

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 128

THE TWO WITNESSES (continued)

“And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And *their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city*, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified” (Rev. 11:7-8).

The present ministry of the two witnesses will not continue much longer. This ministry will finish, all that God purposed shall be accomplished, and the glorious manifestation of God’s sons shall at last appear before the startled eyes of mankind. The ministry of the two witnesses will come to an end before that great and terrible day of the Lord! Here we have presented in a pictorial manner, the fate of the two witnesses. This dire fate of the witnesses comes from two different sources, one within, the other without. It first comes from the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit, signifying that which arises from within, out of their own heart, overcoming and killing their testimony. We spoke of this at length in last month’s message. Then we have also their treatment at the hands of “the great city.”

I pray that all who now read these lines will seek the Holy Spirit to gain understanding of what it means that their dead bodies shall lie in the street of Jerusalem, the great city, which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt. This cannot mean that two dead bodies shall lie in the literal sense of the word in the literal street of Jerusalem! In the Revelation the high significance lies in the fact which cannot be denied that “the street” where the bodies of the two witnesses lie is the street of the great city of *religion*, common to all the believers in the world who dwell in the “earth realm” of carnality, and therefore cannot be confined to one particular city or one certain street. “The great city” is no more a literal city than is the beast who ascends out of the bottomless pit a literal beast! The text itself clearly shows that something entirely different is meant, something *spiritual*. “...the great city, which *spiritually* is called Sodom and Egypt.” Jerusalem signifies false Christianity, the city of God that has corrupted its way before the Lord. The title, “the great city,” is used no less than eight times elsewhere in the Revelation, and in every case applies to religious Babylon (Rev. 14:8; 16:19; 17:18; 18:10,16,18, 19,21). By a careful examination of these passages, it will be clear that the reference is not to *literal* Babylon, but exclusively to *mystical* Babylon. We have noted that this “great city” is “*spiritually*,” or symbolically, called “Sodom,” for its soulful sensuality and wanton spiritual immoralities. It is spiritually called “Egypt,” for its tyranny and oppression; and “Babylon” now for its confusion, heresy, and malignity. The Gentiles, that is, the flesh, the carnal mind, and the worldly ways of natural men trample under foot the “holy city,” that is, the people of God, for the same period of time that the witnesses prophesy. The two witnesses, the prophetic ministry of the Spirit and the Word through an anointed company, now lie dead in the street of the great city of *religion*, the large, popular, recognized world church system of man. The elect still exists in their midst, but they are now declared dead. Their voice has been silenced. And they are the object of contempt and ridicule throughout the great city of religion!

It is of interest to note the “street” or “broadway” in this great city, and compare it with the “street” or “broadway” in the Holy City, New Jerusalem which comes down from God out of heaven. The “great city”

has a street or Broadway, and “the Holy City,” representing the Lord’s purified and perfected people, has a street or Broadway. In the street of the great city we see darkness, death, revelry, and merrymaking of different kinds. We see the citizens of the great city fraternizing with the ungodly people and systems of the world. In the street or Broadway of the Holy City, we see gold, speaking of true riches, the divine, incorruptible nature of God! We see the throne of God and the Lamb, and we also see the tree of life abounding by the sparkling waters of the river of life which flows from the throne of God and the Lamb, bearing twelve manner of fruits every year — the living Word of God! “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that is proceeding out of the mouth of God.” In the Broadway of the great city there is death and decay; in the Broadway of the Holy City there is abundant life, growth, righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost!

What are these streets? Do they exist on the earth today? I think so! All large cities of the ancient world had great broadways, and these broadways were the places of public assembly. The Greek word indicates such a Broadway, not a simple street as we think of streets today. These broadways were more like our “city square.” It was in these broadways where the leaders of the people delivered their messages, and where they harangued the populace. The broadways of “the great city,” or the carnal church systems, are their places of public assembly and gathering, their great church edifices, fellowship halls, and educational facilities. It is where their leaders, the priests, pastors and others, celebrate the masses, and deliver their sermons; where great choirs sing, concerts are held, and religious entertainment of all kinds are delivered to the people. But the “Holy City,” the pure, matured, and prepared bride of Christ, also has her broadways, her public places of assembly! These are not physical places of earthly buildings, but places *in the Spirit*, for God has raised us up and “*made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus!*” It is in these broadways of spiritual life that you will see the throne of God, the Lordship of Christ raised up in the lives of His people! In these broadways you will see the tree of life, the living word of God that quickens men in divine life, growth, and development; yes, and it is in these broadways where you will see the ministry of the Spirit, the river of life flowing out from the throne! Isn’t it wonderful!

