

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 114

THE SOUNDING OF THE TRUMPETS (continued)

“And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a *smoke* out of the pit...and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there *came out of the smoke locusts* upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should...hurt...only those men which *have not the seal of God in their forehead*. And to them it was given that they should *not kill them*, but that they should be *tormented five months*: and their torment was as the torment of a *scorpion, when he striketh a man*” (Rev. 9:2-5).

In this graphic symbolic picture of spiritual realities John sees locusts coming forth out of the smoke that billows forth from the abyss. The locusts did not actually come out of the abyss; rather, they originate with, and come out of, the *smoke*! The locusts therefore have an intimate connection with the smoke. Smoke is more of an ethereal, gaseous substance, whereas the locusts have a tangible form. The locusts represent the outward expression and manifestation of a soulical condition. Arising from the pit of the deceitfulness of the heart is the smoke of ego, thoughts, imaginations, desires, ambitions, perceptions, attitudes, interpretations, ideas, concepts, opinions, and beliefs. None of these things are tangible, visible, physical things! Yet out of these come other things! The visible, tangible locusts which come out of the smoke represent the men, ministries, movements, organizations, rulerships, and activities that are spawned by the thoughts, perceptions, ideas, interpretations, and opinions that arise from the human heart!

These “locusts” have as it were the sting of a scorpion and are given authority to *torment* those men who *have not the seal of God in their foreheads*. You will understand a great truth when you understand that you will have torment in your soul — in your mind, in your emotions — until the seal of the living God is placed in your forehead, until you begin to think out of the mind of Christ and live out of the spirit-man which you truly are. The locusts out of the smoke of the pit will torment you *until* you identify with Christ who *is your life* and your *only reality*. If by the grace of God this holy vision can burst upon you, you will stand upon the heights of the mount of God in triumph and victory! Nothing can destroy your true identity or the eternal life you have in Christ! Some who read these lines have passed through some very hard places, pressures, manipulations of men, haunting fear from past wrong teachings, betrayals, temptations, and testings which pressed you beyond measure, and you despaired of life itself. Be of good cheer, my brother, my sister, for the locusts are under commandment from God — they cannot *kill you*!

Their province is to torment those who have not the seal of God in their foreheads, or who are not consciously abiding in the mind of Christ and in the truth as it is in Jesus. Is it not true that the false doctrines and requirements of the church systems of man are a torment to those over whom they exercise control? The “sting” of the scorpion-tailed locusts often involves the emotions of fear, dread, and terror. The underlying essence of religious Babylon’s theology is designed to activate fear — fear of hell, fear of an angry God, fear of God’s displeasure and wrath, fear of being left behind when Jesus returns, fear of coming tribulation, fear of judgment, fear of God’s “curse” if you rob Him by not paying your tithe into the church, fear of blessings withheld because of faults and failures, fear of separation from God if you fail to keep the traditions and ordinances of the church, fear that God will abandon you if you are not faithful to all your

taskmasters demand of you. Oh, yes! Who can deny that these, and many others, are very real fears that torment the minds and emotions of many of the Lord's people in the church systems!

It is my conviction that three of the most painful stings of the locusts come from the infliction of *fear, sin-consciousness, and condemnation* upon God's people. Those of us who grew up in legalistic religious systems, know that many times sin was preached about on Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night. Sin and judgment were preached long and loud, and we came away with a "sin-consciousness." Thank God, those of us who have received the call to sonship have been dealt with by the Lord and He has given us a new mind, even the mind of Christ! Within our consciousness Christ has made an end of sin, He has forgiven all our sins, He has taken away sin, He has borne all our iniquities, He judged sin once and for all and forever at Calvary, He no longer remembers our sins and is not holding them over our head as a bargaining chip in order to either accept or bless us. The mind of Christ in us has taken away and nullified our *sin-consciousness*!

