

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 109

THE SOUNDING OF THE TRUMPETS

(continued)

And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, *Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth* by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!" (Rev. 8:13).

In the passage above, as quoted from the King James Bible, we have the word "angel" – John sees an angel flying in mid-heaven, crying Woe, woe, woe, to all who dwell in the earth realm. The word "angel," however, is not supported by the original text. Most, if not all, modern translations give us the word "*eagle*," not "angel." John both heard and saw this eagle flying through the upper air proclaiming a message of woe to all the carnal-minded people who inhabit the earth-realm, those whose hearts and hopes are set upon earth, those who, in the language of the apostle Paul, "*mind earthly things*." That eagle was visible, audible, heavenly, and intelligent, showing that he represents a ***word from the Lord!*** With his great and far-reaching voice he was solemnly giving warning of the judgmental dealings of God to fall upon the natural man, the carnal mind, the human consciousness, and the Adamic identity. It will be seen at a glance that the judgments of the "woe" trumpets are of a very different character than the four trumpets preceding them.

The eagle has some very significant characteristics, and by noting these together with what a host of other scripture passages have to say about the eagle, we will be helped to a clear understanding of the symbol before us. The eagle is, first of all, a kingly bird. It stands preeminently at the head of the feathered families, just as the lion does among the beasts. Many nations, on account of the royal dignity of this bird, have chosen it as their governmental insignia. The eagle is also famous for its exalted, and exalting instincts. They prefer the heights both when at rest, and while flying. They build their nests among the highest crags, and outstrip all other birds in their lofty ascensions. It is said that the eagle is the only bird that can look the sun in the face. The eagle is famous also for its keen, far-reaching sight. "The eagle eye" is a common expression. They have a quick, clear, penetrating vision. So quick and sharp is the sight of the eagle that it is almost impossible to surprise or deceive it. The eagle is known for its strength. Its swiftness and power are so astonishing that the ancients used it as the symbol of omnipresence, and omnipotence.

John saw a great eagle flying through heaven, and warning the earth-dwellers of the great truth that our heavenly Father is set to destroy the last vestiges of our old, earthly, natural, human consciousness and identity. This was not a real eagle that he saw, of course, but the *image* of one in his vision. The eagle, though, represented a great reality! It was not a predatory bird hastening to pounce upon its prey, but an intelligent heavenly messenger bearing a powerful and irresistible word from God!

Our text speaks to us of three woes. Woe, woe, woe! There are seven trumpets, and the last three trumpets are woes. This marks a difference between the first four trumpets and the last three trumpets. In like manner, in the original creation in chapter one of Genesis, we see the very same principle. The first four days and the last three days of creation are separated by something of great import. The last three days, the fifth, sixth, and seventh days, are the only three days God mentions as being *blessed*. A blessing was conferred upon each of the last three days – but none upon the first four days! Subsequently Adam falls, bringing upon all humanity the *curse* of sin, sorrow, and death. We follow the story of that wretched curse through all the pages of God's Book. Finally, we come to the closing book, the book of Revelation, and the last three trumpets are woes. Instead of *blessings* they are *woes*! The message is clear – in the book of Revelation God is doing away with the old creation! These are woes upon the old creation, upon the old Adamic thinking and understanding, upon the flesh nature, upon the carnal mind and the whole domain of sin-consciousness and death. It is woe to the Adam of the fall, and the bestial nature of man, and restoration again to the blessedness of the man created in the image and likeness of God! It is woe to the ignorance and insanity of natural thinking and worldly understanding, and restoration to the sanity and wisdom of the mind of Christ! It is woe to sin, and restoration to righteousness! It is woe to the natural man, and restoration to the blessedness of the spiritual man! It is woe to darkness, limitation, and death, and restoration to the blessedness of the glory and power of incorruption! It is woe to the chains of religion, and restoration to the blessedness of the liberating light of Christ! Oh, the wonder of it!

