

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 152

THE BEAST OUT OF THE SEA (continued)

"And it was given unto him to *make war with the saints, and to overcome them*: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations" (Rev. 13:7).

As we consider this thought of the beast making war with the saints and overcoming them, we do well to recall the message of Christ to the church in Sardis. It is evident in the letter to the church at Sardis (Rev. 3:1-6) that the world was invading the church. The church became very much like the city around it. Society should be influenced by the people of God; God has designed that the body of Christ be filled with His power and holiness, to change and transform the world! But the sad truth is that often the church becomes influenced by the world and sometimes the whole church world has for decades and even centuries been brought under an almost total domination by the world. Amid all the fiery admonitions found in the epistle of James is the counsel that worldliness is the enemy of God (James 4:4). The blessed Holy Spirit warns every saint who treasures the beautiful hope of sonship to *flee worldliness*. Some have mistakenly thought that meant to *flee the world*, so they hide themselves away in wilderness retreats, remote areas, jungle farms, or mountain monasteries, in physical separation from the world system.

It is not the world we must flee from, but *worldliness*. Our Lord Himself has taught us that we are *in* the world, but not *of* the world, and in the loving embrace of His final earnest prayer for His own He petitioned the heavenly Father, "I pray *not* that Thou shouldest take them *out of the world*, but that Thou shouldest *keep them from the evil*. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (Jn. 17:15-16). How our glad hearts rejoice in the sacred knowledge that "greater is He that is *in you*, than he that is *in the world*." Oh, let us always remember that the people of God are to influence the world, not the other way around. The saddest event of all is when it is not a saint, or a number of saints, that is influenced by the world, but a whole church is captivated by the world and its light goes out. This is indeed the present condition of all the church systems of man!

Let me call your attention to another feature. The beast makes *war* with the saints! This cannot be during the so-called "great tribulation" as we have been told, following the so-called "rapture" of the saints, for the saints are *right here on earth* when the beast makes war on them and overcomes them! This is not a fight with the sword nor do the saints rise in political rebellion — it is the *spiritual warfare* between the bestial system of man and the people of God. The called and chosen elect of God refuse to worship the beast, as the Holy Spirit makes plain in these significant words: "And all that *dwell upon the earth* shall worship him, *whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb*" (Rev. 13:8). The earth-dwellers, the carnal Christians, *all* worship the beast, for the life of the Lamb has not been formed in their minds nor inscribed in their hearts. The clear implication is that those saints in whom the life of the Lamb has been raised up as the power of their being do not worship the beast!

Individually, the beast is the mystery of sin dwelling inside of every human being alive today, evidenced by most people living a totally fleshly life without regard for God, His will, His ways, or His judgment. Either we overcome this beast or it overcomes us, and in fact, it *has* overcome all of us

somewhere in our spiritual journey! God has allowed the flesh and its bestial system to make war against us for His greater purpose: to cause us to seek Him for HIS VICTORY to be raised up in us! This interplay between flesh and spirit is what eventually makes us strong in God!

Ray Prinzing hit the nail squarely on the head when he wrote: “No doubt about it, there is a real warfare going on — and to this bestial system is given ***‘to make war with the saints, and to overcome them.’*** But it is a momentary victory, *‘For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again’* (Prov. 24:16). Therefore, *‘Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall; I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me’* (Mic. 7:8). The ultimate victory belongs to our Lord and those who put their trust in Him. And that there shall arise those who OVERCOME this whole bestial system, is sure, for later on John writes, ***‘I saw...them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over the number of his name’*** (Rev. 15:2). In spirit the prophet Daniel beheld the same: *‘I beheld, and the same horn (beast system) made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; UNTIL the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. The saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever...’* (Dan. 7:21-22,18). We need not become too expansive concerning this ‘war with the saints’ by the bestial system of Babylon. We are all IN IT! The pressures steadily increase. And seemingly the system prevails against us. We are beaten down, and the only way we currently overcome the system is by our SUBMISSION TO CHRIST. We bow to Christ, with ‘these things’ being merely the tools to help bend our knees. We do not surrender to the evil, but we surrender to the Christ who controls the interplay of good and evil. This is more than a technical difference in words — for while it might appear sometimes that we have bowed to the system, the fact is what we have really done is BOWED TO CHRIST who was using this very system in our disciplines. And then HE gives the victory over the beast!

