

# KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

## FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

### Part 103

#### MINISTRY FROM THE GOLDEN ALTAR (continued)

"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" (Rev. 8:3-4).

So many truths come pouring into the soul from this wonderful vision, and the understanding of these mysteries is of eternal importance, for until they are fulfilled experientially within us we will be ineffectual in our ministry as the priesthood of God. I would draw your attention to seven specific items in this beautiful scene. There is an angel, an altar, a golden censer, incense, fire, prayers, and smoke. We must be very certain about the identity of each of these objects! The imagery is drawn from the typical tabernacle of Moses in the wilderness. The setting is the "holy place," the location of the golden altar in the tabernacle. It was stationed just before the veil of entrance into the "most holy place" of the throne of God upon the ark of the covenant. Here it is viewed as standing before the throne of God in the heavens of God's Spirit!

The scene opens with John announcing that "another angel came and stood at the altar." More literally the Greek indicates that "another angel came and took his place at the altar," indicating that he had the right to be there, that it was his appointed place to exercise authority. This symbolic *angel* John saw standing by the altar, having the golden censer in his hand, ministering in the holy things of the altar, is none other than our great high priest of the heavens, the Lord Jesus Christ; for this "angel" occupies the place of the high priest in the temple worship (Heb. 8:1-2; 9:11). This is not a created angel as some contend, for a created angel is never portrayed as a priest. But this angel stands before the altar and officiates as a priest! A mere angel has nothing to do with our prayers, but our blessed Lord has, for our prayers are offered in *His name*. Nothing can be plainer than this!

The *fire* upon the altar is the energizing, quickening, transforming presence and power of God Himself who "*is a consuming fire*" (Heb. 12:29). The purpose of the fire was to consume and transform every sacrifice placed upon the altar. The fire was God Himself! The *golden censer* represents each member of God's elect, for the fire of God resides in the life of every man and woman who has been baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

The *prayers* offered upon the altar are the effectual prayers of those saints who minister *as priests* in the Spirit and by the Spirit. Now there are multitudes of prayers that are daily offered up to God. You can go to any church and hear many prayers. People pray under all kinds of circumstances. In times of distress, trouble, and crisis, *everyone prays!* Not every prayer is prayed *in the Spirit* and *by the Spirit*. There are all kinds of prayers, Roman Catholics chanting their "Hail Marys," Moslems on their faces on their prayer rugs five times daily, repeating their prayers to Allah, prayers going around and around on a Tibetan Prayer Wheel, and written prayers pushed into the cracks between the stones of Solomon's temple at the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Let us stand assured of this important fact: If there is not some *other ingredient* added to all those prayers, they have no value as *priestly prayers*, no spiritual power whatsoever, they will never get

off the altar they are offered upon, they will never ascend any higher than the head of the person offering them, and they can not penetrate through and beyond the veil into the throne-room of God! Apart from the unction of the Holy Ghost they are merely words!

This brings us to the *incense*. In a number of places in scripture incense is used as the symbol of prayer. David cried, "Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense" (Ps. 141:2). Here in John's vision of the ministry at the golden altar, however, there is a difference! The incense is *not* the prayers of the saints, but is offered up *with* the prayers of the saints. This concept is most interesting. It suggests that the prayers of the saints were lying on the altar and the angel came with the incense to cense the holy things. Incense mingled with the prayers of the saints can only be ***prayer mingled with prayer!*** PRAYER OF A HIGHER, PURER TYPE INTERMIXED WITH THE PRAYERS OF THE SAINTS! Can we not see by this that the incense is the activity of the Holy Spirit in our prayers as we pray "in the Spirit" and "with the Spirit," for "the Spirit itself *maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered...He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God*" (Rom. 8:26-27).

When the Holy Spirit comes to our aid, moving mightily within our spirit, is when the incense is *added* to our prayers! The anointing of the Spirit gives *life* and adds *power* and *efficacy* to our prayers! Let us consider these significant words, "And there was given unto Him *much* incense, that He should offer it with the prayers of all saints." Not just a little incense, but a full and abundant anointing that is sufficient for every need — not only for our situation and calling, but for all creation. The incense-anointing offered upon the altar of our hearts is the power of the Spirit which animates, motivates, enlivens, activates, instigates, and energizes every prayer that is prayed in the Spirit and by the Spirit.

