

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 106

THE SOUNDING OF THE TRUMPETS (continued)

“And when He had opened the seventh seal, there was *silence in heaven* about the space of half an hour. And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given *seven trumpets*. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets *prepared themselves to sound*” (Rev. 8:1-2,6).

If you make a study of trumpets in the scriptures you will discover that the sound of a trumpet represents the word of the Lord. It is His voice communicating a *specific word* to man. Each trumpet blows a specific message. It is not a general word, nor an uncertain sound, but a specific and clear word from God. That's the main thought with trumpets — the word is *clear!* The sound pierces the air with the sense of awesomeness. It's a clear, resonant sound, it comes in power, with enlightenment, opening a revelation in your spirit, and producing the effect of that revelation in your being. Just one word from the Lord can change our life forever! It is an announcement, a creative purpose of God proclaimed, put into action, to bring about a certain transformation within God's elect.

God is preparing a people in this hour for a new sound! The old church order of man is passing away. Within God's called and chosen elect He is quieting everything from the previous realms of His purposes. God is causing the heavens from which the word of the previous orders sounded to become as brass. The dimensions that we once operated in are failing — the anointing has lifted from those orders. The gifts and ministries God used us in, and which we gloried in, are now dissipating and will diminish until there is no life in them at all. As long as we are content and happy to function in the machinery of a passing order we will never be able to make the distinction between sounds — to discern that which pertains to the new order of the kingdom of God! But our Father will not allow those called to sonship to remain in the lower orders, for He is taking us “two of a city and one of a family” and bringing us to Zion — the place of fullness of authority, dominion, and power in the Spirit!

We are not yet prepared to sound the trumpet, to proclaim the message, to initiate, effect, and compel the movement and manifestation of the new and greater thing God has prepared for us. We know how to continue issuing the sounds of Passover and Pentecost, but I would rather sit still in the absolute, awesome silence of God than to keep on blowing the trumpet of a dying age. The hour is upon us for a mighty change, things shall be different, and the hour has come for the silence of God in which we make the paradigm shift from the old into the new. The new will never sound forth until the old has been brought to its conclusion! There has come a deep and wonderful *preparation for transition* in the Father's apprehended ones, and the new move of God will break forth within us when the silence is absolute. Many things are being hushed within us because the Lord will not permit the new sound of the kingdom to be mingled and mixed with the old sounds that are passing away, thereby giving an uncertain sound out of confusion. This sound shall maintain its clarity, it shall be a *certain* sound in the ears of God's elect!

Creation is indeed standing on tiptoe, waiting with bated breath for this sound! And God is raising up a people not content to remain in the old, any more than Jesus could have been content to stay in Nazareth. What will the manifestation of God's sons be like? I don't fully know what it will be like,

anymore than the early disciples knew what the day of Pentecost would be like when they filed into the upper room in obedience to the Master's command. I DO know what it will NOT be like! It will not be like any move of God, any revival, any experience, or anything we have seen in our life-time! The move of God on the day of Pentecost and the new order of the church age was as different from the old order of Israel and the law as any thing could be! I do not hesitate to tell you that the new order of the kingdom will also be just that different from all that we have known and experienced during the church age! It is a *new sound* and the sons of God are on standby, waiting in the wings to hear the sound. Because there is silence in their heavens, they have been given the wisdom and understanding to distinguish the sound and to move at once with its proclamation!