The voice of the eagle brings not a limited woe, but a complete woe to all who dwell in an earthly realm. By “woe” is signified lamentation over the wickedness in anyone, it is woe to the heart of the natural man, the man of sin. And by “woe, woe, woe” the most intense lamentation is signified; for the triplication makes it superlative, because three signifies that which is full and complete. Isn't that good news! God sends a *word* and that *word* is woe, woe, woe to the earth-dweller! Can you not see that we are being changed by the *word*! It is the kingly, authoritative, discerning, piercing, penetrating, powerful, and transforming voice of God out of a heavenly realm proclaiming the destruction of the Adamic life that we might be transformed! That heavenly realm is within ourselves – out of God in our spirit – uncovering the reality of who we really are, causing us to live more and more out of our true nature and identity and less and less out of the natural flesh man. The lights of lesser realms are being turned out, woe to those realms, and woe to that man within us that dwells in the earthlies! When the woe comes to us it reveals to us that we are living in the wrong realm. We are then called to “come up hither” to a higher place in God! We begin to hunger and thirst after something deeper, fuller than we have known hitherto. There is a cry in our hearts for greater reality!

THE FIFTH TRUMPET

“And the *fifth angel sounded*, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit” (Rev. 9:1).

Anyone who attempts to explain that which he does not understand can accomplish but one result: the complete and glaring display of his own ignorance. I know very little concerning

electricity. The extent of my knowledge of it is just about comprehended in three statements: namely, it bites; to press on a button turns on a light or any number of electrical gadgets; and if the lights go off, one can usually remedy the situation by inserting a new fuse in the proper receptacle, or switching the circuit breaker. Briefly, I am grossly ignorant concerning electrical science. But now, just suppose that I took it into my head to write a book on electrical engineering. That book, if ever completed, would be a fanciful tale indeed! If I were possessed of sufficient natural ability, I might be able to make the book interesting from the very fact that it would be ludicrous enough to be entertaining. But woe to the man who would attempt to construct electrical apparatus according to my specifications!

Today men and women who are in greater ignorance of God's truth than I am of electricity are writing books, preaching sermons, teaching scholars, and editing papers on religious topics, that are more fanciful, misleading, undependable, and dangerous than would be my book on electrical engineering! But the horrible feature is, that while no one would think of listening to my electrical delusions, yet the whole church world has gone wild and is glorying in, in varying degrees, delusions, misrepresentations, and lies which have a direct bearing on their spiritual welfare. Only fools are supposed to have license to indulge in foolishness. All reasonable men are supposed to subscribe only to sound and sane and sensible beliefs. Therefore when we can show reasonable men that they have been tricked and led into *spiritual ignorance* and *foolish beliefs*, even though it may be a hard blow to their vanity, the only reasonable course is for them to forthwith forsake their folly and come on up to higher ground. And we all, every one of us, have been victimized. We might as well admit it! But, thank God! a "little flock" has been awakened, and has left the defiled and corrupted religious way. These are now marching up the heavenly mount Zion where the glorious and eternal reality of God's Christ is revealed!

Nowhere has there been more ignorance manifested than on this subject of the "bottomless pit." As we take up this ninth chapter of the Revelation we have the FIRST WOE or the SOUNDING OF THE FIFTH TRUMPET. The fifth trumpet brings the vision of another star fallen to earth. The star is a person, called in Hebrew "Abaddon," and in Greek "Apollyon," meaning "the destroyer." He holds the key to the bottomless pit. When he lifts the lid there issues forth billows of dark smoke, and out of the smoke proceeds a swarm of locusts. Though they are *called* locusts, because in their general appearance, and in the ravages they commit, they resemble them, yet in fact they are imaginary and metaphorical beings, and combine in themselves qualities which are never found in reality. They have bodies like horses, faces like men, the hair of women, the teeth of lions, crowns of gold, breastplates of iron, and the tails of scorpions. They are commanded not to kill, only to torment those who have not the seal of God. The life of these pests is limited to five months, that is, they are permitted to inflict men for a limited period of time.

This message would be very simple and quickly told if we were to take everything in chapter nine *literally*. We would just say that John saw in vision a swarm of weird-looking locusts that came up over the earth and stung all the unbelieving people who didn't leave the planet in the "rapture"! And should you be one of them, you're going to get it! That would be the simplistic response of a naturalistic interpretation out of the darkness of the carnal mind. But once the blessed truth dawns that this is really a picture of Christ, that this is truly *the revelation of Jesus Christ*, and how He comes and transforms His people into His image, at once we take the shoes from off our feet and with head bowed low before the grace of Him who has shed the light of heaven upon a truth, we humbly beseech Him to instruct us in it. How beautiful to have the Holy Spirit paint us a picture of the Lord Jesus from every verse of every chapter in this wonderful book!