Some years ago Tony Salmon shared the following illustration which, in my opinion, is a powerful elucidation of this precious truth. He wrote, "Is it possible for a cat to be a part of the remnant seed company? If your answer to this question is 'no' I would have to agree, or at least I *would* have agreed, before I learned a valuable lesson from my cat. From this remarkable, furry feline I learned one of the greatest secrets of the kingdom and received a key that unlocks the new life within and causes us to live out of the life of the new creation man. The new man within already is a perfect representation of the Father's love, life, nature, and kingdom but for the new man to be expressed we must first be released from the bars and chains of the prison house of the mind. The new man has been kept under lock and key in solitary confinement and guarded by 'bulls' with names such as doubt, fear, unbelief, guilt, shame, and condemnation. These 'bulls' sprang to life from a seed called a *commandment* and they are the direct result of the Mosaic Covenant which Paul declared to be 'the law of sin and death.' I trust that my cat will be able to help find a missing key for anyone locked inside the reward/punishment paradigm of earned, works-based salvation that comes from trying to walk out the Old Covenant law of Moses.

"You learned all this from your...*cat*?' some are asking. I do realize at this point that some of my readers may think that I have 'flipped my lid' while others are looking at their calendars so they can schedule my cat as a special speaker for their meetings. Well, put your calendars away and just know that Father's heart is expressed through all of His creation. The very moment that God said, 'Let there be light,' the stars came together and formed pictures to tell the wonderful story of Jesus and to reveal the highest expression of love that could ever be shown which was the Father's offering to man — a slain Lamb, a sacrificed Son for the redemption and healing of all mankind. Our perspective of the cross has been that of a sacrifice to satisfy an angry God. This is not love; this is pagan ritual! The sacrifice of Calvary is a **REVERSAL** of the dark, pagan mind. You see, it was not GOD who was angry with man, it was MAN who was angry with God! The sacrifice of Jesus is the 'second mile' that Father is willing to go to win over the love of His lost creation. While Jesus was offering Himself to the Father the Father was offering Him to us. Father was in essence appeasing OUR anger. The offering of the Son is Father showing us His willingness to give His ALL to win us back. The cross is not Jesus standing in the way of an angry God. That is why the Word tells us that God was IN Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, NOT IMPUTING THEIR TRESPASSES UNTO THEM! The plan of redemption was perfect union and harmony between Father and Son. So with all this in mind, please make yourself comfortable while I share with you a message brought to me by my cat.

"After delivering a litter of four kittens, our cat, Misty, became ill and was unable to produce milk. Misty abandoned not only her kittens but her human family as well. Misty left our home and her whereabouts were unknown to us for almost a week. My wife and daughter went into action immediately to save the lives of the newborn kittens. They worked closely with a local pet store and purchased a bottle with a small nipple and a supply of special kitten formula. They literally worked around the clock nursing the kittens and taking care of their other needs. Despite all of their efforts, however, the kittens died one at a time.

"While the last kitten was barely holding on to life, Misty came home. Realizing what a negligent mother she had been, Misty walked to the middle of the living room, dropped her head, and exclaimed, 'I'm

so ashamed! I am responsible for the deaths of my children.’ Was that *really* her reaction? Of course not! In fact, she never missed a beat! She ran into the living room, jumped into my lap to greet me, and held her head high. What she *did* was not affecting who she *is* and she was living in the present reality of who she is rather than in some past mistake or failure.

“How is it that Misty is able to live her life without feeling any guilt, shame, or condemnation over a tragedy that she really had no control over anyway? It is because she has never eaten from the tree of *the knowledge of good and evil* — that tree that God commanded us not to eat from, or even touch, lest we die. Let’s imagine for a moment what would have happened if Misty had been a human in the same predicament. Law would have been applied. There would have been police officers, judges, attorneys, social workers, psychologists, and medical doctors all working to determine whether Misty had committed a crime for which she should be held accountable, or if the tragedy had been the result of circumstances beyond her control. Either way Misty, as a human, would suffer the *pain* and *torment* of a *sin-consciousness* and the humiliation of a stigma branded upon her reputation by many of her peers.

“Misty will live out the rest of her days without feeling an ounce of guilt over what happened to her kittens. She is completely free! The most obvious benefit of this freedom is that she is able to fulfill her destiny without the hindrance of shame and inferiority that naturally accompany sin-consciousness. ‘Cats are just animals,’ you might say, ‘they don’t have destinies.’ Misty’s destiny, however, seems to be to show me a picture of the life that can be lived when we live in the new creation rather than in past mistakes and failures. The scope of Misty’s influence reaches well beyond me as I am able to use her story as a teaching tool for the body of Christ.