The bodies of the two witnesses were cast out into “*the street*” of the great city, and there they were left exposed to the elements, and exposed to the vision of the citizens of that city, and also of the ungodly who dwelt upon the earth. It means that in the eyes of the worldly church the Lord’s anointed prophetic ministry is counted as just another of the world’s many “religions” or “churches”! They are not esteemed as anything holy or special, just another “group,” indeed they are looked upon contemptuously as a heretical “cult”! To cast their dead bodies out into the open street after this manner, to deny them burial, and to make merry over them, is to treat them dishonorably, insultingly, scornfully, and with disdain, scurrility, and abuse. Ah, methinks I have lain in the street of that city! Yet, they don’t want to bury them, they don’t want to totally destroy the witness of the Spirit and the Word and the revelation they bring, they just want to take that revelation and fit it in to their own church teachings on a *lower level*, carnalizing and trivializing the deep truth until the life is clean gone out of it. They want to preserve the witnesses in the street of the city of religion as a dead, lifeless *form of godliness without power*, a doctrine or creed apart from the *spirit and walk of sonship to God*.

SODOM AND EGYPT

“And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of that great city, which *spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified*” (Rev. 11:8).

The key to understanding the book of Revelation does not lie in the dictionary but in the heart — the heart consecrated, humble, meek, inquiring, ready to receive and do the will of God (Mat. 11:15; 13:9). The Revelation is part of God’s prophetic message, rich in mystery, clothed in the language of symbol, preserved from the prying eyes of the curious and the carnal, and all whose appetite for prognostication is insatiable. By the Spirit the beloved John prefaced the visions of this book with this admonition, “*Blessed are...those that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things that are written therein.*”

In our verse now being considered, “the great city,” “Sodom,” and “Egypt” are equated with “the place where our Lord was crucified.” Our Lord was crucified by religion in the city of religion, which at the time was the Jerusalem to which He came and which rejected Him and cast Him out. It was an apostate

church which crucified the Son of God, and we must therefore search the mind of the Spirit and find the solution of these mysteries not in the physical and geographical sphere, but in the realm of the spirit where religious men wage war against the true testimony and purpose of God. Therefore we conclude that the names and titles given to this “great city” are not literal but spiritual, describing that one great city which is in perpetual opposition to that other city, the CITY OF GOD, the HEAVENLY JERUSALEM, whose citizens are one and all *spiritual and heavenly* men! Cain, who built the world’s first city, was a carnal-minded man who drenched its walls in his brother’s blood (Gen. 4:17). The founder of Rome did the same! Romulus first murdered his brother Remus to ensure that the city of Rome should bear his own name and that he should be its ruler. Thus it ever is with the city of this world, for in it “our Lord was crucified” — who came unto His own, but His own received Him not.

Israel in her apostate condition in the days of the prophets came to be described in these hated terms, “Sodom and Egypt.” Isaiah writes to the rulers of Jerusalem, “*Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear to the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah*” (Isa. 1:10). Of Jerusalem, he inquires, “*How is the faithful city become an harlot...?*” (Isa. 1:21). Again, in the same chapter, “*Except the Lord of hosts had left us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah*” (Isa. 1:9). Therefore this world church system of man is here being portrayed as the “great city” which no longer is called God’s city, but which *spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.*” It is not Sodom, nor is it Egypt, but in John’s vision it is “in a spiritual sense called Sodom and Egypt.” Sodom is the picture of the carnal life, of worldly unnaturalness, of sensual living, that is, of a sense-centered, man-focused, and need-oriented religious program!

Egypt is the picture of spiritual bondage and oppression where men serve God under the demanding taskmasters of religious systems who seek to control their lives, monopolize their time and talents, and fleece them of their money. Understood as a symbol, not a name, the Hebrew for Egypt means “the twice-narrow place.” It is a place of constraints and claustrophobia, a passage so constricted that a man or woman can only walk forward, from a given past to an unavoidable future, without being able to turn. “*From the narrow place I cried out, Lord,*” says Psalm 118, using another form of the word, “*In the wide place the Lord answered me!*” Egypt is a condition of the spirit. When the Lord’s people are enabled to discern, see, and understand the great and horrible bondage of religion over their lives, they then *see their Egypt!*

“And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that *dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another;* because these two prophets *tormented* them that *dwell on the earth*” (Rev. 11:9-10).