Speculation about, or inquiry into, the future are favorite pass-times of both saints and sinners. Among believers, it often takes the form of a fascination with, and search for, the “signs of the times” – outward signs of the approach of the end of the age or the dawn of the Millennium. These signs are often of a political, social, or judgmental kind – events in the State of Israel, the threat of world Communism, New Age religion, New World Order, world atomic war, conspiracy theories, natural disasters, the decay of public morals, etc. Popular books which claim to recognize or interpret the signs, to identify the Antichrist, or to unveil the date of Christ’s second coming, sell in great numbers today. Other people become excited with each passing comet, or every natural disaster, seeing in each some mystical omen portending the imminence of the “rapture,” the beginning of the Great Tribulation, the end of the world, or something else.

The church world is literally filled with *sign-watchers*, though I dare say most of them have missed the meaning of the signs altogether, for they read with the carnal mind, having the understanding darkened. We can be so taken up with natural “signs” of wars and rumors of wars, violence, political intrigues, of earthquakes and disasters, until we totally miss the real thing that is happening *in the realm of the Spirit*, or hearing *His voice within*, that He might bring us into complete union with Himself, that we might *become His salvation* unto the ends of the earth! We watch the evening news and suppose that we are watching for His coming or His kingdom. We hear of the hurricanes, tsunamis, floods, droughts, crime, wars, the rise and fall of governments, the loss of liberties, the attempt at world government, and our perspective becomes distorted, and fear and doubt seize hold of our souls, until we become more conscious of the darkness of “this world,” than we are of the light, glory, and triumph of the INDWELLING CHRIST! Any time we are troubled by, or anxious about, the outcome of an election, fuel shortages, or a thousand other things coming to pass upon the earth, it is obvious that we are *watching the realm of darkness* rather than *beholding the glory of Christ!* We are of those who “dwell upon the earth” instead of those “caught up unto God and His throne.” The kingdom of God can only be discerned by the spirit – it does not come by outward observations!

It is significant to note that the events we now consider take place at the sounding of the *fifth trumpet*. Five is the number of *grace!* The natural mind will be incapable of finding any *grace* in these scenes, just because the natural mind is enmity against God, nor does it understand the things of the spirit! The great and eternal truth is, my beloved, God is not out to destroy us, He’s about the business of saving us with a full salvation! And here He sounds forth His grace by which we are saved! Most people entertain the idea that the scene in chapter nine of the Revelation is one of great darkness, unbearable distress, and terrible hopelessness, but that is not the case at all! It is a *redeeming message* of hope, deliverance, and transformation! But first, let us consider the awesome scene John beheld in and by the Spirit.

A STAR HAD FALLEN

“And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a *star fall from heaven unto the earth*: and to him was given the key to the bottomless pit” (Rev. 9:1).

A star is the symbol of height of knowledge, understanding, and revelation in God. Stars, sun, and moon in the book of Revelation are always symbols! They are used in various ways and with different applications, but they are all *lights* and bespeak of a height of knowledge and understanding – a *word*, if you please – out of a heavenly or spiritual realm. Gazing into the heavens at night we behold the majesty, beauty, and wonder of the starry heavens, and rejoice in the knowledge that our heavenly Father placed each star in its fixed place in the universe. He has given to each a name, revealing His great purpose for them as they shed forth light in the darkness. The sun and the moon likewise are put in their places by the divine counsel and purpose of God.

There is a vast difference between *descending from heaven* and being *cast out of heaven*. The King James Bible tells us that John saw “a star *fall* from heaven,” but that is not the way it reads in the Greek text. The verb “fall” is not in the present tense at all, and does not denote an action taking place in the present, or at the instant that John beheld it, but something that has already transpired in the past. The Emphatic Diaglott, along with various modern translations, more correctly translates the passage, “and I saw a star *having fallen* from the heaven to the earth.” But even the words “having fallen” need some clarification also, for they seem to carry the connotation of something plunging down through the atmosphere, like a meteor, in an unimpeded and uncontrolled manner. Furthermore, there is no sense of why the star is falling – was it pushed, or did it jump? However, the expression comes from a Greek word which is akin to another word meaning to fly, and its use indicates something that is *flying* in a prescribed pattern and then *alights on the earth*. That is the precise use of the Greek word in this passage! The great truth that the Holy Spirit would teach all who have ears to hear is that Christ, the firstborn Son of God, is the star that alighted on the earth and set in motion the correctional and transformational processes by which mankind is transformed from the image of the earthly into the image of the heavenly! Oh, the wonder of it!

