

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 130

THE SEVENTH ANGEL SOUNDS

(continued)

“We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power, and hast reigned. And *the nations were angry*, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great...” (Rev. 11:17-18).

Which are the “nations” that “were angry”? The Lord promised the overcomers in the church of Thyatira, “And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give *power over the nations*: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron” (Rev. 2:26-27). Generally all believers, of whatever persuasion, interpret these words to mean that the Lord’s people shall rule and reign from the throne of God’s glory over the physical nations of the world, thereby bringing the kingdom of God to pass in the earth. I have taught it that way myself! There is an abundant array of scriptures that clearly point to a rulership of God’s elect over the kingdoms of man, over all the peoples and nations of the earth, in fact, over the endless vastnesses of infinity — indeed, over *all things*! That rule is given to man — God’s man! In chapter twelve of the Revelation the manchild clearly begins to assume that rule and dominion!

The thing we must bear in mind here is that in chapter eleven we are still under the trumpets, signifying the progressive transforming work of God in His chosen elect. Without doubt all these events relate to God’s remnant, His *temple people* in the days when the mystery of God, which is the mystery of Christ formed in us, is consummated. This enables us to understand how the “nations” in this instance bespeak something within the Lord’s elect, rather than the outward peoples and nations of the world. Much of the book of Revelation is rooted in events, conditions, and arrangements set forth symbolically in the Old Testament. The tree of life is drawn from the Old Testament. The hidden manna is taken from the Old Testament. The white stone and the new name are from the Old Testament. The Lamb, the throne, the living creatures, the twenty-four elders, the city, the temple, the altar, the court, and many, many more things are all pictures out of

the Old Testament. It is here that I see the key to what the Spirit is speaking about when he says, “To him that overcometh will I give power over *the nations*.”

Which were “the nations” that Israel of old was given power over? It was not by any means all the nations of the world! The imagery here is drawn from Israel’s *conquest* of the land of Canaan! *Toconquer* is to *overcome* — that is the precise meaning of the word overcome in the Greek language. When Israel came out of the wilderness to enter in and possess the land God had promised them, for which purpose He had brought them out of Egypt by a mighty hand and had watched over them for forty years during their wilderness wanderings, the record states, “When the Lord thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out *many nations* before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perrizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, *seven nations* greater and mightier than thou; and when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt *smite them*, and *utterly destroy them*; and thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them: neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall *destroy their altars*, and *break down their images*, and *cut down their groves*, and *burn their graven images with fire*. For thou art an *holy people* unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath *chosen thee* to be a *special people unto Himself* above all people that are upon the face of the earth” (Deut. 7:1-6).

Let every spiritual mind think deeply and spiritually about the above scene! Does this not sound, in its spiritual connotation, exactly like the word of the Lord to the saints: “To him that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give *power over the nations*: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as *the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers...*” (Rev. 2:26-27). All that time in history, Israel’s new land had been occupied by the seven “ites” — by seven heathen nations who were exceedingly vile and corrupt, which they had to conquer, drive out, break to shivers, destroy, and possess. As we compare the above scripture passage with the Lord’s admonition to the overcomers in the Revelation we see revealed not only the “nations” we are given power over but also *why* we must break them to shivers and rule them with a rod of iron — we are to make no covenants (compromises) with them, nor make marriages (soulical, fleshly unions) with them, nor preserve their images (priorities, ways, systems, methods, etc.), idols, and groves. Our new land in this new day of the kingdom of God is **the fullness of Christ!**

In the hidden language of the Spirit, the symbol of “land” often has the meaning of “inheritance.” In some cases it deals with our inheritance in Christ, in other references, to the inheritance of the Lord in His saints. Incredible as it may seem, the land of Israel is but a figure of the true land — Christ as everything to us and in us! Abraham from the beginning understood this wonderful truth clearly, even if modern-day Christians don’t! The writer to the Hebrews tells us, “By faith Abraham when he was called, obeyed and went forth to a place which he was destined to receive as an inheritance; and he went, although he did not know or trouble his mind about where he was to go. By faith he dwelt as a temporary resident in the land which was designated in the promise of God, in a strange country, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs with him of the same promise. For he was waiting expectantly and confidently, looking forward to *the city*

which has fixed and firm foundations, whose Architect and Builder is God. Now those people who talk as they did show plainly that they are in search of a *fatherland* — *their own country*. But the truth is that they were yearning for and aspiring to a *better and more desirable country*, that is, a *heavenly (spiritual) one*. For that reason God is not ashamed to be called their God..." (Heb. 11:8-10,14,16, Amplified).