Most of us have been blessed to hear many of God's trumpets, we have heard the trumpet of salvation, the trumpet of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, the trumpets of gifts and healing and miracles and deliverance and praise and worship and revelation. There is great blessing but also a hidden curse to that — for God charges us in this Day to make a distinction between the sounds, to hear what the Spirit *now saith* unto His apprehended ones. We don't like the silence — after only a few minutes of silence in a meeting saints begin to become edgy, nervous, uneasy, tense, and apprehensive. "Somebody get up and *do something!*" is their response to the silence. Sing a song, give a testimony, share a revelation, pray, worship — do *anything* except be silent! Some years ago I was in a meeting when the Spirit began to speak through various ministries that we should get quiet before the Lord and wait upon Him. The brethren began to exhort about being quiet, someone prophesied that we should be quiet, another sang about the holy quietness; for the rest of the meeting the brethren did everything *except SHUT UP AND LISTEN FOR GOD!* There is more to it, of course, than being quiet for a few minutes or a few hours in a meeting, but it takes the silence of God in this hour to set His sons apart from the passing and prepare them to hear the sound of the fresh word and the new move of the new Day from out of the throne of God!

The silence does not end until the seven angels are *prepared to sound!* When the inner preparation is complete in the Lord's people and the conditions are right for the seven spirits of God to be revealed out of them, the silence will be broken. It will be broken by a mighty blast of the breath of God! That is what the word "sound" in this passage means — "to trumpet, to blast." It is not a gentle sound, not a quiet murmur, not a whisper. When the fullness of the revelation and glory and power and triumph of the Lord breaks out within the sons of God, it will come as the sudden blast of a trumpet! There will be a great sound from heaven that will change, transform, and empower the sons of God and it will also startle the world of mankind and reverberate through all the kingdoms of men!

Is it not written that God will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. I have no hesitation in telling you that as the hour of manifestation approaches there shall be a great gathering together of God's sons! The sons are now scattered, isolated, separated in remote areas of the land and distant corners of the earth. But God will soon gather them together by the sovereign work of His divine power!

THE TRUMPETS AND THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT

The background of my present thought is the first fifteen chapters of the book of Exodus. Recall the catalog of plagues sent upon the land of Egypt — all were the call of God to the worldly system of this world: "*Let my people go!*"

The religion of ancient Egypt is without doubt one of the most difficult religions to analyze. The Egyptians were among the most polytheistic people known from the ancient world. Even to this day Egyptologists are unable to say for certain what was the total number of the gods which they worshipped. Most lists include somewhere in the neighborhood of eighty gods. The dedication of the Egyptians to their gods is very obvious even to the casual observer as he walks through the sands of Egypt. Beautiful temples and long colonnaded roadways are the expression of deep piety and sacrificial work. In spite of all the beauty and grandeur, however, as an idolatrous form of worship it was morally and spiritually degrading. Almost all of the lower life forms, whatever their habitat, and even inanimate objects were considered the embodiment of some deity. To the Egyptians the lion was *sacred*, and also the ox, the ram, the wolf, the dog, the cat, the ibis, the buzzard, the falcon, the hippopotamus, the crocodile, the cobra, the dolphin,

different varieties of fish, trees, and small animals such as the frog, locust, and other insects. Images were also believed to embody the deities. In addition, there were also living men in the prime of life who were considered gods, such as Amun, Atum, or Osiris.

This is the world that Moses was raised and lived in! It is against this background that we view and gain an understanding of the true significance of the ten plagues that Moses and Aaron brought by the hand of Yahweh against the Egyptians. It is apparent from Exodus 12:12 that the ten plagues were directed specifically against *“all the gods of Egypt!”* Furthermore we find in Numbers 33:4 that all the plagues were directed against the deities of Egypt, for we read, *“the Egyptians buried all their firstborn, which the Lord had smitten among them: upon their gods also the Lord executed judgments.”* The plagues were designed to point out to the Pharaoh and to all the people of Egypt the absolute impotence of their gods, and the obvious inability of their priests to exert any authority or power to turn the tide of the calamities sent by the God of the Hebrews. The prayers, the sacrifices, the counsel of all the wise men of Egypt were incapable of reversing the disastrous situation the whole land of Egypt, together with their gods, found themselves in!

