

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 111

THE SOUNDING OF THE TRUMPETS (continued)

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

"Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the living One; I was even dead, but behold, I am living for the ages of the ages: and *I have the keys of death and hades*" (Rev. 1:17-18, Diaglott).

To John on the isle of Patmos there came One who announced Himself as "the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last." At His girdle hung "the *keys* of hell and of death." This One was our Lord Jesus Christ! When Jesus came into the world in the humiliation of the Incarnation, He started on a route of conquest that took Him through the lonely years prior to His introduction at the muddy waters of Jordan, when the bony prophetic finger of John the Baptist was pointed at Him and those significant words were uttered, "Behold, the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" (Jn. 1:29). These words were followed by the testimony of His Father in heaven as the voice spoke proclaiming, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mat. 3:17). For some thirty-three and a half years He overcame and lived an impeccable life so that it was said of Him, "He was tempted in all points like as we, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

Jesus' flawless and fruitful life was followed by a decisive death. He went to Calvary to endure inexplicable and incomparable suffering: suffering of which we can only have a hint; suffering we can only look at curiously with a sob in our throats; suffering veiled in the mystery of the bearing of sin; suffering surrounded by torn rocks and a sun that refused to shine and an earth that writhed in agony. As He hung there alone, God reached down His giant fist and gathered the accumulated sins, weaknesses, sorrows, and death of mankind and placed them upon Him. In the awful agony of Calvary, Christ made His soul an offering for sin! The sin of the world was imputed unto Him. When He had become an offering for sin, He gave up the ghost and came down from the mystery of His sufferings, having finished that work. What men saw was a man hanging limp — every bone out of joint, a swollen tongue protruding from burning lips that cried, "It is finished!"

For centuries now Christians have supposed that when Jesus cried out, "It is finished," that meant that His work of redemption was completed. Many refer to this as "the finished work of Calvary." But there is too much stopping at the cross! If we stop at the cross we end with a dead Christ, and a dead Christ can save no one! Paul wrote, "If Christ be not *raised*, your faith is vain; *ye are yet in your sins*" (I Cor. 15:17). We must get our thoughts broadened about the redemptive work of Christ. Yes, He died for our sins, but never forget — He was also *raised again for our justification*! There is no "finished work" at the cross! There is not even a "finished work" at the resurrection! The redemptive work of Christ was not finished until He had *ascended up on High* bearing the precious blood of His atonement into the Holiest Place of the heavenlies, as it is written, "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood *He entered in once to the Holiest Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us*. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into *heaven itself, now to appear in the*

presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:12,24). When the Christ cried, "It is finished," it was the cup of suffering — the excruciating agony of the cross — that was finished, not the work of redemption! When He died He then entered the darkest night of death, and was ushered through the somber gates and behind the fearful bars of Hades, the unseen, imperceptible realm of the dead. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades" (Acts 2:31). The message is clear — the Christ not only died, He went to hell! It was imperative that Christ experience all that man experiences in the dread domain of sin and death, in order to take captivity captive and release mankind from the totality of the kingdom of darkness.

Then Hell itself in fear began to quake,
And, in alarm, thus to the devil spake,
"Jesus! Dost thou not fear that mighty Name?
And is this Jesus — Nazarene — the same
Who once cried, 'Lazarus! Come forth!' and swift
The bands of death were loosed, his fetters rift,
And through thy gates impassable he broke,
So soon as that almighty word was spoke?
Let but that Jesus once invade these halls,
And in that hour thy boasted empire falls!
What if the victim thou dost proudly claim
Shall as the Victor bring thy pride to shame?"

And then He arose the conquering Christ! What a marvelous turn of events! He took control of the situation as with one exultant shout He grasped the keys of death and hell from him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, stripped away the power of death, burst asunder the bars of hell, stalked boldly out in eternal triumph over all the dread powers of that unseen realm, entered back into His body in the garden tomb, passed through the walls of rock as water passes through a filter, ascended up far above all heavens, stepped up to the Father's throne, and presented the tokens of His redemption. The Father said, "Sit down, Son, at my right hand until your enemies are made your footstool!"

Jesus has the keys; He proved that He has the keys of both death and hell; for He unlocked both and arose Victor. Death could not hold its prey! Hell could not hold its prey! Oh Christ! Thou Son of the living God! Thou art the resurrection and the life; Thou wast dead; and, behold, Thou art alive forevermore and in Thy nail-pierced hand dost hold in triumph the keys of hell and death. Oh death, where is thy sting? Oh grave, where is thy victory? Oh gates of hell, thou shalt not prevail, for the Redeemer of Israel and the Saviour of the world holds in His triumphant hand thy key!

Who now has the key of death? OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST! Who now has the key to hell? OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST! He also holds the key to the whole dread realm of sin and sorrow that leads to death and hell! He holds the key to everything, for He has been given *all power* in heaven and in earth! His redemption and His mighty power reach to the lowest depths of the bottomless, within and without. He alone is the One who opens and no man can shut, who shuts and no man can open (Rev. 3:7). No one can open or shut any realm apart from our Lord Jesus the Christ! No one passes through the gates of either death or hell, or any other height or depth, except the Lord open or close those gates. Oh, the wonder of it!