Now we know what is meant by **the land!** It was but a shadow and figure of the true land, the heavenly land of the Spirit, where the called and chosen elect of the Lord dwell in Christ in God! Everything that God prepared naturally for the children of Israel was concentrated in that land. "For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven: a land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year" (Deut. 11:10-12). They were called to live on the land and to enjoy all the provision and abundance of God. They were to be formed into a kingdom in that land, observing the statutes, judgments, laws, ways, and will of the Lord in the land. They were to become a kingdom of priests and an holy nation in the midst of the land so that through them all the nations of the earth might be blessed! Notice — they were to *subjugate and destroy every vestige of the wicked nations that possessed their own land, but they were to BLESS ALL THE OUTWARD NATIONS OF THE EARTH!* Selah. Pause and meditate on that!

All the promises, provisions, plans, and purposes of God were concentrated in the land. All these types are fulfilled in Christ as a piece of land! All the promises, provisions, plans, and purposes of God for mankind are concentrated in Christ! Christ is the true, real, appointed, abundant, fruitful, heavenly land to us! Our citizenship is in Christ in this heavenly land of the Spirit! We are not of this world, and regardless of our ethnicity in the flesh, we are not of the earthly Jerusalem, nor of the physical seed of Abraham, nor of the land of Canaan in the Middle East! God has given us a citizenship in the heavenlies where we are seated together in Christ Jesus! God has given us this heavenly, spiritual, incorruptible, eternal, all-sufficient land that we may become a kingdom of priests, an holy nation, and that through us as the very sons of God all the nations and families of the earth may be *blessed!* Isn't it wonderful!

God has promised to give us the land, which is the fullness of Christ. There is just one problem with this beautiful hope. **THE LAND OF PROMISE IS OCCUPIED!** It is infested! It is not vacant, ready to be settled into by God's elect. It presently is occupied by God's enemies. Seven mighty, vile, intransigent nations occupy the land! The natural, outward promised land of old was lived in by brutal and ruthless tribes who practiced devilish idolatries, including the worship of their own sexual lusts and the burning of their children in the fire as sacrificial offerings. Their abominable, degrading, disgusting patterns of behavior had been inviting the wrath of God during the time that Israel was multiplying in Egypt. When we say that Christ is our land of promise, this doesn't mean that Christ Himself is full of wickedness and abominations! You see, my beloved, the land is the realization of Christ *within ourselves*. The land is not in some far-off heaven somewhere. The land is within us! And in that land of the experiencing of Christ within ourselves we find a great number of hindrances, problems, bondages, fears, false perceptions, ideas, concepts, fleshliness, carnality, self-will, habits, lusts, sin, sickness, and death — all enemies of the realization of Christ. All the abominations of the seven nations of Canaan lie right within the very soul and body of each of us!

Now we are crossing the Jordan, in spiritual type, and are entering the new land of the kingdom of God or the fullness of Christ on the earth! We may have held the erroneous idea that upon entering the new land of the kingdom we would at once know absolute peace, joy, righteousness, kingdom blessings, power, and incorruptible life. Perhaps we once thought that by entering into the kingdom of God, by simple faith the entire order of things within and without would change overnight! But I call you to remembrance, my beloved, that the new land of Canaan was the place where Israel of old **faced their enemies and conquered them**. It meant warfare! It meant obedience and sacrifice! It meant struggle and bloodshed! It meant going on the offensive and effectually *conquering*, one by one, each and every enemy!