There in the holy place the high priest burned the incense which ascended from the altar and wafted its way through the veil, permeating the presence and throne of the Lord. Those who work in our office here in El Paso understand how easily incense penetrates from realm to realm, because there is an incense shop two doors down from our offices, and those people burn incense for hours at a time. They are two doors away with another business between, but the incense so penetrates through the ceiling and the walls until some days it is almost suffocating in our office. Incense permeates! When the incense was burned in the holy place nothing could keep it out from the most holy place. The incense, before it was crumbled over the live coals was a cold, hard substance; but the fire transformed it into a *spiritual essence* that penetrated through the veil, under the veil, and around the veil, entering right into the presence of God and the majesty of His throne in the Holiest of all! The deep spiritual meaning of this is that when our prayers are offered by the quickening of the spirit and power of God, nothing can keep those prayers from their destination, and nothing can prevent them from being answered!

Finally, the *smoke* of the incense, which ascended up with the prayers of the saints, bespeaks of the *fragrance* of our prayers which ascends up before God as a sweet-smelling savor — that which is well pleasing and acceptable unto the Lord! The message is clear — prayer is not *priestly prayer* unless it is *in the Spirit* and *by the Spirit!* The power of God as holy fire is that which energizes the prayers of God's Royal Priesthood! Now anybody can "pray." Anyone can utter words and make requests of God. But God pays no attention to many prayers! Prayer is a *spiritual activity!* There must be a *spiritual operation* in prayer, an anointing, a quickening, an energizing that comes out of the very spirit of the high priest within us, which also gives unction, force, validity, authority, and power to the prayer! Without the fire and the incense of the altar the prayer is essenceless, cold, hard, lifeless, barren, sterile, spiritless, dead, meaningless, and unprofitable.

One of the greatest truths ever revealed concerning sonship prayer was penned by the apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans. "LIKEWISE the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities (weaknesses, lack of understanding): for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Rom. 8:26-27). It seems to me that for centuries our eyes have been kept holden to many of the great truths of scripture. Without a doubt, very few who have read these beautiful words of Paul have truly understood what they read. Generally, it is taught that the Holy Spirit will cause us to intercede in prayer, praying for our own or other's needs, when we lack the understanding of just what we should ask for. There is certainly

a measure of truth in that, however, the intent of this passage is to show that the Holy Spirit will cause the saints to make intercession, ***not for their own earthly needs, or the physical and natural needs of their brethren and friends, BUT FOR THE DELIVERANCE OF BOTH THE SONS OF GOD AND THE WHOLE CREATION FROM THE BONDAGE OF CORRUPTION!***

The word “LIKEWISE” in verse twenty-six is a conjunctive adverb which joins the subject of true intercessory prayer with the subject preceding it. The subject of the entire eighth chapter of Romans is the manifestation of the sons of God and the deliverance of the whole creation. Paul explains that the creation is in a sort of universal travail for the manifestation of God’s sons, because that is creation’s *hope* for deliverance from the whole dreadful realm of corruption, sin, and death. Then he shows that we ourselves, who have and enjoy the firstfruits of the Spirit, which is but a foretaste of the blissful things to come, do groan inwardly as we wait for the redemption of our bodies from the power of corruption and death, which will reveal our adoption, our placement as sons, or our manifestation as the sons of God with power to deliver creation. The underlying theme is the ***groaning!*** Creation ***groans!*** We, the future manifest sons of God, ***groan!*** Then follows the little conjunctive adverb — LIKEWISE! “Likewise the Spirit *also* helpeth our infirmities...the Spirit itself maketh *intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered* (by man)...because *He maketh intercession* for the saints according to the will of God.” Oh, the wonder of it! Creation groans, we groan, and ***likewise*** the Spirit Himself groans for the same thing on a plane *beyond our ability and understanding!*

The prayer which the Holy Spirit would pray through all the elect is that prayer which corresponds to the groans and travail of every created thing! Most of us spend much of our prayer time praying for our own temporal needs, rather than allowing the Holy Spirit to pray through us with groanings which cannot be uttered, the transcendental prayer for the manifestation of the sons of God and the deliverance of the whole creation. A very basic and fundamental truth is stated when Paul says, “...for we know not what we should pray for as we ought.” It would indeed be a gigantic step forward toward maturity and perfection in Christ if all of us would allow the truth of this to permeate our beings. This truth would unquestionably revolutionize our spiritual life, for the fact is that WE KNOW NOT WHAT WE SHOULD PRAY FOR AS WE OUGHT!

