we are sons of God than the people in Nazareth were aware that Jesus was the firstborn Son of God. We are in that same position Jesus was in just before His showing unto Israel. Jesus experienced thirty years of unfolding revelation and mighty workings of the Father in His life, yet those outside of Him perhaps thought Him strange, but they had no idea of who He was, or what He was going through, or why. He had never preached a sermon, had never performed a miracle, never healed the sick, never cast out a devil, and never raised the dead. But when He came out of the wilderness in the power of the Spirit the Father began to validate who He was! We know that we have received the call to sonship, we have received the spirit of sonship, we have experienced the testings, trials, processings, and even the scourgings that come to every son, yet we seem to have no more power or impact on the world around us than anyone else, regardless of what spiritual level they are on. We feel weak and helpless before the staggering needs and momentous challenges that lie before us, for the whole world lies in darkness under the bondage of sin and the curse of death, and yet in our deepest hearts we know we have heard the Father's voice, we have answered His call, we are following the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, we have taken up our cross, we are paying the price, and we are the sons of God!

These souls under the altar had pleaded that their cause be at once vindicated, and had asked how long it would be before it should be done. *“How long, O Lord, holy and true, before you judge our cause and vindicate our lives...”* The reply is that the desired vindication would not at once occur, but that they must wait until other events were accomplished. *“It was said unto them that they should rest yet a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.”* What words are these! Nothing definite is determined by the phrase “a little season,” or a short time. It is simply an intimation that this would not immediately occur, or would not take place until all their brethren had paid the same price and attained the same place. This answers a question I have often been asked through the years. Many have inquired whether the sons will be manifested individually, one by one, as they attain to sonship, or whether the sons will all be revealed together at the same time. The answer is clear — the Father will not validate any of us until all of us have come to perfection and full stature in Christ! Should any who read these lines suppose they have now attained to the fullness and are about to be manifested, you will certainly “rest a little season” until the rest of us have caught up with you! The apostle Paul stated it so succinctly, *“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the sons of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ: if so be that we suffer (pay the price) with Him, that WE MAY BE ALSO GLORIFIED TOGETHER.”* **(Rom. 8:16-17)** The work of God must be completed in all the sons of God before the hour of manifestation arrives!

The cry of the souls under the altar is for vindication, a validation of the work of God in their lives. The revelation of Christ has been raised up within them, the seals have been removed, the flesh man, the carnal mind, the soulical life, and all that they have held dear in the outer world, and in the religious realms, has been

brought to death, and the word of the kingdom has been established within as their only hope, reality, and destiny. The word of the kingdom and the revelation of our call to sonship has been planted in the earth over the past sixty or more years. There has been in this world a mighty declaration and proclamation by the prophets of God of the purposes of God in His called and chosen elect! Those who have had ears to hear have been filled with great hope and faith and vision to lay hold upon the purpose of God to bring forth in the earth, in this new day of the Lord, the greatest manifestation of God the world has ever witnessed, through the manifestation of the sons of God. We have been faithful to declare a word that has not yet been brought forth into evidence.

This word of the kingdom is a word that is growing by leaps and bounds. It is not growing because of the promotions of men, or the organized efforts of a movement, but by the mighty working of the Spirit of God! More and more people are receiving the call to sonship! The door that has been opened in heaven for sons to ascend to the throne realm has not been closed! God is still forming, preparing, and equipping a body of people, many sons brought to glory, to deliver creation from the bondage of corruption and restore all things into God again.

There are some in our ranks, however, who believe that the work is finished, they have arrived, the new day is fully here, they are even now the manifest sons of God, there are no more heavens to pass through, no more processing to be accomplished, no further word or working, they now stand upon mount Zion in all the splendor of this high and holy realm of fullness and kingship to which they have come. I have been in meetings where these pseudo-sons have formed themselves into a mutual admiration society, doing nothing but proclaiming to one another how great they are, and how high is the realm to which they have attained, while they polish one another's halos and prune one another's wings. According to them there is no need to wait for another day, nor even to rest for a little season — this is the day. They have arrived. The word they have is no longer fragmentary, but the full revelation of God to which nothing can be added. There is nothing more to seek, nothing to wait for, nowhere else to go in God. Tabernacles is now fulfilled in them, they have passed beyond the veil and have now stepped out from behind the veil to be manifested to creation. They are no longer climbing the holy mount of Zion, for they now are mount Zion. They don't need to climb anything for they have gone as high as they can go in God. The throne is theirs and they are even now reigning as Christ in the kingdom.

It is always a fatal mistake for any man, regardless of who he is, to imagine that he has attained to a realm in God while he is yet unable to manifest out of that realm. That mistake will make him proud and bigoted in his delusions of grandeur and so set in his ways that when God does indeed move on he will refuse to move with the cloud. My prayer is that we will get beyond the declaration, and lay hold upon the manifestation. That is the deepest cry of my heart in this significant hour! No man's experience is complete in any realm until there is the manifestation of the reality wrought in him. There has to be a validity, an evidence, an infallible proof of the word of the Lord through us. There has always been evidence in the history of God's movement from realm to realm. Whenever God has sent forth a word announcing a new day, a new age, a further unfolding of His purpose, He has clearly defined by a word of power that new realm in God, that new place of attainment in the order of His kingdom.

When God has spoken that the time has come to do away with the old, and press into the new; to throw the old order out, and begin to walk in the new order; to step out of the dying age, and enter into the reality of the new — He has always validated that word by mighty signs, wonders, and miracles. Every new move of God from the foundation of the world was attended by glorious manifestations of miracle working power! This new order of manifest sonship will be no different!

Mighty things took place when Noah proclaimed with power the destruction of an evil age and a corrupt world, condemning the world and saving his household. Mighty were the signs that attended it! The rain itself was a miracle of unprecedented proportions, with the breaking up of the fountains of the deep, and a deluge of water that swept the face of the whole earth. These signs and wonders were the validation of God's promise!

Abraham received a word from the Lord to leave his country and his father's house and go to a land that He would show him. God promised to make his name great and to raise up to him a seed in whom the promise would be fulfilled, and through whom all the families and nations of the earth would be blessed. In order to

validate His covenant with Abraham He gave a sign — a son born in his old age when both his and Sarah's bodies were as good as dead. The birth of Isaac was a supernatural birth! The miracle of Isaac was the validation of God's promise! Think, too, of the signs, wonders, and miracles when Moses led the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage! And then as Joshua led the people into their Promised Land, consider the waters of the Jordan piling up like a wall, the walls of Jericho falling down, the sun and moon standing still, and all the other wonders of that new and glorious day! In each case the Lord was bringing a new day, a new stage of His dealings in the earth, and the wonderful miracles and signs were the validation of His promises to His servants! And then when Jesus came into this world to again change the age, He came as *"a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know."* (Acts 2:22)

And then the day of Pentecost came and the apostles of God went forth who by "the power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost" turned the world up-side-down! The record states, *"So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming (validating) the word with signs following."* (Mark. 16:19-20) These signs were the proof that Jesus had risen from the dead, ascended to the throne of the Father in the heavens, and come again within His many-membered body in mighty spirit power. The signs and wonders wrought by the apostles were the foundational proof that Jesus was not just another false Messiah. Jesus wasn't the only one in His day saying that he was the Messiah! There had been many before Him proclaiming themselves as the promised One. There were others, contemporary with Jesus, making the claims of Messiahship. After Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension the Jews followed many false Messiahs just as Jesus had foretold (Matt. 24:5). According to the Jewish historian, Josephus, in the first century before the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70, a number of Messiahs arose promising deliverance from the Roman yoke, and finding multitudes of followers. Then in A.D. 132 Bar Kokba, one of the most prominent of the pseudo-messiahs was hailed as Messiah-King. In crushing the revolt that he led, Roman soldiers killed thousands of Jews. There were many false Christs! Jesus was only one voice among many.

The great difference was that God gave to Jesus the evidence of His sonship! He let Him have proof. He manifested through Jesus a ministry that surpassed any other ministry of His day! All that the other Messiahs had were personality and words. But everywhere Jesus went He did things that no one else could do. He healed every manner of sickness and disease; devils were cast out of many, crying out with loud voices, acknowledging His sonship; He raised the dead; He commanded the elements, grasped the winds in His fists, and calmed the raging sea with a word; He fed five thousand men with five loaves and two fish; He walked the sea; He did so many marvelous works that were they all written the world could not contain the books that could be written! You see, my beloved, God sent His firstborn Son into the world with the proof, the evidence, the confirmation, the vindication, the validation the He was indeed the Saviour of the world.

We are no different! It makes no difference whatever how many people say we need no evidence of our sonship beyond the revelation of who and what we are, and the little day to day blessings and victories that come our way by faith. But creation will see proof of your sonship or your sonship isn't worth a hill of beans! If we are to do anything in this day it is not to continue our declaring, but to cry out mightily to God from under the altar that He would vindicate the revelation of His Son in us so that all the ends of the earth might see the salvation of the Lord! All of our revelation and all of our declaration is for naught until we are ready to let God make us the sign and the wonder unto creation!

It should be clear to any thinking mind that the great purpose in the signs, wonders, and miracles was to validate the ministry of the One who had come to bring an end to the age and order of the law and initiate and inaugurate the new age of grace. He was bringing one age to a close and ushering in a more glorious age upon the whole world of mankind. Christ came making declarations of an order about which the world, and the people of God, knew absolutely nothing. He made declarations of the kingdom of God that it was even then at hand. He made declarations that He would be killed and on the third day He would rise again. He made declarations that He had come down from the heavenly world and that He would return thither again. He made declarations that He Himself was the way, the truth, and the life, and that from this day forward no man would come unto the Father except by Him. He made declarations that He was the revelation of the Father, and if you had seen Him you had seen the Father. He made declarations that except men eat His flesh and drink His blood they have no life in them, and whosoever eats His flesh and drinks His blood shall never die.

He made declarations that if He was lifted up upon the cross He would draw all mankind unto Him. He made declarations that He would build His church and the very gates of hell would not prevail against it. He made declarations that all who are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God and they that hear shall live.

That's pretty heavy stuff! It had nothing to do with delivering Israel from the dominion of Rome, but it had everything to do with saving the world and delivering creation from the bondage of corruption! These are things no one could say and expect people to believe them. The claims of Jesus seemed, to the natural mind, outlandish, preposterous, implausible, unreasonable, illogical, extravagant, incredible — impossible! Some who heard Him said that He had a devil. Others thought He was beside Himself. He was just another mad man, a crazy kook. But multitudes followed Him and His disciples went forth in His name and turned the world upside down! What made the difference? Jesus had more than words — He had power! The difference was marked by the signs, wonders, and miracles! Some tell us today that we don't need any signs, wonders, and miracles, that these are old-order and no sign of sonship. It disgusts me to hear these breezy preachers declaring their sonship while denying its evidence and proof. **JESUS IS THE FIRSTBORN SON OF GOD AND THE PATTERN SON!** Signs, wonders, and miracles were the evidence, the proof, the validation of HIS SONSHIP!

The sonship which God has planned for this day cannot be less than that of the proto-type, the pattern, the firstborn, the forerunner, and the glorious Head of the order of sons! Sonship without supernatural power has a wonderful appeal to the carnal mind which has no incentive to wait upon God for the ultimate reality, but chooses to lay claim to a lesser glory while presumptuously concluding that it has attained to the fullness. Don't go out, my beloved, every time you hear a declaration of those who assert that they have attained the full stature of sonship. Jesus has taught us, His younger brethren, *"If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true."* Many today are bearing witness of themselves! They claim to be manifested sons, but the only way we can know they are sons is by taking their word for it. Don't call it a lie, but don't take what they say at face value until you see the evidence!

When the hour arrived for Jesus to be manifested to Israel as the Son of God with power, the Father Himself bore witness of Him. A voice came from heaven proclaiming, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The Holy Spirit without measure descended upon Him bodily like a dove and the heavens were opened unto Him. Forty days later He came out of the wilderness and returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee. Matthew's Gospel tells us that *"Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And His fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto Him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those which had the palsy; and He healed them. And there followed Him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan."* **(Matt. 4:23-25)**

I'm telling you, dear ones, there is coming to us the evidence, there is coming a manifestation, a display, a showing, an exhibit, a presentation, a demonstration, an expression, a substantiation, a certification, a vindication, a verification, a validation — the proof of our manifest sonship! It will no longer be just a bunch of people declaring, declaring, declaring, but there shall be a change, a transfiguration, an out-raying, an unveiling that is verifiable, so that there is no doubt about it that this is the day of the Lord! All creation shall see and behold the nature, glory, majesty, and power of God revealed in His many sons brought to glory! The evidence is not for me or you — it's for creation! Creation must see the salvation of the Lord! *"For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God."* **(Rom. 8:19)** *"Even creation waits with eager longing for the sons of God to be revealed."* **(Moffatt)** *"The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of God's sons coming into their own."* **(J. B. Phillips)**

Sonship will one day move out of our little groups and out of the individual seclusion of our personal "Nazareth" where God has hidden us away. This word of the kingdom shall break out into the multitudes and it shall come upon them in the power and demonstration of the fullness of the Holy Spirit! Nothing less will avail. Nothing else will do. Nothing short of this will bring the kingdom of God to pass in all the earth. Nothing less will break in pieces the kingdoms of this world. Nothing else will burn Babylon with fire until the whole religious system of man lies in total and eternal ruin. Nothing short of this will obliterate from the earth all the false religious systems of Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Confucianism, Shintoism, Hinduism, Judaism, and all the other isms

of the world. Nothing else will break the bondages, set the captives free, remove the veil that is cast over the face of all nations and all people, break the power of sin, sickness, sorrow, limitation, and death in every man, and truly deliver the creation from the bondage of corruption. If anyone thinks these wonderful things can be accomplished without signs, wonders, or miracles; without healing the sick, casting out devils, raising the dead, controlling the elements, confounding the mighty, and speaking the power of divine life into men, then he is indeed among the most self-deceived.