Only now are we discovering our enemies! As we cross over our Jordan all our enemies, including death, the last enemy, must be driven out before we shall inherit the kingdom of God in all its glorious fullness. But the battle is not ours! Our enemies are also the Lord's enemies, and HE has promised to drive them out before us as we walk forward in obedience to Him! Here in this new land of the fullness of Christ we shall be fully saved in spirit, soul, and body. Then even death, the last enemy, shall be totally conquered within ourselves and defeated. Some say that it is in crossing the Jordan that death is overcome, but such is not the case! Death is the "last" enemy that shall be destroyed, not the first! The battle only *begins after* we have crossed our spiritual Jordan! Jordan is simply the "crossing over" of leaving our wilderness journeyings behind and stepping forth in faith and obedience to enter in and begin possessing the land of our inheritance! As we enter into this land and begin to conquer the enemies and possess our inheritances, we will know that we are truly His people and He is our God!

Do not think, precious friend of mine, that you will face no resistance as you rise up to conquer the enemy nations within your "land"! You will come face to face with all their passion and fury! "...and the nations were *angry*..." Ah, how eloquently those words describe the reaction of our enemies, those entrenched "nations" within, as the battle rages! This is all part of the process. Yet how I praise God with joy unspeakable and full of glory for the words that follow: "and THY WRATH IS COME..." What a word that is! Only HE within us has the power to deal with these nations! Only our Almighty Father has this power over the flesh to subdue it unto Himself. He alone can bring about this transformation of our beings. That is the mystery! On the one hand the Lord says, "You drive out the enemies," while on the other hand He says, "I will drive out the enemies from before you." He alone can make the enemies within us subject to the will of God. He can subdue this flesh of ours, and the powers of darkness within it, so it is necessary for us to turn it over to Him that this transformation can take place. As we turn our body over completely to His control He will go before us and give us the victory! We must be obedient and follow our heavenly Joshua! It is HIS WRATH that works in us and through us to gain the victory!

THY WRATH IS COME

"We give Thee thanks...because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power, and hast reigned. And *the nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come...*" (Rev. 11:17-18).

What is God's "wrath"? Two kinds of wrath are revealed in the scriptures — the wrath of man and the wrath of God. The wrath of man springs from a carnal, fleshly, unholy nature. It is

therefore vindictive, vengeful, retaliatory, implacable, unmerciful, retributive, spiteful, and malicious. The wrath of God, however, derives from a spiritual, loving, holy nature. The wrath of God is no more like the wrath of man than is the love of God like the love of man, or the heart of God like the heart of man, or the thoughts of God like the thoughts of man. God is *not a man*! Yet people speak of the attributes of God as though they are of the same character and quality as the attributes of man, attributing to the holy God the unregenerate traits and emotions of man. But the wrath of man is no model of the wrath of God!

One brother wrote, “Revelation speaks frequently of God’s terrible wrath, and it frightens people to think that the earth will feel the full fury of God’s anger, of hellfire, the fire that burns forever. A woman once told me that she always thinks of the wrath of God as the intense fire of *infinite love* that *burns up that which is not true*. This is a beautiful way of looking at it! We can think of God’s fiery judgment as a purifying fire, and if we read Revelation with the thought that it is speaking of the intense fire of infinite love that is too pure to behold evil, then we can see why anything less than Truth has to go.”

The word “wrath” in our text is the Greek word *orge* meaning *desire, excitement, passion*. That certainly doesn’t sound like the kind of wrath most people think of! There is another Greek word, *thumos*, and surprisingly Strong’s Concordance also gives as the basic meaning of this word, “*breathing hard, passion*.” Why haven’t the preachers told us this before! Let me give you an example of the use of *thumos* right here in the book of Revelation. Speaking of the great harlot, Mystery Babylon, the angel explains to John, “All nations have drunk of the *wine of the **wrath*** of her fornication” (Rev. 18:3). Now, I ask, who ever heard of wrath being sweet and intoxicating like *wine*! And who would ever think of the sensual pleasures of fornication as being angry, vengeful, full of rage and violence! But when we consider the true meaning of the word *thumos* it becomes very clear — “For all nations have drunk of the *wine of the **passion*** of her fornication.” What a difference that makes!