Oh, we *think* we know! Even when we think we don’t know, it is often because we are in a quandary between two or more things. “Should I keep my present job, or change to another?” “Should I buy a new house, or remain where I am?” “Is it God’s will to heal me now, or does He have an unknown purpose in my suffering?” It is nearly always about ***natural things!*** It is evident that with so much pettiness and self-centeredness in our praying, we do not know what we should pray for as we ought. I dare say not one believer in a million truly knows what he should be praying for! The truth is that in about ninety-five percent of our praying we are praying wrong, we are missing the mark — we don’t really realize the high and holy things that are important to the heart of God and His great purpose of the ages, and therefore consequential for the whole creation that groans in bondage — so we continue to pray for things that are trivial in contrast to the transcendent purposes of our Father! Armed with this understanding of the truth that we do not know what to pray for as we ought, we will yield our wills to the will of God and allow the Spirit to pray for us, making intercession “with groanings which cannot be uttered.” And the Spirit travailing through us would intercede **FOR THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD** with the resultant deliverance of the whole creation! There is no other subject in Romans eight!

When it is asserted that the Holy Spirit makes intercession “FOR the saints” and “FOR us,” this is construed by many to mean that the Holy Spirit prays ***for us*** to the end that God will bless us and meet our needs, or the needs of those about us. But there is another meaning more consistent with the subject of the chapter. If you were to say, “I am going to the hospital to pray for Sister Jones,” and I were to respond with, “I will go **FOR** you,” — what would I mean? Obviously, my intention would be to make the visit to the hospital **IN YOUR PLACE**, and pray for Sister Jones **IN YOUR STEAD**. In like manner, if the whole creation is groaning and travailing for the manifestation of the sons of God and the deliverance of creation from corruption that will come through them, and if we ourselves are groaning within ourselves for this very same manifestation and deliverance, surely it follows that if the Holy Spirit, too, is making intercession **FOR** us with that kind of groanings which cannot be uttered, such intercession is **IN OUR PLACE**, that is, the Spirit is interceding **IN OUR STEAD**, lifting the whole cry and groan and travail of both creation and ourselves **INTO THAT HIGHER DIMENSION OF SPIRIT!** Oh, how He “helps our weakness!” But

dispossess yourself, my beloved, of the notion that the ministry of the high priest before the altar and the work of the Holy Spirit in our prayers is an outward scene in some far-off heaven somewhere. Oh, no! The spirit of our heavenly high priest is right here within each of us! These are inward realities! ***This wonderful ministry takes place right here within the holy place of our soul and the most holy place of our spirit, IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD WHICH WE ARE!***

On the plane of *spirit* the groanings are not able even to be uttered, for they are in some marvelous way the groanings of *spirit* rather than the cry expressed verbally out of our natural understanding. He that searches the hearts knows what is the *mind of the Spirit*, that is, there is communication on the plane of *mind*, in that wonderful realm where mind communes with mind and spirit communes with spirit, beyond utterance. Thus the deepest desire and longing of the physical universe, the saints on earth, and the spirit realm are ONE! Creation groans, and we groan, audibly, and the blessed Holy Spirit groans on our behalf and in our stead with those unutterable groanings of divine mind, for we know not how to pray for this glorious deliverance as we ought. Oh, the mystery of it!