Some suppose that it is the devil who is given the key to the bottomless pit. But now that Christ has the keys of death and hell it is not to be imagined that He is about to surrender or concede into the hands of Satan, or any of his emissaries, whether man or spirit, any portion of His own authority. We must not confuse the "bottomless pit" with Hades, nor should we think of a literal opening of a literal pit, and an eruption of the spirits of demons upon the earth. Fancies like these easily gain ascendancy over the minds of those people who only think carnally. The truth is so much more glorious! The "star" who has come down from heaven is Christ our Lord! We are helped to identify Him, for "the key of the pit of the abyss" is given to Him, and He unlocked this place. Also, He is "the angel of the abyss," and He is "king" over the terrible swarm of locusts that fly out of the smoke from the abyss. The devil is not *king* over anything! Christ has overcome him, conquered him, stripped him, spoiled him, and destroyed him! Aren't you glad!

When John relates his vision of the “key” to the abyss being given to the One called a “star” many people imagine that the prophet is speaking of a literal metal device hanging on a key ring like one uses today to unlock a door. In vision John may have seen such a key, but the key spiritually symbolizes something infinitely greater! Yes, a key does open or close something, but it can also be a word that releases some power that has been restricted, or binds some influence that has gone unrestrained; it can also be a word that opens a hidden mystery or a means by which something unknown is discovered. A key can also be the answer or solution to a problem, quandary, plight, or dilemma! A key also bespeaks of authority and power. In the natural, when one is given the key to his new car, he then has the authority to start it up and drive it away. Jesus said, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth!” And spiritually He has been given the key to the bottomless pit or abyss which lies *in the heart of man!*

Thank God, our Lord Jesus Christ has the key, the solution to every dark realm of bondage, sin, sorrow, pain, death, and hell that any man can know without or within. He has all the problems connected with man’s deliverance and transformation unraveled and solved! When on earth He worked out the problem for Himself, overcame in it, and now stands to proclaim to all men everywhere the GREAT EMANCIPATION. Through His sinless life of perfect obedience to the Father, and through His death and resurrection, Christ took away from the adversary every power of sin, death, and from hell its power of containment; no longer can negation claim the final victory over any man — CHRIST HAS THE KEY, and shall ultimately bring every man into the fullness of *His Life*. Christ has the *power* to deal with every issue in every man, and in every realm, and He holds the keys to everything every where!

OPENING THE ABYSS

“And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star that had fallen from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key to the bottomless pit. And he *opened the bottomless pit...*” (Rev. 9:1-2)

Throughout the book of Revelation various things are *opened*. A door is opened in heaven, heaven itself is opened, the seven seals are opened, the ark of the covenant is opened, the temple of God is opened, the book of life is opened, the books of man’s soulical life are opened, and the bottomless pit is opened. The purpose of each of these “openings” is that there may be a *revelation!* Each, spiritually, is an opening up, an uncovering, a disclosure, a revelation of a realm of consciousness, experience, and of a state of being! With the key to the bottomless pit the Lord opens the pit and brings forth a revelation of what is in the pit. We have all had God open up our life and reveal things out of the imaginations of our heart that even we never dreamed were there! A messenger, a word, a dealing of God came and revealed ourselves to ourselves, making manifest things that lurked in the darkness of our human heart. Often, when we see what comes up out of the pit we are horrified — we thought those things were dealt with, crushed, and crucified long ago! We didn’t think we were like that anymore! Yet suddenly there it is in all its hideous deceitfulness and wickedness and we are shocked! This is especially true when it is the “abyss” that is opened! The abyss bespeaks of the very *lowest realm, the heart of the natural man*; and it is there that the *root* of all deceitfulness and wickedness lies. We may have cut off the branches of the tree, or even chopped down the tree, but until we go deep enough to lay the ax to the root of the tree, it will continue to spring up after we think we have eradicated it!

I have found that there is a tendency in each of us to try and place the carnal mind and human heart under law to make them submit. Any man who tries to discipline and control the flesh by laws, commandments, rules, or regulations, whether imposed from without or within, has not yet learned the important truth that “the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it *is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*” (Rom. 8:7). It is *impossible to subdue* the carnal mind, the flesh nature, or the heart of man! You cannot make the natural man submit. He may appear for a season to submit, but as long as there is any root buried beneath the surface, he will rise again. Those beastly impulses and desires on the inside cannot be harnessed and made obedient. They cannot be changed or transformed no matter what you do! You can restrain the man of sin by a law, or by sheer will power, and it will appear that you are doing quite well; but deep within, lower than your eye can see or your instincts can discern, the evil is still boiling, churning, bubbling, smoldering, and like a volcano, building up to erupt again in the moment when you least expect it. That is the law of human life! That is what it is, it has always been what it is, and it always will be what it is. “That which is *born* of the flesh, *is flesh*.” But the flesh is *not the real you!* The real you is *spirit* — not

soul, not body, not carnal mind, not flesh, not the old Adamic heart. The real you is the offspring of God, the real you is a new creation, the real you is the Christ life — that is the real you, and indeed, if we can comprehend the deep mystery of it, it is the *only you!*