God’s wrath is not that which is vindictive and vengeful, but rather that which is impassioned, fervent, zealous, enlivened, glowing, vigorous, intense, burning, and dynamic. In the face of the “anger” of the symbolic “nations” God is moved into action by His *passion* for righteousness. My friend, John Gavazzoni, once wrote, “Ed Brown translates the Greek word *orge* as (God’s) ‘intrinsic fervor.’ I like that. I think Ed has captured the essential meaning. For me it suggests ravishing love. Since God IS love, then wrath, necessarily is a form of love, for nothing could proceed out from the nature of God that is inconsistent with the love that He IS. The conclusion is just too obvious once one has been delivered from the dark, demonic imagination that fuels eternal torment dogma; namely, that God, when faced with the ontological contrarianism that seeks to impose on us a false identity, with us being overcome by a false persona, His love is aroused to reclaim us, to lay claim with divine jealousy to that which belongs to Him. With intrinsic fervor He reaches out to possess that which is His, and we are His both by creation and redemption!” — end quote. Men of passion can certainly be angry, but the anger is not the basis of their passion. Even in a punitive way passion may be expressed in terms of *love*, as when a parent is moved with passion to sternly discipline a misbehaving child. So it is clear that “wrath” has to do with passion, or feeling very strongly about something. It does *not* mean either anger or vengeance!

God has a passion to make right what is wrong, to cleanse and restore His creation, like any Father who wants his son to grow up straight and strong. He has a passion, therefore He will spare nothing, not even the rod, to accomplish His great purpose. The wrath of God is the wrath of a Father and in His wrath He remembers mercy! His purpose in wrath is not vindictive, but corrective and redemptive. Mankind is full of anger, bitterness, torment, and fury — the wrath of man — but now *God's wrath* comes! “The nations were angry, and Thy wrath, Thy passion, has come.” What a revelation that is! Oh, the wonder of it! How sublime the very thought! How awesome the implication! How divine and glorious the outcome!

We will not dwell long upon the other beautiful thoughts in verse eighteen. Mention is made that the time has come for “the dead to be judged.” Immediately we conjure up the thought of a great white throne out there somewhere in the distant future where dead men will rise up to appear in order to be judged. But that is not the thought here! Everything in chapter eleven is *related* and it all concerns the final work of the Lord symbolized by the “seventh trumpet” sounding, and this is His great work *in His called and chosen elect*. May I suggest that the “dead” referred to are the very same “dead” found in verse thirteen: “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...*” Oh, yes! These are the ones who “die” to the “great city,” religious Babylon, and their “names” are erased from the registries of that symbolic “city.” It means to die out to the flesh, to the carnal mind, to the soulical emotions and desires, and to every vestige of the *religious spirit*. It is not said that these dead are *raised*, only that they are *judged*. We need to always hear what the Spirit *saith*! To judge simply means “to render a verdict” which may be either favorable or unfavorable, depending upon the context.

The only judgment most people understand is the negative aspect of judgment, the *unfavorable verdict*, which is unto condemnation and wrath. It should require only a moment's reflection, however, to enable anyone to see that the very same judge who sentences one man to pay a fine, another to die in the electric chair, may suspend the sentence of a third man, declare a fourth man “not guilty,” acquitted, and may *reward* a fifth man the sum of one million dollars as recompense for some wrong done to him! It is plain that a great many different “judgments” or “verdicts” may come from this one judge. Thus, the work of the judge is not merely to condemn and mete out sentences, but to weigh all the facts, take all the circumstances into consideration, and render a just verdict, favorable or unfavorable, as the case may demand.

Furthermore, the “judge” of a beauty contest does not condemn or damn *any* of the contestants who fail to receive the highest recognition. He merely renders a “verdict” as to whom, in his estimation, is “the fairest of them all!” The Psalmist spoke of this when he said, “For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But GOD IS THE JUDGE: He putteth down one, and setteth up another” (Ps. 75:6-7). The positive aspect of judgment, the rendering of a *favorable* verdict, and the granting of a *reward* for some purpose, is implored of the Lord by king David in Psalm 43:1-2: “JUDGE ME, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation: for Thou art the God of my strength.” Ah, *promotion* — promotion that comes from the Lord — clearly that is the idea conveyed by the words of our text! The dead ones are judged — our great and glorious heavenly Father renders His verdict — it is time for promotion in the ranks of His separated ones!