Let us notice how the plagues discredited and brought judgment upon the Egyptian deities. Serpents, objects of worship, were devoured by Aaron’s rod. The Nile river, one of their chief gods, was turned to bloody abomination. Heki, the god responsible for driving away frogs, was helpless. Beelzebub, the lord of the flies, was powerless. Various cattle and animals revered as gods were killed by the plague of disease sent by the hand of Moses. Moses took ashes from the furnace of Typhon, the god to whom human sacrifice was offered to keep evil from the land, cast them into the air and they became the source of boils and blains upon man, and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt. Serapis, protector from locusts, was shown to be strengthless, as the plagues of locusts covered the land of Egypt, devouring everything that grew. Isis and Osiris, representing the sun and moon chief gods, were completely discomfited during the three days and nights of supernatural darkness. These nation-wide afflictive judgments of Yahweh were so ordered as to strike, malign, and judge in an ascending scale *all* the false gods of the Egyptians! But the great *purpose* behind this was to so break the power of the gods, the priesthood, and the Pharaoh, that they would LET GOD’S PEOPLE GO! The primary issue was the *deliverance of the Lord’s elect people* from the bondage of every power and shackle that held them from going forth to possess their true and full inheritance in God!

The seven trumpets in the Revelation are a striking spiritualization of the plagues the Lord sent upon Egypt! As we look at these plagues we see that they are likened unto the literal plagues upon Egypt, but we know that the book of Revelation is a *spiritual book of spiritual truths and spiritual experiences* addressed to a *spiritual people* which can be perceived and received only *by the spirit!* Can we not see by this that the *spiritual plagues* come upon the *spirit of Egypt* within each of us to bring the release of our spiritual man from the dominance of the carnal mind that we may march out of the bondage of the flesh, the Adamic nature, the human identity and consciousness, the spirit of the world, and enter into the full realization of our inheritance in our promised land — *Christ!* Is that truth not infinitely more blessed and meaningful than literal plagues falling upon the nations of earth! Truly *these plagues* bring THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST!

The plagues of Egypt were sent upon the people, spirits, and kingdom that held God’s people, Israel, in servitude. The plagues in the book of Revelation are, therefore, related to God’s *spiritual people* — for the message is sent to the *church!* It is the Lord Jesus talking to His *body!* The Egyptian typology is an emphatic way of saying that these “judgments” or “dealings” of our Father are but a prelude to His great deliverance of His elect from all their enemies! The plagues in the Revelation represent those dealings God sends into *our lives* to break the religious bondage of spiritual Egypt, the spirit of *this world*, the controlling of the *flesh*, the dominance of the *soul*, the ruling of the *carnal mind*, and the whole realm of *sin, limitation, and mortality!* God is breaking the power of every kingdom within that rules us, usurping the life of the *spirit*. In each of the heavenly trumpet blasts God is saying to the “Pharaoh” of our own personal “Egypt” of bondage, “LET MY PEOPLE GO!” Referring to the plagues of Egypt the Psalmist said, *“He gave also their cattle over to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunderbolts”* (Ps. 78:48). The “cattle” is the symbolic figure for the whole bestial nature and system of man! Our Father is bringing us out of our Egyptian bondage by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm! And what mighty shakings, judgments, hail, earthquakes, thunderbolts, and cataclysms take place in our earth as He does this! He judges, discredits, humiliates, and

destroys everything that is contrary to the life of sonship. He is bringing us “out” in order to bring us “in” to the fullness of our inheritance in Christ!

The admonition of George Hawtin is still a vital word for every man and woman who treasures the beautiful hope of sonship. “There can be no tenacious hanging on to the things of the past. There must be a clean break away from all of Egypt’s bondage and every relationship with the drunken harlot of Babylon. We must forsake even the things that seem to be pleasant, good, and harmless that we may attain, and for my part nothing short of *attaining* will satisfy. We *must attain* without counting any cost. We must sell all that we have that we may buy the *pearl of great price*. We must buy the truth, *but sell it not*. It will mean the loss of friends. It will mean misunderstanding among our relatives and often the closest members of our family. That is why Jesus said, ‘I am come not to send peace, but a sword’ (Mat. 10:34)” — end quote.