When the pit is opened and those ugly things of soulical deceit and fleshly wickedness begin to come out we are horrified and ashamed and run to hide as Adam did in the garden. But this is God's purpose — these things *need* to come out, be exposed for what they are, until the indwelling Christ can deal with them! What comes out of our pit does not define who we are, and we want to get rid of it. We must be very honest about the difficult places in our lives! We see things in us that we think are so awful, whether wicked or religious, and surely God can't have anything to do with us, we can never be worthy of His love or to attain to His great purpose and high calling in Christ Jesus. So we start looking for a king to govern us, for an authority to come into our lives and deal with those horrible things in our pit. We look for a law, a method, a technique, a man, a group of brethren, an order, a covering, an apostle, some external power that can help us control the monsters in our pit!

The procedure whereby the Lord brings His judgment into our lives is simple, but very effective. When He sets His hand to deliver us from any negative realm of our lives, He "opens" that realm, bringing it into manifestation so that He can show it to us and begin His dealing in our life. God arranges the circumstances, places His child in a situation or circumstance where that which lies buried deep within the unconscious or in the depths of nature is brought to the surface — the inner condition uncovered, the secrets and intents of the heart made manifest. As it is written, "God shall bring *every work* into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccl. 12:14). Notice what these "works" are — *good and evil!* These works are from the tree of the knowledge of *good and evil!* The good bespeaks of that which is moral, sophisticated, and religious! The evil speaks of that which is perverse and corrupt! But God will judge our "good" just as He will judge our "evil." Neither is acceptable to Him, neither is of Him, and neither is fruit from the tree of HIS LIFE! Good religious works are just as far from Life as are adultery and murder!

"God shall judge the *secrets of men* by Jesus Christ" (Rom. 2:16). Let no one who reads these lines think that this will happen some fearful day out in the future before a great white throne out in space somewhere! Oh, no! These are *spiritual realities*, my beloved. They point to the dealings of God in judgment right now, today, in the life of every son of God who shall be conformed into the image of God's Son, brought unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ! Ah, you will fear and shrink before God's judgments until you clearly understand that God does not open your abyss to either embarrass or destroy you — but to *deliver you!* God brings no man to judgment apart from the exposing of his heart. That is the true *spiritual message* conveyed by these beautiful *symbols* in the book of Revelation! It is a divine law — God can never deliver you, or any man, until the deceitfulness and wickedness in your heart has been drawn into outward manifestation, exposed to be dealt with by God's stern and tender hand. When the inner nature, whether a religious spirit or some secret sin, erupts in some outward uncleanness, do not despair! Thank God for exposing the deceitfulness and wickedness, cast yourself upon the tender mercies of the Lord who judges you with unconditional love and infinite goodness, and yield yourself under His mighty hand that He may bring forth victory *in your earth*. We must never be discouraged nor feel condemned when God *reveals* the man of sin who sits in the temple of God which we are, but neither should we become complacent about it! God will send forth judgment unto victory however long it takes and however severe the dealings. He will never abdicate His throne, He will never terminate His judgments until *every man* is presented perfect in Christ Jesus! It is indeed wonderful!

Ray Prinzing expressed the truth in these words: "Because God would *try* us and *purge* us, He must needs at times arrange for more of our FALL. However, 'Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me' (Micah 7:8), and in His time there is a coming forth out of the delusion, the error, the fall, what ever form it took. Praise God, He shall bring us to that place where there is nothing within us that responds to any allurement of this world's system in any way. How we long to come to that place in God where we can truly say with Jesus Christ, 'The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me' (Jn. 14:30). That there will be nothing within us which gives the adversary a toe-hold that he can activate, use to beguile us, tempt us, and cause us to stumble. So while we weep to see one we love slip into some delusion or cultic doctrine, or some uncleanness, etc. we can stand by

in prayer and belief, to **know** that after God has **tried** and **purged** them they shall come forth **as gold** — to be found to His praise” — end quote. Bless His wonderful name!

THE “AIR”

“And he *opened the bottomless pit*; and there *arose a smoke out of the pit*, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the *sun* and the *air were darkened* by reason of the smoke of the pit” (Rev. 9:2).

Now, let us reveal to you a great mystery; the mystery is that in its spiritual meaning “air” signifies the realm of SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING. It can also denote the SPIRITUAL ATMOSPHERE — the spiritual environment, tone, tenor, mood, feeling, aura, or spirit — both within and without. With these two principles in mind, let us look at a statement of the apostle Paul’s wherein he says, “We...shall be caught up together with them...to **meet** the Lord **in the air**: and **so** shall we ever be with the Lord” (I Thes. 4:17).