Those who rejoice and make merry when the prophetic testimony of the witnesses is silenced, apparently coming to nought, are those who “*dwell upon the earth,*” that is, the “earth dwellers,” carnal Christians who are “of the earth, earthy” — those who follow Jesus for temporal blessings, the prosperity crowd who seek fame and riches in the name of Jesus, who “mind earthly things” and “walk after the flesh” — who are more concerned about God blessing their bank accounts, blessing them with the best jobs, the finest clothes, the most expensive cars, the most plush homes, with divine healing and health and every earthly amenity. Their sole home is this earth and they have no connection whatever with heaven! They are not those who “*dwell in heaven,*” who “live and walk in the Spirit,” who “sit together with Christ in the heavenly places,” and are “blessed with all *spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus!*” The earth-dwellers follow the earthly blessings and benefits of the gospel but have no passion to “go on to perfection,” to have “Christ formed in them,” to be “conformed to the image of the Son,” to “come unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,” and to “inherit the kingdom of God as kings and priests upon His throne!”

The reason why the earth-dwellers rejoice over the silencing of the witnesses is because their conscience is tormented by the truth of that witness. “These two witnesses *tormented* them that *dwell on the earth.*” The Lord told His disciples in the upper room, “*If ye were of the world the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you*” To this perverted Sodom and worldly Egypt the two witnesses, the prophetic ministry of God’s remnant people, seem as *the dead*, because they appear to walk in the streets with no ministry and no followers. Now

this people who dwell on *earthly things* are no longer tormented by a living word so they rejoice because the moving of the Spirit of God is gone, and they make merry and give gifts one to another; in other words, they crank up the soulish, sensational, flesh-oriented and entertainment-centered church programs that tickle the ears and attract the crowds, and make a great religious splash in the community. It is ever thus, the earth-bound, especially those in the denser realms of the religious bondage of Babylon, inwardly rejoice with one another and make merry when they hear of the “death” of any deep and profound move of the Spirit and Word of God! They are pleased when the anointing lifts and the glory departs, and when those who were the Lord’s instruments in the move are vomited out from their midst. Now they can settle down in their little routine of form, ceremony, social activity, man-made programs and promotions, and entertainment. The prophetic ministry is a torment to them and their worldly systems! The strong word of the Lord in the power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost distresses, agitates, confuses, convulses, and torments the earth-dwellers! This prophetic ministry has no interest and no part in their lust of the eyes, their lust of the flesh, and their pride of life, nor in their promotion of the things of this dying world order. This ministry is spiritually set, appointed and destined of our Father to bring an *end* to all that is in and of *this world*. It prepares the way of the Lord, and makes straight His paths! It is indeed a torment to all who dwell on the earth-plane, because of the holiness and majesty of God! And when at last it seems that this witness is dead and gone and forever passed from the scene, what a celebration this evokes!

The following words by George Warnock bear eloquent testimony to the truth we now present.

“We have already talked about the Testimony of Jesus...that corporate witness of the Light that shines from His people who are walking in the Spirit. That witness was clear and powerful in Jesus...and God must have it that way in His people. I recall reading some of the journals of George Fox, and the powerful Light that shone forth upon the people in that day. But as George Fox emphasized that the Light was for all men, and sought to bring others into the Light, the movement that came out of his ministry became a corporate Testimony. They did not idolize him, but they emphasized what their leader emphasized: every man who comes to the Light must walk in the same Light, and there must be an equal brotherhood. And because it was a light that penetrated a church that was greatly overshadowed by darkness — there was much persecution *from the established church*. He and his *Friends* walked in it together, as brothers. And shared persecution together, as brothers. Repentant sinners as well as antagonistic church members would literally quake and tremble as he stood before them! It was the *fear of God* that made the word of God go forth with might and with power. I used to wonder why it says of the ‘two witnesses’ that they ‘*tormented* them that dwell on the earth,’ but I understood when I read in Fox’s journals this account of what happened in *The House of Correction*, in Derby, England:

“‘The keeper of the prison, being a high professor, was greatly enraged against me, and spoke very wickedly of me; but it pleased the Lord one day to strike him, so that he was in great trouble and under much terror of mind. And, as I was walking in my chamber I heard a doleful noise, and standing still, I heard him say to his wife, ‘Wife, I have seen the day of judgment, and I saw George there, and I was afraid of him, because I had done him so much wrong, and spoken so much against him to the ministers and professors, and to the justices, and in taverns and alehouses.’ After this, towards the evening, he came into my chamber, and said to me, ‘I have been as a lion against you, but now I come like a lamb, and like the jailer that came to Paul and Silas trembling.’ And he desired he might lodge with me. I told him I was in his power, he might do what he would; but he said ‘Nay’ that he would have my leave, and that he could desire to be always with me, but not to have me as a prisoner. *He said he had been plagued, and his house had been plagued, for my sake.* So I suffered him to lodge with me.