THE FIRST TRUMPET

“The *first angel sounded*, and there followed *hail and fire mingled with blood*, and they were cast upon the *earth*: and the *third part of trees was burned up*, and *all green grass was burnt up*” (Rev. 8:7).

I must call your attention to the parallels between the events of this first trumpet and the seventh plague God sent upon the land of Egypt by the hand of Moses. “*And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along the ground; and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast, and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field*” (Ex. 9:23-25).

When the first trumpet sounded immediately hail and fire mingled with blood were cast into the earth. That this is not a natural judgment traceable to natural causes is evident from the fact that the hail and the fire mingled with blood were “cast upon,” the earth, not falling from the heavens in an ordinary way, but impelled by an unseen yet powerful arm. They were cast, in fact, by the angel sounding the trumpet! The seven angels are the seven spirits of God! This is not the work of any man, for this is the work of God by the Spirit!

The elect of the Lord should be aware that water, especially rain falling from heaven, is used in the scriptures as a type of God’s word and God’s spirit combined, that is, the *living word of God!* Usually it indicates that He is sending a blessing in the time of drought. When God sends the rain that refreshes, sometimes it has come to us as a prophetic word. The Spirit speaks words like these, “Yea, my son, thou art mine, thou art precious in my eyes; I have called thee, I have chosen thee before the foundation of the world unto a high and holy calling. Yea, thou shalt be a great one, a mighty one in my kingdom! My goodly spices shall flow out from thee and thy fragrance shall fill the earth in the day of my moving! I will never leave thee nor forsake thee, I will be with thee in all of thy ways, yea, my hand shall bring thee unto thy appointed place, saith the Lord!” Oh, yes, we all love a word like that, and in days past the Lord has spoken in just such endearing, encouraging, and faith-inspiring promises to us! But not so when He sends His word that comes as *hail!*

Water flows, and also it becomes sometimes hard as ice and hail. When it falls as hail it is not a blessing, as we think of blessing. When it falls it always brings destruction, depending on its size and duration. Hail is water, but it is frozen water, thus it bespeaks of a *hard word* from the Lord! It is the word of God that strikes us and knocks the carnal mindedness out of us! It is the word that rebukes, chastises, and corrects us! It is not an easy word, not a flowery word, not a sweet, soothing word, but a word that devastates our field and beats down the carnal mindset, ways, and works that grow out of our earthly nature. When Israel was walking after the flesh and corrupting the ways of the Lord, the word of the Lord came to them declaring, “*Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies*” (Isa. 28:17). What hailstones of a “hard word” fall from the heavens of God’s Spirit into our land as He smashes our religious idols and all the things we treasure more than His will and way! The “refuge of lies” speaks of all the false ideas, false concepts, false doctrines, and false ways of the Lord’s people! Today there are many who speak only a word of blessing. They proclaim the *faith*

message or the *prosperity* message. According to these messages the Lord's people should never have any sickness, poverty, pain, trouble, pressures, adversities, calamities, or judgments in their lives, for God is a loving Father who wants only to give *good things* to His children — high paying jobs, fine homes, expensive cars, swimming pools, money in the bank, and the finest and best of everything *this world* has to offer! But that is not a true word of the Lord! It may be true for some, whom the Lord according His own purpose moves to so bless, but it is at best a half-truth, and at worst a *refuge of lies*.

You can be a good Christian and embrace such a word, but you'll never be a *son!* Manifest sons of God are not spoiled brats who have an indulgent Father who doesn't want them to ever lack or suffer or endure anything, but lavishes upon them every carnal thing they ask for! "*Ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as sons, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him: for whom the lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. And if ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement...then are ye bastards, and not sons*" (Heb. 12:5-8). Oh, yes, the Father will give us His glory, His nature, His wisdom, authority, and power, and raise us up to judge the world and rule the nations with a rod of iron. But before He entrusts into our hands such awesome responsibilities He will put His finger on every aspect of our lives, He will bring training, discipline, order, and judgment to our house; He will send the *hailstorms* into our lives to beat down and destroy all the refuge of lies, all the false messages, doctrines, opinions, ways, and every false thing in which we trust and every tree and all the grass that grows out of our carnal mind and earthy nature!