People write to me all the time and say, “Bother Eby, pray for this, pray for that, pray for the other thing.” We used to call those “prayer requests.” In our meetings in former days we always “took” prayer requests. Some folks didn’t want to reveal what their prayer requests were, so they gave in an “unspoken request.” We had no idea what we were praying for, so we just asked the Lord to “meet the need.” I’ve come to the place in my walk in the Spirit where I have had to turn from all that! I have discovered a greater reality and a higher order in the Spirit, and I simply cannot pray for everything people ask me to pray for. Sometimes brethren don’t understand that. “You’re a son of God, and you can’t pray for me?” they question. Well, Mary and Martha sent for Jesus when Lazarus was sick and He couldn’t go. While Lazarus lay dying Jesus stayed another three days in the place where He was, restrained by the Spirit from going to minister to Lazarus or even to pray for him. You see, Jesus could only pray for those things the Father directed Him to pray for, and He could only minister to those whom the Father showed Him! He couldn’t pray according to the desire and request of Mary and Martha, nor could He pray according to His own will and desire. As a manifest son of God He could only do those things He saw the Father doing, and He spoke only those words He received from His Father. That is so different from the old-order church way of doing things!

The following words by George Hawtin bear eloquent testimony to the truth of which I now speak. “How often have you heard Christians dreamily say, ‘I wish the Lord would send us a revival.’ ‘I wish the Lord would save my husband.’ ‘I wish the Lord would heal my body.’ ‘I wish the Lord would send us a good rain,’ or some such thing. Then they will make request in the congregation desiring people to pray that these wishes of theirs, which they call *prayer requests*, will be answered. Then when such requests go unanswered for years we wonder why the Lord did not hear us. Why should He hear us when the request is born, NOT OF HIS SPIRIT, but OF THE NATURAL MIND? There is far too much rushing into God’s presence with our boots on, far too much lifting up of unholy hands, far too much stepping where angels fear to tread, and far too little preparation of the heart in waiting for the Spirit of God to put the YEARNINGS OF THE ALMIGHTY in the spirit and on the lips of man” — end quote.

There must be an *administration of the Spirit* in prayer. When we pray apart from the *anointing* we are as a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. The anointing is the *incense* that is added to our prayers! Within ourselves we are weak and helpless. With our carnal understanding and desires we know not what we should pray for. It is certain that many times we have prayed for what *seemed good* to us, but was actually contrary to the mind of the Lord and the will of God in the matter. We will never understand the ignorance of the carnal mind by which men ask God for all the worldly things their carnal hearts desire. Well did the apostle James write, “Ye ask, and receive not, *because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts (carnal desires)*” (James 4:3). That’s why I rarely ask for ***things!*** I have said to the Lord, “Father, if it would please you, I would thank you for providing such and such.” If it would please the Father to give me a million dollars I would be very blessed! But I leave all such carnal desires in the hands of my Father. Sometimes He has been pleased to bless me with wonderful things, and often He withholds things that He knows would be to my detriment. The simple but powerful truth is just this — ***we know not what we should pray for as we ought!***

Every called and chosen son of God is learning in this significant hour that if we pray a prayer, speak a word, or do anything that is not *energized by the holy fire of God upon the altar, and mixed with the incense of the Spirit's supplications Himself*, it is all vanity of vanities. This is beyond any chance of contradiction the **central truth** in intercession! Learn, O man of God, to fellowship with Christ, rejoicing in the Holy Spirit, communing with the Father, becoming one with Him in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, hearing His voice and beholding His works in and by the Spirit, walking in His will and doing His bidding, and you will then be qualified to enter upon that precious ministry of **priestly intercession** as a KING-PRIEST OF THE MOST HIGH GOD! We can accommodate, placate, and please the people by praying for all the things they request, but that does not mean there will be any smoke ascending up before God, nor does it indicate that it will produce any results! Spiritual prayer originates with God in our spirit. It is His word in our spirit that ascends from the altar of our souls — He lights the incense by the energy of His quickening life — all this activity takes place within the temple of God which *we are!*

The same truth applies to our praise and worship! What ignites real praise and worship is the *fire* upon the altar of God in our hearts! There was an unspeakable glory manifest in the spirit of worship that came to the Lord's people at the time of the great Latter Rain outpouring of the Spirit in the late 1940's and the 1950's. There was the living stream of the *song of the Lord* as the people stood at the golden altar of incense and worshipped the Father in the Spirit and by the Spirit for untold hours at a time. What glory rested upon the people of the Lord! What power flashed forth from the Holiest of all! There was the *fire of God* that energized and empowered the worship, it came from the altar of God out of the holy fire, and there was a divine fragrance that ascended with it!