The sons of God have been declaring for decades, "A change is coming, a new order is at hand." The question follows — What is that change? I have passed through the declaration that "God has brought us into a new order" again and again throughout the past sixty years! And yet I must confess, not much has really changed. Some brethren get a new depth of revelation and declare they have entered a "new order" in God, yet I heard the same word of revelation and the same proclamations of a new order fifty years ago! By the word of the Lord I say to God's precious elect, a dramatic change and a glorious new order is coming! And it will begin with the Father's public announcement of His sons, to show them unto creation! Jesus' sonship ministry could not begin until the day the voice came from heaven, in the hearing of the multitude of men by the Jordan River, declaring, "This is my beloved Son!" The change is the Father's validation and vindication of our sonship, not in our little secret gatherings, but before great masses of humanity as the Father Himself speaks out of the heavens, saying, "These are my beloved sons, in whom I am well pleased!" This will be followed by the fullness of sonship anointing released in our lives, bringing first within ourselves the quickening of the Spirit by which we receive the redemption of our bodies. *"But ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption (the placement as sons), to wit, the redemption of our body."* (Rom. 8:23) J. B. Phillips beautifully translates this, *"It is plain...that we who have a foretaste of the Spirit are in a sort of painful tension, while we wait for that redemption of our bodies which will mean that we have realized our full sonship."* Then shall the sons of God go forth in all the wisdom, understanding, glory, and omnipotence of God to change all things and make all things new. THIS WILL BE THE VINDICATION OF THE MANIFEST SONS OF GOD!

There will be a people upon this earth who will not lay their bodies down, they will not go by way of the grave, for the promise is sure, *"Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we SHALL ALL BE CHANGED!"* (I Cor. 15:51) What do the words of Paul mean to you, saint of God, when he speaks concerning this change, saying, *"Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."* (Phil. 3:21) I tell you, God's called and chosen elect are not walking in the same light or the same hope as the old-order church world. This earth is about to be visited by a race of men out of the heavens of God's Spirit, a company of incorruptible and immortal men who shall stand upon this planet in the power of His resurrection. We are not called to do what any people before us has done. Oh, yes! Men will be saved, healed, delivered, sanctified, filled, blessed, changed, transformed, and empowered through the ministry of the sons of God. Oh, yes! Signs, wonders, and miracles will be done on a scale never witnessed since Jesus of Nazareth walked the pathways of Galilee — and not even then — for *"the works that I do shall ye do also, and greater works than these shall YE DO."* But even the signs, wonders, and miracles are not the final phase of the validation of our sonship ministry. The firstborn son of God truly did all those wonderful works, and multitudes beheld His glory. But Jesus went on to do something else. HE AROSE FROM THE DEAD AND WALKED OUT OF THE TOMB IN A RESURRECTION BODY OF GLORY! Oh, yes! He did! That was the final validation, proof, and vindication of His sonship as clearly stated in the words of the apostle, *"Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh: and declared to be the Son of God with power...by the resurrection from the dead."* (Rom. 1:3-4) Can we not see by this pattern of the firstborn Son that the redemption of the body is indeed the DECLARATION OF THE SONS OF GOD WITH POWER!

As we walk in the spirit of sonship there is arising within us a life that is swallowing up all death, all darkness, all corruptibleness within us, in spirit, soul, and body. I care not how much revelation you have; I care not how articulately, anointedly, and powerfully you can enunciate the high things of God; I care not how many goose bumps you can raise or how many shouts of glory and hallelujah you can stir; there is one thing, and one thing only, that I am looking for as the final validation, and that is the same validation that Jesus Christ Himself gave — AN EMPTY TOMB! The proof of His sonship was that He could take His body into the darkness of the tomb, thoroughly dead, tightly bound in grave clothes, and Himself raise it up into a body of glory, incorruptibility, and deathlessness. This didn't happen to His spirit, beloved, it happened to His body! That,

and that alone, in the final analysis, declares Him to be the Son of God with power! When the disciples ran to that tomb, the evidence, the validation was there, nor could they even find Him except He appeared before them. This will be the final step in the process of the validation of all who are called to sonship — NO MORE DEATH! Then, and only then, will we be able to fulfill the true ministry of the manifest sons of God — TO DELIVER ALL CREATION FROM THE BONDAGE OF CORRUPTION. It is indeed wonderful!

This is the hour when the sons of God must face squarely the truth of all things. Have you ever asked yourself the question, “If Jesus abolished death and brought life and immortality to light (II Tim. 1:10), why are men still dying?” If Jesus accomplished everything He would ever accomplish, and we’re just to rest in His “finished work,” then I must think deeply and ask myself, “If it is all finished, then why, two thousand years later, is the whole human race still bound by the power of sin, sorrow, disease, fear, torment, deception, delusion, and death? And why are God’s redeemed people still dying? WHY!” The divine answer is that there is still to come forth another son, a son company, a corporate son, the many brethren of Jesus Christ, conformed to His image, matured unto His stature, transformed into His likeness, filled with His mind, wisdom, and power, and raised up into the glory of His resurrection! The seed was planted at Pentecost and throughout the age God has been watching over that seed to bring it to maturity as the many-membered son of God in the earth.

For these manifest sons all creation has been groaning and travailing together in pain until now! These sons will stand in the earth in all the splendor of the resurrected Christ to reveal all that God in Christ has provided for mankind. We shall see walking this earth a vast company of begotten sons who have laid hold upon the fullness of Christ’s redemption. They will not fly away to heaven, but remain here upon planet earth to manifest full redemption in resurrection life and this is the life they shall give to all mankind. Isn’t it wonderful! These sons shall have a word that will reconcile the ages, a word that will bring light out of darkness, strength out of weakness, holiness out of sin, life out of death, that will transform the condition of men; a word that will do for all men what God did for one Son two thousand years ago, and shall in this blessed hour do for His many sons. Christ gives this life to His many brethren, and His many brethren shall impart it to all the ends of the earth. What a plan!

Is it here yet? No, my beloved, it has not yet appeared. But it is right on the horizon, it lies just before us, and though it tarry we will wait for it, because anything less is just more of the same. We are all keenly aware that what we’ve had, including all our declaring of our sonship, has not got the job done. The world is still going to hell in a hand basket! We’ve heard the declaration — now where is the manifestation? If you think the declaration is God’s new thing, you are dead wrong. The problem with the declaration is — we’ve declared ourselves! Now there must come the Father’s declaration followed by the Father’s validation. I’ve been in this word of the kingdom for most of my life and I’ve heard my share of declarations, men have declared themselves mature, the finished handiwork of God, manifested sons, immortal and deathless, reigning now over the nations, the order of Melchizedek, their divine godhood, and other things so bizarre I won’t even mention them.

YET — THE HOUR IS DRAWING NIGH FOR THE TRUE MANIFESTATION! I refuse to settle for anything less. There is coming a glory and power of God that will make Pentecost look like a firecracker in contrast to an atomic explosion. There is a glory coming to this latter house that will exceed the glory of the former house. Now notice — the former house had a glory and it had a validity, and until the latter house was filled with its glory the former house was the only glory that was valid. We are today like David before he ascended the throne to reign over Israel, he had already received a declaration from Samuel the prophet that he was anointed the king of Israel. He had even had the oil poured on his head! But he was still invalid as long as Saul sat upon the throne. So he became an outlaw with a band of outlaws. Eventually, however, that old order passed and David, although he had the declaration, had to have the actual outward validation of his kingship in a second and greater ceremony of anointing, with a procession into Jerusalem, and at last physically occupying the throne of Israel. Oh, the wonder of it!

This is a spiritual picture of the validation of the sons of God! When the validation takes place the Day will declare who the sons of God really are! Hold still, precious brother, sister, hold your peace in this hour of solemnity, abide in the life of the Christ within, stay in your place with the outlaws of the wilderness, treasure the beautiful hope and promise of your sonship, stagger not in unbelief, do not come out until the hour

appointed of the Father when He will move for you, in you, and through you in His unmistakable and irrefutable validation of surpassing glory!

WHITE ROBES

“And white robes were given unto every one of them.” (Rev. 6:11)

This verse is full of gracious thoughts. Souls do not need white robes, but our symbolic book is teaching us of the assured and blessed state of those who lose their own lives so that Christ can be raised up in them. Nothing is more frequently spoken of in these visions than the “white robes” of the Lord’s elect, and these robes are obviously theirs by virtue of their overcoming. It is the robe of the priesthood, and those who are called to the high calling of God in Christ are made kings and priests unto God! It is the robe with which the faithful remnant in Sardis had been arrayed even before they are introduced to us, for they had not “defiled” it, and the Lord Jesus says of them, *“and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.” (Rev. 3:4)* Again, the promise to everyone in that church that overcometh is that he “shall be arrayed in white garments.”

In like manner the Laodicean church is exhorted to buy of her Lord “white garments” that she may be clothed. And when the marriage of the Lamb arrives it is said of the bride that *“it was given unto her that she should array herself in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.” (Rev. 19:8)* The spirit of revelation has taught us that the Bridegroom is Christ, not Christ in heaven, but the Christ within, in our spirit, and the bride is the feminine dimension of our life, the soul. Perhaps we have been casual in reading these precious truths, so let us prayerfully consider the deep mystery encoded in these wonderful words. You will note that it is the “souls” under the altar to whom are given the “white robes,” and it is the “soul-bride” to whom it is granted to be “arrayed in fine linen, clean and white.” It is always the soul which is clothed in the fine linen of Christ’s righteousness! The white robe is the clothing of Christ in our spirit as He overshadows us, swallowing us up into Himself! Thus, it is the blessed and intimate union of soul and spirit within ourselves that brings us to the marriage of the Lamb! Putting all these passages together, we are distinctly taught in the language of the Revelation that the “white robe” denotes the perfect righteousness of Christ, and the excellent glory of Christ, which is bestowed upon every overcoming saint of God who puts on the Lord Jesus Christ!

Paul has admonished every saint of God to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. *The term “put on” is from the Greek enduo meaning “to get dressed,” to put on Christ as a garment.* The Lord Jesus, in the days of His flesh, wore a very special garment that was seamless (John 19:23). The garment of Jesus was not made of parts — it was a whole. This is indeed a parable! Spiritually it means that the Christ we are to put on is not composed of parts. We are not to put on a part of Christ, but the whole Christ, without even a consciousness of parts, but the totality of who He is! When we speak about the garment of the Lord we speak of His nature being expressed and revealed outwardly. The scintillating glory of Christ revealed upon us and through us in the totality of all that He is signifies the manifestation of the sons of God!

God from the beginning has been involved in making clothes. *“Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.” (Gen. 3:21)* In the heaven blest mists of Eden clothes did not exist! The nakedness of Adam and Eve speaks to us of man’s innocence. Adam was created in the image and likeness of God, but he was not a mature son of God, for he was young and inexperienced. Had he been mature he would not have listened to the serpent’s voice and disobeyed the word of his Father. Adam was like a little child — innocent and inexperienced. He did not know good and evil, neither did he understand the true value of life. He could in no way appreciate the sad result of his unwise choice, for he was untested, untried, and unproved.

The purpose of clothing is to cover. The clothing also reveals who we are! Most of us appear much more beautiful or handsome when we are well dressed than we do in the nude! From the earliest dawn of history clothing reflected the status of a person’s life. Kings, priests, judges, nurses, mechanics, store clerks, and a thousand other vocations are recognized by the clothing they wear. Even beggars can be identified by the clothing they wear. Who wants to go shopping for beggar’s clothes? The clothing, you see, represents the status of our life! Clothing speaks of who we really are! Is it not therefore a marvelous thing that our heavenly Father has made us a garment to wear! The coat of skin that God has made for us is Christ Himself. He brought Him forth as flesh upon the earth. He secured the raw material for our divine garment. He then

transformed that man of flesh into a sinless, holy, pure, overcoming, death-defying, immortal, glorious, glistening garment of Light! He has presented that garment to us in our spirit, for “he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.” And now our soul and body are “putting on” the heavenly garment of Life and Light!

Unless He clothes us, we are not fit for the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is the government of God, and those who represent the government of God are kings and priests who reign with Christ! Even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like we shall be, for our garments shall make the wise king's raiment appear as filthy rags. Oh, yes! The Lord shall indeed clothe us in the brilliant incorruptible raiment of the King of the kingdom, the Christ life. We are learning that we cannot do one thing to clothe ourselves with the garments of His Life. Certainly we must seek the Lord, trust Him completely, and yield to His moving in our lives. Other than that we are powerless to change ourselves! Yet God is moving in us to bring about the change. “To her it was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white.” What a word that is!

