

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 104

MINISTRY FROM THE GOLDEN ALTAR (continued)

“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).

There can be no doubt that we are living in an hour when the Lord is revealing many things that concern the coming to pass of His kingdom in the earth. Long centuries ago the beloved apostle John saw in vision an angel, who is none other than our great high priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, standing at the golden altar of incense in the heavens of God’s Spirit. He was given much incense, which is the anointing of the Spirit, and offered the incense with the prayers of God’s elect upon the golden altar, the place of prayer, praise, and worship. The fragrant smoke of the incense ascended as a sweet-smelling savor with the prayers, indicating that they were well-pleasing and acceptable to the Father.

As John beholds the scene, he sees the angel take the live coals from the altar, put them into the golden censer, and pour them out upon the earth. Immediately there begins a procession of stupendous convulsions, overturnings, and changes. There are *voices*, as the word of the Lord is released in the earth; there are *thunderings*, as the power of God is made manifest; there are *lightnings*, as the illumination of divine truth bursts within the consciousness of men; and these are followed by a great *earthquake*, as the carnality of man, and the kingdoms of man are shaken to their very foundations! All the symbolic forces of nature are divinely affected! The vision reveals the great truth that in the outworking of God’s kingdom purposes, *first* something happens *in heaven*, and then as a *consequence*, certain *events* take place *on earth*. As the prayers, praise, and worship of God’s *priestly people* 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 prayers start forces working in the heavenlies that ultimately release mighty powers in the earthlies! As God moves His spiritual kings and priests to minister unto Him in the Spirit on behalf of creation, 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! It is this fire of the divine energy and power of God that quickens, energizes, purifies, changes, and transforms the world of men! By the fire of God we bring the day of the Lord upon the earth!

Bill and Elaine Cook shared the following testimony which graphically illustrates the truth of which I now speak. Several high-ranking church leaders from Europe, visited a pastor in Hong Kong who took them to visit some churches. They found them inspiring, and uniquely Chinese, but they wondered aloud if they were seeing the *real* church. At their last stop, the pastor discovered that two young women had just returned from their mission station for a short visit, so he asked them to come to the hotel late, to meet the visiting leaders. These young ladies had become believers as teenagers while listening to the radio, and they each had felt the call to be a missionary. The pastor had tried to convince them to witness right where they were but they said, “No. The Bible says Jesus said to go into all the world. We will go.”

The pastor protested, “You have only been Christians for six months, and you are so young.” They replied, “Pastor, we have read everything Jesus said and nowhere does He ask people how old they are. We

want to go.” The pastor replied, “Very well. We need some workers on Hainan Island. But it is very rough. The people there are fishermen. There are no Christians there. For young ladies it might be dangerous.” Excitedly they responded, “How soon can we go? We will go to this place.” They had been there for two years and were now back for a short period of time to try to get Bibles for their new churches. The pastor had not seen them since they insisted that they “go now!”

The pastor went to the lobby that night at the appointed time and waited for the ladies to arrive so he could escort them to meet the visitors. While he waited, he watched the bellboys in their crisp, tailored uniforms, and the tourists who attempted to be casual in their designer clothes. “Oh, no!” he thought, as the girls walked in. Their black pajamas and broad-brimmed fishermen hats stood in stark contrast to the appearance of the sophisticated hotel. Tourists ogled them with that “*how quaint*” look so often directed to nationals. Several people stood staring as he greeted them as politely as possible without drawing too much attention. “Come, we will go to my room to meet some people from Europe.” The women looked at each other, then apprehensively followed behind, looking down at their bare feet sinking into the carpet. They attempted to step more lightly, as though they were afraid they would sink into this beautifully colored “mud.” The pastor pushed the elevator button, keeping his head down and afraid to watch any of the many eyes staring in his direction. The elevator arrived and the door slid open, and the women greeted it with a look of astonishment.

Several tourists smiled at them as they stepped on. There were more “how quaint” looks. The elevator operator pretended not to notice his passengers as he asked for the floor number. The women’s wonder changed to fear as the doors closed and their first elevator ride began to ascend! Once in the room, the two European church officials graciously greeted them and motioned for them to sit down. The pastor pulled chairs toward them, so they would not sit on the floor.