“When the morning came he rose and went to the justices, and told them that he and his house had been *plagued* for my sake. One of the justices replied (as he reported to me) that *the plagues* were upon them, too, for keeping me.” At this point George Warnock comments: “I believe *the two witnesses* represent the corporate testimony of Jesus Christ, whose clear witness will shine throughout the earth. Their sphere of ministry is ‘Sodom and Egypt’ (*where our Lord was crucified*); not the Sodom that Lot lived in, or the Egypt that made slaves of the Israelites. But those cities speak of the world system that crucified Jesus — Sodom, which was affluent and wealthy and at ease, and filled with moral corruption. And Egypt, representing the opposition from without, as it was with the children of Israel in the days of their captivity” — end quote.

Let us now notice that there is a depth of meaning in this word “tormented” that lies beyond all that we have said thus far. The Greek word is *basanismos* which is derived from the root *basanos* which is what is commonly known in English as the “touchstone.” Its proper usage in olden times was to try the genuineness of gold. The pure gold rubbed on the touchstone would leave a peculiar mark, different to that of all other metals or alloys. Therefore it acquired a symbolic significance: a test or criterion for determining the quality or the genuineness of a thing; to test for purity or truth. Can we not see by this that the “torment” of the “earth-dwellers” is not because the two witnesses physically torture them by sadistically inflicting upon them outward curses, plagues, and judgments, but rather by the living testimony of Jesus Christ, which is the spirit of prophecy, the earth-dwellers are *convicted within themselves*, being tested and tried by the Spirit and the Word for their own truth and purity.

Is this not the very same thing that so angered and infuriated the scribes and Pharisees when they saw the anointed ministry and heard the majestic words of the firstborn Son of God? In the light of their own impotent religion, static creeds, lifeless traditions, and hard, legalistic hearts they were powerfully convicted by the holy life, gracious words, wisdom, and mighty works of Jesus! It pricked them in their hearts! They were condemned, not by Jesus, but *within themselves*! Oh, yes, it was a torment unto them because it applied the touchstone to their own lives and religion, and they knew in their heart of hearts that they were poor, blind, powerless, empty, and wretched! When the scribes and Pharisees brought the woman taken in the very act of adultery and set her before Jesus they said to Him, *“Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting Him, that they might have to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground, as though He heard them not. So when they continued asking Him, He lifted up Himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up Himself, and saw none but the woman, He said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more”* (Jn. 8:4-11).

The torment, then, is that which is inflicted by the LIVING and ENERGETIC WORD of God, for this Word is the “discerner and analyzer and sifter (Wuest) of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12). When the earth-dwellers are being tormented by the two witnesses they are having their genuineness and quality tested and challenged by the essence-word of God, which is the living spirit of prophecy, which also is, in reality, God Himself — for our God IS A CONSUMING FIRE!

A friend has ably written, “Thus we find that it is as Paul said, *‘We are a fragrance of life — unto life, but we are a fragrance (odor) of death — unto death.’* To those who are alive, we smell fragrantly alive. But to those who are dead, we have the stench of death! But it is the *same anointing* that does *both works*. There is not a word of life for one group and a word of death and judgment for another. It is the SAME WORD — but falling on different ears. It is the same rain — but falling on different ground. It is the same sun rising — but shining on different material. As the old saying goes, ‘The same sun that melts wax, hardens clay.’ That is why, in Revelation 22:11 the Lord says, *‘He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.’* One Greek commentator said that the sense of the Greek in this passage is, *‘Let him be more and more filthy, more and more unjust, more and more righteous, more and more holy.’* In other words, the LIGHT *reveals* the condition — it does not CREATE IT! I like what I read in Wuest the other night: ‘Light rejected, blinds!’ Jesus said, *‘Men refuse to come to the light because their deeds are evil.’* The same Word that blesses one will become a curse to another because of the difference in the heart that receives it. This is why I say there is no need to judge Babylon, because *‘He that believeth not is condemned already.’* A BEAUTIFUL WORD will condemn an unrighteous heart — and will at the same time deliver the righteous” — end quote.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE TWO WITNESSES

“And after *three days and an half* the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they *stood upon their feet*; and great fear fell upon them which saw them” (Rev. 11:11).

The two witnesses continue in that condition of death for three and a half days, according to prophetic time. This is half the perfect time of seven, or half the fullness of time, indicating a temporary state that cannot last nor be victorious. They will not remain “dead” forever! Truth crushed will rise again! It is a prophetic time, the spiritual meaning is found in the significance of the number, not a literal period of three and a half days or three and a half years, as some count it.