It is instructive to note that not only does our Father cast down the hail into our earthly life, but swiftly He follows it with *fire mingled with blood*, and it is the fire that *burns up the trees and the grass*, making the purging work complete. The fire that purifies us is *mingled with blood*, and the *life* is in the blood! God is both *life* and *fire!* The blood is mingled with fire — God mingles *His life* with His *purifying fire* so that we are not destroyed, just changed and transformed! Oh, the wonder of it!

TREES

TREES represent those deeply rooted things that grow out of our human nature. Some time ago in a letter from Linda O'Neill she shared the following experience. "Last night as I was drifting off to sleep, I was led by the Spirit to a wooded area. I sensed the Lord speaking to me, saying, 'Linda, go walk in these woods!' 'What do you see?' the Lord asked. I saw a small forest bereft of trees, everywhere my eyes looked was barren, brown with dead stumps here and there, as though a fire had swept through this wooded area and wiped it out. I sensed the desire of Father was for me to behold this now empty and barren forest, where once many trees had flourished. At first after waking I thought, 'Oh, no, another catastrophe headed America's way,' as I'm aware that in scriptures trees represent men. But for once I was left alone and didn't jump the gun, but waited for Father to confirm or say what He wanted to reveal to me through this experience. Well, at the end of your latest teaching something just jumped right out and grabbed my heart! I knew that I knew this was what Father was showing me. The whole paragraph met me in the depths of my being, but for lack of time I will write only one line that pulled my understanding into a deeper insight of what Father is doing today. '**The trees that are being burned up are those manifestations that grow out of our own earthiness.**' All of our own understanding, carnal reasoning, self efforts, etc., *are being destroyed*" — end quote.

Nowhere are the "trees" that grow out of man's earthiness more evident than in the religious world. The so-called "gospel" in this hour is fashioned to appeal to the carnal mind, offering men blessings, prosperity, instant solutions to all problems, a miracle a day, ease and comfort and all good things, rapture out of tribulation, golden streets, harps, and wings to flit about a celestial Disney World with nothing to do and all eternity to do it in. Men do not have to climb very far heavenward to pluck the fruit from these earth-bound bushes, for the benefits are all *natural, physical, and earthly*, not *spiritual or heavenly!* I do not err when I say that if all the prayers and faith that are exercised daily for *earthly things*, blessings of money, cars, homes, clothes, physical healing, comforts, and luxuries that pamper the flesh were stripped away from most believer's prayers, their prayer lives would be reduced by at least ninety-eight percent!

The so-called gospel of popular religion is glamorized as Hollywood stars and popular night club entertainers intone with their unsanctified voices the sacred hymns given by the Holy Spirit to saints who walked and talked with God in the secret places of His presence. They give glowing testimonies of what Christ has done in their lives, yet they go right on with their Hollywood acting, entertaining the ungodly in the midst of the filth of the devil's strongholds. Then, if you would engage them to give their testimony at your gathering for the glory of God, you must sign a contract with their agent guaranteeing them many thousands of dollars for their brief appearance. Cursed fruit! Fruit borne too close to the earth to lift men heavenward!