The European brethren began, “Pastor, ask them how many churches they have established on Hainan.” They put their heads down and answered, “Oh, Pastor, we have only been there two years. Not many. Not very many.” Their voices were apologetic. “How many?” “Oh, not many, not very many. We have only been there a short time. The people were not very friendly. Sometimes they became very vicious. Yes, sometimes they told us they were going to drown us in the ocean. Several men threatened us. Oh, my, and because we were so young, even some of the ladies did not like us. Yes, some even called us terrible names...so, not many churches...no, not many.” The pastor interrupted and slowly repeated the words, “H-o-w m-a-n-y?” There was a moment of silence, then one of the women looked up with embarrassment and anguish, as though confessing to a crime, “Only thirteen.”

The pastor looked astonished and interpreted for the guests. “Thirteen.” One of them repeated the number, “Only thirteen! Oh, my, goodness, I haven’t planted that many churches in my lifetime!” One of the pastor’s assistants interrupted, “No, Pastor, she did not say thirteen, she said thirty!” The pastor looked at them and asked, “**Thirty?**” “Yes, yes, not many. We have done very poorly. Only thirty.” “How many people are in the churches?” Again both heads went down, apologizing for their failure. “Not many.” Finally, the pastor looked like he was ready to shake them and practically yelled, “**How many?**” “Only two hundred and twenty people. Not many, no...not many.” Quickly multiplying in his head, the pastor said, “Two hundred and twenty in thirty churches?” “Oh, no, in only one, but that one is a very small church, very small. There are bigger ones...” The guests repeated the numbers, “Two hundred and twenty is small? Dear Lord, I wish I had some that large. Ask them how many are in the big churches.” With a more reverent manner the pastor inquired, “And how many in the big churches? I mean, the biggest one?” They began again, “Oh, not many...” when he asked them, “Please, ladies, *how many?*” “Oh, less than 5000. Only 4,900. Yes, less than 5000. We have just started.”

From behind the pastor came the sound of weeping. “Dear Lord, forgive us! What did they do? How did they do it? Ask them what they did!” When asked, they looked astonished. “What did we do? Why, nothing. Yes, we did nothing, nothing.” “You did nothing? You have thirty churches; the smallest with two hundred and twenty people, the largest with almost five thousand new believers! And you did *nothing?*”

“No, nothing. We just prayed.” “I know you prayed, but what else did you do?” ***“After we prayed, the Holy Spirit would tell us exactly what to do. We would keep praying and He would tell us what to do, and we would do it. Then we prayed and then He would tell us what to do. We would do it and keep praying...”*** “Dear Lord, they **just** prayed and the Holy Spirit told them exactly what to do and they prayed...” The pastor laid his hands on the shoulders of the two sisters. Behind him his two guests, on their knees, weeping, joined as they *just prayed*. (Conclusion).

Ted Martin shared the following accounts. Imagine a community where 92% of the population claim to be born again; where the last of four city jails has been closed for lack of crime; where agricultural productivity has reached biblical proportions. You are in ***Almolongo, Guatemala*** (population 19,000) where just a few years ago poverty, witchcraft, idolatry, alcohol addiction, and violence ruled, ***until a few intercessors began praying and fasting***. Conversions, healings, and deliverances from demonic oppression followed. Almolongo has been transformed into a city of *churches* instead of *bars*.

Now, imagine a city where 60,000 believers jam the soccer stadium (provided rent-free by the city fathers who want to encourage the Christian influence in their city) for ***all-night prayer vigils every ninety days***, where a multi-billion dollar drug cartel has been brought to its knees. A few years ago ***Calle, Columbia*** was the ***drug capital of the world***. This large city, controlled by cocaine drug lords, was full of violence, corruption, and homicides. In 1995 ***a few believers came together and began interceding for unity among believers, and for the overthrow of occult influences and the drug cartel***. Soon, believers from all over the city converged for an all-night prayer meeting at the soccer stadium. That weekend, the newspapers headlined that there had been no murders for two days, where before, there was an average of fifteen a day. A few days later the head drug lord was arrested. Before the summer was over, six out of seven of the drug lords had been arrested. Corruption throughout the city was reduced dramatically. As the believers continued to come together in serious intercession, the kingdom of God continued to descend upon their city where thousands continue to be converted!

Now, imagine a town where local bars have been transformed into church houses; where ancestral shrines have been destroyed; where entire family clans have come to faith in Christ. In ***Kiambu, Kenya*** (a suburb of Nairobi) rape, violence, corruption, alcohol addiction, and spirit of witchcraft had made this town one of the most undesirable places to live in all of Kenya. The few believers were impotent, that is, until ***round-the-clock intercession resulted in the overthrow of the communities' leading witch, and a dramatic increase in conversions***. Now Kiambu has one of the lowest crime rates in all of Kenya! (Conclusion).