The spirit of life from God entering into the fallen witnesses so that they stand upon their feet once more to the terror of those who had been rejoicing in their death, has an obvious connection with the prophecy of Ezekiel 37 — the resurrection of the dry bones of the house of Israel after the Babylonian captivity: “*Come from the four winds O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live...*” The word used for “breath” here is the same as for “Spirit” in Genesis 1:2, “*The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters...*” As Ezekiel prophesied to the dry bones “*the breath came into them and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.*” Compare these words with those in our text: “*And the spirit of life from God entered into them and they stood upon their feet.*” The word for “spirit” is *zoe*. It is not the normal life of all animals and even of the insensate creation, but the very divine life of God which enters them. Though the witness of the Spirit and the Word through God’s anointed prophetic company may seem to be dead, it shall be breathed upon by the very breath of God and it shall live again, and stand up in the earth again — raised up to an even higher realm of spiritual revelation, heavenly reality, and divine purpose, glory, and power. Hallelujah!

We have all experienced a personal, individual, inward aspect of this great truth. The word of truth that we formerly heard, the word of revelation that once was spirit and life, but which became to us just a fading hope as the demands and struggles of life pressed in upon us and beat us down and we found ourselves in our own wilderness experience, dry, parched, barren, and dead, suddenly begins to vibrate, coming to life again with quickening power by the sovereign moving of the Spirit of the Lord! O glad day! Within us the two witnesses stand up again! They were lying in the street of our soul, but now they are standing up in the power of God!

ASCENDING IN THE CLOUD

“And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, *Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud*; and their enemies beheld them” (Rev. 11:12),

While the King James Bible says that the witnesses ascended up to heaven in “a” cloud, it is significant to note that the Greek text reads, “And they ascended up to heaven in THE cloud.” On that momentous occasion when the Lord Jesus took Peter, James, and John up into the mount and was transfigured before them, suddenly there appeared A BRIGHT CLOUD — a cloud with a light in it! And out of that bright cloud the voice of the Father spake concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, “This is my beloved Son: hear Him!” It is more than coincidence that, as Peter spoke, a CLOUD overshadowed them and a Voice came out of the cloud. One of the significant facts in connection with the glory cloud of God’s presence which manifested at various times throughout the Old Testament, is that God always *spoke* from the cloud. This began first on mount Sinai. “And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may *hear when I speak* with thee...and the Lord came down upon mount Sinai...and the Lord *called Moses...*” (Ex. 19:9,20). At a later time God spoke from the same cloud after that it had descended upon the tabernacle. “And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the CLOUDY PILLAR descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and *the Lord talked with Moses*” (Ex. 33:9).

What was that bright cloud with the light in it from which the voice of God spake? It was none other than the pillar of cloud housing the glory fire, the Shekinah glory of God that had led the children of Israel in their exodus out of Egypt and guided them for forty years! As Jesus prayed on the mount, He was transfigured before His chosen disciples. At that moment of transfiguration the glory cloud enveloped Him and God spoke from the midst of the radiance of glory.

Here I wish to point out a most significant fact of scripture which has entirely been overlooked by the average Bible student and almost all preachers and teachers in the church systems. All the way through the scriptures, from the crossing of the Red Sea by the children of Israel to the ascension of Christ from the mount of Olives, God consistently manifested Himself in ONE GLORY CLOUD. There was always only ONE SINGLE CLOUD. One cloud over mount Sinai. One cloud guiding the children of Israel through the wilderness. One cloud resting upon the tabernacle in the wilderness. One cloud shining in the most holy place. One cloud filling Solomon's temple. One cloud overshadowing the virgin, implanting the seed of the Christ. One cloud shimmering over the summit of the mount of Transfiguration. And finally, we read, "And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and A CLOUD (only one!) received Him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9). Christ ascended in ONE SOLITARY CLOUD of God's Shekinah glory — the very *same* cloud in which He had manifested His presence throughout the long ages of time.

It is when we come to the return of the Lord that we notice a distinct difference in the circumstances surrounding that coming. For suddenly, the one single cloud disappears and we are introduced to a great plurality of **CLOUDS!** Let us *see!* Christ departed this earth in *one cloud*. He comes again in *many clouds!* "Behold, He cometh with *clouds*: and every eye shall see Him" (Rev. 1:7). Daniel in vision beheld Him thus: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like a Son of man *came with the clouds of heaven*...and there was given unto Him dominion" (Dan. 7:13-14). Jesus Himself said, "And they shall see the Son of man *coming in the clouds of heaven* with power and great glory" (Mat. 24:30). And again, "Hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and *coming in the clouds of heaven*" (Mat. 26:64). Finally, the apostle Paul relates this dramatic experience: "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them *in the clouds*, to meet the Lord..." (I Thes. 4:17). In the C-L-O-U-D-S! More than one cloud. Many clouds. A great company of clouds!