As the shallow-minded worldlings applaud the smooth words with which they are entertained, the hallowed things of the heavenlies are dragged down into the deepest mire of the earth-realm as fruit to be plucked by unsanctified hands, which contains no power to lift them out of their carnal minds into THE MIND OF CHRIST. Corrupted fruit! Corrupted fruit borne by trees that *grow out of the earth!* Though they reach up to heaven and flourish with green leaves and bear fruit which is delectable to the earth men who eat of it, it is truth mixed with error, the holy with the unholy, the heavenly with the earthly, light with darkness, until men are unable to distinguish one from the other, and they do not. All carnal, man-made church systems, programs, rituals, ceremonies, outreaches, and efforts are trees that grow out of the earth! You see, my beloved, there are two kinds of trees in the book of Revelation! In the earth-realm there is a multitude of "trees," but in the heavenly city of God there is but *one tree* — the *tree of Life!* This glorious tree does not grow and bear fruit out of the earth, it grows by the river that flows from the throne of God! This is an incorruptible, immortal, eternal tree of divine and heavenly life, whereas the trees that grow out of the earth are destined to be *burnt up!*

Through the years we have received a steady stream of letters in the mail telling of this great program and that great endeavor for God, with their pleas for financial help. With glib tongues and plausible programs by which the world is going to be won for Christ, well-meaning people are urged to give to further grandiose programs hatched by kingdom-building preachers who live in wanton luxury upon earth, which programs are not the plan of God at all, but merely the product of an imaginative, scheming, and avaricious mind. Through long centuries billions of dollars have been squeezed from God's precious people, including the poor and the widows, to build huge temples, cathedrals, and church buildings; to promote innumerable programs and methods to do this and that for God which, not only did God not ordain, but were in all truth a stench in His nostrils and an abomination before His face.

When all these good religious fleshly works are brought into the blazing presence of God who is a consuming fire they will one and all go up in smoke! What a bonfire that will be! I declare to you that the fire of that judgment shall be beheld from the farthest extremities of the universe so that every creature in heaven and in earth may come to know once and for all the eternal truth that "Except the LORD build the house, they LABOR IN VAIN that build it!" Those of God's elect who now read these lines know this quite well, for the fire of God has already been cast into *our earth!* Ah, all the "trees" that grew out of our earth, all the religious fleshly works that appeared to have life and bear fruit, but sprang up from our carnal minds and soulical zeal, along with all the hay, wood, and stubble, have been burned out of our earth by the fire of the Holy Ghost! Oh, how naked, how desolate, how stripped and utterly vulnerable we felt at first when God set our forest on fire! Yet now, how eternally grateful and thankful we are for that tall, stately, ever-blossoming and fruitful *tree of life* that is springing up out of the *river of living water* that flows from the throne of God within our spirit!

In the prophetic mysteries of the book of Revelation we see a significant distinction between the "trees" that are burnt up and the "grass" which is also burnt up. Trees are tall, strong, and deep-rooted, whereas grass is small, low, and fragile. This explains the imagery of transience which haunts the writers of the scriptures. "*For they shall soon be cut down like the grass and wither as the green herb...in the morning they are like grass which grows up. In the morning it flourishes and springs up; in the evening it is mown down and withers...my heart is smitten like grass and withers...as for man his days are like grass...for the wind passes over it and it is gone...all flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth because the breath of the Lord bloweth upon it.*"

GRASS

GRASS represents those surface coverings and masks in our lives which hide the nature beneath from being seen for what it is. So what is the fire of God poured out upon? The outer covering of our flesh! Isaiah says that “all flesh is grass,” and just as men and women try to dress up their bodies with designer clothing, makeup, perfume, and well groomed hair, so that men do not see us as we *really are*, so the flesh-nature creates its own facade of respectability, morality, intellectualism, and religiosity to hide the corruption that lies beneath it in the heart. This facade of the flesh has to be dealt with in every son of God! The flesh man must be destroyed! I have seen that man destroyed by the fire of God! They weren’t killed as people, there is no grave in any cemetery where you will find their headstone, but those fleshly men were burnt up, they simply don’t exist anymore! Their fleshly, natural, human identity went up in smoke, and now they know that they are not Adamic men, but truly a new creation in Christ Jesus! It’s not about this flesh of our body that we walk around in, rather it’s about the image of the earthy in our minds in which we think out of a fleshly mentality. Once we see this wonderful truth by the Spirit, we begin to think and live out of a new spiritual, supernatural, divine identity! When the fleshly mindset that governed our view of ourselves and our actions has been burnt up by the fire of the Spirit, the wonderful work of God has begun to bring forth the life of the Son of God as our *only reality!* It is indeed wonderful!