When the Christ “descended” He did far more than merely leave one place and go to another. Since heaven is not a “place” but a *spiritual realm of life* and dominion, to “descend” does not speak of a change of location, rather, a *change of being*. The Spirit of God makes no mistake about this! “*From the beginning He had the nature of God. Yet He did not regard equality with God as something at which He should grasp (hold on to). Nay, He stripped Himself of His glory, and took on Him the nature of a bondservant by becoming a man like other men. And being recognized as truly human, He humbled Himself and even stooped to die; and then that too a death on the cross. It is because of this also that God has so highly exalted Him, and has conferred on Him the name which is supreme above every other name, in order that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of beings in the highest heavens, of those on the earth...*” (Phil. 2:6-11, Weymouth Translation).

Yes, Christ *descended*, not geographically, but He descended in rank, in form, in substance, to *become a man*! The Mighty God became a man! And becoming a man He identified with all that was common to man. “*Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham*” (Heb. 2:14,16). Yes, my beloved, CHRIST DESCENDED from the high and holy realm of the Eternal Spirit into the depth of totality of the human experience, into the depth of what man *is*, into an identification and participation with the whole dreadful realm of darkness and death into which mankind had fallen. This was the Son of man, the Son of God, a member of the Divine Family, the Elohim, having changed Himself into a tiny collection of human cells, growing to be born of a virgin in Bethlehem, and living human life as it had never been lived before. He became obedient in this walk even unto death. With the coming of the Christ into this world of ours the STAR HAD FALLEN (COME DOWN) FROM HEAVEN UNTO THE EARTH!

About a century before John saw his vision on the rocky slopes of Patmos the firstborn Son of God had descended from heaven to earth to be born as the man-child Jesus. The Old Testament ends with the glorious promise of the arising of the Sun of Righteousness, Christ arising with healing rays over the horizon of this earth-realm. But the New Testament does not begin with the Sun of Righteousness! Wise men came from the East and walked down the streets of Jerusalem and said, “Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His *star* in the east.” Not the sun, but the star! God hung in the heavens something supernatural, something new, something

divinely glorious – a star. And out of the East, these men who had been studying the stars, began to converge on Jerusalem. And if you think there were just three little wise men there, you need to read the story again. There were probably three hundred! I don't think for one moment that three little men from Persia could have caused such a commotion in Jerusalem. Matthew says that at their appearance king Herod was troubled – greatly disturbed – and THE WHOLE OF JERUSALEM WITH HIM. They came from every direction. They came from all the countries of the mysterious Orient. And they said, "We have seen His star, and we've come to worship Him."

Now how did they come to associate the coming of Christ as a King with a star? If you want to know where they got it you will have to get into the gondola of a heathen prophet and go up with him. Back in the book of Numbers this heathen prophet who had a message from God said this, "I shall see Him, but not now: I shall behold Him, but not nigh: there shall come a *star* out of Jacob, and a scepter shall arise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth...out of Jacob shall come He that shall have dominion" (Num. 24:17-19). "I shall see Him, but not now (the One of whom I am speaking is not present yet): I shall behold Him, but not nigh (this is not going to happen within the foreseeable future): there shall come a *star* out of Jacob..." Out there in a pagan, heathen land there was given this prophecy to the Gentiles that a *star* was coming! They were to watch for a star, if you please. They had that prophecy in that area of the world. They were looking for a star, and when they saw it they converged on Jerusalem.

The star in Matthew chapter two is just the beginning of this matter in the New Testament. When we go to the last book, the book of Revelation, we see two things: the first is that the Lord Jesus is the star, not the evening star but the Morning Star (Rev. 22:16); secondly, we see that all the stars mentioned in the book relate to people. We have so frequently discussed the symbolism of the Revelation that there will be no need to remind those who read these lines that every sentence in this marvelous book has a symbolical and figurative significance and stands for some SPIRITUAL REALITY. The language of the Bible is the language of symbols!