“Am I saying there is no need for repentance for the things we have done wrong? Absolutely not! What I will say is that we have ‘missed the mark’ in understanding what true repentance is! When I feel that I have broken the heart of my Father I am quick to tell Him that I am sorry and to ask His forgiveness (which has already been given). I tell Him this not out of a fear of punishment but because I love Him and I do not want to misrepresent Him. I LIVE for the relationship with my Father and for His manifest Presence. However, the godly sorrow that *leads* to repentance is NOT repentance! Repentance is a change of mind or a paradigm shift from the old creation that lives in the *dust of the outer realm* to the new man who lives in *heaven* or the spiritual realm within every believer. In other words, my sin is nothing more than an indication that I am living in the wrong realm and thinking with my natural mind rather than with the mind of Christ. Repentance involves a beheading of the natural mind so that the New Jerusalem, the heavenly paradigm or mindset, can descend out of the heavenly realm that exists within every person that has identified with the finished work of Christ. We need to ‘repent’ and begin living AS the new creation man!

“What about you, dear friend. Do you feel hindered from fulfilling your destiny because of some past mistake or failure? Let me tell you that the mistakes you made do not define who you are! You are a regenerated spirit having a human experience. You are the righteousness of God in Christ! That is the truth. The new man within your breast IS the real you! Have you suffered abuse or emotional pain? Do you feel paralyzed and unable to walk in your calling because of the pain? Take courage and know that the abuse was inflicted on an old creation man that no longer exists and your new man is unaffected by anything that has happened to you. Your new man is strong; he is whole. Your new man is already in heaven (the other realm) walking upon a street of gold (walking out a divine nature). Won’t you join him? Will you allow the sword of His truth to remove the old mindset so that you can start thinking with the mind of Christ? ‘Wilt thou be made whole?’” — End quote. May I add to this little story this one remark. When we identify with the new man, the mind of Christ, thinking and living out of that mind, our sins, faults, failures, weaknesses, and the fears, bondages, abuses, and pains inflicted by the “stings” of the locusts of religious minds which heap upon us fears, condemnation, and sin-consciousness, ARE ALL HEALED AND THE LOCUSTS ARE UNABLE TO STING US ANY MORE! They are given power only to torment the natural mind, those men who have not the seal of the living God in their foreheads! Oh, the wonder of it!

TORMENTED FIVE MONTHS

“And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be *tormented five months*” (Rev. 9:5).

The usual time for locusts in the Bible lands was from May through September, that is five months. Furthermore, there are precisely five months from the last day of the feast of Passover to the first day of the feast of Tabernacles, which begins with the blowing of the trumpets. The time is significant! As long as we are living spiritually in the feast of Passover or the feast of Pentecost we are able to be stung by the scorpion-tailed locusts. Until we get a vision of the fullness of God within our spirit, that is, the fullness of God in the Most Holy Place and the fullness of God in the feast of Tabernacles, we do not know or understand the way to victory! We are tormented until we consciously enter in to the feast of Tabernacles, until we enter in to our full inheritance in the spiritual land of Canaan, until we identify with the place of rest and security in the fullness of Christ. We recognize the flesh for what it is, old Adam who lives on a lower level, we cease from our own works, from all self-effort to reform the natural man, doing it our way, to simply *rest* in the goodness and faithfulness and power of the Christ within!