Commenting on the prayers and the high praises of the saints ascending to the Lord, followed by the angel taking the censer, filling it with fire of the altar, and casting it into the earth, producing in the earth-realm voices, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake, brother Paul Mueller wrote these beautifully confirmatory words:

“From reading this passage, it is clear that every Divine action that affects the earth begins in the heavenly, spiritual realm. As soon as the prayers and praises of the saints ascended to the Father, the angel took fire from the altar and cast it into the earth. Thus, the presence and power of God was sent to earth to fulfill our Father’s sovereign purposes. The spiritual ministry or service of the saints at the heavenly altar ***caused things to take place on earth!*** All that is necessary to fulfill our Father’s plan of the restoration of all things must begin with the saints of God, who are seen interceding and praising the Lord at the heavenly altar.

“The fire of the Lord from the heavenly altar shall first purge and purify our prayers so that they shall become His will. When the prayers of the saints ascend as a sweet-smelling odor before the Lord out of the angel’s hand, they shall then be fulfilled by the omnipotent power of Him who rules and reigns in all the earth. The casting of the golden censer to the earth, containing fire from the altar, undoubtedly initiates the answers to those prayers. Our loved ones, for whom we have prayed many years, shall then come to know the Lord! All our prayers shall be fulfilled, not in a weak or mild manner, but with a mighty and glorious display of the power of God in ‘thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.’ We are truly entering a wonderful period! We should believe God and expect the utmost of Him! When we see these truths by the

mind of Christ, our faith and trust in Him increases. We then know that He will be our habitation and strength through every difficult situation, and our Saviour unto the fullness.

“The most important and significant truth we are learning today is that all spiritual action necessary to change the world for the better must begin with us in the realm of the Spirit! Nothing in this world will ever change for the better without an initial move of the Spirit beginning in the heavenlies. When we use the word ‘heavenlies,’ we are referring to the realm of the Spirit. All earthly, worldly changes for the better must begin first in the realm of the Spirit! Only the Light of Christ can dispel the darkness in the world! And His Light must come to us from the realm of the Spirit! Only by the Spirit of God can this corrupt world be changed into that new earth, wherein dwelleth His righteousness. And the Spirit of God, that shall bring forth that new earth, is the fire of God from the spiritual altar. Only as the fire of the Spirit of God is cast from heaven to the earth shall the knowledge of the glory of the Lord cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea. And God is that Fire (Heb. 12:29). He is the Spirit-Fire that must come from the presence of the Lord to do that glorious work in all the earth! God’s way of changing things in the world is, *‘not by might, nor by power, but BY MY SPIRIT, saith the Lord of hosts’* (Zech. 4:6).

“Our new kingdom ministry, or our service to our King and Lord of all, is not only a future ministry or service; it is a present reality! We are called to minister to the Lord NOW! We are called to bow in humble obedience and submission to the will, the plan, and the purpose of God NOW, not sometime in the dim, distant future. We are called to minister to the Lord NOW, by offering praise, honor, and glory to Him! We are called to pray the Lord’s prayer NOW, not with mere lip service, but with total and absolute commitment and abandonment to the will of our Father. All that we do NOW, in the Spirit and by the Spirit, shall bring the eternal benefits and blessings of the kingdom of God to earth. Our spiritual action as from the heavenly altar shall bring heaven to earth! The New Jerusalem is coming down from God out of heaven, or out of the realm of the Spirit, to the earth, because of our spiritual action in the heavenlies (Rev. 21:2)” — end quote.

You see, my beloved, when we pray in the Spirit upon the altar of God, our prayer becomes a ***word of the Lord!*** And the word that ascends to the Father evokes a release of the fire-power of God which is cast into the earth where it brings forth transformation in that realm. It is the fire that does the work! It is the sovereign move and power of God! I can’t do anything myself. Oh, how I long to set creation free! But I have come to the end of myself. If I could run out and change the world and deliver the groaning creation, I would lay my pen down and be out there tomorrow doing so. I really would. God knows I would! I’ve told Him a thousand times. Oh, yes, I’m ready for a change! I’m excited about the new order of the kingdom of God that is now at the doors! I am divinely anxious to see the kingdom of God come in power, not just in me, but in every son of God, and upon all the earth-realm!