Several years ago, while meditating upon this precious passage of scripture, the Spirit unfolded within my consciousness the significant truth that our “catching up into the air” can never be properly understood apart from the apostle’s inspired words to the Ephesians, “And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the **prince of the power of the air**, the **spirit** that now **worketh in** the children of disobedience” (Eph. 2:1-2). There are several key words and terms that unlock the storehouse of truth contained in these verses. Consider — PRINCE, POWER, AIR, SPIRIT, WORKETH, and IN. According to these plain statements of scripture there exists a “**power of the air**.” Furthermore, the “power of the air” is a “spirit,” and this spirit is located “in” the sons of disobedience, wherein he “works.” Can we not see by this that the “prince of the power of the air” is not something or someone outside of us, but a spirit-power that operates right here WITHIN MAN! Then, too, this spirit-power that works within man also emanates from man, exerting an influence throughout the atmosphere of our lives, both individually and collectively, giving motivation to the myriad activities and events that transpire in the world. Because of its influence out from us and around us, it is called the “**power of the AIR**.”

Dr. Charles Price wrote a little book entitled *Made Alive* in which he shares this instructive information: “Every atom of matter — every piece of mineral — indeed everything which is the result of God’s creative intelligence is surrounded by an ‘aura’ or an emanation which is identical with and corresponds to the *nature* of the substance from which it comes. There is a sense in which personalities are possessed with this ‘emanation’ and ‘extension’ of themselves into their surroundings. It is a radiation which can be felt when someone walks into a room in which you may be seated. Our personality becomes affected by their personality. They have power to elevate or depress” — end quote.

I would like you to really get a grasp of this thought! We *all* know people who by their very presence can lift us up, and impart a sense of well-being, who can lift our spirits up to heights of peace, joy, confidence, and victory. Others can leave you feeling depressed just by spending a few minutes in their presence! The thought I want you to get is the fact that every atom of created material, in especially every living thing, has this aura surrounding them, which is a radiation of their mind, emotions, personality, and nature into their surroundings. It is an extension of themselves into their environment! This ‘aura’ or emanation corresponds to our nature, and *is* our nature and feelings radiating from us into our surroundings, and it affects everything around us. These emanations have **power** just as within ourselves we have **power**. It is a radiation that flows from our souls and spirits, and the stronger our souls or spirits are the greater the radiation. If you find it difficult to believe the very atmosphere or air waves are charged by the emanations of energy, positive or negative, then go directly from a worship service where the atmosphere is charged with the presence of God, and enter a night club where people are drinking, cursing, lusting, laughing, and singing, and the difference you feel in a very real way is the difference between the emanation of the positive and negative life force. And this power which works in man, and flows out in the atmosphere from man, is the “**power of the air!**”

Grasp it! A hundred and fifty years ago we could not have understood as we do now how communication by sound and picture can be broadcast instantaneously **through the air**. Wherever you are as you read these words, there are voices, pictures, and music **in the air** around you. You cannot see them or

hear them, but a radio or television set tuned to the right wavelength will make them audible to you. You may not have realized it, but both the soul and the spirit in every man are both a receiver and a transmitter. You may be tuned in on the wavelength of the Holy Spirit or you may tune in on the wavelength of Satan, the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience. You don't hear anything with your natural ears because soul and spirit do not broadcast in words or sounds. Soul and spirit broadcast in thoughts and attitudes, and the life force of the natural man broadcasts in thoughts and attitudes of self-will, pride, lust, vanity, arrogance, greed, jealousy, anger, envy, fear, competition, selfishness, intellectualism, strife, hatred, violence, religiosity, debate, bitterness, and a host of other things. Here is the real cause of all the world's evils! The people hear no audible voice, they do not see a visible Satan, and they comprehend not from whence come such attitudes, impulses, and desires!

Let us explore this thought of the *spirit* that *works in man*, which is also the *power of the air*. We must understand that the life force of every man (soul and spirit) is *energy*. This means that you as a person, a personality, *are ENERGY!* Many people confuse *soulical energy* with *spiritual energy*. This is particularly true in the Metaphysical and New Age movements. There are emanations of energy they have learned to channel which they suppose are *spiritual* when in fact they are *soulical*. These have not learned the difference between soul and spirit! Until our spirit has been joined to God's Spirit (I Cor. 6:17) man is incapable of emanating *divine spirit energy*. Just as fire ignites the coal, causing it to release its heat energy, so the Holy Spirit, as divine fire, ignites the spirit of man causing it to release divine energy. This truth reveals the great importance of the words of John the Baptist concerning Jesus, "HE shall baptize you with the *Holy Ghost*, and with *Fire*" (Mat. 3:11). I have been in the presence of those who operate out of soulical energy, not having been quickened by the Holy Ghost, and it is easy for one who walks in the Spirit of God to discern that there is *no spiritual life* in their ministrations!

Energy has many forms, but it is not something that you can see or hold in your hand. You can think of energy as something that can make things change. For example, a moving object has energy because it can change things by crashing into them. Heat is another form of energy. You could fill your house with coal or fuel oil and it would never heat your house; but cause the coal or oil to *release (emanate) the energy* within it and the temperature will rise! Heat energy can melt ice, changing it to water, and heat it more, changing it to vapor. It can run the engine of an automobile, jet plane, or rocket. There is another kind of energy, called chemical energy. This is in the food that nourishes your body and keeps you active. There is atomic energy which can be set free from the atoms of some materials. And then there is the energy carried by light waves, called electromagnetic energy. It is the electromagnetic energy in the sunlight that warms the earth. Light waves, streaming out of the sun, carry energy to us across nearly a hundred million miles of space. When the energy of the light hits the earth, part of it changes to heat. Just as the light waves emanate from the sun and bring energy to the earth to change things, so the soulical and spiritual energy of man flow out from our lives to affect and change things about us! That is the mystery.