But you know, my beloved, the day came when we didn't need the fire any more. *We learned how to do it!* It mattered not whether the high priest was standing in the holy place by the altar; it made no difference whether there was any fire in the censer, or any incense added to our worship. We knew how to worship and we could just turn it on and turn it off any time we wanted. Soon there was no fragrance ascending from our worship, it had become just another form that we knew how to perform by rote. I must be perfectly honest with you! I have heard much so-called "spiritual worship" through the years that was not generated by the fire of the Holy Ghost and there was no fragrance, no glory attending it whatsoever. At times, though the people felt blessed by the performance of it, in my ears (and I believe also in God's) it sounded more like the braying of donkeys or the yelping of coyotes, than the celestial sound of the Spirit.

Jesus was the firstborn Son of God and He knew the Father in a measure and on a realm no man had ever known Him. He has taught us, His younger brothers, that "they that worship the Father **must** worship Him **in spirit**." Then He added, "For the Father **seeketh such** to worship Him." John beheld this same Christ of God standing at the heavenly golden altar in the realm of spirit and He held 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 that was before the throne. Oh, what divine wonders are these! The incense was offered with the *prayers of all saints*, not just those on this side of the veil, but those on the other side as well! There is a deep and mighty cry arising out of the hearts of all God's chosen ones in both realms, the visible and the invisible, for the fire of God that has quickened us in the depths of our being to be **cast into the earth-realm and reveal the glory of God to creation**. The smoke that John saw ascending before God is something which is energized by the fire of God upon the altar of our hearts. It is divine! It is spontaneous! It cannot be worked up! It cannot be instigated by man! Only the fire of God can release it! There is no need for us to do anything. It is that which is sovereignly ignited by the blazing Holy Ghost fire of God from the inner sanctum of being!

## FIRE CAST INTO THE EARTH

"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. 8:5).

It must have been a tremendous revelation to John to see the scene which immediately followed the ascension of the spiritual prayers of God's elect! When you read the book of Revelation, you will find that it is based on a pattern that *first* something happens *in heaven*, and then as a *consequence*, certain *events* take place *on earth*. Here the angel (Christ Jesus) takes the censer (our lives) and fills it with fire (the Holy Ghost fire of God) from the altar (the place of spiritual praise, worship, and prayer), and casts it (the fire-filled censer) into the earth (the souls or human identity of both believers and mankind). What a picture that is! May the blessed spirit of wisdom and revelation from God grant us eyes to see what is happening here!

As our prayers, 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 the 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, there are *thunderings* as the power of God is manifested, there are *lightnings* as the illumination of divine truth flashes within the consciousness of men, followed by a great *earthquake* as the carnality of man, and the kingdoms of man, are shaken to their very foundations. Oh, yes! The earth-realm of our own life, and that of the world of mankind about us, is powerfully changed and transformed by the activity of the Spirit that is cast into their midst out of the heavens of our spiritual ministry in the heavenly temple of God! Oh, the wonder of it! 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 as they are supposed to happen in the earth-realm. As we pray in the Spirit, 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!

The fire in the censer which the high priest carried was put there to reveal the great truth that it is the fire of God that brings change in any realm. The fire of God brings the spirit of purification and transformation into the lives of men. This is not an action of judgment, as we think of it, but rather an action of purification! It recalls the action of the angel in Isaiah's inaugural vision, taking burning coal from the altar and touching Isaiah's lips (Isa. 6:6-7). Beholding the manifest glory of the Lord Isaiah cried, "Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." But the coal placed on Isaiah's lips does not mean Isaiah's judgment or destruction; instead it is good news, for the angel says, "Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is *taken away*, and thy sin *purged*." Purification does not come easy! Hot coal *burns*, as does the cauterization of an infected wound. Surgery might take away a part of us in order to make us well; we may not want to lose anything, but pain and loss may be necessary in order for us to experience actual healing.