We often talk about the new order of the kingdom of God that is coming upon earth. That new order, however, *begins* in God’s elect! It is the new life of the kingdom within ourselves! God is raising up His righteousness, peace, joy, mind, heart, love, will, and the sovereignty of His dominion in our hearts and lives. He is searching out the inward parts of our belly, He’s discerning all things, penetrating all things, quickening all things, illuminating all things, and transforming all things. He’s changing everything within us! He’s peeling away from us layer after layer of all the carnal stuff that has concealed the beauty and glory of the pure life of Christ within. He’s separating us from everything we have trusted in, all that we have been taught, all that we have believed, all that we have practiced, all that we have been associated with, all that we have participated in, that the nature, glory, wisdom, purpose, and power of Christ alone might be revealed in us. Yet all that He is doing in us must be “cast into the earth!”

God knows the deep prayer that is in my heart, upon the altar of the Lord. It’s a cry out of the depths of my being for the manifestation of the sons of God and the deliverance of all creation. The fire of God is soon to be poured out into the earth-realm on a level the world has never seen. But first it must happen within all of God’s elect! The fire is being cast into *our earth* — from the altar of the heavens of the spirit within us, into the earth of our outer life. The only thing that can change anything about me, or about you, my beloved, is the fire of God from the altar! I can’t change myself! You can’t change yourself! I cannot save my own soul or redeem my own body from death! Neither can you! And just as certainly as we can’t do it for ourselves, neither can we do it for creation! My heart sings a thousand hallelujahs, for we are

standing on the threshold of a mighty, stupendous, incredible, dynamic, unprecedented, supernatural, sovereign *intervention of God*. The spirit of the high priest within us is casting fire into our earth, and mighty things are beginning to happen! Oh, yes! We are being changed from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. And creation is standing on tip-toe to see the wonderful sight of God's sons coming into their own! For the creation also shall be visited by the consuming, illuminating, purging, transforming fire of God from the altar of God within His sons! Aren't you glad!

VOICES, THUNDERINGS, LIGHTNINGS, AND AN EARTHQUAKE

"And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and there were *voices*, and *thunderings*, and *lightnings*, and an *earthquake*" (Rev. 8:5).

What happens next is amazing: when the golden censer of fire is cast into the earth, this is followed by "the sound of voices and peals of thunder and flashes of lightning and an earthquake." These phenomena, of course, should be familiar to every student of the scriptures as the normal accompaniments of the divine Glory-Cloud! "So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound...now mount Sinai was all in smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently" (Ex. 19:16,18).

One of the key words in the book of Revelation is "voices." It is important to note in each case what the voices are, what the circumstances are, where they come from, and what they say. Here in our text the voice bespeaks the ***word of the Lord*** spoken out of the mouths of His kings and priests! It is the one Voice of the Lord becoming many voices, as the sound of many waters, issuing from the many sons brought to glory. If you ask me today, "How do you perceive God? What do you see in your mind? Do you see a great man with a white beard, piercing eyes of fire, with lightning bolts coming out of His fingers?" No! "Do you see some kind of a figure?" No! There are times when I see a face. It is a mental concept of Jesus. If I see a body in my mind, it is the body of Jesus Christ, the corporate, composite body of many members. How do I conceive of God? As a body? No. As some spirit who flits about disembodied with a lot of force and energy? No. I conceive of God as a *voice*. That is how I conceive of God. That's how I experience Him. The first thing we read of God is that "God *said*..." He spoke! And the only manifestation of God Adam knew in that long-ago Eden was simply "the *voice* of the Lord God walking in the midst of the garden in the cool (spirit) of the day" (Gen. 3:8).

Early in the Revelation John heard a voice as of a trumpet speaking to him, and he turned to *see* the *voice*. That voice was the manifestation of Him who is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. It was the revelation of the glory of God's Christ, Head and body. Later John was shown the throne of the Lord, and one sat upon the throne; there were four living creatures in the midst of the throne and twenty-four elders round about the throne, and "out of the throne proceeded *voices*" (Rev. 4:5). What are the voices out of the throne? Jesus had previously promised, "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). It should not be difficult to understand that the voices proceeding from the throne are the voices of *those sitting in the throne*! The word "voices," from the Greek, means a saying or a language that reveals or discloses something. Since it is God's voices that are sent into the earth, it is the Lord revealing Himself, His truth, His ways, His will, and His glory to many people. The voices are the ***word of the Lord*** proclaimed by God's kings and priests who reign with Christ upon His throne! The voices represent the sending forth into the earth of the authoritative word of the Lord!