Another kind of energy which we, the people of God, are aware of is SPIRIT ENERGY! The principles stated above show us that God, as a *holy spirit being*, possessing holy spirit characteristics, exerts holy spirit *influences*. The influences of God are no less God than is the personality of God. God Himself is supreme energy — able to influence and change *all things!* But the characteristics, attributes, virtues, power, nature, and mind of God are likewise energy, spirit energy. The Bible declares that God is LOVE. It doesn't say that God *has* love, but God IS LOVE! That is His nature. Did you know that love is energy? You won't have to think about that very long to realize that it is true. Love is a powerful force that can influence and *change things!* Love is invisible, like the wind, but it is powerful! And love can be transmitted, invisibly, from person to person, even as light rays are transmitted from the sun to the earth. The qualities of love can be received by those around us even as the life-giving qualities of the sun are utilized by every living thing on earth. Righteousness, peace, and joy are likewise emanations of the life force of God by the Spirit!

On the other hand, Satan is also spirit and possesses an un-holy spirit mind, disposition, nature, will, etc., and exercises an un-holy spirit influence through various channels and agencies. Therefore, Satan is *also energy* — mis-directed energy, negative energy, deceiving energy, destructive energy. I cannot over-emphasize the significance of this! Each characteristic of either God or Satan is a FORM OF SPIRIT ENERGY! This energy can be transmitted to our conscious mind, from either the regenerated spirit or the

old human heart, to produce its power within us, just as electricity is transmitted from a battery to an engine to make it function in a certain way. When the “spirit of holiness” is transmitted to us we begin to function in our personality in the expression of God’s holiness, thus becoming holy. When the “spirit of truth” is transmitted to us we cease our own natural reasonings and the deceptive teachings of our carnal heart and commence to act in accordance with the higher knowledge and wisdom of God. Oh, the mystery of it!

Never forget, my beloved, that all the attributes and characteristics of the Holy Spirit and the Un-Holy Spirit ARE SPIRIT, and therefore **energy — power!** As we walk in either of these realms of spirit-power there is ALWAYS A TRANSMISSION OF ENERGY! None of us is an island to ourself, the emanations that flow out from our life affect the world around us and change things, consciously or unconsciously, visibly or invisibly, for the better or for the worse. There is constantly in this world a definite transference of spirit energy from person to person, from group to group, from religion to religion, from nation to nation, positive or negative as the case may be. The rise and success of false religions, communism, sexual immorality, rock music, drugs, humanism, and evils of every kind that are flooding our societies today, are the direct result of negative satanic spirit influences transmitted to the masses through faithful ministers of unrighteousness who have become filled with the UN-HOLY SPIRIT, and consequently transmitters of the same, producing a **SURCHARGED ATMOSPHERE!** This, my beloved, *is* “the power of the air,” the “spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience!” Satan has a large elemental power. He is named the “prince” of the power of the air, meaning he is the INVISIBLE RULER, which activity and authority he exercises **IN AND THROUGH MAN!** Truly, he is the spirit that “worketh *in* the sons of disobedience.”

The word for “air” in the Greek language is *aer* meaning “to breathe.” The “power of the air” is thus the ENERGY OF BREATHING! Thoughts from the unconscious realm **breathed out** — expressed in words in the conscious realm and lived out as deeds in the physical realm — go forth as energy, power, soulful and spiritual influences in the very atmosphere of the earth. These are not *merely* thoughts or *merely* words, for the soul and spirit of man are tapped into the timeless sphere of eternity wherein is that which is called by the scriptures “the powers of the heavens.” This is the realm of **pure energy**, and the unconscious mind of man is tapped into this vast supply of energy, either positive or negative, and not only tapped in, but when the mouth is opened, or the body acts, the energy is brought forth through the conscious realm and released into the atmosphere of man’s physical world, carrying a very real power capable of either blessing or cursing mankind!

The great mystery and the great truth that the Holy Spirit would now reveal to all who have ears to hear is that there is a “catching up in the air” to “meet Christ in the air” and “so shall we ever be with the Lord.” The natural-minded Christian is looking to be suddenly snatched up into the air, away from the earth, to inhabit mansions on golden streets somewhere in the blue beyond. The spiritual-minded elect of the Lord, however, look to be LAID HOLD UPON BY A HIGHER POWER and lifted into a realm in the Spirit from whence they can do something for this world! These are looking to **become the power of the air** as God moves to bring down the dark powers of the heavens that have ruled over this planet. It means that when Satan is bound in man and thus removed from his sphere of operation “in the air,” THAT POSITION IS NOT GOING TO GO UNFULFILLED! ANOTHER POWER MUST BE RAISED UP INTO THAT VACATED REALM OF DOMINION TO BECOME THE ENERGY FORCE THAT INFLUENCES THE INHABITANTS OF THE WORLD, giving direction and motivation to every activity and event wrought upon earth. That, my beloved, is what it means to the **“caught up into the air!”** When the manifest sons of God flood the atmosphere with the vibrations and powers of redemption, righteousness, peace, love, joy, power, life, and glory, what changes shall be wrought in the earth! What deliverance and transformation will flow forth to the peoples of the nations! Oh, the wonder of it!