The great truth of what I now say is incontrovertibly confirmed in the very statement that follows: "...and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, *and that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants the prophets (two-witness prophetic company), and to the saints, and to them that fear Thy name, small and great*" (Rev. 11:18). It is evident that the "judging" leads to the "reward." And it indicates a reward for faithfulness, obedience, and kingdom works. It is a *reward for works*, not a dealing with sin, nor a discipline for the perfecting of sons. It is vital to our understanding of this subject that we see clearly the distinction between these important biblical terms: *salvation, inheritance, and reward*. Salvation relates to the sinner, inheritance relates to sons, and reward relates to servants. SALVATION means to be rescued from the power of sin and death and is the *free gift of God to the believer*. "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their *sins*" (Mat. 1:21). "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the *gift of God: not of works*, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9).

INHERITANCE, on the other hand, is that which a son receives *by virtue of his relationship to the Father*. It is not a gift. It is not earned. It is his by right! "Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a *son*, then an HEIR of God through Christ" (Gal. 4:7). "And if children, then HEIRS; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17). REWARD, furthermore, is something that is given *for service rendered*. It is not a free gift, as is salvation, nor is it bestowed because of right, as an inheritance. It is *earned by work*! "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His messengers; and then He shall REWARD EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS WORKS" (Mat. 16:27). "And the nations were angry, and Thy passion is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy *servants*" (Rev. 11:18).

It is when we come to this thought of *servants* that there arises a great deal of misunderstanding among the Lord's people. When we speak of servants, some boast that this calling does not apply to them, for they are no longer servants, but sons. And that is true in the spirit in which Paul argues when he states, "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore, ***thou art no more a servant, but a son***; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ" (Gal. 4:6-7). It is far from the truth, however, to say that there is no sense in which those who are sons are also servants. Paul is speaking of ***our relationship to God, the Father***. Under Old Testament economy the people of God had not received new birth by the Spirit and so were not, by spiritual regeneration, conscious of being the children of God. They were conscious only of servanthship to God and the book of Hebrews calls them a "house of servants" (Heb. 3:2-6). Their relationship to God was the relationship of *servants*. They were not counted as sons.

Now, bless His name, Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law that we might receive placement as sons, and He has birthed into our hearts the Spirit of His Son, the very spirit of sonship, whereby we cry, "Abba, FATHER!" This has brought a change of relationship to God. *To Him* we are no longer servants, but sons. However, as sons we enter not only into a relationship *to God*, but we also become ***uniquely related TO MEN***. It is here that we must be very clear in our understanding! Unto GOD I may be a *son*, but unto MEN I may be a *servant* — the servant of God unto them — because I am a son! I can not be a servant *to God*, for I am a son. But I cannot be a son *to men*, therefore I must approach unto men in a relationship through

which I can minister to them *out of the life of the Son* which indwells me. The only agency through which I can minister the life of the Son unto men is as a *servant* — the servant of the Lord unto them. To minister means “to serve,” and both “minister” and “servant” are frequently translated from the same Greek word. If I am a minister, then I am a servant — not a servant unto God, but a servant sent from God to serve men!

Can a son be a servant? Jesus, the Pattern Son, declared: “Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister (serve), and to give His life for many” (Mat. 20:28). Jesus was a *Son* to His Father, but He came as a *servant* unto men. It is the SON that SERVES! The Son is a Servant-Son. The very same Jesus, the Son, of whom the Father witnessed, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” of Him the Father also witnessed, “Behold my SERVANT, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon Him: He shall bring forth judgment to the nations” (Isa. 42:1). Matthew 12:15-21 shows unmistakably that this SERVANT of the Lord is JESUS. The Son came into the world as a Servant-Son! The beloved John understood this beautiful truth, for the same John who wrote, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called *the sons of God*,” later penned these significant words, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His *servants* things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it unto *His servant John*” (I Jn. 3:1; Rev. 1:1).