This white raiment is not the imputed righteousness that is given to us when we receive Christ as Saviour. You will note that the Lord, in the book of Revelation, sent seven letters to seven churches. To them He said, “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment.” Therefore, He is speaking to people who have already received the imputed righteousness to their account! Though righteousness has been imputed to them through faith in Jesus, there is yet another white raiment that is obtained only through overcoming. This is not the imputed righteousness of Jesus as Saviour, but the actual righteousness which God is bringing us to as our state of being, that perfect walk in Christ, His nature and glory raised up in us as our very own life, that perfection that He is bringing us to, fulfilling the words of Jesus, *“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”*

The miracle of what God has done through Jesus Christ ravishes my heart. I am enthralled beyond measure that He has translated me out of the kingdom of darkness, and is clothing me with the fullness of the Son of God. Daily I am putting on the Lord Jesus Christ who is my robe of righteousness and my house from heaven, the new man, the spiritual body, and the new building of God, eternal in the heavens. Just as the life within a lamb produces from within its covering of wool, so does the life of Christ within each son of God create the garments of our full salvation. We put on the robe of Christ's righteousness, not by putting it on from outside ourselves, by our own self-effort, keeping rules and regulations, and good works, but by the working and power of His life within.

I thank God today that there is a righteousness, a divine righteousness that God can raise up within men, and which can exalt a man to the image and likeness of God. In no other way can men ever be exalted or lifted up out of the power of sin, self, sorrow, limitation, and death. Thank God for the imputed righteousness of Christ — it is sufficient to remove your sin-consciousness and bring you into fellowship with God. But it is not enough to make you an overcomer, perfect, mature, in the full stature of Christ. Men get all hung up on the imputed righteousness of Christ and never get on to the business of transformation into the image of God. They major in milk, but have no meat. They get men started, but never grow them up!

So I gladly and thankfully this day record this truth that the righteousness of which I speak is the righteousness of God, which by faith we may possess; not only a righteousness imputed, in which we can trust for the beginning of our salvation, but a righteousness IMPARTED, INWORKED INTO THE NATURE, RAISED UP AS ACTUAL RIGHTEOUSNESS IN OUR STATE OF BEING. All very good is all this talk about imputed righteousness, but I cannot — will not — settle for a righteousness that is only imputed. If it is not the very nature of our being then we are not really changed at all!

The white raiment that is not and cannot be defiled, soiled, or stained, is the garment of glory — being a part of that inheritance which is incorruptible and fadeth not away. This is the garment of the overcomer of which the Lord speaks, *“and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.”* The Greek word here translated “white” actually speaks more of the brilliant radiance of light than it does of a color. It is the same word which is used of the appearance of Christ at the time of His transfiguration as “white and glistening.” Actually, what is being said here is that those who overcome will be clothed upon with the radiant glory of the risen and ascended Lord! Just as He is robed in celestial light (Ps. 104:2), so we are progressively being clothed from glory to glory with light as with a garment. The words used carry the sense of shining in intense whiteness, in a dazzling heavenly glory. A vesture of light would enclothe the overcomer and the glory of the celestial

realms would be his garb. In that great day when we shall perfectly image and out-ray the exact likeness of God in the fullness of our sonship, we, too, shall be clothed in glistening garments of white light. We who “walk in the light as He is in the light” shall show forth the glory of God through our incorruptible bodies of glory!

God is calling a people in this hour beyond profession to possession. It is easy to embrace the message of sonship and the kingdom of God, and presume that by the very revelation of it we have somehow attained, but to be a son of God one must truly and fully put on the Lord Jesus Christ. It should be clear to all who have eyes to see that when the scripture makes such statements as, “put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ,” “put on the whole armor of God,” “put on the armor of light,” “put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem,” “be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven,” these cannot be put on the outer physical body, they must be put on in a spiritual way over the nature of the natural man. Those who have put on Christ bear the image, likeness, and identity of Christ! They are truly and sincerely living and doing always the pure and perfect will of their Father in heaven, just as the firstborn Son of God did.

What a calling!

To be continued...

J. Preston Eby

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 92 'END-TIME' PROPHECIES – TRUTH REVEALED

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART NINETY-TWO BREAKING THE SEALS (continued)

THE SEA
THUS FAR AND NO FURTHER
THE EARTH
HEAVEN

Before considering the significant and momentous events occurring under the sixth seal, it will be advantageous to first review one important principle that will greatly aid our understanding of almost all the scenes we behold not only under the sixth seal, but throughout the remainder of the book of Revelation. I would draw your attention to the fact that the vast majority of the events in the book take place in one of three dimensions: HEAVEN, EARTH, and SEA. These are, of course, symbolical and prophetic terms! They represent states of being, life-styles, levels of consciousness, spheres of existence, and dimensions of life within each of us.

THE SEA

The lowest of these three realms is the sea. Throughout the book of **Revelation** a number of things transpire in the sea. A few of them are as follows. *"And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and a third part of the sea became blood." "I stood upon the sand of the sea, and I saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns." "And the sea gave up the dead that were in it." "Woe to the inhabitants of the sea, for the devil is come down unto you." "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth...and there was no more sea."*

Throughout the scriptures the sea is a type of the inner storms and turbulent nature of the Adamic man. The prophet Isaiah penned these inspired words: *"The wicked are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."* (Isa. 57:20-21) Jude also described wicked men when he said, *"These are raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame."* (Jude 13) The beloved John, on the isle of Patmos, had a vision of a great whore sitting on many waters. The angel revealed the meaning of the many waters, saying, *"the waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."* (Rev. 17:15)

The natural sea is a great deep, an abyss (Gen. 1:2; 7:11; 8:2; Deut. 8:7; 33:13). The Psalmist wrote of this abyss of the wickedness of man, *"They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart is D-E-E-P (an abyss)."* (Ps. 64:6) To the enlightened mind of David the depth of iniquity of which the human heart is capable is so great that it is beyond the ability of man to comprehend. The heart of man is an unfathomable depth, or, as Jeremiah observed, *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"* (Jer. 17:9) While John the Revelator saw a beast (bestial nature) rising out of the sea (abyss, depth) of humanity, Jesus expressed the same truth thus: *"For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed all these evil things!"*

No one can dispute the fact that it is this restless, turbulent, raging, evil heart of the fleshly man that inspires every evil and devilish perversion, and has filled the world with ever increasing confusion, faithlessness, immorality, falsehood, fraud, hatred, violence, greed, cruelty, strife, wars, bloodshed, and oppression. There are wars and rumors of wars and terrorism that strike fear into the hearts of men. Among the ruthless surging tide of unbridled crime, drugs, rebellion, illicit sex, disease, suffering, abuse, poverty, sorrow, and injustice, we hear the groans of the dying. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain! Men's hearts are failing them for fear in looking after those things which are coming upon the earth. It is more than a raging sea of evil

— it is a virtual tsunami of self-destruction! As we look at the sad earth today, it is plain for every eye to see that, flowing from the corrupt minds of the corrupt rulers of every corrupt government on earth, taught in the schools, practiced in business and in the courts, and propagated by the media and Hollywood, we find the evil fruit of sin and death manifesting itself. Everywhere on the planet mankind is being overwhelmed by its evil until the earth is filled with violence and the thoughts and imaginations of men's hearts are only evil continually.

The natural man is not getting better, as some affirm. The unregenerate man, old Adam, is corruptible. That means not only that he is dying, but that he is continually being brought into a worse state and inferior condition leading to destruction. He is on a never-ending downward spiral into oblivion. Is not this the terrible danger of the hour in which we live — enough bombs stockpiled to not only blow planet earth to smithereens but twenty more like it! And all in the hands of unpredictable, corruptible men, and terrorists everywhere on the prowl. You may suffer from the illusion that human nature has improved during the past sixty-five years since the horror of the Holocaust and the savage warfare in which fifty million men, women, and children were blown into eternity, but you are mistaken. Human nature never improves, old Adam can never reform, for his is a corruptible nature, growing steadily more vicious, deceitful, and immoral.

For us the seashore is a place of vacation, and a cruise across the sea is for many the dream of a lifetime. Not so for the ancients! To them the sea symbolized chaos and destruction and unrest. One description of this is found in Psalm 107:23-30. These things, gathered together in the concept of the hostile sea, represent a part of human existence. The disquiet that goes on in many souls is sometimes almost beyond bearing. Friend, have you ever heard someone who has passed through mental or emotional torment speak of its hell? Have you ever seen the quivering jaw of someone crying bitter tears after having taken all that a human being could be expected to endure? Have you ever tried to encourage someone who is in an impossible corner of life with absolutely no exit to be seen? Have you ever stood beside someone and felt by way of empathy a groan of inner misery so deep that it cannot even find its way into words? Some of you have known dear people who have so suffered. Some of you have experienced some of these things yourselves! But there is a place — a place in God's new heaven and in God's new earth, in the realm of the Spirit, where the anguish represented by the sea exists for us no more! "And there shall be no more sea." Thank God!

THUS FAR AND NO FURTHER

"Who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb? When I brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors, and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." (Job 38:8-11)

The above passage is a statement the Lord made concerning creation — how He arranged and limited the "great deep" at the time He was fashioning the earth as a habitation for man. He describes His action of dividing the dry land from the seas. At times, when there have been fierce hurricanes or terrible tsunamis sweeping the shores, has the thought not entered our minds of the devastation that would occur if no limits had been put upon those fierce and powerful waves? What if they should break forth from the invisible barrier which holds them in place and sweep far inland and engulf even the height of the mountains beyond! The scriptures assure us that our Father Himself controls the seas. Though storms may arise, and waves rage, they may boil and crash in fury, but their boundaries are set. No matter how strong the wind or how powerful the earthquake, they can go no further than God has decreed: *"Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed!"*

The raging of the sea indicates that the forces of the flesh and the world are all against us! There is much opposition from our own carnal mind, and from the powers that be without, to the great plan and purpose of God that is before us! Sin and death are everywhere! Tyranny and conspiracy dominate the world scene and militate against the rule of the kingdom of God! If it were possible, carnality and death would overwhelm us! Death at its worst! The powers of sin and death control this world! But, praise God, though the raging waves crash upon the shore and run up the beaches, yet they have to fall back within the boundaries God has set for them. In every temptation and trouble there is a place of refuge in a realm higher than the storm-tossed sea! Thank God, there are realms above sea level!

“The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea.” (Ps. 93:4)

It is certain that the Lord has the power and ability to control the mighty waves of the literal sea. But there is more involved here than just the literal waters of the oceans! It is the sea of humanity, the wickedness of man which “casts up mire and dirt,” to which the Spirit would point us. The Lord is stronger and mightier than the masses of the world who wickedly cast up the mire and dirt of the carnal, evil works of the flesh. The “floods” of sex, rock music, drugs, crime, divorce, broken homes, abuse, profanity, licentiousness, and godlessness they lift up and by these floods they have deluged the world with sin, darkness, perversion, and shame. But the Lord shall speak peace to the troubled waters of wickedness! The abundant salvation and restoration of the Lord shall calm the troubled waters of the wicked! God is even now preparing a great “counter wind” to blow the waves back into their place, and by the ministry of the manifest sons of God all mankind shall be quickened to experience and manifest the righteousness, peace, and joy of the kingdom of God. Oh, yes!

It is the Lord *“which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people.” (Ps. 65:7)* This passage is not speaking of the noise and waves of the literal oceans, but the noise and commotions sent through the earth as a result of the tumult of the people. Only the Lord can quiet the noise and calm the waves! Only the Lord can heal and soothe the passions of the flesh and the evil works of men! The carnal mind and the flesh nature constitute the “seas” within us, whereas the corrupt systems and evil works of this world make up the “seas” without. Only the Lord can still the ravings of the carnal mind! This has been His great work in His elect as He has moved mightily in us by His Spirit, raising up the pure and holy nature of Christ within. In this new day of the kingdom of God the Lord is prepared to speak to the noise of every sea, to the raging of every wave, and the tumult of all the people of the earth! The sons of God shall arise and through them Christ shall rule the world in righteousness and subdue every enemy and subject all things by that mighty power whereby He is able to still the noise of the seas and calm the anger of their waves. The Lord shall show that He is the one who made the seas, the seas are His possession, and He is the one who has power over the seas; then shall every enemy, the raging “seas” of man, bow at His feet.