The glory of God is the emanation or radiation of His nature, and this glory surrounds Him wherever He manifests Himself. As we become partakers of the divine nature, we also radiate the glory of His nature. This is the real purpose of our calling, and the meaning of being caught up into the air! Recognize, O saint of God, the radiant glory that is even now vibrating from your being, and seek His presence, that the glory and power might be greatly increased and intensified for the sake of His body as well as a lost world. You can change the atmosphere about you, regardless of how dark or hopeless it may appear. You can radiate His power and glory, like a blazing light where darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people. Arise

and shine! Your light has come! The glory of the Lord is risen upon you, and His glory shall be seen upon thee!

As we militate upon these things we begin to comprehend the great truth, the great mystery that the spirit of revelation is now unveiling to us, the mystery that the “air” in its spiritual sense signifies *first of all* the **understanding** — especially our **spiritual understanding**. You see, my beloved, we can only fill the world with the glory of God as first we have put on the MIND OF CHRIST. It is His *mind* in man that changes everything! Understanding is an ability and faculty of the mind. Without mind there can be no understanding. A man’s understanding corresponds precisely to the condition, development, and quality of his mind. Every created life form possesses mind and the understanding of the creature is limited by the quality of its mind. For instance, a cat thinks like a cat simply because it has a cat mind. We used to have a cat in our home. This cat would come and sit in the room while I watched the evening news on the television. While I was very interested in the news, the cat had positively no interest at all! He couldn’t care less! It is not that he didn’t see the pictures flashing across the screen, or hear the words coming out of the speaker. He both saw and heard, alright, but he didn’t understand them — so he just curled up on the carpet and went to sleep! It is simply impossible for cats to understand things human. Humans are of a different and higher order than are cats. Cats may see men, observe their movements, yet there is no common ground of knowledge. The cat has no comprehension of what it sees. It discerns only things pertaining to its own realm. If you want to get the cat’s attention, turn a mouse loose in the house! Then the cat will get interested! Cat minds function on the level of cat nature, while human minds function on the level of human nature.

Likewise, God is of a different and higher order of life and nature than are humans. The mind of the natural man functions on the level of human nature, whereas the mind of God functions on the level of divine nature. There is no common ground of knowledge or understanding between the two! Therefore, the natural man is completely incapable of comprehending that which pertains to the realm of God. For natural minds to comprehend things spiritual is equally as impossible as for cats to comprehend things human! Yet — deep within every man there is a secret sanctum where dwells the mysterious essence of his true being. Though the natural man does not function of that level, it is there, just as the beautiful butterfly that will one day fly through the atmosphere lies deep within the being of the earth-bound caterpillar. This inmost reality is that part of man which separates him from every other living creature and makes him uniquely mankind!

This deep-in human entity of which I speak is called in the scriptures *the spirit of man*. “For what man knoweth the things of man, save the *spirit of man* which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, save the *Spirit of God*” (I Cor. 2:11). As God’s self-knowledge lies in the eternal Spirit, so man’s self-knowledge is by his own spirit, and his knowledge of God is by the direct union of the Spirit of God with the spirit of man. I cannot overstress the importance of this in our forward walk into our destiny as sons of God! This truth denies that man is an earthly, physical being having a spirit and declares, rather, that he is *a spirit having a physical body*. That which makes man truly *man* is not his body but his spirit, in which the image of God originally lay.

Wonderful words were spoken at the very dawn of civilization, recorded in the oldest book of the Bible, which state simply and powerfully the reality of man. “There is a *spirit* in man: and the *inspiration* of the Almighty giveth them understanding” (Job 32:8). It is something great in man, Elihu conceives, that he *is spirit*, and, because he is, is capable of being *inspired*. He is not here speaking of Adam as he was in the primordial glory of Eden, nor yet of regenerated man in this wonderful age of the Holy Spirit; but, speaking thousands of years ago in the present tense, he magnifies man as being able to be inspired, just because he *is spirit*. And it is God, who likewise is spirit, that inspires him! Can we not see by this that the very being of man has a God-ward side, being related constitutionally to Him. The testimony of scripture is incontrovertible that there *is a spirit in man*, and that *we are, as being spirit, permeable and inspirable by the Almighty!*

This reveals man’s capacity for God; to experientially know the presence of God, to let in the divine nature, to entertain the eternal Spirit witnessing with his spirit, to be energized by Him and filled with His glory, in every faculty, feeling, and power, being a vessel and channel for the life of God, to think His thoughts and do His works. Thus, “*the Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children*

(offspring) of God!" (Rom. 8:16). And "*because ye are sons*, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son *into your hearts (spirit)*, crying, Abba, Father!" (Gal. 4:6). "There is a *spirit* in man, and the *inbreathing* of the Almighty giveth them understanding." Only because *man is spirit* is all this possible!