Another beautiful aspect of this truth lies in the fact that Noah's ark floated upon the floods for five months. Five in scripture is the number of GRACE! Noah's ark floating for five months reveals to us the great truth of God's grace given to cover us until we find the answer, the solution of our problem, and all the stings of the locusts, by putting on the mind of Christ. In his book *Number in Scripture* E. W. Bullinger wrote, "Grace means *favor*. But what kind of favor? for favor is of many kinds. Favor shown to the *miserable* we call mercy; favor shown to the *poor* we call pity; favor shown to the *suffering* we call compassion; favor shown to the *obstinate* we call patience; but favor shown to the *unworthy* we call GRACE! This is favor indeed!" Though we have lived far beneath our privileges as mature sons of our Father, subject to the excruciating pain of the locusts' stings, our Father has covered us with His abundant grace until we could grow up enough in Christ to enter experientially into a higher place. We have been in pain and torment! And we stay in torment until the trumpet sounds and we are awakened to the realm of God's fullness. The trumpets announce the feast of the seventh month — the feast of the fullness of God! It is there on the day of Atonement that sin-consciousness is finally and forever removed from our minds. The day of atonement brings us out from under the law into the power of His life within, releasing us once and for all from our torment! But until the work is complete — we are marvelously covered by His grace!

SEEKING DEATH AND NOT FINDING IT

"And in those days shall men *seek death*, and *shall not find it*; and shall *desire to die*, and *death shall flee from them*" (Rev. 9:6).

I tell you, I have read between two and three hundred books on the Revelation given to John on Patmos and the vast majority of them don't have a clue as to what the above passage means. Some say, "This is a strange thing" and they can't figure out how it could be that people can't die. They don't understand it, but they look at it literally and conclude that for some strange reason God will temporarily make men unable to die. Even should you run over them with a Mack truck, shoot them through with an Uzi, poison them, or slit their throats — they can't die! But the book of Revelation is a spiritual book! It speaks of spiritual realities! This desire for death is the result of the horrible "stings" of the scorpion-tailed locusts! The effect of the torment is that the subjects of it become weary of their lives, desire to die, but death flees from them. Death is the only relief from the agony, but nothing they are doing can produce it in them. These people aren't seeking physical death, they want to die spiritually! They seek to die to self! They want their old man to be put to death! They want their carnal mind to be removed! They want their flesh nature to be slain within themselves! They want old Adam to be beheaded, decapitated! For the symbolic period of five months they seek death and cannot find it. They want to die, they're seeking death, they're trying to die, they're even trying by will-power and self-effort to commit suicide, to kill themselves, they believe that this death is what will release the life in them. **But they can't die!**

I wonder how many who read these lines at one time sat under Fundamentalist, Pentecostal or Holiness legalism and got beat up every Sunday, saved every week — you felt so weak and helpless and condemned, you felt you could never make it till next week, so you just wished in a moment of victory that God would just kill you so you could go out into eternity with your sins under the blood. I tell you, my beloved, I know exactly what I'm talking about because I've been there and I've done that! However it was not really physical death that we most longed for, but the death of all within us that was contrary to God and

the pain inflicted upon us by religion through their ministry of condemnation and their misguided efforts to make us “righteous” by outward works!

George Wylie shared some beautiful insights into this dilemma in one of his messages. He wrote, “Just who or what is this ‘old man’ that we have to get rid of? We hear a lot about our carnal nature, and if we live according to the carnal nature it will produce death in us. For years I tried to get rid of this old sinful nature, with negative results (in other words, he was seeking death and could not find it!). We are told in Romans six that our old man is crucified with Christ, and that we are to reckon that he is. I somehow pictured in my mind that this old nature was something I was saddled with, something I would be able to put off and get rid of. Something like a filthy old overcoat that I could take off and discard, leaving me intact. It was something that wasn’t really a part of my personality, but something that had been forced upon me, that made me act the way I did; sort of an evil thing that influenced me to do the wrong things. So I wanted to get rid of this thing so I could live a life pleasing to God. I tried to get this filthy old overcoat off and nail it to the cross, crucify it. For years I tried to picture in my mind this old nature nailed to the cross and crucified, but somehow he never seemed to stay there. I still found him hanging around me!

“I was something like the sister in one of the old churches. We had the habit of bringing everything we wanted to get rid of to the church altar and try to leave it there. I have seen men bring their cigarettes and tobacco, and alcohol too, to the front of the church and leave them on the altar, and go away without them. Sometimes this worked and sometimes it didn’t. This dear sister came to the pastor one day, and said, ‘Pastor, I have a problem. I seem to be able to lay everything on the altar but my tongue. I just can’t seem to leave my tongue on the altar.’ She had a very sharp, bitter tongue, with which she did a lot of damage. The pastor just looked at her and said, ‘Well, sister, what’s the problem? Isn’t the altar long enough?’