The Lord Jesus Himself is the Morning Star! I do not hesitate to tell you that to see Christ is to behold the Morning Star. To know Christ is to know the Morning Star. To experience Christ is to experience the Morning Star. How do we see and touch and experience Christ? This is the same problem that confronted the wise men of old! One thing is certain. To find Christ is a matter of life and reality; it is not by a knowledge of the Bible or doctrines or church traditions. Jesus was born in Bethlehem. There is no doubt about this – it is an historical fact. The strange thing, however, is this: far away from the so-called Holy Land, far away from the religion of the Jews, far away from the glistening walls of the temple, far away from the sacred books of the law, far away from the bleeding sacrifices, far away from the priests, the scribes, the Pharisees, and all the fervent and incessant religious activities, there appeared a star bearing the revelation of Christ to men who were looking for Him! It did not appear to the Pharisees or the priests or the scribes or even to the king of Israel, but to men outside of everything that represented God to the people, and the revelation came to them by the sovereign act of God and by the illuminating power of His Spirit! Today, all the churches, all the preachers and teachers tell the people that they must find Christ by the Bible, or by the ministers, or by the religious activities of the church. But the first case of finding Christ in the world was not by any of these! The wise men were not reading the Bible, nor were they listening to a preacher, nor were they attending a church service as they rode along the way to Jerusalem. These men had seen something that no man before them had ever seen. Their eyes and minds and hearts had received the sweet sound of a message so transcendently glorious that it compelled them to make a journey that lasted for two whole years.

You see, precious friend of mine, merely to hold the Bible in your hand and try to believe all that your natural mind can understand of it will not bring the true revelation of Christ. Christ is a living reality, and the reality of Christ who *is spirit, truth, and life* is only known in the spirit and by the spirit! We may have read all the prophecies and all the promises and all the great statements of God's wonderful plan and provision and purpose. We may confess after we have read it that we have got it. We may name it and claim it, but we have not seen it, touched it, or experienced it until we do so in the spirit and by the spirit! The chief priests and scribes in Israel knew the scriptures forward and backward, and could quote you every verse telling about the coming of the Christ. But the Lord did not appear to them! He went far away to a heathen land to reveal the Christ to some heathen, not through the scriptures, not through the priesthood, not through the synagogue, not through the sacrifices and ceremonies and rituals, but through something no human hand can ever touch – a heavenly star! To go through the motions of religion is easy, but to look unto the star is something more! Like so many Christians of our day, those priests and scribes rejoiced in and revered the things they read in the Book, but their hearts could not comprehend nor were they able to recognize the vital truth and reality of the message. They had the record of the words of God, but their eyes had never seen the star – the illumination and revelation of God in and by the spirit – so they could not find the Christ! No one knows just when or where or how the star will appear. But I can assure you of one thing – you may attend the greatest seminary and understand all the theology and receive the highest degree conferred upon one in that, and never see the star or find the Christ. We may think the star should have appeared to the priests praying in the temple, but it appeared to pagans in a distant land.

Oh! How my ransomed soul exults and shouts a thousand hallelujahs, for I have seen the star! All of God's called and chosen elect in this hour, those called according to His purpose, those apprehended to the high calling of sonship to God, have seen the star and are following the star, and have found the Christ! What is the star? The star is the LIVING REVELATION, the QUICKENING VISION of the Christ wrought in the heart by the illuminating activity of the Holy Spirit. The firstborn Son of God is the bright and the Morning Star! He is the star that fell into the earth, that flew down, as it were, from the high realm of the heavens of God's Spirit, and alighted on the earth in the sight of men. Today He is the Living Star, the bright and Morning Star, announcing within us the dawn of God's new Day! Only as HE is revealed unto us by the Spirit do we see Him as He is, to know what sonship is, and to know who and what He is, and thereby who and what we are as sons of our Father! We are no longer clinging to the dying embers of yesterday's revelation and yesterday's move of God, but we are following the on-going path of the Living Star! Aren't you glad!

There is a wonderful admonition which pertains specifically to all who have received the call to sonship. The apostle Paul by inspiration wrote, "Do nothing from selfishness or deceit, but in *humility* count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. *Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus* who, though He was in the form of God, did not think equality with God a thing to be grasped, but *emptied Himself*, taking the *form of a servant*, being born in the *likeness of men*. And being found in human form He *humbled Himself* and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:3-8, RSV).

There is presented first Christ's wonderful divinity: "*in the form of God,*" "*equal with God.*" Then comes the mystery of His incarnation, in that word of deep and inexhaustible meaning: "*He emptied Himself.*" The cross follows, with the humiliation, and obedience, and suffering, and death, even the death of the cross. "*He humbled Himself.*" Oh, the wonder of it! And all is crowned by His glorious exaltation: "*God hath highly exalted Him.*" Here we see the awesome journey of the star that fell from heaven into the earth! We behold the star, Christ as

God, Christ becoming man, Christ as the first manifest Son of God upon earth, Christ as man in humiliation working out our redemption, Christ as the firstborn from the dead, Christ as the firstborn among many brethren, and Christ in glory as Lord of all – such are the treasures this passage contains.