We will never, in this age, be fully able to comprehend the boundless power of the mind of man. It appears to be true that practically everything of good and evil in the world comes forth from the mind. Even the natural mind, though it understands not the things of the Spirit of God, is capable of astonishing wonders. All the marvelous inventions of the world have proceeded from the mind of man, yet the natural mind *receives not* any of the things of God! As heaven is higher than the earth, so are God's ways higher than man's and God's thoughts higher than man's. The man who receives of God's life is renewed in the *spirit of his mind*, that is, he takes on a new mind originating in a new Spirit Life, so that he thinks and acts as an entirely new creation, a new man, a new creature. The mind which is produced in the new creation is the mind of Christ, for, Paul says, "Who hath known the mind of the Lord? But *we have the mind of Christ*" (I Cor. 2:15). What is the mind of *Christ*? Christ came as a man whose human mind was brought into union with the mind of His Father. It is the mind of the Father expressed in and through and as our mind! It is the mind of *sonship*! Again the apostle exhorts, "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts; and *be renewed in the spirit of your mind*; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:22-24).

The child of God who follows on to know the Lord will find that his darkened mind will completely give way to this new creation mind which is the *mind of Jesus Christ*. Paul wrote, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." The mind that was in Jesus was the Father's mind! Because He was fully possessed of His Father's mind, He was able to say, "I and the Father are one." The mind that was in Christ Jesus is freely offered to every man who believes into His name that he might be *one with Christ* and *one with the Father*, sons of God in the true and perfect sense of the word. Let us never forget that in those glorious ages to come it will be the mind of our heavenly Father that will rule the universe! The Father has decreed that He will rule the universe by that man (the corporate Christ) whom He has chosen, and those sons, every one, will be possessed of the Father's divine mind. God the Father has given His mind to His firstborn Son, Jesus Christ, and He in turn has given that same mind to us, His younger brethren. As the hands and feet of a healthy body act in harmony with, and obedience to, the head, so every member among the sons of God, the corporate Christ, acts in harmony with, and obedience to, their glorious Head, even Jesus, because one mind dwells in us all! Isn't it wonderful!

All understanding is in the mind, therefore, the Understanding of God is in the mind of Christ, which is the mind of the Spirit, which is also the mind of the new creation man. We do not understand the spiritual realities of God with our natural minds! It is not the same mind that understands how to drive your car that understands the deep and eternal mysteries of the Spirit. Oh, no! It is the new mind, the mind of Christ within, that understands things spiritual. When Jesus received the seven spirits of God He received the Spirit of Understanding! (Isa. 11:1-2). This was not the same understanding of the same mind by which he built furniture in Joseph's carpenter shop! This Spirit of Understanding is one aspect of the fullness of the *mind of God* — to understand *as God* Understands!

"Wisdom is the principle thing," said the wise man; "therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting, *get understanding*" (Prov. 4:7). "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the *knowledge of the holy is understanding*" (Prov. 9:10). "It is sport to a fool to do mischief, but a man of *understanding* hath wisdom" (Prov. 10:23). "It is better to get wisdom than gold, and *understanding* is rather to be chosen than choice silver" (Prov. 16:16). "*Understanding is a wellspring of life* unto him that hath it" (Prov. 16:22).

Hear it! "*Understanding is a WELLSPRING OF LIFE* unto him that hath it." Certainly one reason so many millions of humans are lost and dying upon this earth today is because they neither know who, where, nor why they are. Truly a great darkness is upon the human family! This condition is explained by Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians. "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the *vanity of their mind*, having the *understanding darkened*, being alienated from the life of God *through the ignorance* that is in them, because of the *blindness of their heart*" (Eph. 4:17-18). In this passage we learn, among other things, this one simple truth: **DARKNESS IS IGNORANCE**. In its spiritual meaning, to be in darkness is to be in ignorance! Ignorance is a condition of the *mind*, in

which the mind *lacks understanding*. The inspired apostle tells us that men have their “understanding darkened” because of the “ignorance” that is in them! It means that either they don’t know much, or the information they have been given is incorrect! And it is this condition of *spiritual ignorance* that causes the whole world of men, and vast numbers of the Lord’s precious people, to walk in darkness, alienated from the abundant life that is in God! Oh! How many of the Lord’s people walk in spiritual darkness, or spiritual ignorance, because the teaching they have been fed by those who are supposedly the messengers of God is not the truth at all! Men are in darkness because the blindness of their hearts has kept them from the glorious Light of Christ penetrating into their lives!

The next time you stand ready to condemn men for their slowness to see the glories you behold, give place to the *spirit of understanding* that it may possess you; then you will surely know that men’s hearts are smitten by the terrible darkness of ignorance, causing their understanding to be darkened. This is the state of spiritual blindness! And the great truth is that GOD ALONE CAN OPEN THE EYES OF THE BLIND! We have a great pity for the man who has some awful handicap because of a physical defect from the time of his birth, for understanding has taught us that these afflictions come through no fault of his own. Just as the man Jesus healed was *born blind*, so have all men been born into this world *spiritually blind*! Why then do we cast aside the spirit of understanding by demanding that he whose spiritual eyes have never been opened should be able to see the mountains filled with the hosts of the Lord?