“I was having a similar problem with my old carnal nature. Perhaps I wasn’t using the right kind of nails. The thumbtacks I was using just didn’t seem to hold, and he kept coming off the cross. It bothered me that I wasn’t having better results. Someone said that our old man was already crucified, so there was no need to crucify him. It was a little hard for me to identify myself with something that happened two thousand years ago when I wasn’t even around. It just seemed a little difficult to identify myself with the crucifixion of Jesus that happened so long ago. I tried, the Lord knows I tried, but somehow this old self seemed to stay very much alive. He just didn’t want to stay on the cross and die! I tried to reckon him to be so, but he still seemed to stay around, very much alive and well.

“I think we all make this big mistake when we invite the Lord Jesus to come into our hearts and live, and He comes to dwell in us, we treat Him as a guest. In effect we say to Him, ‘Lord, I’m so glad that you came. I am thankful that you are here to live with me. Just sit down and make yourself comfortable, and I will try to fix up this old house and clean it so it will be more to your liking.’ So if we have been smoking, and we know He doesn’t like that, we give it up. If we have been drinking, we quit. We go all over the old house, cleaning up this and getting rid of those things we feel He doesn’t like. We do our best to get rid of bad habits and things we know are not Christ-like, so we will have a fit place for our guest to live in. But the trouble with that is that when we think we have a place cleaned up, we come back and find it just as filthy as ever. The habits that we have tried to break and get rid of, we find ourselves doing over and over again. We find that sin still has power over us, the world still has a great attraction for us, and the things in it. Temptations come and we still find ourselves yielding to them. We are still in bondage to sin, sickness, and death, and all our efforts to free ourselves have produced little or no results. We try over and over again to live a life pleasing to God, and He will let us do it, until we finally come to the place where we realize it is all in vain; that we cannot do it, and that only He whom the Son sets free is free indeed!

“I tried on my own for years; failing over, and over, and over again, until I came to the place where I had to say, What’s the use? Many people when they come to this place, realizing they are not getting anywhere, just give up and let sin and the world have full control over them. This is sad, for it does not have to be! There is victory, but this victory is not in ourselves but in the Lord Jesus. It is the Christ within who is the victory! We come to the realization that He hasn’t come as a guest, but as the rightful owner...we are His possession, every part of us, He bought us, and ‘ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s’ (I Cor. 6:19-20). Christ in us is not a guest, but the owner of the tabernacle; He is rising up to take over the control of all our being, for all is His.

He is rising up to be Lord over all our lives and actions, and only when He is, do we know the liberty and deliverance wherewith only He can set us free.

“When I came to the full realization of this mystery which has been hidden for ages and generations, which is *Christ in us, the hope of glory*; then I began to see things in an altogether different light, and found out how to do things differently. When I realized that He was within me to take over, and wanted to have complete control of my being, I started turning everything over to HIM! No more worry, fretting, regrets, struggle, self-effort, sweat, or tears. We are told to cast all our burdens on Him, for He careth for us. But you see, I had been thinking of the Christ on the cross, or the glorified Son of God in heaven sitting at the right hand of God. So like many others, I was having no end of trouble trying to put these things off and unto Him. It seemed hard to do, because He was someone at a distance, two thousand years back from me, or trillions of miles up in the sky! He was someone at a distance, outside of myself, other than me. But I find no trouble in dealing with the Christ who is within me, right here, dwelling in this house, this earthly house of my body, who *is my life*. So little by little I am learning to turn all over to Him, because all belongs to Him, and He is the Lord and reality of my house!

“I had difficulty relating to the death of Jesus on the cross, which happened so long ago, before ever I walked on earth. But I find it easy to identify with this death which He is dying in me now! This I can easily associate with, because now He *really is my substitute*, not in theory, not as an historical fact, but in actuality. I can easily cast my burdens, my troubles, my cares, my sins and my shortcomings, my carnal desires and thoughts, my sicknesses and diseases, my afflictions and infirmities, not on someone who lived two thousand years ago, and who is now in heaven, but on the one who is alive and lives in me, who, as I trust Him and yield to Him, is arising within me as my very own life to do just this. What a blessed and wonderful thing it is to know Him in this way!