FIRE

Let us consider the work of the divine Holy Ghost fire of God. When “fire” is mentioned most believers think of hell fire, not heavenly fire. This fire, however, is cast out of the heavenly realm, the realm of the spirit, and is cast into “our earth” or that earth which *we are*. Throughout the Bible we find this glorious element of **Godfire**. The fire that accompanied the people of Israel through the wilderness was the holy fire of Yahweh Himself! He descended in the fire of His glory upon mount Sinai. He was the pillar of fire that led them, and from His fiery presence He lit the fire of the altar in the tabernacle in the wilderness. The only light in the most holy place of the tabernacle was God’s *shekinah* glory, brighter than the sun. That holy and divine fire, which was God Himself, was used to purify and sanctify the holy vessels used in the service of the Lord, as well as to consume the burnt offerings and sacrifices. It was used to burn the incense in the tabernacle and the temple — the fire was hallowed.

When Nadab and Abihu offered *strange fire* (fire that was not the fire of God) before the Lord, the fire of God leaped out and consumed them (Lev. 10:1-2). Korah, along with 250 others, offered incense when they raised up against Moses and Aaron, and they were all consumed by the fire that came out from the Lord (Num. 16:1-35). Out of this holy flame came the glorious word of the Lord! It was by this holy fire that the people were led unto their promised land! This was the glory of the Lord revealed in the midst of His people! Yet our God is a consuming fire, and all that is not holy and pure is consumed by that fire!

The New Testament manifestation of God as a consuming fire began on the day of Pentecost when tongues of fire rested upon the waiting disciples. They were accepted, approved, transformed, and anointed when God’s spirit-fire baptized them. They would never be the same again! They were themselves the sacrifice, God sent the fire and they (their carnal state) were consumed. What a refining came to the apostles on that glorious day! How full of self-seeking they had been up to the very last supper! At the last supper they had a dispute as to who should be the first in the kingdom of heaven, but after Pentecost they no longer thought of self, but Christ. How weak and cowardly they had been right up to the crucifixion! They all forsook Him and fled, and Peter denied Him, at the accusation of a servant maid, with oaths and curses. But after the day of Pentecost, that same Peter that cursed and swore and denied Christ, faced the very council that condemned Him, and said, “If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole, be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole” (Acts 4:9-10). What a cleansing the baptism of fire does in a moment! The “tongues of fire” in Acts 2:3 were not seen by the multitudes. Such a strange phenomenon would have been recorded. It was the “vocal tongues” that amazed them and not the “tongues of fire.” Apparently, they were not seen, they were felt. John the Baptist said Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with **fire**. The obvious change in the disciple’s lives after Pentecost proves John’s prophecy. Peter’s change of nature is outstanding. He met the glory of God and tasted the fire of God! A coward became a conqueror! Keep in

mind, beloved, the fire of Pentecost is merely the “firstfruits” of the Spirit! It is but the firstfruits of the holy fire of God! That fire produced holy men who became apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. That fire has not, however, produced any *manifest sons of God!* There is a greater dimension of the fire of God revealed throughout the seven trumpets of the Revelation, and this fullness of the fire of God, when its work is complete in the called and chosen elect of God, will produce A MANCHILD UPON THE THRONE AND 144,000 SONS OF GOD UPON MOUNT ZION! Oh, the wonder of it!