The great apostle Paul also understood this great truth, for the very same Paul who wrote, “Wherefore, thou art no more a servant, but a son,” also said, “Paul, a *servant* of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle” (Gal. 4:7; Rom. 1:1). Is Jesus a son or a servant? Was John a son or a servant? Was Paul a son or a servant? And lest we would exalt ourselves above John, or Paul, or even Jesus, we further find that the 144,000 in the Revelation, that glorious company of the manifest sons of God standing with the Lamb in the governmental heights of the heavenly mount Zion, even of this exalted company it is written, “Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed **THE SERVANTS OF OUR GOD IN THEIR FOREHEADS**” (Rev. 7:3). So there you have it! The *sons* are the *servants*! Not servants to God, of course, but sons who are servants unto men, humble ministers of the life of the Father. And *the servants receive a reward!* That is the mystery.

DESTROY THEM THAT DESTROY THE EARTH

“And the nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time...that Thou...shouldest *destroy them that destroy the earth*” (Rev. 11:18).

That there is a natural application of this idea of “destroy them that destroy the earth” none can deny. We are now witnesses of an ever-looming catastrophe that potentially could take place between the nations of earth on a scale never before seen. There is an increasingly dangerous level of corruption, fanaticism, violence, and terrorism in our world, with the potential for the release of various weapons of mass destruction. The attempt to procure these devastating means of destruction includes chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons, which are now openly and aggressively being obtained by rogue nations and numerous terrorist groups world-wide.

Our day is also marked by impending environmental catastrophes that appear ever larger upon the horizon. Most of these conditions have come about as a result of man's pride and selfishness. The idea that man could actually, literally, destroy the earth would have appeared ludicrous to any previous generation. Even less than a hundred years ago it would have been hard to imagine that *anyone* could destroy the earth! Sure, mankind tended to *misuse* the earth, but *destroy* it? For the first time in history, mankind *does* have the capability of totally destroying all human and animal life from the planet! The effects of air pollution, the transportation and storing of hazardous materials, depletion of the earth's ozone layer, pollution of the atmosphere, rivers, lakes, and oceans with some of the most dangerous chemicals known to man, the kind that just don't go away; these are penetrating the food chain even in pristine environments like the Arctic. U. S. citizens alone produce some two billion pounds of hazardous waste a day, not to mention vast quantities of automobile lead deposits, tire rubber, backyard pesticides, chemical fertilizers, plastic products, fossil fuels, refrigeration equipment, and a thousand more.

But how can it stop? Pollution is only the by-product of all the goods and services upon which the modern world has become so dependent. If big business is to continue to produce goods and provide jobs, if big finance is to continue to fund growth and expansion, if government is to continue to make it all possible — and since *greed* is the undiminished underpinning of *human nature* — then the continued wreckage of the earth is the inevitable course of the natural man! All the modern technology which we now consider irreversible and indispensable to our way of life, products of man's ingenuity to wrest the secrets of nature, the handiwork of the "wise," all combine to terminate as a Frankenstein monstrosity — threatening man's annihilation! No personal benefits can survive this level of irresponsibility indefinitely! It is apparent that man's careless and greedy tendencies are responsible for this systematic destruction of the natural earth. Even those nations that produce the highest levels of pollutants are ill-prepared to act swiftly and seriously because of *economic reasons*, and the situation continues to deteriorate.

Yet — as true and awesome as all of this is, we are not interested in the *natural*, except as it serves as a parable, for the revelation given to John by the Spirit is not a warning for the natural man about earthly and physical catastrophes, but a *spiritual revelation* given for the edification, understanding, instruction, and transformation of the saints! All the outward is merely a shadow of the true and greater realities to which the Spirit points. It speaks spiritual truth and sets forth spiritual dealings! The "earth" signifies the *soul realm*, and all that is soulical in the religious life of man. Out of man's fleshly nature arise those things which instead of bringing the soul into union with the spirit of life, enslave and destroy the work of God in the soul, barring man from entrance into the kingdom of heaven. The meaning of the Greek word "destroy" in our text is "to rot thoroughly, decay utterly, ruin, pervert, corrupt." The clear import is just this — *to pervert, kill, or destroy by corruption!* To destroy by corruption signifies to destroy by *the flesh*, "for he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption" (Gal. 6:8).