The question follows: Why are there *many clouds* attending Christ's coming again, and what are these clouds? To aid our understanding of this truth, let us not for one moment forget that we are dealing with *the cloud of God's glory and presence*. The Shekinah. When Jesus, the firstborn Son of God, was in the world John said of Him, "And we beheld *His glory*" (Jn. 1:14). When did they behold His glory? You may reply that they beheld His glory when He went about doing good, healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, raising the dead, forgiving sins, and teaching the glorious truths of the kingdom of God. I do not deny that in all those things they beheld His glory, but the apostle Peter pinpoints for us what is really meant by them beholding the glory of the Son. "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were *eyewitnesses of His majesty (glory)*. For He received from God the Father honour and *glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory (the glory cloud)*, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, *when we were with Him in the holy mount*" (II Pet. 1:16-18).

How very significant that at the end of Jesus' earthly ministry He said, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us...and the **glory which Thou gavest me I have given them**...I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one...Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given me, *be with me where I am*; that they may behold **my glory** which Thou hast given me" (Jn. 17:20-24). And this is the crux of the whole matter! From the dawn of creation's light until Jesus stepped upon this planet, our heavenly Father manifested to creation in a singular way *His own glory*. He, the one eternal God, exhibited His presence in the form of *one glory cloud*. But as Jesus approached the cross and the glorious events to unfold shortly thereafter, He disclosed the grand truth that God purposed from eternity to *share His glory with His vast family of sons*...that glorious body which is *the fullness* of Him that filleth all in all! Oh, the wonder of it!

Let us see then what great encouragement God has given us concerning His glory. "And ye know how we exhorted you, as a father does his children, that ye should walk worthy of God, who hath called you *to His kingdom and glory*" I Thes. 2:11-12). Peter asserts, "I...also am...*a partaker of the glory* that shall be revealed" (I Pet. 5:1). "Whereunto He called you...to the obtaining of *the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (II Thes. 2:14). "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with *the glory that shall be revealed in us*" (Rom. 8:18). The writer to the Hebrews adds this significant testimony: "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing *many sons to glory*, to

make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Heb. 2:10). That there is to be a mighty and universal revelation of the glory of God in and through His many sons, that very same glory which was revealed in the cloud of old, is evident!

When Jesus ascended two thousand years ago, He ascended glorified in that singular glory cloud in which He had dwelt from eternity. He was the One God manifested in all fullness in one Man, the Son. But, blessed be God! when He comes again He comes to be “**GLORIFIED I-N H-I-S S-A-I-N-T-S**, and to be admired **I-N T-H-E-M** that believe in that day” (II Thes. 1:10). The glory is shared, so the *cloud* which represents that glory *is shared*. Each elect son becomes a manifestation of His glory — of the *cloud* — of the Shekinah. Each is as a cloud, but none manifest in individuality, for it is written, “And if (we are) children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be GLORIFIED TOGETHER” (Rom. 8:17).

But now we find that the two witnesses ascend up to heaven in THE CLOUD. Now, can you not see that this signifies an ascension into a higher heaven of the Spirit of the Lord, into the glory of our glorious Head and Lord? There is nothing wrong with desiring to ascend higher into the spiritual heavens of our Father! It is an honorable goal, the aim of every saint of God with a holy passion to apprehend that for which we also have been apprehended in Christ Jesus. But remember, *there is a proper way of ascending*, and that proper way is in **THE CLOUD** — that is, IN CHRIST JESUS! It is always in oneness and union in Him! Ascending by any other means makes one a thief and a robber (Jn. 10:1). No one, not even one person, can ascend into heaven by his own volition or efforts, or by his own worth or merits. Trying to flap your own wings to get there is *futile*! There is no formula, no easy seven point program, no method or technique apart from *oneness and union in Jesus*! Our Lord Jesus Christ is THE CLOUD! We will ascend IN THE CLOUD or our feet, spiritually, will never get off the ground! Jesus ascended *far above* all heavens, which would be above all other exalted positions, above all other ruling factions, above every other glory of men and of angels!

The witnesses ascend up to heaven in *the* cloud — raised up into the perfection, fullness, and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ! This is the highest dimension of the Spirit and the Word — the full measure of the Spirit of Him who was filled with the Spirit *without measure*, and the absolute purity and omnipotent power of the Word as it is in Christ who *is the Word*. This is not the expression of the Spirit and the Word in the lower heavens of prophetic anointing — all that is past — this is the fullest move of the Spirit and the ultimate revelation of the Word that will produce the *manchild*! Let all who would ascend into this high and holy place loose their grip on all the old things belonging to the natural realm and the traditions of men. *All the old things and all the old orders are passing away* and we are entering a new era, a higher plane, a brighter day, and a greater glory! Let the old things go! Do not set your heart on any old realm you have passed through, including the present “two-witness” prophetic ministry announcing the imminent appearing of the fullness of God’s Christ — the manchild. Our heavenly Father will allow even this ministry to die in the street of the city. Set your heart on the heavens above! Make Christ Himself your life and your very existence. HE is the resurrected, ascended, exalted One! We all have set our faces to ascend up to the spiritual heaven where He dwells, and we *shall ascend* IN THE CLOUD. Isn’t it wonderful!