The Holy Spirit has taught us that in every event of human history the Lord has had control. This was true in His dealings with men, and nations, and His own people, and each individual life in the past, and it is just as true today. The Lord has set the bounds, and bars, and doors, and limits to everything! Anything that may attempt to go beyond the boundary which He has set for it will fail. We see this principle so beautifully exemplified in the evil that fills the earth. In spite of men’s wicked designs, intents, and plans, the evil of man has never had complete mastery over the events of earth. Many times throughout history an exceedingly corrupt regime came upon the scene, forcing men into an abyss of oppression. Yet even these tyrannical empires and wicked rulers were permitted to exist for just so long, and the Lord raised up another power in the earth to crush the evil into the dust. He says to the despot ruler who afflicts a portion of mankind, “Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.” The prophet Daniel lived in such a time and he said, *“This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it (even) the basest of men.” (Dan. 4:17)*

The Lord set a limit for the insane plans of Hitler to exterminate the Jews and rule the world. His armies were able to overrun Europe and invade Russia, but then the word of the Lord went forth among the nations, saying, “Thus far shalt thou come, and no further!” The Lord held the ruthless and godless communists of the Soviet Union at bay for seventy years, saying to them, *“Thus far shalt thou come, and no further!”* When they reached the limit the Lord determined for them they receded like the waves of a troubled sea. His word reaches to the evil and subtle powers of Babylon, the great whore which sitteth upon the nations, oppressing them under threat of hell-fire should they not pay their homage, and He says to them, “Thus far shalt thou come, and no further!”

In our personal experiences there are trials, testings, troubles, temptations, emotions, problems, and perplexities that come upon us and try the metal of our character in Christ. Some of these experiences are permitted for a short time — others are of longer duration — but our mighty, omnipotent Lord of all stands before His elect who are faced with principalities and powers of darkness and the outbreaks of the carnal mind and fleshly nature, saying to all those dark powers, “Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.” Marvelous are the promises of God to those who know His power over the seas! Paul understood this great control of the Lord over every raging wave when he wrote, *“There hath no*

temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape.” (I Cor. 10:13). This is the measure used by God to determine what trials, testings, and provings are necessary for us to endure. When our need and God's purpose has been fulfilled and satisfied, we can rest assured that His voice will command the waves.

Indeed sometimes our trials and the demands of the flesh seem so fierce and oppressive, so difficult to bear or to withstand, but as we remember that we are being shaped for a place of authority and power in the kingdom, and by His magnificent design, we are fortified to learn the lessons that He has for us in each experience. The Lord says to our trials and temptations, “Thus far shalt thou come, and no further!” Just as a builder shapes a stone or a piece of wood to fit into a specific spot in the home he is constructing, so our Father has a particular place in His kingdom in mind for each of His elect, and He is fashioning us to fit into our place in His holy, spiritual temple. A carpenter or stone mason does not randomly form a piece of building material, and then hunt for a place for it to fit. Oh, no! It is cut and shaped and sanded and planed, or is hewn and carved, so that it will exactly fit the place for which it was intended. Truly the Lord is in control of our ways and His voice commands all the forces used to conform us to His image! Rejoice then, beloved, for He who has created all things, limits the power and influence of the flesh and evil which are arrayed against the Lord's anointed, allowing only as much as will serve His purposes. He controls all things and allows only that which will serve Him in the preparation of His elect. Isn't it wonderful!

Terry Crisp once graphically expressed it this way: *“Personally speaking, have you ever had times when, for no apparent reason, and for no particular fault of your own, everything around you was dark and mysterious; when nothing seemed to make any sense, and the spiritual realm was silent? Pressures mounted...problems loomed...and you were wearied with attacks from the Adamic nature. Have you ever been there? There have been times when those same fleshly feelings suddenly rushed over us, when foreign emotions crowded in around us, and when carnal attitudes pressed themselves upon our minds, all of which were diametrically opposed to our spirits. They were not invited, but they came, nevertheless! And we could not explain them. They were just there...one after another...continuously knocking at the door...repeatedly seeking opportunity and acceptance from us. Try as we may in our own strength, we just couldn't stop them from coming! However, when we cried unto the Lord for deliverance, then, He suddenly appeared in the clouds. He broke through the veil with ‘the brightness of His coming,’ and showed Himself mighty to save! Praise God! He made sense of the situation, by showing us the underlying motives and principles involved. ‘Then the channels of the waters were seen, the foundations of the world were discovered at Thy rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of Thy nostrils.’ He showed us the activities occurring ‘beneath the surface,’ so to speak, and allowed us to see the scene as He saw it!” — end quote.*

Every tense situation is alive with the movement of God,
As He is inworking His purpose deep in the heart of this clod.
All of the rolling and surging, as billows sweep over the soul,
Bespeak of the hand of His mercy holding in perfect control.
For all the measures of pressure are obedient to His command,
Thus far shall they come, but no farther, their limit His wisdom planned.

— Ray Prinzing

Brother Prinzing also shared the following in this connection. *“Betimes men will start a situation over which they eventually lose control, and they regret that they ever started it. GOD HAS NEVER LOST CONTROL, and therefore never has any regrets. HE knows at just what point along the way He must exercise His restraint, put a bend in the road, change the dispensation, and thus ease the situation while He continues to work out His plan of the ages. So often through the years I have seen those circumstances evolve in our life where the pressures built, we were brought to that point where the proverbial ‘one more straw would break the camel's back.’ Either we would cave in, or the whole situation would explode — and then GOD EASES IT, pressures slacken, and we carry on. It may take years before the whole thing is resolved, because God has an extended purpose in it that is being wrought out, but in HIS CONTROL He allows the pressures to build, and He causes them to lessen, for He is in full control all the way, working all things after the counsel of His own will, and for our ultimate good” — end quote.*

While I am quoting from other brethren let me add this beautiful line from brother **Elwin Roach**. *“We may have puzzled at the significance of Jesus calming the wind and sea, and also walking upon it during the storm; but it is now becoming clear. If He had not done so, it would have been a testimony that there are two elements He could not conquer — the wind and the sea — that is, the spirit of the world, and the nations of the world.”*

The sea Jesus conquered was the sea of Galilee, and Galilee was known as the land dominated by the Gentiles or the nations. In Matthew 4:15 it is called “Galilee of the Gentiles.” Calming the sea of Galilee is a parable with momentous implications! All the Old Testament scriptures which speak of Yahweh as the One who controls the seas are thus seen fulfilled in Christ! Oh, yes! Christ is the manifestation of God upon earth, and He it is who has power over both the wind and the waves! Little wonder that the disciples were so astonished at this miracle and cried out, *“What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the waves obey Him!”* How wonderful is the knowledge that our mighty and omnipotent Christ who dwells within us is THE CONQUEROR OF THE SEA! He rules the winds and the waves within each of our lives, and with Him we shall rule and reign over every spirit and over every nation of men in the glory of the kingdom of God upon earth!

Ah, the sea is the lowest realm on earth, and this vast sea of fleshly, Adamic humanity represents mankind at his lowest point — as bad off as man can be! Individually it speaks of the lowest aspect of our human nature and life — the body with its passions and lusts. The sea represents the physical desires and impulses that are restless, driving, compelling, and raging out of control! God is now in the grand process of bringing men out of the lowest realm of the sea of vanity, sin, and death, up into the highest realm of heaven, the realm of the spirit, to the fullness of His life, nature, wisdom, authority, and glory. This shall be fully accomplished by the omnipotent power of God’s word and by the moving His Spirit, and not by man’s carnal mind, self-efforts, or worldly wisdom.

THE EARTH

[The second realm is that of the earth.](#) In contrast with the sea and heaven, the earth is the symbol of the second dimension of life, a realm higher than the sea, but lower than heaven, an intermediary realm which at its highest peak kisses heaven, and at its lowest level embraces the sea; and yet, in the true sense it is, of itself, neither heavenly nor degenerate. The sea, as we have seen, comprises the masses of restless, surging, sinning, warring men who live only and always after the unrestrained desires of the flesh (body realm). Heaven, on the other hand, speaks of those who have been quickened, raised up, made alive in Christ, seated together with Him in the heavenly places, who walk only and always in the Spirit. Those who “dwell upon the earth,” however, are a moral class, religious folk, with many up-right citizens of the community and church-going Christian people in their ranks; but these, while not overtly wicked, are not spiritual either, but in most aspects of their daily lives “mind earthly things.”

On the individual level the earth speaks of the soul, but only in the aspect of the “good” of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. These are the three entities that grew in the midst of the Garden of Eden! The tree of life represents the life of the spirit; the tree of knowledge, on its “good” side, represents the life of the soul; and the evil of that tree stands for the sin in our members, the body realm. The soul, which is situated between the spirit and the body, is our inner, psychological part which includes our good human desires, emotions, will, and intellect. The desire is the organ for fancy, motivation, and aspiration. The emotion is the organ for pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy. The will is the organ for formulating opinions, making decisions, and inciting actions. And the mind is the organ for thinking and considering. These senses of the soul are psychological senses and comprise man’s ego or self, giving him self-consciousness and enabling him to be a social being and contact the psychological world around him.

The soul is an intellectual realm, but also the realm of the carnal or natural mind. It is the realm of “good” but it is not the realm of Life! Out of this realm comes our organized society, law and order, charities, good works, social activities, education, the arts, and man-made religious realms which are deemed spiritual, but which do not originate out of the spirit. The man who walks in this realm of “earth” is that good neighbor of yours, a nice fellow, a good person, who wouldn’t cheat you or lie to you or misuse you in any way. In fact, he may be helpful, caring, and compassionate. He may attend First Methodist or Saint Mary’s Church; he may be a Sunday School teacher, a deacon, a board member; he is socially and religiously active, a God-honoring, flag-

waving man, but has never ascended into the heavenlies and does not live out of a heavenly dimension. You can't accuse him of any gross sin, or any wicked or ungodly act, but if you start talking to him out of a spiritual realm he will look at you like you came from Mars. He has absolutely no idea, not the foggiest notion, of what you are talking about! He doesn't live in the sea; he doesn't wallow in the lusts of the flesh, in pornography, crime, drugs, adultery, dishonesty, or any lustful or hurtful thing. BUT NEITHER HAS HE BEEN TO HEAVEN! THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT ARE NOT LIVING REALITIES TO HIM!

As already stated, the soul is the mind, will, emotion, and desire of the natural man. Before the apostle John on Patmos heard the voice calling him to "Come up hither," John was in his own mind, his own will, his own emotion, and his own desires. There is nothing wrong with that! These were not ungodly or corrupt, but neither were they the Spirit of God or John's own spirit. We need to think spiritual sense about these things! The "flesh" is the realm of sin in my members. It is a lower realm than the soul. I am acting in my soul when I study at school, drive my car, chat with my neighbor, do my work, play with the grandchildren, or go to a concert. I am in no way acting fleshly — that is, out of a sinful nature. Now, if while driving my car I deliberately run someone down, or, if while chatting with my neighbor I lie to him or insult him, or, if instead of going to the concert I go to a nude dance club, then I am in the flesh! Yet, when I am doing very natural things I am not sinning. I am merely moving in my soul life. There is something wrong with walking after the flesh, for *"the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: immorality, impurity, indecency, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, ill temper, selfishness, divisions, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like..."* (Gal. 5:19-21)

John came to be "in the Spirit." It is a blessed thing to be in the Spirit! God is making a spiritual man today! When God formed man of the dust of the ground, he became a living soul. Adam was sinless when he came from the hand of his Creator, and he lived and walked in the dimension of his soul. It is natural to live in the soul realm! Adam was of the earth, earthy (I Cor. 15:47). He was also a living soul (I Cor. 15:45). Can you not see by this why I say the earth-realm is the soul-realm? The soul realm is not wicked — it is just natural. You don't have to do a thing to get into the soul realm. We were all born into this world in that realm! When we came out of our mother's womb we weren't born in heaven, nor were we born in the sea. We were born on earth, into the earth, in the soul realm! But Adam did have to do something to fall down into the flesh realm — he ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He disobeyed the warning of the Lord to Him! He partook of the fruit of a lower realm and added evil to his good. He sinned! That is just the difference between the "flesh" and the "soul." You have to sink to a lower level to be in the flesh. In the flesh is a dark realm, a rebellious realm, a sinful realm, a wicked realm of perverted self-hood, corruption, and unrighteousness.

The soul may have a dark side, for I mentioned earlier that at its lowest level the earth-realm touches the sea, while at its highest peak it kisses heaven. But the soul can be beautiful! What can be more beautiful than the innocence of a child, though they know nothing of the spirit? It is the soul that enjoys traveling to far-away places with strange-sounding names, quaint cultures, and exotic vistas. It is the soul that is moved by the strains of beautiful music that stands transfixed before a colorful sunset or the majesty of mountain peaks. It is the soul that loves, as a man loves his friend, his children, or his wife. The soul may be lifted up to touch the high realms of the Spirit of God! In such a moment the sweet singer of Israel exulted, "Bless the Lord, O my soul!" And in the magnificent the virgin of Galilee cried out, *"My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour!"* The soul can also sink into the domain of the flesh and revel in base things, for "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." But the soul itself, of itself, and by itself, is neither evil nor spiritual. It is just the soul. Natural. The soul is incomplete and seeks union. It finds union with either the flesh or the spirit! When it walks after the flesh, it dies. When it walks after the spirit, it lives!

"The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." (I Cor. 15:45) It is in conscious union with Christ that we become "in the Spirit." This was John's "rapture"! In this rapture John became a spirit-man. He became one who heard; who turned; who saw; who was caught up into heaven! His own consciousness, life, identity, and reality were swallowed up in the vision of Another! He moved out of being an earth-dweller to being a heaven-dweller!