Most commentators, when viewing the fire cast into the earth, interpret it as *divine judgment* or *punishment*. They tell us that fire bespeaks wrath, torture, and destruction of the wicked. Those who tell us this say that fire is the common and exclusive figure of divine terribleness toward the guilty, the chief torment of the lost. If the action of the *high priest at the altar of prayer, praise, and worship — casting fire into the earth* — is a prophecy of the pouring out of the wrath and vindictiveness of God upon the world of mankind, then the type is incomprehensible! If the fire is vengeance, the one pouring it out upon the earth should be represented as a *warrior* or a *judge* — not the *compassionate, merciful, interceding HIGH PRIEST!* The fire of the altar is the very fire of *God Himself!* It is the fire of His *glory and majesty!* It is the fire that *purifies, transforms, and glorifies God!* What fire is in the natural world, the Holy Ghost fire of God is in the spiritual world of men. Fire warms, beautifies, protects, glorifies, refines, purifies, and consumes. Purification is neither judgment nor punishment — purification brings SALVATION! Aren't you glad!

Before ascending back to heaven, Jesus said, "I came to *cast fire upon the earth*; and would that it were already kindled!" (Lk. 12:49). To which He added: "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how I am constrained until it be accomplished" (Lk. 12:50). Just what Jesus meant by this fire He did not explain. However, He did say that as yet it was not kindled, even though He longed for it to be kindled, and that before it could be kindled He would first have to undergo a baptism of suffering leading to His death. Now by the Spirit we know what Jesus meant! He was speaking of the pouring out and release of the Holy Ghost

fire, glory, and power of God in the world following His death, resurrection, and ascension. It began on the day of Pentecost! “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come...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...” (Acts 2:1-4). This is where the Holy Ghost fire of God was first *cast into the earth* by our great high priest at the golden altar in the heavens of the Spirit! When Jesus said that He came to “cast fire into the earth” He was alluding to the very thing John saw in his wonderful vision on Patmos! The firstborn Son of God initiated this fiery, purging, refining, empowering, and transforming work of the Spirit in the earth, and the body of Christ, the “many brethren,” the “many sons brought to glory,” shall consummate this great ministry of reconciliation, redemption, transformation, and restoration!

I don’t know who penned the following words, but I found them recently among my papers and found sweet confirmation in them. “Jesus is speaking (Lk. 12:49) of our own little inward earth and world. He longed for us to be filled with the Holy Spirit. It is the fire of the Holy Spirit within that burns up the chaff and tares of our own natural and carnal mind. Every wicked thought and injected imagination shall be cast down and destroyed. Everyone shall be salted and purified with fire! All mankind goes through judgment, now or in the ages to come. Fiery judgment is God’s method to bring to perfection that which was saved by the blood and life of Christ. When God’s judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will *learn righteousness*! Such judgment is for instruction, correction, and revelation. By the work of God’s Holy Spirit fire all things will be set right!”

Throughout the book of Revelation we see our God as a consuming fire! God’s action in fire, like His action in grace, is pure, harmonious, balanced, directed towards the purging that leads to transformation and wholeness. The eternal 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 for the presence and manifestation of God! Moses beheld Him as the fire in the burning bush, which burned but was not consumed! He came down upon mount Sinai in the midst of the people of Israel as a blazing, burning fire that scorched the mountain! He dwelt as fiery majesty upon the mercy seat in the Holiest of all! “Our God *is* a consuming fire,” says the scripture, and the apostle adds, “God *is* love.” God IS! God is fire and He is love. He is light and life. Fire represents the divine process of cleansing. Divine judgment by fire is not unto destruction, but unto redemption! Fire appears terrible only to the man who is unprepared to pass through it. 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 carnality 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 eternal burnings. Nothing is more certain than the fact that the fire of God has already been cast, and shall yet be cast, into the world of each of us! Not to destroy us, but to purge our land. Only the dross must be removed!

Now that fire — the very power, the anointing, the divine energy in the heat of our spiritual prayers, praise, and worship is cast into the earth-realm — into the soul life, into the carnality, natural consciousness, and human identity of mankind. The Christ within does this! It is truly the Christ! The censer is our life as a vessel, placed upon the altar of the Lord. The fire is the power of God transforming the sacrifice. The incense is the ministration of the Holy Spirit in our spiritual ministry of prayer, praise, and worship. The high priest is the Christ within His temple performing all this wonderful work in our lives. And by the power of God we, the members of the Christ body upon earth, are fulfilling this same ministration on behalf of all who “dwell in the earth-realm.” We pray in the heavens of the Spirit of the Lord and the power of God is cast into, and released in the earth!