Two striking statements stand out: “*He emptied Himself*,” “*He humbled Himself*.” The most startling thought of all is that GOD HUMBLING HIMSELF! We can hardly conceive of such a thing. The high and holy One, the omniscient and omnipotent Creator and Lord of the universe HUMBLING HIMSELF! Yet, it could not be otherwise. Let me state it this way: God is humble! Have you ever thought about that? If God were not humble there could have been no babe in Bethlehem’s manger, no Son growing up in dusty Nazareth, no Redeemer dying in agony upon the cross. If God were not humble there would be no indwelling Spirit, no habitation of God in temples of clay. If God were not humble it would mean the destruction of God Himself, for He either could not, or would not, uphold all things by the word of His power and fill all things everywhere with Himself! He would then have almighty power without the balance of mercy, love, compassion, and identification with creation. Thus, He would be a tyrant, and tyranny holds within itself the seeds of its own destruction.

Furthermore, our Father requires humility of each of His sons! “*Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up*” (James 4:10). “Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with *humility*: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God...” (I Pet. 5:5-6). And now hear this, O elect of our Father! “Put on therefore, *as the elect of God, holy and beloved...HUMBLINGNESS of mind...*” (Col. 3:12). The question follows: Does our heavenly Father require an attitude of mind and state of being of HIS ELECT SONS which He does not Himself possess? Nay! “*He humbled Himself*.” In Jesus Christ we behold the humility of God! Isn’t it wonderful!

And now comes the word: “Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God...*emptied Himself*, and as a man *humbled Himself*.” Every son of God must be like Christ in His self-emptying and self-humiliation. The first great act of self-abnegation in which as God He emptied Himself of His divine majesty, glory and power and laid it aside, was followed by the no less wondrous humbling of Himself as man, to the death of the cross. And in this amazing two-fold humiliation, the astonishment of the universe and the delight of the Father, the Holy Spirit with utmost simplicity tells us we, His younger brethren, must, as a matter of course, BE LIKE CHRIST.

As one has pointed out, people have great difficulty understanding an abstraction or a force. It must be personalized and that is why God has come in the person of Jesus Christ, so that we might see Him and see what God is like. The first-begotten Son, He hath revealed Him! God has been personalized first in our Lord Jesus Christ, and this personification, the embodiment of God Himself, HUMBLING HIMSELF! That One who walked by blue Galilee and through the dusty roads of Palestine was none other than the Living God, the Creator who emptied Himself and humbled Himself and came into this world. Humility, self-abasement, serving, laying down our life to pour it out to others – these are the identifying marks of sonship! “Whosoever therefore shall *humble himself* as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven!” (Mat. 18:4). “But he that is greatest among you shall be your *servant*. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; but he that shall *humble himself* shall be exalted” (Mat. 23:11-12). Ah, THIS IS THE STAR THAT HAD FALLEN FROM HEAVEN BRINGING THE LIGHT OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GLORY OF GOD!

When heaven came down to earth one day there was no room in the inn. God was left out in the cold! The only one ever to be *born* king was sent to a bed of straw, while earth slept on feathered beds. But really, should there have been room? Did God expect a Conrad Hilton Hotel? Did God care that shepherds came to the stall rather than dignitaries to the suite? Was it really God's plan for His firstborn Son to be born in a stable? All God wanted, and all He ever wants even today, is that people open the rooms of their hearts and lives to Him so that He might become the king of their lives! It *wasn't* the Son of God who said, "If a man loves me he will make room for me in his inn, he will build for me beautiful cathedrals, and he will take me down from the cross and put me on a throne." But it *was* the Son of God who said, "If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our *abode* with him" (Jn. 14-23).

Someone has described the life of the first Son of God in these words. "Today, Nazareth is a noisy city with a population over 200,000. But in Jesus' day, Nazareth was just a quiet ridge. Here, Jesus grew to manhood like any other boy. From the age of twelve to about the age of thirty, Jesus' life is known as the Silent Years. We know little about those eighteen years, except from the writings of a Jewish rebel leader Josephus Flavius, who wrote a history of the Jewish people. His writings vividly describe the cultures, events, people, and places upon which Jesus gazed as a young man. The roads from north to south, from east to west, crossed through little Nazareth. Jesus surely saw the occupying Roman soldiers, sailors, merchantmen, and trade caravans that brought goods from far-off lands. He saw harlots, zealots, rebels, philosophers, and priests and priestesses of the foreign Roman cults. The people who passed by His tiny town of Nazareth brought news of events from great cities around the vast Roman Empire. The town provided a young man a window to the whole world. Jesus did not grow up behind a window of obscurity, but saw face to face all the world had to offer – its best and its worst."