Earth, or the soul realm, is also a religious realm which is man-centered, need-conscious, and revolves around flesh-oriented activities. Because of the soul the whole world is religious! They have religion but no life and no

power. It is only as God Himself increases in the life of the child of God that power can increase, and this can never happen until self decreases. Oh that God's people could realize that it is *"Not by MIGHT nor by POWER, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."* (Zech. 4:6) The might and power here spoken of refer to man's might and power — not to God's. To the natural and not to the supernatural. There are two sources of power! Many great church organizations today boast of their "power," "influence," or "popularity" in their community. Their power and influence are derived from the magnificence of their great church plants, the efficiency of their organization, the appeal of their programs, outreaches, entertainment, and ceremonies, their numerical strength, their connection with the "right" people — those with wealth and influence and prestige in this world. Their fine talent, and soothing worship services, their beautiful forms, and exciting teaching and preaching, all help to make them popular — to give them power in a world of "religious," "respectable" earth dwellers. It is from such as these that Paul has warned us that we must separate ourselves. *"Having a form of godliness, but DENYING THE POWER THEREOF, from such turn away."* (II Tim. 3:5) These people would be greatly displeased if God should interrupt the controlled orderliness of their procedures by moving in a supernatural way by the power of His Spirit!

Someone has pointed out that we live in a world that rushes like a car with the accelerator jammed to the floor and the body thrown back in the seat. Life exists at a high rate of speed, a dizzy blur to the passengers on board. The extreme pressures of demanding schedules touch our jobs, our homes, and our churches, at times threatening to shear the very rivets of our being. The religious world's schedules are no exceptions. They move in the same earth-conscious time demands. We have lesson preparation, Sunday School class, Morning Worship Service, Children's Church, carry-in dinners, Sunday School picnics, rest home ministry, church soft ball league, evening church, after church fellowship, youth group activities, mid-week services, weekly Bible studies, committee meetings, deacon meetings, missionary groups, choir practice, prayer meetings, prayer breakfasts, Full Gospel Business Men's Meetings, visitation programs, hospital calls, Bible Clubs, Vacation Bible School, work nights, discipleship sessions, and counseling. Phew—! The soulish Christian substitutes reason for revelation, emotionalism, zeal, and good works for spirituality, and man-made rules, regulations, and traditions for the inward law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus!

The world today has its own religious dictionary of definitions of "God" and "Spirit" and "Church" and they think and speak in the framework of those definitions. But GOD SPEAKS A DIFFERENT LANGUAGE and has a different dictionary of definitions by which He speaks to His people and according to which He works. If all the multiplied practices and methods employed by the churches today were suddenly swept away it would in all probability cease to function! If the churches had to drop all their rituals, forms, programs, ceremonies, and special activities; all their confirmations, baptisms, and communion services; all their special singing, organ music, and altar calls, they would feel as though they had been stripped naked and could not serve God in any way. All this simply demonstrates the terrible fact that the faith and dependence of the churches is not in God, but is in the trappings they have accumulated to themselves throughout the centuries. The thought that God is perfectly able and fully willing to run His church without the aid of anything in the way of soulical contributions, is found to be abhorrent to the average church member. These are they that DWELL UPON THE EARTH! You will find them mentioned many times throughout the book of Revelation!

In the earth realm one can touch the sea, and one can touch heaven, but one doesn't dwell there! The hour of temptation is to *"try them that dwell upon the earth,"* the Spirit says (Rev. 3:10). *The Greek word for "dwell" is not the ordinary oikeo, but the strengthened form of the word, katoikeo, meaning those who have settled down upon the earth, who have identified themselves with it.* They are content to remain in a carnal, soulish, natural-minded state of being! The man of earth lives out of the dimension of the first man Adam — the living soul! It is a soulical realm of life.

Ray Prinzing outlined the truth of this in such simple yet powerful terms:

The body is the "sense" conscious realm.
The soul is the "self" conscious realm.
The spirit is the "God" conscious realm.
When the flesh controls you, you are carnal.
When the soul/mind dominates you, you are soulish.
When the Spirit rules within you, you are spiritual.

He went on to say, *“While a man is triune — spirit, soul, and body, of these three the soul is the dominate feature of our natural life. The body is the portrayal ground for the action of the soul. The body may be at rest, but the mind carries on continuously, whether we are awake or asleep. Strong emotions may surge within us, whether we express them or not — but if we do, it is through the body that they are revealed. Thoughts may rush through our mind continually, but only as we speak and act them out through our body, do others know what is in our mind. Yet the soul, being the feminine part of our being, must be joined to some spirit-force that it might gender life to bring forth that which would be expressed. The spirit of man is insufficient in itself, and so seeks to be strengthened by other spirit-forces. If the human spirit is one with the spirit of the world, it is self-evident that all of the emotions, impulses, thinking, and operation of the will, shall bear the mark of the world upon them. But — if we join our spirit to the Spirit of God, until HIS life controls our being, then all that is brought forth out of the womb of the soul would be that which bears the mark and the image of God. That is our deep desire!”* — end quote.

HEAVEN

The third and highest of the three realms is heaven. This is the highest dimension of life, the dimension of spirit. Those who live out of the spirit are spiritual and heavenly! The Greek word for heaven is ouranos meaning elevation, height, exaltation, eminence. It has both physical and spiritual applications. In its spiritual sense it bespeaks of the eternal, invisible, and omnipresent realm of the spirit in which God and all celestial beings dwell — far above the realm of the physical, material, earthly, and mortal. It is not a geographical or astral location. It is not a planet or a solar system or a galaxy or any kind of place. It is a DIMENSION OF LIFE, REALITY, AND BEING. It is a SPHERE OF EXISTENCE. It is a PLANE OF CONSCIOUSNESS. It is above the earthly not in terms of space or location, but in respect to kind, quality, and state of being. Every life-form lives on a plane of awareness. Each of these planes constitutes a “heaven,” a spiritual realm above the physical.

Heaven is naught but the biblical name of the REALM OF GOD’S SPIRIT, the invisible and omnipresent dimension of Spiritual Reality. And it is all around us! It is as near to us as the air we breathe, closer to us even than the blood coursing through our veins. We are one with it by virtue of our spiritual life. “He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.” We touch heaven as we touch God in our spirit. We behold heavenly things as with our spiritual mind we behold spiritual realities. We walk in heaven as we walk in the Spirit. We think like celestial beings when we think with the mind of Christ. We act heavenly when we live by divine nature. Heaven is, furthermore, the realm of God’s government — His infinite power and almighty authority. The kingdom of God is rooted in our spirit, the heavenly dimension of our life.

No word written or spoken could hold more truth in this regard than the words of the apostle Paul wherein he speaks of *“the power which God exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavens, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come.”* (Eph. 1:20-21) These wonderful terms used by Paul are figures of speech. God is omnipresent spirit — He doesn’t physically sit on anything! Nor does He physically have a right hand! It means that Christ is raised up permanently into that highest spiritual realm where He has all power and authority! The “throne” spoken of in other scriptures refers to His omnipotent power. So now we know where Christ ascended! He didn’t necessarily “go” anywhere. He simply vanished out of this lower material and physical sphere of existence and ASCENDED INTO THE OMNIPRESENT, INVISIBLE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION OF SUPREME AUTHORITY AND ALMIGHTY POWER!

Then Paul says, *“And He raised us up together with Him, and made us sit down together with Him in the heavenly sphere.”* (Eph. 2:6, Amplified) It will be a blessed day for us when God makes it clear to our hearts that we have already been raised up and given joint seating with Christ in the very same heavens where He is enthroned with the Father. YOU ARE WHERE HE IS! That is the true heaven — not visionary mansions, golden streets, or a flowing river out of the throne. And yet Christians continue to sing, “When we all get to heaven...” Most Christians have no idea where heaven is, what heaven is, how to get to heaven, or where they are! Therefore they live in the consciousness of a lower realm out of which they think, walk, act, and live.

Those who are God's called and chosen elect in this hour have been taught of God, they have been given an understanding for they have been quickened, made alive, raised up into the higher than all heavens, and in consciousness, in spirit, in reality are seated even now in the heavens in Christ Jesus! People think they are where their natural mind tells them they are. They have missed the spirit reality altogether and understand not that they are born from above and their citizenship is in heaven! That high and holy realm is not a place away off beyond the galaxies, but a place in our spirit where we rise up above our earthiness and learn to compare spiritual things with spiritual things. It is there that we discover reality!

Dear ones, how can we live in the heavens? Just by being in Christ! Christ has ascended. Christ is now Himself the highest heaven in this universe! Most of those who read these lines understand what it means to experience the ascended Christ, to daily live out our lives in the victory and triumph of the Son of God who dwells in our spirit, and in whom we dwell in blessed union, far above the sorrows, strife, sin, problems, perplexities, limitation, struggles, fears, disappointments, and death of the carnal realm. THIS is sonship! In spirit I hear the wonderful words falling upon the ears of the prophet of Patmos, "Rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them!" Oh, yes! We dwell there! That's us he's talking about! This should help us see how it is that the promise of the Lord is fulfilled in us, "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." Sons of God do not "dwell upon the earth!"

Those who dwell in heaven, who walk in the spirit, who think with the mind of Christ, who live out of divine nature, have no need to be "tried" as men who dwell in an earthly state. There is no processing in heaven! There is no condemnation, no judgment, proving, purging, refining, correction, discipline, or testing of those who live and dwell and sit in the ascended Christ! Those who truly walk after the spirit are not depressed, perplexed, worried, or victimized by any kind of "earthly" situation. When our affections are set upon things above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God, and where we sit with Him and in Him, we are resurrected and ascended, for the Christ with whom we are joined in spirit is the Christ who has ascended into the heavens! When you stand in union with Him you are high above the mountains, not in the valleys. You are in the heavenly places, far above the earth-realm. The things of earth grow strangely dim for those who truly are in Christ.

In the book of Revelation everything that comes out of heaven is good and wonderful! Angels, great and mighty, come out of heaven (Rev. 10:1; 18:1; 20:1). Voices of wisdom, revelation, and power come out of heaven (Rev. 10:4,8; 11:12,15; 14:2; 18:4-5; 21:3). The all-conquering army of God, Christ the firstborn with all the holy sons of God, come out of heaven (Rev. 19:11-14). And a city, a glorious city, the New Jerusalem, comes down from God out of heaven (Rev. 21:2, 10). The throne of God is in that city, the Lamb is on the throne, and every overcomer is on the throne! So heaven is a wonderful realm, and I live there. All who live and walk in the spirit live there. Individually, I live there in my spirit. Collectively, we all live there in our walk with God in the spirit.

All three expressions, those who dwell in heaven, those who dwell on the earth, and the inhabitants of the sea, recur a number of times in the book of Revelation. They are descriptive phrases, denoting a spiritual state, not an actual location anywhere in the universe. Are you, dear friend, a dweller of the heavens, or an inhabiter of the earth? If you are looking after those things which are coming upon the earth, if you mind earthly things, if your great concerns are about some "beast government" that will rule the world, or which world leader might be the antichrist; if every new technological development, computer chip, or laser makes you fearful of taking the mark of the beast, if earthquakes, storms, tsunamis, wars, and every new political development is interpreted in your mind as the fulfillment of some imminent "end-time" prophecy, then surely you will live out your life on the level your vision beholds and you will be captured by the bestial system of this world, for *"all who dwell on the earth shall worship him!"* (Rev. 13:8)

All who have their vision focused on the "below realm" stand in jeopardy, for the false prophet *"deceives those who dwell on the earth...telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image of the beast."* (Rev. 13:14) The sea and the earth are the realms of the beast: *"And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea...and I saw another beast coming up out of the earth."* (Rev. 13:1, 11) The earth-realm is the sphere of the dragon's power and authority, for *"the dragon was thrown down...he was thrown down to the earth, and his messengers were thrown down with him...Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! Because the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath."* (Rev. 12:9, 12) Woe to the people who believe the natural, earthly report, who

live in an earthly consciousness, who are focused on earthly events, rather than the heavens of God's Spirit, rather than the spiritual reality that is locked up within each of us. Woe to you! Why? Because the devil is come down to you and he has great wrath, and he is there to torment you until you realize that you don't belong in the earth anymore. You belong in the heavens! What is happening in the heavens is all that pertains to you! Satan is bound to the dust realm, and he is there to remind you that dust is not your heritage, you belong to the heavens where you walk with God in the spirit!

It is in the "below realm" that the judgments of God are being poured out, and those who have their habitation in this realm will find no escape. *"Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!" (Rev. 8:13)* Those believers who spend their time worrying about a world government, the Illuminati, the Council on Foreign Relations, the European Union, communism, terrorists, conspiracies, or any other earthly thing will have no solace or security, but will find themselves in constant fear and dread, as Jesus forewarned, *"Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on THE EARTH."* (Luke 21:26) Take note that the fearful are among those who have their part in the lake of fire! (Rev. 21:8), for these have not learned to dwell in the secret place of the most High, under the shadow of the Almighty; they have remained inhabitants of the earth.