Then there were "thunderings." Thunder is always the symbol of the ***power of God***. Job understood this truth when he said, "Lo, these are parts of His ways...but the ***thunder of His power*** who can understand?" (Job 26:14). When God made bare His holy arm in the midst of the Egyptians, to deliver His people Israel, He revealed His awesome power. "And Moses stretched forth His rod toward heaven: and the Lord sent *thunder* and hail, and the fire ran along the ground...and Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them...Intreat the Lord (for it is enough) that there be no more *mighty thunderings*...and I will let you go" (Ex. 9:23,27,28). We have already read how mount Sinai was shaken by mighty thunderings when God came down upon it in power and great glory! No one who has heard the claps

of thunder in a summer thunderstorm can think of anything except the awesome *power* it personifies! The thunderings of the Spirit indicate that the voice of the Lord is roaring or thundering the reality of His kingdom in *great power* to many people. “The voice of the Lord is upon the waters: the God of glory *thundereth*. The Lord is upon many waters. The voice of the Lord is *powerful*; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty” (Ps. 29:3-4). The *thunder* is the *power* of the Lord’s voice! It is the majesty of the Lord going out to creation!

The word of God is a word of *power!* Jesus, the firstborn Son of God, was “anointed 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” (Acts 10:38). Jesus was Himself the demonstration of the power of the kingdom of God on earth! After being filled with the Holy Spirit the disciples of Jesus went forth speaking boldly in the name of Jesus, proclaiming the kingdom of God, doing mighty signs and wonders among the people, and the scripture says that “with *great power* gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 4:33). The kingdom of God, Paul tells us, “is *not in word, but in power*” (I Cor. 4:20). That in no way belittles or depreciates the value of the *word* of the kingdom. The power of God is in His word! But to have a word without power simply means that it is not the word of God, nor is it the word of the kingdom. Jesus had a word with power, and that is why the people exclaimed, “Never man spake like this man!” It wasn’t His beautiful sermon, but the demonstration of the kingdom of God with power. Jesus’ own disciples were exceedingly amazed and marveled when He commanded the wind and the waves of the sea and cried out, “What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him!” That was a word with power, and it was the word of the kingdom and the power of the kingdom!

In our day, the truth of the power of the kingdom needs to sound like a trumpet. Men’s hearts are failing them for fear in looking after the things that are coming upon the earth, and many of the Lord’s people are also filled with fear. The elect of God, those who are walking in the Spirit and following on to know the Lord, are beholding HIM before whom all nations are as a drop in a bucket — who with infinite care and divine purpose created the vastnesses of the limitless universe and the wheeling constellations and calleth them all by name. For who has yet arrived from the Other World to announce that God has been outsmarted by the devil, or that His kingdom is in danger or disarray? Only One has come, and He has come with *great power and glory*, and with a word that the kingdom of His Father ruleth over all!

Jesus was Himself the demonstration of the power of the kingdom of God on earth! The miracles that Christ wrought while He walked the earth in flesh were His Kingdom Credentials. His signs, wonders, and 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 the inquiring disciples, “Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, and lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them” (Mat. 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 could be seen and felt!

Jesus was the firstborn of God’s vast family of sons. He came into the earth to reveal the *glory* of manifest sonship and the *power* of the kingdom of God! The power of God came first in the life of Jesus to raise up within Him all the nature, wisdom, glory, and power of the Father, *before* showing it forth through Him to bless and restore men to God. God’s power worked in the life of Jesus for thirty years, bringing forth in Him the maturity of sonship, before ever it was manifested outwardly before the eyes of the people. In this hour, we, His younger brethren, are experiencing the power of God within and God is working mightily in our lives to finish the work of perfecting and maturing His sons, before showing them forth to creation. 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!

There were also “lightnings” that flashed throughout the earth! Undoubtedly we have all seen, when clouds turn the sky into terrible blackness, how there suddenly flashes forth from their awesome darkness almost terrifying streaks of lightning that light up earth and sky. Lightning is a powerful discharge of atmospheric electricity. Benjamin Franklin knew that lightning and electricity are the same thing.

Spiritually, there is a word and revelation of the Lord that flashes within our consciousness like a bolt of lightning! When man's darkness seems impenetrable and unbearable, then suddenly we behold the brilliance of a stream of moving charges as God's lightning flashes and the Lord breaks through the darkness of the carnal mind by the illumination of His Word and His Spirit. His glory is seen in the "lightning" and we discover where we are in His great purpose! This declares to us with unspeakable clarity that lightning is the symbol of ***divine illumination!*** These symbolic lightnings are spoken of in Psalm 97:4 wherein we read, "His *lightnings enlightened the world*; the earth saw, and trembled." The lightnings of God bespeak of the illumination of men when the Lord moves by His Spirit of wisdom, understanding, and revelation! They are vivid, spiritual displays of the light and glory of God, without doubt through the manifestation of the sons of God!