Ah, when Jesus healed the blind man outside of Bethsaida, it was not immediately a complete healing! After spitting on his eyes and putting His hands upon him, he asked him if he saw anything. The man looked up and said, “I see men as trees, walking.” After that Jesus put His hands again upon the man’s eyes, and made him look up. He was then made every whit whole and saw everything clearly! We would think that when men come to Jesus for salvation, and are born again, that their blindness, or spiritual ignorance, would be healed. Not so! They still see through a glass darkly because the gospel preached to them, in most cases, is not a pure word of the Lord! When we were first saved just enough Light shone in to reveal Jesus as Saviour. We joyfully embraced what became revealed unto us in that measure of Light, but what a great darkness prevailed even yet in so many areas of our lives! And then so many doctrines and traditions of men, so much “spiritual ignorance” and “spiritual foolishness” was fed to us by the church systems of man that we were never able to clearly see, and of the things we did see we could not tell for certain whether they were *trees* or *men*! Oh, yes! The Lord has had to put His healing hand upon every one of us *again* before we could begin to see as we ought to see! That is the mystery!

The mind is the understanding organ, and when the spiritual mind (the eyes of our understanding) is blinded, one is without spiritual understanding. That is what the “air” represents in Revelation 9:2. “And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a *smoke* out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the *sun* (light of Christ) and the *air* (spiritual understanding) *were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.*” The “abyss” signifies the human heart. The “smoke” of the pit signifies the *deceitfulness* of the human heart! This smoke displays a movement, a tendency coming out of the abyss. It is that which comes forth from the heart, the *understanding of the carnal mind* which interprets the things of God on a carnal level and misses the deep *spiritual truth and reality* altogether! Oh! How the churches today are filled with the smoke out of the pit! All the dead, carnal church systems were built by men who were saved by receiving just enough Light to know Jesus as Saviour and Blessor, and then, out of the overshadowing gloom yet untouched in the vanity of their minds and the darkness of their carnal hearts they proceeded to build upon the foundation of Christ every kind of grotesque structure of tradition, ritual, form, error, legalism, fleshiness, and worldliness: great towering edifices of hay, wood, and stubble! The carnal and foolish interpretations of men put upon the word of God, out of the blindness of their hearts, has created a great ignorance among the Lord’s people, and they are alienated from the glorious flow of divine, heavenly, spiritual, and incorruptible Life by the blindness that causes them spiritually to see men as trees, walking!

It has always, from the very beginning when the serpent whispered to Eve, been the adversary’s policy to misrepresent truth, to distort and carnalize the word of God, in order to hinder mankind from seeing the great beauty and majesty of the purposes of God. The more absurdities the adversary can get interwoven into man’s doctrines and concepts respecting God, the church, eternity, the final destiny of man, judgment, hell, heaven, the “end-time,” and a hundred more, the better he will succeed in separating men in their consciousness from reality. Thus for centuries the great adversary has been working most successfully and

has covered and hidden some of the most precious and glorious truths under the most specious and repulsive errors, and the progress of the Lord's people has been correspondingly stunted. But, thank God! we are now living in the time when the veil of ignorance is being dissolved, the blinding smoke from the pit is being blown away, and the people of God are being drawn by the Spirit to look away from the creeds and systems formed for their enslavement during ages past, and to open their hearts directly to the spirit of truth that leads to the living God! Therefore lean no longer upon thine own understanding! Judge neither after the sight of the eyes nor the hearing of the ears, but seek that Living Spirit of UNDERSTANDING that comes from God alone!

This is why Paul so fervently wrote to the saints in Corinth, saying, "Brethren, be not children in *understanding*: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in *understanding BE MEN*" (I Cor. 14:20). Paul prayed for the Ephesian brethren to this end: "The *eyes of your understanding being enlightened*; that ye may *know* (by understanding) what is the hope of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places" (Eph. 1:18-20). And again, "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but *understanding what the will of the Lord is*" (Eph. 5:17). To the Colossians Paul wrote, "For this cause we also, since the day we heard of it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the *knowledge of His will* in all wisdom and *spiritual understanding*" (Col. 1:9-10).

Have you ever prayed that God would *open the eyes of your understanding* that you might truly and correctly and fully know what is the hope of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance *in the saints*? Ah, how much better this would be than to pray for temporal blessings for the outer man, for the heart of the Father is truly pained when He beholds His called and chosen ones neglecting their devotion to His highest purpose while they diligently pray and seek for earthly blessings. Walk no longer in the *vanity* of your mind, having the *understanding darkened*, while alienating yourself from the *life of God* through ignorance! Never spend your days seeking the things of this carnal life, or a golden mansion in some far-off heaven somewhere, for they make themselves wings and fly away and have no power to deliver the creation from the bondage of corruption! Every son of God who is pressing forward to lay hold upon the prize of the high calling of God in Christ is COMING OUT OF THE SMOKE FROM THE PIT, TO STAND UNDER A CLEAR HEAVEN WHERE THE SUN OF DIVINE LIGHT SHINES IN ALL ITS BRILLIANCE AND THE AIR IS PURE AND RAREFIED WITH THE LIFE OF GOD! It is indeed wonderful!

To be continued...

J. PRESTON EBY