Well did **Mark Toohey** write: *"The dwellers in heaven have ascended above the distress of the natural, earthly realm of strife and confusion, for they have set their vision on the realities of a higher realm. They have found themselves seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, abiding steadfastly in the strength of His Spirit, resting securely in the joy of His presence. These have the uncanny ability to sleep soundly in the bow of the boat while all around them the storms rage. The dwellers in heaven are the manchild company 'caught up to God and His throne.' (Rev. 12:5) The dwellers in heaven are the 144,000 who stand victorious with the Lamb upon mount Zion 'having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.' (Rev. 14:1) These are the overcoming saints standing upon the sea of glass who sing a new song of victory, deliverance, and praise (Rev. 15:2-24). The dwellers in heaven are the New Jerusalem coming out of heaven from God (Rev. 21:2). The dwellers in heaven are 'those who are with Him who are the called and chosen and faithful.' (Rev. 17:14) and 'the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, who were following Him on white horses' (Rev. 19:14) as in righteousness He judges and wages war. Those who have ascended into the heavenlies have no fear of an earthly beast, for they are beyond his grasp, even as he 'opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven.' (Rev. 13:6) God is calling a people to 'come up hither,' and to walk in the reality of such a dominion in this very hour!" — end quote.*

To be continued...
J. Preston Eby

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FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE, PART 93 'END-TIME' PROPHECIES – TRUTH REVEALED

BY: J. PRESTON EBY

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

PART NINETY-THREE BREAKING THE SEALS (continued)

THE TWO HEAVENS AND THE TWO EARTHS

Before moving on in our study to the momentous events occurring under the sixth seal, I would again draw your attention to the fact that almost all the events in the book of Revelation take place in one of three dimensions: HEAVEN, EARTH, and SEA. These are, of course, symbolical and prophetic terms! They represent states of being, life-styles, levels of consciousness, spheres of existence, and dimensions of life within each of us.

Within me, and within you, my beloved, there is a sea-realm, the outer man of the body. In our intellect, in our soul life, there is an earth-realm. And in our spirit there is a heaven-realm! There are things that are true in each of these realms, in each of these dimensions of our life. Every man on earth fits into one of these three categories — every man! There's not a man on this planet who isn't living out his life from one of these three realms. All of God's processing in our lives, as He conforms us into the image of His Son, takes place only in the realms of earth and sea. Everything that comes out of heaven affects and deals with the earth and the sea!

Fire comes down from heaven and brings corrective, purifying judgments upon those who dwell upon the earth and in the sea. Mighty messengers come down out of heaven and the sea rages and the earth shakes and quakes. Oh, yes! When heaven comes down and touches earth there are voices, and lightnings, and thunderings, and earthquakes, and judgments, fires, blood, hail, and mighty transformations. I can't think of anything greater that could happen to my body and soul realms! There is nothing more wonderful that could descend in power upon the self-consciousness and self-righteousness of my soul realm, and the lusts and passions of my body realm, to bring change. In the book of Revelation nearly all that happens in the earth and in the sea originates out of heaven! I'll tell you why that's important. If you're trying to deal with your carnal mind, your fleshly desires, your religious hang-ups, or any other thing apart from the life of God out of your spirit, then you are indeed making a great effort of futility!

Heaven is nothing else but the invisible, omnipresent realm of the spirit in which God dwells. It is the divine spiritual world! We understand that God's presence fills the expanse of the universe. There is no place where God is not. There is no place you can imagine on this side of the grave, on the other side of the grave, in this visible universe, in other invisible parallel universes, no matter where there is time or space or dimension — God is there! He is everywhere because He is the Source, the Creator of all things. All is "of Him," "out of Him," and "in Him all things consist." The physical cosmos is completely enveloped and permeated by a spiritual dimension. The material universe is the effect of the great Cause, and that Cause is God. There is divine interaction between these two realms for they are related just as a baby birthed out of a mother's womb is related to its mother, or as the plastic pen I now hold in my hand is related to the crude oil from which it is a by-product. We are surrounded not only by God's Spirit, but by the spiritual world, by a great cloud of witnesses, by an innumerable company of angels, by the spirits of just men made perfect, and by principalities and powers in the celestial realms.

Heaven is not merely the spiritual dimension outside of us; it is also the spiritual dimension inside of us. That is where each of us touches the spiritual world, or heaven, — within ourselves. When our spirit is quickened by His Spirit the heavenly realm is first opened within us. As we walk with God we are learning to connect with the heavens of God's Spirit within us. We are being drawn to go deep inside and find ourselves in that most holy place of the spirit, resting upon the mercy seat, beneath the wings of the cherubim, in that perfect, full, holy and glorious place where the curse has never touched. Heaven! When you see heaven in the scripture

just think of the realm of the spirit. The closest and most perfect and real dimension of heaven is within each of us. You will never know the true heaven anywhere else until you discover it there!

The more we learn to make our connection with heaven the more we grasp reality and understand the true nature of all things. Once having identified with the spiritual world of the heaven within, in the midst of chaos and crisis; in the midst of loss, collapse, disappointment, and destruction in our outer world; in the midst of any situation or circumstance we are able to translate ourselves immediately to that safe and secure haven of rest. As we dwell in the heavenlies of God's presence we are heavenly and in heaven. As we consciously enter into the depths of God within we then learn also how to bring that realm out into our outer, conscious, visible world. As men behold the heavenly life expressed through our outer man we become the "gate of heaven" to those about us!

In the book of Revelation the symbolical term "earth" is used by the Lord to represent the soul with all its emotions, intellect, will, attitudes, and expressions. Note some of the symbolic uses of the earth elsewhere in scripture. *"Let the earth fear the Lord" (Ps. 33:8) "All the earth shall worship Thee, and shall sing unto Thee; they shall sing to Thy name." (Ps. 66:4) "His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled." (Ps. 97:4) "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth." (Isa. 1:2) "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord!" (Jer. 22:29)* Manifestly the literal earth cannot fear the Lord, nor worship Him. Nor can the literal earth sing unto the Lord. Nor can the literal earth "see" the lightnings of the Lord. Neither can the literal heavens and earth hear the word of the Lord. Obviously these texts refer to the souls of the people living on the earth.

We should earnestly meditate upon the words of the apostle Paul wherein he writes, *"If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."* (Rom. 8:13) According to Paul it is only through the spirit that one can bring to death the deeds of the body. There is only one way to deal with both the soul realm and the body realm, the earth and the sea, and that is to deal with them out of heaven, in the spirit and by the spirit. It is impossible to conquer and subdue the activities of the soul and the body by any effort that originates out of those realms. They have no power to either reform or transform themselves! But if you through the spirit, which is the power and authority out of heaven, put these realms into neutral, out of gear, you shall then live by the spirit and in the spirit. Paul continues, *"For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God."* Aren't you glad!

Even though we may have been saved for many years, we must now ask the Spirit of God to lift the veil that is upon our minds and reveal the truth of whether we are presently living in the realm of the body (sin, sensuality), the soul (carnality, self-will, intellect, emotions, etc.), or the spirit (life, light, love, victory, peace, joy, righteousness, power, etc.). With reverent heart let each of us ask the Lord to search us in order to be clear where we are. Frankly, many of the Lord's precious people are wandering day after day in the wilderness of the soul! In the morning they may have joyful countenances, but ere long the pressures of the day take their toll and they become irritable, frustrated, upset, anxious, and dismayed. Yesterday it seems they were in the heavens, but today they are making their bed in hell, discouraged, fearful, depressed, and defeated. Yesterday they were full of faith and courage, ready to believe God for exploits, but today they are disheartened with their walk in God, and full of doubts and questionings. They are continually wandering about in the soul, the wilderness, without rest, circling in the same rut day after day, getting nowhere. Like the children of Israel, they may have been walking with God for forty years, but are still going around in the same vicious circles, with no improvement and no progress, never possessing their promised land of righteousness, peace, joy, and power. Why? Because they are living in the soul, they are earth-dwellers! The soul is barren and desolate; there is no life in it. Those who live in the body realm are still spiritually in the bondage of Egypt, under the taskmasters of Satan's kingdom; but when we are in the soul we are with the children of Israel wandering in the wilderness!

The word of God must pierce us so that we may know how to press on from the soul into the heaven of our spirit, where Christ dwells. We must know how to bring our body and our soul into the holy place of the spirit so that the whole man may live in His sight! Only God can teach us these things, and He does so as we sit at His feet in adoring fellowship and communion. Flee, my brother, my sister, from the desolate wilderness of your soul as you would flee from a bear in the forest and you shall find blessed refuge in the promised land of the spirit, for there is a realm there within you, closer to you than the air you breathe, closer than the heart that beats faithfully within your breast, as continuously available as the blood coursing through your veins, a sacred

sanctum within your spirit where the things of earth do not rule or have any power. Christ dwells there as Life! Dear reader, ponder if you will this marvelous truth: CHRIST is not depressed, driven, anxious, upset, worried, confused, fearful, frustrated, weary, weak, nor defeated — and CHRIST IN YOU IS NOT EITHER! Tap the infinite resources of the Christ within your spirit and the Promised Land is your land!

There is a people rising from the barren dust of the wilderness of the soul and soulful religious activities to sit together with Christ in the heavenly places of the spirit. God dwells in your spirit, dear one, and God in your spirit is both infinite and eternal, and therefore in finding all that is available in God one must be prepared to go ever onward and upward into the vast expanses of the Spirit of God. It is not enough to experience a heavenly realm now and then in the blessing of a gathering of saints. That is not dwelling in heaven! If God is infinite, there is no limit to the experience we might have with Him in union with Him in the spirit. And if God is eternal, there is no end to the measure of grace and glory into which He would lead us by the spirit. When our astronauts began their explorations to the moon, it was not sufficient that they should have entered a rocket and pushed through the atmosphere for an hour or two. True, they were in space the hour they started but space is vast — and they must go on, and on, and on, and on...even to the surface of the moon. If God permits, man will go to Mars, and eventually from solar system to solar system, then from galaxy to galaxy, throughout the unbounded heavens!

Now, God has made us partakers of His Holy Spirit, and that simply means He has called us to explore the inexhaustible sphere of the deep things of God and the infinite summits of His glory, wisdom, power, and holiness. Our spirit has been quickened by His Spirit for this very purpose: *“that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” (I Cor. 2:12)* The natural mind cannot discover these things, hence the Spirit of God is sent into our spirit to reveal them unto us and to search out and explore *“all things, yea, the deep things of God” (I Cor. 2:10)*

For those who live in heaven everything is in the spirit. We walk in the spirit, pray in the spirit, worship in the spirit, speak by the spirit, and do all things in and by the spirit. This is sonship! We find that as we live and walk after the spirit, judgment is brought into our lower realms of soul and body, and we have not to do anything about it. It is all accomplished out of a heavenly realm, by the spirit! There is no other way. If we go around preaching death to self, the need to crucify the flesh, to kill the old man, to reform and change the old Adamic nature, then we’ve missed the whole book. None of that is of any value at all! It is heaven that comes down and fills the earth with glory and stills the raging waves of the sea! My brother, my sister, nothing will ever happen in your earth or in your sea until there is an administration of life out of your heaven. This comes by seeking only and always HIS PRESENCE IN THE SPIRIT. Read the book! It’s all there. THIS IS THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST!

THE TWO HEAVENS AND THE TWO EARTHS

Now we come to a most important point. While everything in the book of Revelation takes place in the realm either of heaven, earth, or the sea; and while we have explored these from the vantage point of three dimensions of consciousness and life in which men walk, there is yet a further truth which is vital to our understanding of the visions John saw relative to these realms. The reality is that there are TWO SETS OF HEAVEN AND EARTH! There are, indeed, TWO CREATIONS, TWO WORLDS, AND TWO HEAVENLY UNIVERSES!

First, let us inquire as to what we mean by a “heaven and earth.” These are the two realms first mentioned in the Bible. *“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” (Gen. 1:1)* The symbolisms of scripture are always appropriate and fitting. The literal heavens and earth bear a certain relationship to each other which well illustrates the operation of the spiritual heavens and earth. The heavens, for example, control earth’s tides, atmospheric conditions, day and night, and seasons. The heavens rule and the earth is ruled. Heaven influences earth, but earth in no way affects heaven. From the very first pages of scripture, the sun was spoken of as the ruler of the day, the moon and stars as the ruler of the night.