“There is no way you or I can live a godly life. Self cannot do this; only the indwelling Christ as Lord of our beings living out through us from within can produce a life that is God-like. Thank God, He is not a Lord who is afar off, but one who is near to complete the work of our redemption within us. Paul talks about the righteousness of God, and how the Jews were trying to establish a righteousness acceptable to God by self-effort, and said this, ‘Christ is the *end of the law for righteousness* to every one that believeth.’ Moses had said that he that keepeth the law would live by it; but of course no one could keep the perfect law of God, though in their zeal they tried, therefore no one had life! But Christ is the end of that; no more trying to be good, just yielding to Him. Christ is the end of self-effort. Righteousness can only come through Him. But where is He? How is this righteousness attained? Paul goes on to say, ‘But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above). Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead).’ (Rom. 10:6-7). So where is He, this Christ who produces righteousness in us? Bless God, He is near, not afar off. How near? ‘Even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; this is the word of faith, which we preach’ (Rom. 10:8). That’s how near He is! Right within us, to work out His righteousness in us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

“As we yield everything to the Lord within, self is put down and out of the picture; self is dethroned, and when our whole being has been delivered unto the Christ within, self has been abolished. He no longer has any place, he is truly dead, and has no power or authority any longer” — end quote.

It should be clear to all who read these lines that brother Wylie suffered the *torments of the locusts’ stings for his allotted symbolic five months* until he discovered the mind of Christ and the fullness of God within and identified with it. Thank God for the allotted five months, for it will indeed come to an end as we continue to grow and progress into Christ. That is the secret! Never despair, my friend, rest in His love, accept His covering grace, expose yourself to His presence, and follow on to *know* the Lord. The months will pass, the trumpet will sound, the feast of Tabernacles will commence, the glory will overflow, the torment will end, and you will stand triumphant in the victory of Christ within! It is indeed wonderful!

THE APPEARANCE OF THE LOCUSTS

“And the *shapes* of the locusts were like unto *horses prepared unto battle*; and on their heads were *crowns like gold*, and their faces were as the *faces of men*. And they had hair as the *hair of women*, and their teeth were as the *teeth of lions*. And they had breastplates, as it were the *breastplates of iron*; and the sound of their *wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle*. And they had tails *like unto scorpions*, and there were *stings* in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months” (Rev. 9:7-10).

John is being shown all these things in visions, like a great moving picture before his eyes, all these symbolic scenes pass before his face. When he sees these locusts, the shape of which is like horses prepared unto battle, it is evident that he is not seeing either literal locusts or literal horses prepared for battle. No literal locusts could wear on their heads crowns like gold or have the faces of men, or have the hair of women, or have teeth like lions, or wear breastplates of iron, or have tails like scorpions. Nor could literal horses have these either!

The words “like” or “as” occur nine times. In verses seven and eight the locusts’ forepart is described; in verse nine their middle part; in verse ten their hindpart. The prophet Joel has a description of similar beings in the second chapter of his prophecy. These locusts have hair “as” the hair of women, but it is not women’s hair. They have teeth “as” the teeth of lions, but they are not the teeth of lions. Their breastplates are “as” breastplates of iron, but they are *not* iron breastplates. They made a noise that “sounded like” horses and chariots running to battle, but they were *neither horses nor* chariots. If all this were literal can you imagine the abject horror a man would experience some morning when he looks out the window of his house and sees a creature with a man’s face, woman’s hair, and looking like a horse with lion’s teeth and wearing a breastplate walking around in the yard, making its way to the house where he is. There will be no way to keep it out or kill it. But what *purpose* would such a creature serve?