THE EARTHQUAKE

“And the same hour there was a *great earthquake*...” (Rev. 11:13).

As the two witnesses ascend into the heavens of Christ’s glory it causes a great earth-shaking as the carnality and earthliness within us is dealt with in a deeper measure. Our spirit man ascends into a new place and it produces shock waves in our natural life. And I have some good news for you — for God’s firstfruit company *this is the final shaking*! Aren’t you glad!

Some years ago Rosemary Garzon wrote, “We have recently heard of a prophecy given concerning a terrible earthquake this summer in this country. Through the years we have heard of similar prophecies being given, which most of you have also heard. Be that as it may. We do know that the hour of the manifestation of the sons of God must surely be nigh at hand. There is enough proof in His word that when we have a breakthrough of great intensity from the natural earth realm into the realm of His Spirit, an earthquake is assured! We might liken this reaction to the ‘sonic boom’ we are all familiar with when a jet

plane breaks through the sound barrier. This reaction is one of God's laws in His vast universe. When Jesus Christ broke through His flesh body and 'yielded up the ghost' we read of what took place. *'And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom: and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent: and the graves were opened: and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many'* (Mat. 27:51-53)."

"And the same hour there was a great earthquake, and *the tenth part of the city fell...*" (Rev. 11:13).

What is a tenth? It's a tithe, a firstfruit, an earnest — that which is uniquely God's and guarantees the balance! All of Babylon, the "great city," will fall, but here it is a partial fall. Individually, the confusion of Babylon does not fall all at once. When we first heard the call of the Spirit to come out of Babylon, truly we thought that the great city had fallen within us! But through these years of walking with God we discovered that only a tenth part of the city fell! Yet, that tenth was the firstfruit, the "earnest" — the guarantee that one day every citadel, wall, tower, and fortress of Babylon would come tumbling down to lie in complete and eternal ruin within us. The tenth part prepares the way for further desolations to come!

George Hawtin spoke of this very truth when he wrote in his little booklet *Mystery Babylon*, "God does not leave you in a dry land for long if you are bound to be one with Him. Should my life be very long on earth, I shall never be able to forget the glory, the awe, the reverence, the holiness, and the power that came to our class room as we waited on God that glorious 13th of February, 1948, when God began to do a new thing that was destined for a time to *shake* the church system all over America. How we sang the songs of deliverance! How the praise of God echoed down the corridors of the soul and re-echoed among the battlements of heaven! Music of heavenly choirs of earth went sweeping up the sky steeples while angels stood at heaven's gates and swept their harps of gold. Day after day, month after month the celestial wonder continued. Heaven came down our souls to greet and glory crowned the mercy seat. People came for thousands of miles to drink at the ever flowing fountain of life and it looked for a time as though the walls of Babylon were to be broken down and the whole church would come marching to Zion. *But the Babylonian captivity was not yet over.* As I look sadly in retrospect now, I can see with clearness that the great and blessed move of God was not two years old before the sectarian spirit began to show its ugly head and men began to hide the Babylonish garment in their tents together with the silver and the wedge of gold" — end quote. Brother Hawtin then continues on to show just *how much* of Babylon had not yet fallen within them.

Corporately, the sons of God themselves are the "tenth" part of Babylon that is now falling. As the Spirit of the Lord has destroyed the strongholds of Babylon within us, we are all aware that not all of this symbolic city has fallen! The other nine-tenths, the structure of the church system, has continued till today, but it has suffered some loss from the earthquake that has freed God's elect from its clutches. What it has lost and is losing from itself is here called "a tenth." This reminds us that, when the prophet Isaiah was told about the destruction coming upon Jerusalem and its kingdom of Judah, "there will still be in it a tenth, and it must again become...like a massive tree in which, when there is a cutting down of them, there is a stump; a holy seed will be the stump of it" (Isa. 6:13). This "stump" or "holy seed" proved to be the faithful remnant that survived the exile in Babylon and returned home to rebuild the holy temple at Jerusalem and restore the kingdom of Israel. Though the application is a little different, the principle is the same — the "tenth part" is the promise that the whole kingdom of Babylon will come down!

Only after the blessed sons of God are manifest and the glorious bride of Christ has "made herself ready" will the entire city of Mystery Babylon be eternally desolated, burned with fire, and reduced to ashes. And yet — when the two witnesses go up the city is shaken mightily and a tenth part of it comes down. The witnesses *go up* and the city *falls down!* Oh, the mystery of it! The message is just this — when the prophetic ministry of this hour is raised up into a higher realm within us, when the present truth we have received *becomes life and reality*, raised up into the glory of the Christ within, Babylon is mightily shaken and begins to fall!