With these truths fresh upon our minds let us look at the work of fire throughout the book of Revelation. In the very first chapter we find the glorious Christ standing in the midst of the churches and “His eyes are as a flame of fire” (Rev. 1:14). The Christ’s eyes of fire, and the eyes of fire of every son of God who shares His glory, are eyes of the very same fire that is revealed throughout the 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 *same* fire! The fire of the golden altar which is cast into the earth is the same holy, refining fire of God and when it is cast into the earth 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). These seven spirits of God are “sent forth into *all the earth*.” Is it not clear that the work of the seven lamps of fire sent into “all the earth” is but another picture of the fire from the altar that is “cast into the earth”? It is the same fire! It’s activity is in the same sphere! It accomplishes the same thing! The Lamb has seven eyes and the seven eyes are the seven-fold spirit of God, thus they are likewise the eyes of fire which are also the seven lamps burning before the throne! (Rev. 5:6).

You see, it is all the same fire of God in different administrations! There is a sea of glass mingled with fire (Rev. 15:12), 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 and the flesh have been burned out of them! There is fire that is cast upon the earth and burns up the trees that grow out of the earth (Rev. 8:7), consuming the carnal manifestations and works that grow out of our earthly, fleshly nature. There is a fire that destroys the religious sham of Mystery Babylon (Rev. 18:8), not consuming the people, but destroying the apostate system that enslaves them.

Then we are shown 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 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 been given some horrific connotations and given a distorted view of the character of God. The crude idea that an all-wise, all-knowing, all-righteous, and all-loving Creator would decree endless torture in undying flames 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 wonderful Holy Ghost fire of His glory to torture billions of souls throughout eternity!

The consuming fire of God 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. Our Father dwells in the light that no man can approach unto. No *man!* That is, no *carnal, fleshly nature or being!* Who shall stand when He appeareth, for He is like a refiner’s fire! 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 deception, 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 death, but life; not damnation, but salvation. 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 the eternal fire! When all that has held us captive in chains of darkness is consumed by the fire of His love, we see Him as He is and reality breaks forth!

Do you long to truly affect and impact the earth-realm, my friend? Do you want to hear voices and thunderings and lightnings and see a mighty shaking and change in the earth? Does your heart yearn for God to move in mighty spirit-power to bring forth the word of God in such authority and with such illumination that it will shake all the kingdoms of the flesh and all the soulical powers of man, bringing a glorious change and transformation? How our heart cries for this!

Our Lord Jesus has taught us to pray that great *sonship prayer* in which are included these words, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done *in earth as it is in heaven*.” Is it possible — faintly, vaguely, possible for God’s will to be done in earth in the same totality and completeness *as it is done in the heavens of God’s Spirit*? In heaven the will of God is done absolutely, totally, completely! But on earth — you know about Osama bin Laden, of course, you know about Fidel Castro, the Islamic Fundamentalists, the Chinese Communists, the gangs, pedophiles, drug lords, and godless humanists. If you take the terrorists into account, and all the vulgar movies, the divorce rate, the crime rate, the sexual immorality, the crooked politicians — do you still think the will of God can be done in earth as it is in heaven? I’m going to tell you something. You’re dreaming; it’s wishful thinking; you’re whistling in the dark; you’ve got your fingers crossed hoping for the best — *unless* you know *which earth* the Father’s will has to be done in first, completely! It is significant to note that neither Luke nor Matthew records Jesus as asking for the Father’s will to be done ON the earth, but rather, IN earth. “In earth” does not mean the outer world of mountains, hills, valleys, rivers and oceans, nor yet the outer world of governments, organizations, institutions, cities,



farms, and buildings. Man himself is the earth! “The first man is of the earth, earthy...as is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy...and as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly” (I Cor. 15:47-49). “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels...” (II Cor. 4:7). “Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return.”

My interest is not “Thy will be done in earth...” and earth is that which is outside of me, farthest away from me, over which I have no control. The cry of my heart is, “Thy will be done in *this earth that I am*” with the same totality and completeness and absoluteness as it is done in heaven. And when God’s will is done in this earth that *I am*, and that earth which *you are*, and the other earth that your family, friends, and neighbors are, soon it will take care of the whole earth, within and without!