When the soul is united to the fleshly life instead of being joined to the spirit, the restoration and transformation of man is thwarted and at best the Lord's people are held captive in the *soulical religious realm*! In order for truth, righteousness, life, and reality to be raised up in our life, sin, lies, error, deception, and the spirit of the world *must be destroyed*. That means all earthly concepts and fleshly ways have to be destroyed, for they bring man under the dominion of the carnal mind and the old Adamic life. The "earth" is their dwelling place, for the carnal mind

dwells in a body made of dust! The thoughts, desires, and ways of the mind of the flesh are “those” which *by corruption kill the soul*! They “kill” or “destroy” the soul by keeping it from life in the spirit! To destroy those who destroy the earth does not mean that God is going to send destruction on all the people in the giant corporations, factories, refineries, and governments of the earth that are physically polluting the planet. Nor does it mean that people are going to be put into hell and tortured. Oh, no! **When their wrong thinking and fleshly ways are destroyed, “they,” the powers of the carnal mind and the natural man, are destroyed!** Oh, the mystery of it!

So the passion of God arises and destroys the carnal mindedness and fleshly life within each of us and so astonishes the power of Self that it silences its desires, its aspirations, its determination, and all its unrighteous and worldly religious ways! Paul spoke of the Galatians who did run well for a time, but were hindered. That is ever the problem for those who are not consumed by the flaming passion of the Lord! We do well for a time, but the cares of this age, the deceitfulness of riches, the desires of the flesh, and the old religious spirit enter in and choke us, and we become unfruitful and drop out of the race altogether.

We have previously pointed out that in the book of Revelation the “earth” is a symbol bespeaking the realm of the soul and all that is soulical, especially the religious realm. The soul has been created to be joined in union with the spirit, as a woman is joined in union with her husband. Eve, as a type, stands for the soul as Adam stands for the spirit. “Now the Lord is the spirit,” says Paul, and may I add that the bride of Christ is the soul of the new creation man in union with the Head, the Lord who is the spirit, or Christ *in you* the hope of glory. Peter admonishes the saints in his first epistle, “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from *fleshly lusts*, which *war against the soul*” (I Pet. 2:11). Can we not see by this that “those who destroy the earth” are those who corrupt the *soul* by leading it into a carnal union with the body of death (flesh realm) instead of the life of the spirit. It is the defects of man’s fleshly emotions, thoughts, understanding, desires, and will that usurps and prevents the life of the spirit, thereby keeping the soul from life and perpetuating the death of carnality. These are “they” who “destroy the earth!” When the Lord’s passion strikes the enemies of our soul and destroys them, He effectively destroys them that corrupt the soul, leads the soul out of her captivity to the flesh, woos her with His cords of love, and claims His rightful bride as His own! It is indeed wonderful!

George Hawtin has given a very perceptive and inspirational insight into this truth, and I quote:

“Now, since the flesh lusts against the spirit and is at endless conflict with it, then anything that seeks to make you earthly and fleshly-minded is a great evil. The things that belong to the realm of the flesh (the body) are passing away. Even the flesh itself is passing away. Anything that is passing away is not real. It is like a bubble that floats prettily in the air only to burst and never to exist again. It is like the darkness that disappears with the dawn and has no certain dwelling place. It is like a flower in the field that blooms for a moment and disappears, a vision of the night, a fleeting shadow, a moment of joy, a passing sorrow, or a sudden pain. When such things have passed by, no one knows where they came from or whither they have gone. Those, however, who indulge themselves in the things that belong to the body grow to think that nothing is true or real but what is bodily and can be touched or seen or eaten or drunk or enjoyed by the passions of men. Unwittingly they change true riches for false; things that are unseen by mortal

eyes for things that are seen. They exchange things that are spirit for things that can be touched, tasted, and felt by the body.

“The soul now begins to think that these things which belong to the body are real and therefore becomes fleshly-minded. The carnal or fleshly mind is an enemy of God and an enemy of all things spiritual. It follows, then, that because the soul is burdened down with the earthly and visible, it is impossible for it to be spiritual, and when the time comes to depart out of this world by death and enter the realm of the spirit, it will fear to die and want to remain in the body, because it is a stranger to the realm of the spirit and has come to believe that the realm of the body is the only realm that is real, when in truth it is the only realm that is unreal” — end quote.

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