Now notice that it is both the things of the heavens and the earth that are affected by the events occurring under the sixth seal! *“And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell*

unto the earth...and the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.” (Rev. 6:12-14)

The natural sun is the brightest luminary in the natural heavens. And to help us in correctly interpreting the meaning of the spiritual sun, we find that God made *“the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night.” (Gen. 1:16)* Here we first have the idea expressed of both sun and moon being rulers. Then we find that God, the supreme Ruler, is called in the Word a “Sun.” *“For the Lord thy God is a SUN and a shield.” (Ps. 84:11)* Also, our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings, is called *“the SUN of Righteousness” (Mal. 4:2)* He rules. Furthermore, we find that in reference to this principle of the sun and rulership we read, *“He that RULETH over men...shall be as the light of the morning, when the SUN ariseth.” (II Sam. 23:3-4)* Then we find David the king called *“the LIGHT of Israel.” (II Sam. 21:17)*

Concerning saints who are ordained as kings and priests in the kingdom of God we find that they are compared to the sun: *“Then shall the righteous SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the kingdom of their Father.” (Mat. 13:43)* Of these same ruling members of God’s elect Jesus says, *“And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations and he shall RULE them with a rod or iron.” (Rev. 2:26-28)* Then He hastily adds: *“And I will give him the MORNING STAR.”* That is, I will give him power over the nations — rulership — and I will give him the position as the morning star to give direction to mankind, to announce and proclaim the new day of the Lord! Now consider these meaningful words of Daniel the prophet wherein he foretells the manifestation of the sons of God, saying, *“And they that be wise shall SHINE AS THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE FIRMAMENT; and they that turn many to righteousness as the STARS for ever.” (Dan. 12:3)* Then we find in **Daniel 4:26** that *“the HEAVENS DO RULE.”* God’s heaven is His throne. *“Heaven is my throne.” (Isa. 66:1)* The heavens of God’s Spirit in the symbolic terminology of prophecy is the seat where the sun, the mighty God Himself, sits and rules! And as God’s heaven is His throne, so the prophetic heavens include all the governmental realm through which God rules, and He is Lord of all.

All the above constitutes the heavens of God’s Spirit! But now there is another heaven of rulership which is not that of God by His Spirit. It is the rulership of men, including even the basest of men. This natural governmental realm is demonstrated quite clearly in the words of the prophet Daniel to king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, *“thy greatness is grown, and REACHED UNTO HEAVEN.” (Dan. 4:22)* He had just become the most exalted monarch of earth, the greatest ruler among men: the SUN of that “heaven.” The prophet Isaiah, describing the casting down of earthly kings from their thrones, says, *“THE LIGHT IS DARKENED IN THE HEAVENS THEREOF.” (Isa. 5:30)* This statement is most meaningful when compared with the words of Jesus when He foretold the removal and destruction of all the rulers and governmental powers of both Judaism and the entire pagan world, saying, *“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the SUN BE DARKENED, and the MOON SHALL NOT GIVE HER LIGHT, and the STARS SHALL FALL FROM HEAVEN, and THE POWERS OF THE HEAVENS SHALL BE SHAKEN.” (Matt. 24:29)* These words of our Lord signified the complete dissolving, darkening, and abolishment of all the governmental orders of His day! Those were the “heavens” that passed away!

The sun in prophecy is the most exalted ruler of any order, the moon the second or lesser, and the stars are other governmental authorities and powers. The heavens are the thrones which these rulers occupy, whether the rulers be men, spirits, powers, organizations, ideologies, or some other entity. The earth is that which is ruled by the heavens — that which looks to the sun, moon, and stars for its light and direction. There is an order of human government now, but all these are soon to pass away, be darkened, fall from heaven, and a new order shall be inaugurated. In this new day of the kingdom of God the manifest sons of God shall arise in the power of Christ’s resurrection and glory to constitute the heavenly bodies that shall rule the earth in the wonderful age now at hand! We are being made to know that all that has been giving light in the past, and that has ruled in the past, is going out and shall be darkened forevermore. The glorious Christ company shall take the place of all the former sun, moon, and stars. A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH — oh, the wonder of it!

Let us now further pursue this thought of the two heavens and the two earths. I know of nothing that will so thoroughly awaken the fathomless depths of wisdom and understanding than the blessed knowledge of the sacred mystery that Christ saves men right now from “this present evil world.” And while you, dear reader, may be one of those waiting with rapturous expectation to be whisked away and “evacuated” off this earth to

spend eternity in some far-off heaven somewhere, Peter expresses with urgent and profound aspiration the true desire of all sons of God who groan for the deliverance of creation from the bondage of corruption and the triumph of the kingdom of God in all realms, saying, *“Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found in Him in peace, without spot, blameless.”* (II Pet. 3:13-14) It is an incontrovertible fact that the vast majority of Christians today is not looking for the same thing Peter was looking for — NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW EARTH!

Peter also said in this connection, *“The heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the Day of Judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”* (II Pet. 3:7) But Peter had prefaced these ominous words with the following illustration from the world of Noah’s day which was destroyed in the flood. *“By the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.”* (II Pet. 3:5-6) The heavens and earth of old perished, Peter says, but he does not mean the literal earth we walk on or the literal heavens whose sun, moon, and stars still shine upon us every day and night. Oh, no!

When righteous Noah stepped out of the ark that bright morning he stepped onto the soil of the very same earth that existed before the flood, and at night he gazed into the star-spangled splendor of the same heavens above. Yet — all was changed! The old order of things was gone, and a new order, or a new heavens and earth, would now be manifested. Was it not a new heaven and a new earth by being purged through the overflowing waters of the flood from the wickedness and corrupt order that previously polluted the earth? With what joy and satisfaction do we now entertain the precious promise: *“For behold I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.”* (Isa. 65:17) Hallelujah! What a wonderful thing that God will so thoroughly cleanse our own little world and the whole vast cosmos that even our minds will be purged from the remembrance of it! God will make such a good job of His work, that the past will be completely obliterated and never thought of any more! God shall not end this present evil world and call forth the new by destroying either His creatures or His creation. Not one thing, not one precious person shall be lost! He shall bring this world to an end and establish new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness by MAKING ALL THINGS NEW — changed, purified, and transformed by the fire of His Word! *“And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.”* (Rev. 21:5) Not all new things, but all things NEW! That is the wonder.

Here we have the two heavens and the two earths — the OLD and the NEW! With astonished wonder the Seer of Patmos beheld this scene in spirit and cried out, *“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away...”* (Rev. 21:1) You will understand a great mystery when you see how it is that whatever has ruled or does rule your life apart from the spirit is your “old heaven.” Of a truth I tell you that the thing that rules or motivates or controls you in either soul or body, in mind, emotion, desire, will, or physical expression and activity, constitutes the “heavens” over your life! If Hollywood with its glitter and entertainment, its values, standards, and spirit rules you then the heaven over your head is Hollywood. If you “eat, drink, and sleep” sports, then sports are the heavens that rule you. If politics, political ideology, politicians, and some political party is what lights up your life, then you are governed out of the political heavens.

Some people’s heaven is the business world; work, climbing their way up the corporate ladder, gaining prestige, position, and power, and making money. Those who are ruled from these heavens are obsessed by this realm, becoming workaholics, often unprincipled in their ethics, stepping on others and destroying people in their selfish, frenzied climb to the top. Other folk’s heaven is philosophy, education, pleasure, drugs, sex, or lust. And we cannot fail to mention the “religious heavens” that rule over billions of lives on planet earth!

Men governed out of the religious heavens fight over religion, condemn everyone else to hell, demand obedience upon penalty of eternal damnation, lay heavy yokes of external rules, regulations, laws, dress codes, you cannot do this or that, cannot go here or there, demand tithes and offerings, fleece widows and rob the poor, make merchandise of men’s souls, burn heretics at the stake, and blow themselves up as suicide bombers! By the time many so-called “holiness” groups get through with the women in the church, putting them through the dress-making and appearance departments, these very women have lost most of their appeal to their husbands, and then they wonder why the world is filled with “unsaved” husbands! All through

the years these holiness groups have imposed an external appearance of “holiness,” forcing their people to conform to certain contrived standards of conduct. Such “holiness” focuses primarily on what they wear and the kind of places they go. Some cannot even go to the county fair, wear a wedding ring, put on make-up, or drink a Coca-Cola!

There are some groups that will split and start a new “church” over the length of the ribbons on a prayer covering, how many buttons are on the sleeve of a suit, how a beard is trimmed, whether one wears a necktie, or whether the chrome on their automobile is painted black. The further one goes in those directions the more ridiculous it becomes! I see these women at the mall dressed in their long dresses and a particular style of head scarf, and I know by their attire they are some kind of Christian. But where does the scripture teach us to be known as Christians by the style of our clothes? You see, I would never recognize these women as Christians because of the love, joy, peace, and glory of God radiating from their countenances — only because of the outer garments they are wearing! Doctrines, creeds, traditions of the elders, rules, commandments of men, and control over men’s lives — these are the governmental powers of these RELIGIOUS HEAVENS!

Every man has his “heaven” and every man is the earth that heaven rules over! For most who read these lines the most recent heavens that have passed away are the heavens of the old-order church systems. Of this **Paul Mueller** wrote: *“Once again, in this new Day, the Lord has purposed to do a new thing in the earth. But since all power and authority to do anything new in the earth must come from Heaven, from His throne, or from the realm of Spirit, God must create a new Heaven, or a new realm of Spirit, which He has done. And when the Lord brings forth a new Heaven, He is, by that sovereign act, changing the order of things, that He might do a new thing in the earth. You can beg and plead with the Lord, fast and pray earnestly, asking Him to bless the old-order church works in this new Day, but He may not answer you, for our Father is doing a new thing! There is now a new Heaven, a new throne realm, or a new realm of Spirit, which governs all God’s work on earth! And with the coming forth of this new Heaven, ‘the former things are passed away.’ God has established a new spiritual order, beginning in the Heavens, and that new spiritual order is beginning to change everything spiritual that pertains to the earth, so that, in the fullness of Father’s time, a new earth shall also come forth! And now I join John in declaring, ‘And I saw A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.’*

“Therefore, we will have to think in terms of doing things on earth according to God’s NEW WAY, not our own way, which is the old way, or the way we were accustomed to doing things in the past. A NEW HEAVEN HAS COME FORTH. And that new Heaven is a new Spiritual order, with new principles and new plans for the kingdom of God on earth, which will provide us with NEW METHODS OF WORKING WITH THE LORD and doing His perfect will on earth, during this new, Kingdom Day! It is difficult for us to imagine what that new ministry will be like, for we tend to think of ‘ministry’ in the context of church order, which is the old order of the past. But a new ministry exists in the Heavens of God’s Spirit, and those who are Spirit-led and Spirit-directed will be able to read, see, hear and receive that new ministry, in the Spirit and by the Spirit. The Lord’s chosen elect are ready for change, and they have progressed spiritually with the Lord, as the Holy Spirit has led them. ‘These are they...’ who are motivated by the Spirit, and are therefore able to discern the will and the way of the Lord pertaining to His kingdom, for the Heavens of Spirit are open to them (John 1:51)” — end quote.

A new heaven and a new earth necessitate the passing of the former or old heaven and earth. The former and the present. The old and the new. THESE ARE THE TWO SETS OF HEAVENS AND EARTH I SPOKE OF EARLIER. Each heaven has its sun, moon, and stars, its primary source of dominion (sun) in our life; its rules, culture, and pressures (moon) which also direct our thinking and activities; and the myriad lesser influences (stars) which likewise affect our actions. The way we think, act, walk, and live out our life is the earth-realm ruled from those heavens! And every earth has its mountains and valleys, its rivers and streams, its air and oceans. Here is the truth we must now consider. When we see in the book of Revelation events taking place in the sun, in the moon, in the stars, in the earth, with mountains, trees, grass, rivers, streams, seas, and in the air we must understand and know whether these belong to the OLD HEAVEN AND THE OLD EARTH or to the NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH! John saw them both! And until we also see them both and are able to distinguish between them, our understanding of the Revelation will be dismally defective. The beautiful truth is that THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH DO NOT PASS AWAY!

Again I quote the words of **Brother Paul Mueller**. *“The Lord also declared, ‘For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain.’ Isa. 66:22) The Lord, our King and Creator of all, has declared that He will create the new heavens and a new earth. And the new heavens and the new earth will be permanent and endure forever and ever. God’s word tells us they ‘shall remain before me, saith the Lord.’ That which God creates shall remain before Him, which is to say that the new heavens and the new earth shall stand, to be established before the Lord in a new and enduring relationship with Him. The new heavens and new earth will satisfy God, for it is that which He has created and made new. And just as eternally enduring, everlastingly permanent, infinitely secure and immortally righteous are the Lord and His new Heavens and new Earth, so also are we before the Father! We shall stand before Him, complete, perfect, righteous, and secure, for we are being created in His glorious and enduring image and likeness. We are the spiritual seed of Abraham and have been given the Lord’s Name, the Name of His ‘city,’ and His new Name. Nothing shall separate us from the love of God! We shall stand before Him in white, for we shall be just like Christ!” — end quote.*

The new heavens and the new earth which remain before the Lord cannot be darkened, removed, fall, turn to blood, be shaken, visited by earthquakes, plagues, disasters, fire, pestilence, judgments, or ruled by beasts. Can we not see by this that many times in the Revelation it is our old heavens and our old earth that are being affected, for all of the above mentioned things happen in the heavens and in the earth as they are judged by the mighty power of the Spirit! It is our old heavens and earth that pass away! It is the sun of our old heavens that is darkened! It is the stars of our old heavens that fall unto the earth! It is the moon of our old heavens that turns to blood! It is our old earth, our natural, carnal, fleshly life that is being shaken, devastated, shrouded in darkness, burned with fire, and brought to naught!