"And the same hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake *were slain of men seven thousand:* and the remnant were affrightened, and gave glory to the God of heaven" (Rev. 11:13).

These seven thousand bespeak of a remnant out of Babylon in whom the carnality of the soulical religious realm is slain. To our minds it seems like a horrible judgment for seven thousand men to be killed! If John were speaking *literally*, so it would appear. But is it not a *good thing* for the carnal life of the Lord's people to be slain within them? It is a deep mystery, but *all death is not the same death*. "You are dead, and you (new) life is hid with Christ in God" doesn't mean your body is in the grave and your spirit has flown away to some far-off heaven somewhere to be with Jesus. Oh, no! Theologians read the book of Revelation with the literal understanding of the natural mind and never see beyond the letter of the word! These seven thousand are captives of Babylon! When the prophet Elijah fled from the face of the threatening queen Jezebel into the mountainous region of Horeb, the Lord told Elijah, "Yet I have left me *seven thousand* in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him" (I Kings 19:18). The apostle Paul applied this to the remnant of Israel that did not stick to Jerusalem in rejecting the ministry of Jesus the Christ, but forsook her, leaving her to the consequences of murdering the Son of God. Similarly, in the symbolic "earthquake" when the two witnesses are caught up to their higher realm in the heavens of the Spirit, a symbolic "seven thousand persons," that is, the complete remnant company, *die* to the church systems of man. They cease to exist to the Babylon system! No longer can she retain their "names" on her church registries. They are no longer alive and active in her! Thus, the "seven thousand men" correspond to the "tenth part" of the great city that falls!

The number, of course, is not literal — seven is the number of completion and perfection and one thousand signifies the day of the Lord. Furthermore, the slaying of seven thousand "men" requires a deeper consideration. The Greek text actually reads, "And there were killed seven thousand *names* of men." This is a peculiar expression, and is similar to the usage in Revelation 3:4, "Thou has a few *names* even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments..."; also in Acts 1:15, "The number of *names* together were about an hundred and twenty." In the scriptures "names" are of utmost importance and are generally used to denote the character, nature, or office of the person bearing the name. Names are very significant in the meaning of the prophecies of the scriptures, and often the names of the prophets signify the nature of their prophecy. The name reveals the character, or nature of the person. Seven thousand "names" of men were killed! Thank God, He is killing, destroying the nature of old Adam and the character of religious Babylon in the life of each and every member of His called and chosen elect! There is to be a complete, total eradication of the carnal mind, human identity, Adamic life, and the soulical religious spirit — only Christ will remain!

So God does His perfect work in this company, causing Babylon in them to fall; the error, bondage, delusion, deception, ignorance, and darkness of Babylon within them is brought to an absolute death. The illumination of the day of the Lord dawns in their hearts! Truth and reality flood in upon their understanding and they behold the majesty of God's Christ as they ascend into the heights of the Spirit! The old religious mentality is wiped out by the revelation and quickening of the truth as it is in Jesus!

"The *second woe* is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly" (Rev. 11:14).

The three "woes" are upon Babylon. The ministers in the Babylonian church systems all think the woes are to be poured out upon all the wicked sinners of earth, but such is not the case. The woes come upon the very spirit and system of which they are a part, and which they suppose safeguards them from the woes. On the other hand, let not anyone who reads these words imagine that the woes are reserved only for "them," those poor Christians in the organized church systems. Oh, no! Many saints are inclined to point to the church systems and call them Babylon. But this is not enough! I do not hesitate to tell you that the very root of Babylon has been *within us all* to this very day. Make no mistake about it! You have had to contend with it all along the way, and so have I. And I still see it shooting out its tentacles from even prominent brethren in this *kingdom walk* as they put their names to their ministries, make buildings and money their centers, publish and sell their books, and charge, putting a price on everything they send out. Religion is big business, my brother, my sister, and now "kingdom" is becoming big business! Don't tell me that the taproot of Babylon doesn't run very deep within each of us! The outward form is merely the visible manifestation of the inward nature and spirit. But now, my beloved, the ax is laid to the root of the tree and the deep root of Babylon is being cut out and cast into the fire! Aren't you glad!

A "woe" is no longer a woe when it has passed away, and very often what seemed to destroy us is the very thing that propels us forward into the new heights in God. This "woe" was a misfortune only as long as

it lasted, but if the time of its duration is troublesome, its consequences are glorious beyond words to describe!

To be continued...

J. PRESTON EBY