So ordinary was His life that the people of Nazareth said, "We know him. His family lives right here." That's what the hometown folks thought about this native son. When Jesus returned to His own country, preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing the sick, the response was not enthusiastic. "Is not this the carpenter's son?" people asked skeptically as they listened to Him. Perhaps they just couldn't understand how someone they remembered as having an ordinary upbringing could be a manifest Son of God! If you and I had met Jesus on the streets of Nazareth, we probably would not have believed that He was the first manifest Son of God! He lived and looked like any other ordinary human being. Perhaps in Jesus' case, many of the people of Nazareth just couldn't accept that He really was the Son of God because they were sure they already knew Him. They indeed knew Him *after the flesh*, but precious few of them knew Him *after the spirit*! Things have not changed in two thousand years! Beloved, now are *we* the sons of God! Therefore the world knoweth *us* not, because it knew *Him* not! No one *can* know the Son except the Father, and he to whom the Father reveals Him! And the world will not know us until we are revealed not only in the full glory, majesty, and power of our sonship, but also the veil is removed from off the minds and hearts of all mankind that they may see and know us by the revelation of the Spirit! Not everyone saw the star, but Jesus was truly THE STAR THAT CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN TO EARTH!

God said, "I will invade humanity and come down in the person of my Son, limit myself to a human, physical body like man has, with all its appetites, emotions, possibilities of suffering hunger, weakness, temptation, and death, and I will demonstrate the character, the life, the love, and the power of God on the human level." The incarnation was God manifesting Himself within the limitations of a human body and personality. A tiny baby. A young man learning to say "Mama" in the Aramaic tongue. An obedient, bright Hebrew boy learning His father's trade in Nazareth. A mature, hard-working provider for the family for the next eighteen years until He

was thirty. A strong, average-looking, average-sized young man who wore everyday clothing, and who grew in depth of understanding through each human trial. Christ could not fly, He could see no further than anybody else, He could not run faster than the other young men of His day, He got tired as anybody else, He got as tempted as anybody else, He got hungry, fell asleep, they could spit on Him and finally kill Him. Yet in Jesus Christ you have the perfect expression of God! The meaning of the incarnation is that God could drink out of a bottle if Jesus drank out of a bottle, God in Him learned to crawl before He learned to walk, God learned a language and stumbled over the words before He got it straight, His mind could increase.

When God invaded humanity in the body of Jesus Christ, He took upon Himself human nature and limitation, was made in the likeness, not of glorified flesh, but of sinful flesh, and for thirty-three and a half years lived, walked, slept and died in that body, manifesting God in the scope of humanity. Being mocked, God was living in Him. Asleep in the boat, God was living in Him. Hungry, and He goes to a tree and finds nothing to eat on it, God is living in Him. When He was weary, pressed, persecuted, hated, spit upon, His back beaten, His brow crowned with thorns, His hands and feet nailed to a cross, His side pierced, His soul exceedingly sorrowful unto death, dying on the cross in agony with the spittle running down His face, **GOD WAS LIVING AND MANIFESTING IN HIM.** God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself! Oh, the mystery of it!

Do you see what God did? He made it possible for Himself to be at home in human bodies and to fully manifest His nature and glory in man. “The tabernacle of God *is with men*” (Rev. 21:3). Not with angels, with men! “And the Word was *made flesh and dwelt among us*, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (Jn. 1:14). It means that God can, by His Spirit, Jesus can, by His Spirit, come in and live in these human bodies of ours, grow in the fullness of His nature, mind, and power within us, loving in us, and manifesting Himself in us until with the Christ we can say, “If you have seen me, you have seen the Father; I and the Father are one.”