Let your heart meditate deeply upon the wonder and glory of the new heavens and the new earth. Let us begin with these inspired words of the apostle Paul, *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, He is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things (of this new creation) are of God...” (II Cor. 5:17-18)* I am wonderfully blessed by the rendering of this passage from the New English Version: *“When anyone is united to Christ, THERE IS A NEW WORLD; the old order is gone, and a new order has already begun. From first to last, this has been the work of God!”* Wonderful! The Williams translation has it, *“For if anybody is in union with Christ, he is the work of A NEW CREATION; the old condition has passed away, a new condition has come. This has all originated with God!”* Oh, yes! Our new heavens and earth, our new world, our new order and condition originated in Christ Jesus, and entering into Him brings to an end the old corrupt order of consciousness, lifestyle, and nature, and the establishing of the new which *“after God is created in righteousness, and true holiness.” (Eph. 4:22-24)*

Thus, these “new heavens” and “new earth” are not a new material heavens or new literal earth. The physical heavens and earth were made perfect, and the scriptures show they will remain for the ages (Ps. 89:36-37; 104:5). The new earth is a new kind of people, those who live out of a soul that is under the dominion of the spirit, and new heavens are the new authority and order out of the heavens of God’s Spirit within us. When the Daystar of the new creation, Christ the Lord, arises in our hearts; when the life-giving rays of the morning sun, even the Lord the Spirit, break forth upon us in His glory, warmth, and splendor, then this old world within us begins to be dissolved. The old heavens and the old earth within us meet with the all-consuming heat of the Sun of Righteousness and fall away to nothing in the light of the glory of God. The Spirit of Jesus within then begins to frame a new heaven and a new earth in soul and body, even one wherein dwelleth righteousness. All things are born anew within us by the creative word of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus and not only the heaven and the earth pass away, but there is no more sea; no more great overflowings of the carnal mind, no more inundations of the carnal nature, no more swellings and surgings of fleshly emotions and ungodly desires, no more roarings of Adamic pride, intellect, wisdom, knowledge, ego and self-hood, or worldly glory, for the sea is dried up within us never to be anymore at all!

Every apprehended son of God is coming to experientially know the new heaven and the new earth! This is what was transpiring in John’s experience when he said, *“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.” (Rev. 21:1).* John saw the new heaven and he saw the new earth! To see the new heaven and new earth means to have a fresh understanding or a new concept about heaven and earth. John saw the new heaven and earth by being caught up in the spirit into the day of the Lord. This is a wonderful truth that shows that the new heaven and earth can only be seen in the spirit and

by the spirit! John said, *“And I saw...”* The verb “saw” means to discern, perceive, cognize, discover, recognize.

Yet there is an order to what John saw! He said, *“And I saw a new heaven.”* He then followed this by saying, *“and a new earth.”* Can we not see by this that we can only see a new earth when we see a new heaven! If you have not seen a new heaven, you will never see a new earth, for earth is set in the heavens! From the beginning this has been the divine order. *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”* (Gen. 1:1) Heaven is the tabernacle of the earth. In the spiritual sense the new heaven is a new or quickened spirit and the new earth is a new redeemed, transformed soul and body. New! *“For the former things are passed away.”* *“Behold, I make all things new.”* When one has truly experienced this, his first concept of heaven and his first concept of earth have passed away. He has received a new understanding and touched a new reality! It is a state of being and an identity beyond what we have been consciously aware of. The new heaven and the new earth are indeed the new man, the new mind, the new life, the new nature, and the new creation that we are. The sons of God are within themselves the new heaven and the new earth! It is a new way of thinking, a new perception of reality, a new consciousness of being, a new dimension of expression, a new plane of living! Oh, the wonder of it!

We know the reality of the new earth when God comes down out of the heavens of His Spirit to dwell and manifest in the earth realm — the visible, tangible realm. John said that he saw a new heaven and then he said, *“And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.”* (Rev. 21:2-3) The New Jerusalem, the Holy City, is God coming down out of the invisibility of spirit to manifest His presence, life, and glory visibly in and through a people. The New Jerusalem is the capital of the new earth — the dominion of God formed and crystallized in and through a people in union with Christ. These are God’s elect in whom the heavenly reality has been fully formed! These are they who are the light of the world, for the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of this city! The New Jerusalem is the firstfruits of the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness!

To those who walk in the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God the Holy Spirit is giving a new concept of earth. Multitudes of Christians are possessed of the Babylonish notion expressed in the old song that says, “This world is not my home, I’m just a passing through.” For these poor souls life in the flesh is a toil, a drudgery, filled with weakness, lack, pain, trouble, and sorrow and they are just waiting to die and get out of here. “Stop the world and let me off” is the popular “rapture” mentality. One thing is very clear — these precious folks have never SEEN THE NEW EARTH! Neither have they seen the NEW HEAVEN! Once you have seen, discerned, perceived, discovered, recognized, and experienced the new earth you no longer have any desire to “go” anywhere! There is no need to go anywhere! God manifested in and through your soul and your body is the new earth! This is the new earth “wherein dwelleth righteousness.” This passage leaves no room for doubt that the righteousness of God expressed in and through our lives constitutes the new earth! Where else would you want righteousness to dwell? Where else does righteousness need to dwell? Where can righteousness dwell in such a measure that it transforms every thing in the whole world? Only in the lives of mankind! When the righteousness of God is revealed through the lives of all people everywhere, the old earth will have fully passed away for every man, and the new earth will be established in the glory of God. Isn’t it wonderful!

You see, my beloved, it is not about what happens to this physical planet called earth upon which we walk. It’s not about literal mountains, valleys, canyons, oceans, trees, rivers, or rocks. Oh, no! It is not that earth out there at all — it is this earth which we are that has become new! And yet — it is wondrously true that the earth out there is and shall be affected, delivered, restored, quickened, and changed by the life of God manifested through the new heavens and the new earth that we are! This is certain, for man is given the dominion over the earth and over all things. The outward world fell under the curse along with its ruler, Adam; and it shall be restored and delivered from the bondage of corruption through its ruler, the many-membered Christ, the last man Adam! Do you see the new heaven, my brother, my sister, and can you see the new earth? I see a new heaven and I see a new earth! I see a heaven and earth wherein dwelleth righteousness! Oh, yes, I SEE IT!

There is no truth within the pages of God's blessed Book more certain than the fact that God is creating a new heavens and a new earth. Beyond question this is the allegory proclaimed by the Lord to the prophet Isaiah, *"I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, THAT I MAY PLANT THE HEAVENS, AND LAY THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE EARTH, and say unto Zion, THOU ART MY PEOPLE."* (Isa. 51:16) Zion is a people, the Lord's elect, and it is in Zion that the Lord plants the heavens of the new spirit by His word, and lays the foundations of the new earth wherein He dwells. It is God's called and chosen elect, His glorious city and mount of Zion, that He sets in the tabernacle of the heavens to be in a settled place, firmly established by His love and grace, secure in the new spirit and the new nature, no more to be lost or wandering in the emptiness of selfhood.

Stand with me for a moment in holy contemplation of these words the Lord spoke to Isaiah. The Lord said that He would plant the heavens and lay the foundations of the earth in Zion, His people. But the Lord prefaced this by telling Isaiah how it would be done! Hear it! "I have put my words in thy mouth...that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth." It would be accomplished by THE WORD OF THE LORD IN THE MOUTH OF HIS SPOKESMAN! How would you suppose God would create a new heaven and a new earth? How did He create the physical heavens and earth? *"And God said, let there be!"* The apostle Peter tells us that it was "by the word of God" that the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water (II Pet. 3:5). John tells us in His Gospel, *"In the beginning was the Word...all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made."* (John 1:1-3). God creates by His word! God creates the new heavens and the new earth with a "Creative Word"! He is moving within us in this hour by His revelatory word, His living word, His omnipotent creative word to plant within His elect the new heavens and to lay the foundations of the new earth. This word is nigh us, even in our mouth and in our heart! (Rom. 10:9-10). This word has no corruption in it at all — it is the incorruptible seed of the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.

It has been made very clear to me by the spirit of truth that the only way God can create within us this new heavens and new earth, in all the splendor of their fullness, is to bring us back to the beginning. When God has finished His work in you, my beloved, He will have taken you back to the beginning — because you are His spoken Word. The Christ within us is the Word of God! All that God has done, is doing, and shall yet do in us is by His powerful, omnipotent, living, creative word! How do you think a man is "born again"? *"Being born again...by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever."* (I Pet. 1:23) The Father birthed each one of us by the spoken Word! We were birthed as the living offspring of God, a spirit being, in the image and likeness of God, through or by the Word! And now the thoughts of God have risen up within our minds and hearts, bringing us to the realization of our sonship to God! Treasure every word that God is speaking into your mind and heart in these days, dear one, for this word that is proceeding out of the mouth of God is the power of God to plant the new heavens, and lay the foundations of the new earth within you! Aren't you glad!

It should be clear to every enlightened mind that God is in the process of making an entirely new creation, or making all things new — not this time a mere natural creation, nor yet a purely spiritual one, but a spiritual-physical one. This present natural creation is really only a step in the process of making the creation God had in mind from the beginning. "First that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual," is the divinely revealed order. Does that mean the natural is completely done away with, supplanted by the spiritual? Not at all! It means that the natural is swallowed up by the spiritual. The natural is a necessary step in the process of making the kind of creation God purposed from the beginning. Jesus Christ, the firstborn Son of God, is the proto-type of that new creation — the PHYSICAL SPIRITUALIZED, RAISED UP INTO THE DIVINE AND HEAVENLY! The physical body of Jesus was raised from the dead, brought out of the tomb, spiritualized, and made a spiritual body — not a spirit, mind you, but a spiritual body! Jesus is still referred to as a man all through the New Testament, not only after His resurrection, but also after His ascension. "There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

The firstborn of this new creation order is a GOD-MAN upon the throne of universal power! Think of it! When you see Jesus as a divine-human, a God-man, one of the natural creation metamorphosed, spiritualized, raised up into the celestial and incorruptible, then you see exactly what God is after in the whole creation, and you also see what the finished product of the new heavens and the new earth within you will be like! "This corruptible must put on incorruption." "This mortal must put on immortality." How unspeakably wonderful! We see the natural creation all around us, but this natural creation is not the finished product any more than the

ore dug out of the earth is the fine piece of jewelry the artisan has in mind when he begins his work. The whole creation is still in the process of being made into the kind of creation God started out to make. God is still Creator! And He is still creating a new heavens and a new earth! The work has only begun in us!

The new heaven is the mind of Christ and the new earth is the body of Christ, the members of which have put on incorruption. The new heaven is the new mind of the spirit, and the new earth is the soul and body quickened and governed by the spirit. Surely the fullness of redemption includes possessing the “mind of Christ” as well as a body “fashioned like unto His glorious body.” And being conformed to His image, partakers of His divine nature, we shall be His “all righteous” ones — a new heaven and a new earth WHEREIN DWELLETH RIGHTEOUSNESS!

The coming “world” will be one that will see the fullness of God in operation through His Zion people, His sons, the demonstration of the mighty power of the new heavens and the new earth. It is not a mansion over the hilltop, or a cabin in the corner of gloryland, or white night gowns, or harps, or palm branches, or dangling feet in some stream of celestial water. There is a job to be done! A battle to be fought! A victory to be won! An enemy to be conquered! “And there was no more sea.” “And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” This is God’s will for humanity on this earth, and this is what our call to sonship is all about! It would be a most beautiful thing if all the saints of God could have an open vision that would enable them to understand the glory of God’s purpose on earth, and His election in man.

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and THE POWERS OF THE WORLD TO COME...” (Heb. 6:4-5) The Rotherham translation renders this last statement, *“Mighty works of a coming age.”* The Interlinear Greek New Testament says, *“The works of power of the age to come.”* Jesus said, *“Greater works than these shall ye do!”* But have the followers of Jesus really done any greater works than Jesus did? The book of Acts doesn’t record them. Neither do the epistles. Nor does church history. And, my friend, after more than a century since the restoration to the church of the baptism in the Holy Spirit; after more than sixty years since the restoration of the five-fold ministry, the gifts of the Spirit, and the prophetic flow, have you seen any greater works than raising the dead, cleansing lepers, walking on water, calming storms, and turning water into wine? You know you haven’t!

Yet, according to the writer to the Hebrews, there are MIGHTY WORKS OF A COMING AGE, GREATER WORKS THAN JESUS DID TWO THOUSAND YEARS AGO! And all we have experienced of God, of His Spirit, of His Word, of His power, glory, miracles, and revelation, has been merely a small taste, a little sampling, of the glory and power of that coming age! Why friends, we have only seen the firstfruits of what God will do through His in-Christed body upon this earth. Can you imagine a world where the hospitals have been emptied, the doctors’ offices deserted, the prisons closed, the policemen all laid off, the armies dismantled, the mortuaries locked, the dead raised, all nature tamed, controlled, and subdued, the nations turned to the Lord, all men transformed into the image and glory of God, and the whole world system transformed — and GREATER WORKS THAN THESE SHALL YOU SEE as the glorious mind of Christ rules and reigns over the earth realm through the manifest sons of God! The fullness of what we have just had a taste will be the normal works on behalf of humanity in that blessed world to come. This will be the new heavens and the new earth in all the fullness of what that means!

Behold, I make all things new!” saith the Lord. “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.”

To be continued...
J. Preston Eby

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