We have noted previously that these locusts represent *religious delusions* propagated by men and movements! They embody the spirit, movement, and activities of religious Babylon. These delusions come with a power as irresistible as a charge of cavalry, as “horses prepared unto battle.” Like horses prepared for battle also signifies that out of man’s own strength he tries to fight the spiritual battle with the carnal weapons of the *letter of the Word*. It is carnal strength, the self-assertiveness of the human will saying, “I can please God, I can serve God, I can do God’s work, I can build the kingdom, I...I...I...I...can!” The ability and wisdom of the flesh seems strong, powerful, awesome, formidable, irresistible, all-conquering!

When we come to the “crowns of gold” we approach a mystery that the Holy Spirit would make real to every son of God. Of God’s priesthood company John said, “And round about the throne were...four and twenty elders sitting...and they had on their heads *crowns of gold*.” These crowns are not the coronets worn by the sovereigns of this present world. The feeble kings and rulers of this dark world system represent in their weakness the transient glory of earth’s passing kingdoms, but the golden crowns on the heads of God’s Royal Priesthood are not like one of these. The most common term rendered “crown” in the New Testament is the Greek word *stephanos*. This crown was usually a laurel wreath woven of fragrant branches, or the like. It was granted to the winners of the Pan Hellenic games and also for a token of public honor for distinguished service — especially of military leaders who had been victorious over their enemies on the battlefield. This crown denotes a VICTOR’S CROWN — the crown of an OVERCOMER!

Golden Stephanos! Golden Victor’s Crowns! Gold is a symbol for the divine nature. And how true that we are only able to overcome by being made partakers of *His divine nature*! To be “crowned” means to be given kingly authority. As the kingly authority and dominion of God’s divine nature now ascends the throne of our lives to rule within us — we are CROWNED, RULED OVER by our Father, but more than this, *made rulers*, not after the strength of the flesh, but in the love, justice, and glory of God’s own character flowing out from our lives! Of course the crowns of fragrant branches won by the Greeks in their athletic contests were short lived, for they soon wilted and became dead and brittle. In contrast to this, *our stephanos* are incorruptible crowns which will never fade away — for the Royal Priesthood is of the Melchizedekian Order — after the power of an endless life! God is even now bringing forth an *incorruptible* people, overcomers, who are overcoming all things. God is teaching us to reign in our lives and in every situation! He is making us a Royal Priesthood! Priests reigning in the Father’s own nature, love, and power! Reconciling the world and subduing all things!

Those *golden stephanos* worn by the twenty-four elders of the Royal Priesthood are the *genuine golden crowns* in the book of Revelation. But when we come to the locusts in chapter nine, they only *appear* to be of divine excellency, wearing, *as it were*, “crowns of gold.” The appearance *as of* crowns of gold indicates that they are not truly crowns of gold — these are fake, imitation, counterfeit crowns! There is that about them which tends to inspire their captives with a superstitious sense of their having received a divine commission from God, and that they exercise the very authority and power of God. When they speak they intend to be heard! They are like kings to those who serve them and their religious systems. The slightest disagreement with either the system or the doctrines brings the fury of a scorpion when it strikes! They have the power of life and death over men. One word from them and you are in danger of eternal judgment...at least that’s what they want the people to believe. What they bind on earth is bound in heaven. You can only receive the mercy of God through them. Yet, though they seem to be crowned, though they appear to have an authority and dominion out of the very nature of God, it is all phony! It is not real! It is assumed, usurped! In fact, they have no authority or power from God at all! You need fear them no longer, my precious brother, my dear sister, their torment over you must end, and they cannot harm you once the *truth* has been gloriously revealed in your spirit! CHRIST IN YOU has *all power and authority in heaven and in earth!* Nothing that originates from the abyss of man’s human heart of deceit and darkness has any right of authority or power over your spiritual life at all. It is a front, an illusion, and a lie.

Sadly, I have seen “kingdom preachers” also wearing these “crowns *as of* gold,” setting *themselves up* as apostles and bishops, and only *they* have the full and true revelation of God, superior to all the other brethren; *they* are the special ones who have been raised up by God to lead the Lord’s elect into the promised land, to bring the saints to maturity and perfection, and if you want to enter the kingdom and put on immortality you must grab on to *their* coattail! Wearing their crowns *as of* gold they gain a following, raise up a movement, build a kingdom, become more and more sectarian, and are at last just another of the many divisions of Babylon.