Divine quickening and revelation raise us up to a higher perception of truth and reality. Spiritual illumination is that lightning which flashes brightly again and again when the fire of God is cast into the earth! It is a sudden, brilliant, almost blinding burst of divine energy which in one spectacular instant miraculously breaks upon our consciousness and lightens our world with divine truth and understanding. In this very hour, as we approach the manifestation of God's life through His son company, the spirit of revelation is breaking forth so gloriously that we can hardly take it all in! Flashes of "light" or "enlightenment" are bolting all around us in ever increasing brilliance, glory, and splendor, just before our final metamorphosis. Isn't it wonderful!

Finally, John tells us that there was an "earthquake." Earthquakes are mighty ***shakings!*** Earthquakes in the natural are powerful events! Probably the most violent land-based earthquake was the 8.7 smasher that devastated the Himalayas in 1950. The Alaskan earthquake with 8.5 magnitude — with its thousands of aftershocks, released the equivalent of 500,000 Hiroshima-type atomic bombs. At least, this was the estimate of Frank Press, well-known seismologist. According to Dr. Richter (the Richter Scale), the largest earthquakes release the energy of "only" TEN THOUSAND atomic bombs! We are rocked by earthquakes.

On the physical level, an earthquake occurs where the cooling of the earth has caused two layers of earth to overlap rather than to come together flush. As they try to settle into a more natural position, they release energy. Spiritually, this is fulfilled within each of us in those areas of our lives where the flesh and the spirit, the carnal mind and the spiritual mind, truth and error, or our will and God's will *overlap within ourselves*, causing intense pressures to be formed! We have these places deep within us where things do not fit together properly, for soul and body have not been synchronized with the spirit, so that they do not "mesh" together. The flesh *wars* against the spirit, and the spirit *wars* against the flesh! When both the spirit and the flesh want to dominate great pressures are created. When we meet a situation that begins to trigger this conflict, we cannot help but experience the rumbling! The "earthquake" touches the fault-lines of our lives, not just surface things, but the very depths of our being where the foundation is defective, imperfect, and unsound. When there is a shaking from deep within there is a change on the surface, not from outside in, but from inside out! It should not be difficult to understand that *no man* can be conformed to the image of God apart from spiritually devastating and destructive earthquakes! In order for creation to be reconciled and restored into God everything of the natural constitution, the human mentality, the Adamic consciousness, the carnal mind, the flesh life, and our own will and ways must be utterly demolished.

When the earthquake comes there are great commotions within and we react and feel in a spiritual way exactly like those people experience naturally who are victims of physical earthquakes. Cars in the streets roll back and forth, trees thrash about, broken like toothpicks; buildings collapse, the terrain moves violently, bridges collapse, hospitals are rendered useless, water supplies are broken, communications are cut off, highways and railways are split asunder, and there is great suffering and death. Oh, yes! When the spiritual earthquake occurs within us, the old world of our carnal understanding and the powerful citadels of the flesh are wiped away! This is the awesome work of the fire of God when it is cast into "our earth," or into the earth of all mankind!

I am thankful for the divine order in our Father's working. Aren't you glad that you hear the voices, feel the thunder, and behold the lightnings *before* the earthquake strikes! Ah, the Lord sends His word, manifests to us His power, and gives wonderful illumination before proceeding to shake our old human

nature and identity to pieces. Should He have sent the earthquake first, we would simply have disintegrated into oblivion! There would have been nothing left. But we have a wise and wonderful Father! He says, "I'm going to come and awaken the Christ-life within you, I will quicken you to the life of the spirit, I will raise up my presence in you, reveal to you my glory, show you my power, and put my word in you — after all this has been firmly established within you, with the fault-lines clearly delineated, I will *then* shake that old realm of the earth-man, and the old creation that you were will fall, never to rise again! Oh, the wonder of it!

In closing this message, let us look a little further into the depths of this mystery. The Greek word for earthquake is *seismos*. While the word *seismos* is often used of conventional earthquakes, it also is used in different ways. *Seismos* has three primary shades of meaning: (1) commotion (2) gale (3) earthquake. In Matthew 8:24 *seismos* is translated as the "tempest" of a storm. "And, behold, there arose a great *tempest* in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves..." Was this "tempest" an "earthquake"? There certainly was great agitation, motion, movement, shaking, and potential devastation! But Jesus didn't rebuke the "earth-quaking" — He rebuked the *winds* and the *sea*!