Paul grasped the full reality of this when he said, “For me to live is Christ” (Phil. 1:21). He didn’t say, “For me to speak in tongues, dance in the Spirit, fall out under the power, heal the sick, cast out devils, be spiritual and get into the 144,000 is Christ.” Oh, no! He said, “For me to **LIVE is Christ.**” Living for Paul did not mean those obviously supernatural moments when he was seeing visions and hearing voices and being caught up into the third heaven. It meant for Paul to walk from one town to another on the dusty roads with Christ walking in him. It was for Paul to sew tents, with Christ making tents through him. It was for Paul to be shipwrecked on the razor-edged reef of a savage island, with Christ shipwrecked with him. It was speaking to people and manifesting the love of God, the heart of God, the glory of God, with Christ manifesting through him. The everyday living out of his life in the nitty-gritty of human experience – **WAS CHRIST!**

So now God can feel at home in us, He has humbled Himself, He can live and work and manifest Himself without any abnormality or strain. The Son of God can live in us, manifest His life in us in the office, in the shop, among the ungodly, in the home, in every relationship of life. Some people think that there are areas, particularly to do with our bodies, our appetites, our functions, with which God does not have anything to do, but *God* made us that way. Christ was made that way, and He demonstrated God in every facet of His life – spirit, soul, and body. In Jesus the light and glory of the eternal Father first came from heaven into the earth to shine among men in the union of God and man. Oh, yes! **THIS IS THE STAR THAT HAS COME DOWN FROM HEAVEN AND ALIGHTED UPON EARTH IN THE MIDST OF MANKIND BRINGING THE LIGHT OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GLORY OF GOD!** That glory was and is seen *in the face of Jesus Christ!*

The word was made flesh and dwelt among us and those who walked with Him in the days of His flesh *beheld His glory*, the glory of sonship to God. They beheld Him and perceived that He was not like other men. He was totally like one *born of God*. They heard Him, they saw Him, they observed Him, they discerned Him, they touched and handled the Word of Life. Hear what they said. “For the life was *manifested* – and we SAW IT!” (I Jn. 1:1-3). The life of God was manifested right before their eyes! How did they know, what did they see, what was it that Jesus did that revealed the glory of God? Here was this man Jesus who looked like you and me, and really He could do anything He wanted. But no, He went about preaching the kingdom of God, and doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil. How did they observe His life? How did they know Jesus was the Son of God? Was it because He came up to them and said, “I’m He!” Do you think they believed Him because He *claimed* to be God’s Son? No! A thousand times, No! They *saw* His power, they *beheld* His glory, they *touched* the Life! Dearly beloved sons and daughters of God – so must it be with every one who attains to sonship to God! I have met people through my life who were quick to tell me that they were sons of God. I remember in one community of “kingdom people” this man who saw me walking through and he hastened to step out to meet me, shook my hand and said, “Meet a son of God!” But the only clue I had to his sonship was his word for it! “If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.” That is what the firstborn Son declared! At the Jordan and on the holy Mount it was the Father who bore witness of Him, “This is my beloved Son – hear Him!” Today the Father in us will bear witness to our sonship as He walks, speaks, and acts through us *in the power of His Life!*

Jesus, the star that came from heaven, was the firstborn of God’s vast family of sons. He came into the earth to reveal the glory of sonship and the power of the kingdom of God. In Him we see what it means to be a *manifest son of God!* As we grow up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ the day is even now approaching when the power and glory of sonship shall be expressed through us, Christ’s younger brothers, in a measure not seen on earth since Jesus walked among men. There was not a sickness He could not heal; there was not an evil spirit He could not cast out. They were all subject to His command, and they had to obey Him, even though they didn’t want to. He never spent hours in wrestling, fighting, struggling, shouting, or commanding the spirits to come out. He didn’t practice today’s insipid methods of so-called “deliverance.” Oh, no! When He spoke, the spirits obeyed! When the storm on the sea was great, and the winds were violent and the waves contrary, all He had to do was speak, “Peace, be still!” and the wind ceased and the waves went to rest in the bosom of the deep. Like a mother quieting her fretful child, saying, “Hush, my child, and go to sleep,” and with her hand upon the child, the little one stops crying and goes to sleep; so all Jesus had to do was speak to the storm, “Hush, be quiet,” and like a fretful child it quieted down and went to rest. When He needed money to pay taxes, and had none, He sent Peter to get it out of a fish’s mouth. There was never a need that He could not supply! There was never a circumstance or situation He could not handle! He always had the power, the wisdom, and the means to take care of them all. This is the power of the kingdom manifested in the Son of God, and it is the power of the kingdom to be revealed through all the sons of God. For this we do even now travail and groan within ourselves, and for this *all creation earnestly and expectantly waits!*

To be continued... J. PRESTON EBY