Jesus was baptized with the baptism of fire (Lk. 12:50) that nailed Him to a cross, buried Him in a tomb, raised Him from death into immortality and glory, and caught Him up to the throne of His Father. That is the fire that leads to *sonship!* Having passed through that fire He now reigns in heaven; He reigns on earth; and He will establish His Father’s kingdom over every heart, and every spot of ground. Because He lives, we shall live also! We have received the *spirit of adoption* or *placement as sons*, and the same holy fire that made Jesus the firstborn Son of God is now working in our lives to purify and perfect us and make us the sons of God with power. Let us live it, so that we can then carry the fire that will consume every unclean desire in every heart, in every home, in every city, in every nation, until the earth is purged with the purifying power, and Christ our King has come to reign; until the time when every foe is vanquished, and He delivers up the kingdom to God, even the Father. The apostle Peter wrote of the time when the whole earth, indeed the whole cosmos, would be judged and purified by the fire which is God, and which in union with Him we also shall be! Isaiah prophesied of the establishing of the new order in these words, “*For behold I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind*” (Isa. 65:17). What a wonderful thing that God will so thoroughly cleanse our own little world and the whole vast order of things, that even our minds, and the minds of all mankind, will be purged from even the *remembrance* of it! Wonder of wonders, to be able to forget that sin, sorrow, limitation, and death ever existed! The Lord will make such a good job of His work through His son company that the past will be completely obliterated and never thought of anymore. ***And He is doing it first in us, His firstfruits!*** Isn’t it wonderful!

In the natural world using fire was an important step in the process of civilization. The ancients learned to make bronze with fire, and later iron. Today we make high-grade steel in huge blast furnaces. If properly controlled, fire purifies the elements it touches. Different heat levels are needed to purify certain elements. If there’s not enough heat, the element remains impure, but if there’s too much, the element is consumed. We, too, are like the elements that need to be refined! What are the impurities in you that need to be burned off — pride, lust, anger, intolerance, impatience, greed, foolishness, fear, doubt, negativity, hatred, unforgiveness, self-seeking, desire to control and dominate? How much heat will it take to purify you — a red flame, a blue, a white? Would you be able to “take the heat,” or would you be burned up? Malachi doubted that any of us could withstand the heat of God’s fiery presence and power! “*Who shall stand when He appears? For He shall be like a refiner’s fire...*” (Malachi 3:2). What fires are ignited in our souls as the Lord comes to His temple and sits in His temple as a refiner’s fire! The natural man can’t stand! Thank God, the outer man of flesh is not pure enough to handle the all-consuming fiery presence of God! Our purification means the annihilation of our carnal, human consciousness! No matter how good we think our human life is, getting close to a holy fireball will consume us. That is good news! Adam is being consumed! Every impurity of our old natural, human identity is being burnt out of us, going up in smoke! God is burning up one realm, cutting off a realm from us, so that we cannot live there any longer. **THAT IS WHAT THE FIRST TRUMPET PROCLAIMS!**

OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE! I understand not why fire has been represented to us as something so terrible, so frightening, so hideous that we should try to avoid it. If our approach back to God is through fire, as revealed by the flaming sword placed at Eden’s gate, why do we always try to get out of the fire? Why do we evade the fire? Why expend such energy and effort to try and pray ourselves out of the fire? Fire, in the scriptures, symbolizes two things — judgment and cleansing. But God is not schizophrenic in His nature — one side of His character disposed to forgive, heal, save, redeem, deliver, and restore, while another part of His nature is bent on vengeful destruction and sadistic torture of His enemies. His action in fire, like His action in grace, is pure, harmonious, and balanced, directed towards the purging that will lead to restoration and perfection. His fire cleanses the believer that He may qualify for God’s highest! His action of fire towards the unbeliever is to the same end, conditioning and preparing that one for good results, when, having been broken and purged from pride and rebellion, he bows low before the Saviour, humbly and

penitently receiving the gracious gift of life. The fire does not save him, but it removes the hindrance that separates him from the kind mercy of the Lord. Yet the preachers rant and rave, threatening unbelievers and dangling sinners over the flames of hell fire, when in fact, if they are truly incorrigible, that would be the best thing that could happen to them!

To be continued...

J. PRESTON EBY