This reveals that the *seismos* had something to do with the storm. The fact is that storms, cyclones, hurricanes, typhoons, deluges, whirlwinds, gales, and tornadoes are all words that can be described as a *seismos* as well as the shaking of the earth. *Seismos* means the shaking or the quaking of anything! The root word from which *seismos* is taken is *seio* and is used in Matthew 21:10 and several other places. "And when He (Jesus) was come into Jerusalem, all the city was *moved* (*seio*), saying, Who is this?" Here *seio* is rendered "moved." Do you suppose Jesus was so powerful that when He entered the city it caused an earthquake, and the buildings collapsed and tumbled into the streets? Not at all! The *people* were *shaking* — perhaps not even physically, but emotionally. It wasn't the ground — it was a shaking *within themselves*! Can we not see by this that the shaking and quaking of a *seismos* is not necessarily the shaking of the literal ground of the earth, but can be the shaking of many things both literally and metaphorically. One thing is very clear — the earthquakes in the book of Revelation are not required to be something that can be measured on the Richter Scale!

Now I would draw your attention to one other interesting fact. "And there were *voices*, and *thunderings*, and *lightnings*, and an *earthquake*." Notice the order here! Voices...thunderings...lightnings...and an earthquake. The question follows — do we connect the "earthquake" with the thunderings and the lightnings, or do we disconnect it from them and see it only as a shaking of the ground? It is clear that when the fire is cast into the earth it produces a great storm there! We know that there is a storm because of the lightnings and the thunderings! We also know that storms are generated by the coming together and equalizing of two areas of different temperatures and other atmospheric conditions. Storms are caused by the action of large, rapidly moving air masses in which, very often, *heated air* containing large amounts of water vapor meets *cold air*. The clashing of the masses of water vapor against each other causes electricity to be formed. When enough of this electricity has been formed it jumps from one part of a cloud to another, or from one cloud to another, or from the cloud to the ground. This is *lightning*! As the lightning flashes, it heats the air around it, causing it to vibrate. This makes the noise of *thunder*! At the height of a thunderstorm, with the lightning flashing and the thunder booming, the rain comes down in torrents. The rain brings blessing to the earth! It purifies the atmosphere and gives refreshing and life to everything on earth!

The "storms" of the book of Revelation are interesting. They can be seen throughout the book! Here something symbolically represented as "fire of the altar" is cast into the earth and becomes a disturbing element in the earth causing great disturbance there. When the Lord comes in His Holy Ghost fire it always creates a disturbance! The fire of God *heats up* the "atmosphere" of Adam's world, quickening the spirit within man, and that heated atmosphere of the spirit meets the *cold atmosphere* of man's soulical life, and a great storm is generated! God *speaks* out of the storm, and there are heard voices! In the storm God manifests His *power* in the thunderings! He gives *revelation* and *illumination* by the lightnings! By this storm He *shakes* everything of the old carnal understanding, the old natural life, the old worldly system of things, purifies the atmosphere, pours down the rain of His Spirit and Life, and MAKES ALL THINGS NEW! Isn't it wonderful!

Whether the earthquake is a deep-earth quake, or the tempest of a storm, in no way changes the outcome. It may be either, or it could be both! There is nothing more important in this hour than the manifestation of the sons of God. The ministry of God's priesthood at the golden altar of the heavens of the Spirit is God's *purpose* for the deliverance of all creation! "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent," speaking of the Christ of God, "thou art a *priest forever after the order of Melchizedek*" (Ps. 110:4). The word "order" in the phrase "order of Melchizedek" is something like the word "order" we use when we speak of certain worldly religious orders, such as the Franciscans or the Dominicans, or the orders of various secret societies or lodges. The scripture affirms that God's Christ is a priest after the "Melchizedekian" Order. Christ is not called to be a priest after order of Aaron, the priesthood under the law (Heb. 7:11-22). Here you may see, Melchizedek the priest was not made WITHOUT AN ORDER. The fact of the "order" reveals the great truth that the Melchizedek priesthood is not composed of one person, but a community of persons fulfilling the same type of ministry. Our great high priest was not made a priest without an order, but is after the order of Melchizedek; and His *royal priesthood* (for Melchizedek was both *king* and *priest*), who offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God, are in His spiritual order, which is the order of the Son of God, for they are the *sons of God*.