We’ve heard all our lives that “prayer changes things.” But do you know that’s not really true? Do you see what the prayer did? “And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, *ascended up before God* out of the angel’s hand” (Rev. 8:4). The prayers *went up* before the presence and the throne of God! They became a sweet-smelling savor in the nostrils of the Lord! That means that the prayers were pleasing and acceptable to God, both an expression of His very own heart, and a proper participation in His great purpose of the ages. That’s what the prayers did! That’s *all* that the prayers did! But now notice. These prayers are not only answered, but answered in full. The censer which held the incense and the prayers is the same vessel which now is filled again with fire from the altar, and in equal measure, to the brim. As the prayer has *risen* from the earth, so *descends* the fire! Mount Carmel becomes the universe, and every member of God’s elect a prophet Elijah. The fire is cast into the earth, into the souls of men! It is not the prayers that change things on earth — it is the *fire*! As a result of the prayers being accepted by God, the same fire that energized the prayers is the fire that is cast into the earth-realm of men’s souls! It is the power of God to *change men*! The prayers do not change them, but the fire sent in response to the prayers!

I have shown with great detail earlier in this series how it is that in the book of Revelation the “earth” is the symbol of the world of mankind’s *soulical life*. Collectively it is in the soulical works of man, especially in the religious realm, where the expression of the *soul* is confused with the life of the *spirit*. Our vision of heavenly things has been so distorted due to our looking through physical and soulish 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 really quite alright in themselves, and that the distortion arises from your seeing them wrongly. In like manner, the pure eyes of our regenerated spirits have 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, rituals, concepts, interpretations, methods, and religious systems and exercises.

This distorted vision of heavenly things is really what we know as “Christianity” and “the Church.” It is a seeing, but a false seeing. It is a knowing, but a false knowing. Over the hearts of all unquickened and untransformed men and woman, as well as vast multitudes of the Lord’s own people who have not truly been transformed by the *renewing of their minds*, there hangs an impenetrable veil of carnal understanding and spiritual darkness that keeps men blinded to the glory of Truth and Reality in the Spirit. Even in the reading of the scripture the veil is over their eyes, and they sit in blindness and outer darkness until *their minds are completely renewed by the quickening, energizing, purifying fire of God*! Then and only then does the light shine upon them! Then and only then do they begin to see all things as they really are and discern all spiritual things! Then and only then do they understand the incredible darkness and dreadful void of the carnal mind with all its delusions and distortions!

No greater tragedy can overtake a man than that, after he has been illuminated by the light of Christ, and made a partaker of the life of the Spirit, he should then mingle his affection with the emptiness of earthly things and not set them entirely on things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God. The children of God are so occupied and busy with soulish zeal and carnal efforts! They are running here and there, busily initiating 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 that they will remain saved!

Everybody feels that they should be “doing something *for* God.” This sounds reasonable to the natural mind; so men mingle the thoughts, schemes, ideas, plans, purposes, ambition, skill, and zeal of the *carnal mind* with the new inclinations and affections of the *spiritual mind*; consequently Christians rush about in every direction like ants on an ant hill, doing this and doing that, going here and going there, organizing this and organizing that, promoting this and promoting that, praying, preaching, scheming, planning, toiling, giving their money, working themselves into nervous wrecks, even neglecting their families and homes, cultivating the vineyards of others while letting their own experience remain shallow and on the surface. They find no time to wait on God in earnest, to sit at His feet in intimacy of fellowship and vital union, to *learn of Him*. They spend little or no time in coming to *know* the Lord of the Vineyard! Without exception, this barrenness and void in our lives is sure proof that we are in need of God’s dealing hand. Therefore, let us leave everything that we can leave, and let us get still before the altar of God that He may speak to us and work in us, and for us, and through us, to His glory. Then shall we go forth with the presence and power of God upon us, and while we shall be used of Him with those around us, we shall have learned to watch for His movings and dealings upon our souls, and to always yield to Him to work in us first. Then shall our hearts become truly pure, unmixed with soulish zeal and scheming of the carnal mind. Then shall we be sons indeed, kings and priests of the Most High God!

To be continued...

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