The locusts’ faces were “as the faces of men,” having the appearance of reason, intellectual credibility, and human intelligence, combined with “hair as of women,” the attractiveness of grace and beauty, signifying that these ministers of religion have an artificial sweetness, catching the innocent in their net. Religious ceremonies, rituals, pageantry, vestments, cathedrals, choirs, stained glass windows, teachings, etc. appear as beautiful, to be desired, and people are drawn irresistibly as one seduced by a woman. Hair also speaks of anointing, which they appear to have, but they speak and devour as lions! It further identifies them as soulical creatures, rather than spiritual beings. In the religious systems of man that which is soulical is always pawned off as being spiritual! Those who thrive on either intellectualism or emotionalism are unable to discern the difference.

Having teeth “as the teeth of lions” these take firm hold on the mind and are ultimately destructive to spiritual life. Truly they seek to devour you, they will hinder you from your growth in the life of the spirit, and rob you of your attainment unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Having breastplates “as it were of iron” they cover themselves with pretexts which make them appear unconquerable, it seems to everyone that these people are equipped with zeal to defend the cause of God, proclaiming loudly their success to which they point as proof of their being the true army of the Lord; their arguments appear to be unanswerable, carried by “wings” having “the sound” of chariots and horses running to battle, that is, the sound of irresistible power — a torrent of words carrying all before it, flying everywhere, winning for them many people, but warring against the Christ within. The wings also denote action, motivation, self-effort to ascend and move into a heavenly realm.

The locusts have tails “like unto scorpions” and there are stings in their tails. The tail is a very important component in the symbolism of this vision. The “sting” of the scorpion-tail is a picture of the spirit of error, misrepresentations of truth, erroneous concepts of God; it is the ministry of the *accuser*, the ministry of *condemnation*, *sin-consciousness*, and *spiritual abuse* with its threatenings of *wrath* and *judgment*. Out of carnal understanding men proclaim as truth that which is mere superstition, legend, and folklore of a carnal interpretation of the word of God. It comes from the smoke out of the deceitfulness of the human heart. Men preach fairy tales as divine truth! It is the language of the pit, the abyss. When we walk in the kingdom of God we speak the heavenly language! When I go to Mexico I speak Spanish, for that

is the language of the nation. The language of the kingdom is the language of life, light, love, encouragement, strength, redemption, transformation, revelation and blessing! The elect of God speak an altogether different language than the religious systems of man! Should an ordinary Christian wander into the midst of a people speaking the mysteries of the kingdom of God, the glories of sonship, and the truth of the great restoration of creation they would understand little, if anything, of what they hear! It would be as a foreign tongue to them, for only those blessed ones taught by the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God have understanding in the language of the heavenlies!

In one of the great passages of Isaiah the Lord announces that He “will cut off from Israel *head and tail...*” and then explains that “the *ancient and honorable*, he is the *head*; and the *prophet that teacheth lies*, he is the *tail*” (Isa. 9:14-15). Here is an interesting comparison! The ancient and honorable, or as it is in one version, the elders and the magistrates, are the *leaders*. They will be cut off because they have caused the people to err. In addition, the false prophet teaching lies is called the *tail*. False doctrine is like the sting of the scorpion. First it poisons, but it leads ultimately to madness. Power is given to the scorpions to “*hurt men five months.*” The very thought evokes fear! Their sting won’t kill you, but it can make you wish you were dead! I have known people who were in deep depression because they thought they had blasphemed the Holy Ghost — the so-called *unpardonable* sin. That is one of the terrible by-products of the ministry of fear and condemnation that spews forth from many pulpits. I know of some poor souls who are locked up in mental institutions because they believe they have committed the unpardonable sin. That is *torment*! And their torment comes from the sting of the locusts which swarm out of the smoke of religious deception! The effect of the false doctrines and religious delusions is the “sting.” What is said of strong drink (Prov. 23:32) may also be said of this *strong delusion*: “At the last it *biteth like a serpent*, and *stingeth like an adder.*”

To be continued...

J. PRESTON EBY