The Melchizedek order of priests is not yet complete, for Jesus, the forerunner into that Order, must be joined by those who are to follow after to make up the entire Melchizedek Order. There are many others, God's called and chosen remnant, who are to be joined to Christ in this Melchizedekian ministry, *after the power of an endless life* (Heb. 7:16). Until that incorruptible and immortal Order is completed, the remainder of our Father's redemptive and restorative plan of the ages cannot be consummated. This is the truth the writer to the Hebrews proclaimed when he wrote, "Wherefore, holy brethren, PARTAKERS OF THE HEAVENLY CALLING, consider the Apostle and High Priest of *our profession*, Christ Jesus, MADE AN HIGH PRIEST FOR EVER AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK" (Heb. 3:1; 6:19-20).

"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 FULLNESS OF THE STATURE OF CHRIST" (Eph. 4:13). There is the order of Melchizedek! God is making a new man, a perfect man. There is being formed in the earth a new man after a new order. This new man will be in the fullness of the perfection, maturity, attainment, and power of the Son of God! That's God's purpose in calling us, in giving us the firstfruits of the Spirit, in dealing and changing and transforming us from glory to glory into His own image and likeness. And here is what this new many-membered man is for: A NEW MAN FOR A NEW AGE.

Through our many years in the pews of religious Babylon all we ever heard was "the end of the world, the end of the world, the end of the world is coming!" So we grew up looking for the end of the world. Now I am going to tell you something folks — there isn't going to be any end of the world! You might as well stop packing your bags, testing your wings, polishing your halo, and praying God to whisk you away into the clouds. We have far too many Christians in the world today with dying faith, but they don't have any *living faith*! They are so anxious to die, and go off to heaven to be with the Lord. That is, until they get chest pains or a stomach ache, then they rush down to the hospital, and spend their very last dime to keep from flying away to be with Jesus! It gets rather ridiculous. Ah, something is wrong, very wrong, somewhere!

God is raising up a people in this hour with a vision for *living*, not so they can stick around to see their great-grandchildren, or take another cruise, or raise another garden — but because of the inner consciousness of the mind of Christ that our Father doesn't want us out there in the blue somewhere — He wants us right here on earth, raised up into incorruptible nature, life, and glory, to bring in this NEW AGE! There will be no end of this world, only the end of an age. The end of an age in which Satan in the carnal mind and wicked heart of man has been ruling over the world, and the bringing in of a new age in which God's many-membered man is going to be ruler over all this world that our glorious Father created for the sons and daughters of God *right here*! This new man will live in the heavenlies, but he will walk on the earth. And when God has fully prepared this man, and restored him to incorruptibility and immortality after the power of an endless life, which is the power of the order of Melchizedek, which is the order of the Son of God, He will turn the dominion of the world over to this new man for the new age!

The great truth I would emphasize in closing is just this: This ***new man*** is going to be after a ***new order!*** I want to drive this point home to every believing heart — what new order means. All across the land for many years we have heard these terms, “old order,” “new order,” “divine order.” And many saints have not the foggiest notion what “order” means! They hear the words “new order” or “divine order,” and they think it’s just a new message coming forth. That’s all it means to them — a new revelation, a new perception, a new terminology, something for everyone to preach and sing and shout about. Ah, beloved, if that’s all you see in God’s new order, you’re going to miss it! An order means a ***system of things***, an ***arrangement***. Things aren’t like they used to be, and things don’t work the way they used too, and we don’t live, move, act, or have our being on the plane we did before.

Divine order is that order which God reveals He is going to put this new man into. This ***new man*** must be after a ***new order!*** The order is the order of Melchizedek! Jesus wasn’t a priest after the order of Melchizedek until after He came out of the tomb in the power of resurrection and ascended into the heavens of the Spirit of God! This new man will be a priest for the ages. He’s going to be the mediator through which God meets all of His creation forevermore! Many saints don’t understand this mystery, but the truth is that in this age now closing there has been only one man who has risen out of the bonds of sin and death and the limitations of the physical realm to be seated in the Melchizedekian Order — the man Christ Jesus. So there is now ***one*** mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. But in that glorious age and ages to come all the other sons, His many brethren, sons of the resurrection, shall be “*priests* of God and of Christ, and shall ***reign on the earth.***” Priests *mediate!* Priests *reconcile!* Priests *deliver!* Priests *restore!* This new man will be God’s priesthood for the ages after the order of Melchizedek!

When the fire of God from the altar of this glorious priesthood is cast into the earth there will be “*voices*, and *thunderings*, and *lightnings*, and an *earthquake.*” Glorious changes are coming to the earth-realm! It is indeed wonderful!

To be continued...

J. PRESTON EBY