“While we have learned, yea, become surrendered and submissive to HIM, one with His will, this is an active state of being, not a passive one. Passivity is the law whereby evil-forces work. You have to give your self to them — the mind goes blank, the faculties dormant, the will ‘let go,’ and even the body relaxed and passive, then the familiar spirits do their thing. This is likewise the bestial system’s mode of operation! The usurped powers say in effect, ‘We will think for you, will for you, create the right emotional responses in you, etc.’ They would control your life in all its action and thinking, and all of their brain-washing operation is towards this end. The news is controlled so that your thoughts are channeled as they want them to be. The most insidious devices ever used to destroy the mind of man are now being used in increasing numbers, called *subliminal persuasion*. The innocent looking sales ads, the rock music and the movies, etc., all designed to cause men to rebel against God, parents, home, authority, decency. It works below the threshold of consciousness, to brain-wash the subconscious mind, and thus motivates the actions accordingly. And in this way the beast makes war even with the saints! BUT GOD’S LAW IS THAT OF ACTIVE CO-OPERATION. He does not always work instead of us, though He certainly can, for He is sovereign, but He would work WITH, IN, AND THROUGH YOUR ACTIVE OBEDIENCE. God’s elect are not automatons — behaving mechanically without active intelligence, but they have truly ***‘put on the mind of Christ,’*** to function with His mind, one in His will, one with His purpose. And thus they overcome the beast!” — end quote.

According to God’s purpose the beast may battle with the saints; yes, it may even overcome the saints. How overcome them? Is it possible to overcome the saints? Does not the Lord tell us for our comfort that no one will be able to tear us out of His hand and that no weapon formed against us shall prosper? Yes, indeed this is true! But “overcome” here does not mean that we are torn out of Christ’s hand or that the war is lost. In the heat of the battle when we are smitten and fall, we are secure in *His hand*, He sees exactly where we are, He is in control of our destiny, and though the *battle* may be lost the *war* is not over! At this moment it seems the beast has the ruling power; but the invincible body of Christ shall finally, after much warfare and battling, arise and appear in triumph over all their enemies, though in the meantime we, like our glorious Head when He walked here in the flesh, walk about under the cross, bearing contempt and scorn, bearing about in our body the marks of the Lord Jesus, having no power nor regard, for the Lord says, “My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight” (Jn. 18:36). Therefore the little group of God’s elect is scattered among all kindreds and tongues and nations, a very small group indeed, compared with the large horde belonging to the power-holding beast. Therefore they are overcome, yet not overcome — for the true saints bend only outwardly, they do not resist

the evil, but they possess their souls in patience; however, they do not *worship* the beast, this is done by those whose names are not written in the book of the life of the Lamb!

In His kingdom parable of the soils the Lord Jesus revealed various weapons of the bestial system with which it makes war with the saints. He spoke of seed that fell *among the thorns* and that kingdom seed sprouted up but was then choked out by the thorns, bringing no fruit to perfection. He identified the thorns as ***“the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches”*** (Mat. 13:22). The word “cares” is from the Greek *merimna* meaning literally “divisions, distractions.” Jesus gave another solemn warning about these “distractions” in Luke 21:34-36, *“And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things...and to stand before the Son of man.”*

The first mention in scripture of thorns and thistles is just this side of the garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve sinned, God sent them forth from the garden and said, *“Cursed is the ground (earth, outer man, outer world) for thy sake...thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee.”* Ever since that fateful day man has contended with weeds. The thorns and thistles become the symbol of the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the pleasures and pressures which grow rampant in the lives of men and women today, choking the spiritual life of the kingdom. Our temptations, fleshly desires, carnal appetites, worldly pursuits, jobs, education, taxes, bills, government requirements, needs, and pressures of all kinds can be symbolized by the bramble patch. Forever clinging, grabbing, tearing, choking, pressing, hurting, the realm of the carnal mind and the world system reach out to ensnare and entangle us in a hopeless jungle of no release. The roots run deep and wild, springing up in unsuspected places with a harvest of pain.

The cares of this world have turned many peoples’ lives into a pressure cooker. The strain of everyday living is steadily growing worse because of financial problems, higher taxes, inflation, government policies, demands on the job, the disturbing world situation, added responsibilities, sickness, hospital bills, rebellion in the home, unemployment, etc., etc. The divisions and distractions of “this world” are too numerous to mention, we are all faced with them every day. There are those seemingly needful involvements in the activities of this world’s order, but when they so OVERWHELM US that we find ourselves so fragmented and so divided that we are not able to gather ourselves together to walk out the presence, nature, purpose, and glory of the Lord in our lives — then we need to be LOOSED from these things both by divine wisdom to prioritize our involvements and by a supernatural infusion of peace, strength, and joy that comes down from the Father above. Praise God, we find in Him a realm of freedom from all “these things,” so that what He provides we can enjoy, but we are not bound by them or to them. There is an escaping from the cares of this life if we yield to the mighty hand of the husbandman of the vineyard — the manifest presence and power of the Father within us! As we yield, HE will take care of the weeds in our earth! God has a way out of the briar patch! When everything starts to fall apart HIS LIFE WITHIN gives the strength and faith to ride out each crisis, to PASS THROUGH all these things, and to stand victorious before the Son of man, praise His name!

There is another area of division and distraction by which the bestial system makes war against our soul — that is the “religious realm” which can cause one to be so caught up in its programs and lifeless works that it literally becomes destructive to spiritual life. Well do I remember former years of pastoring churches when every weekend was crowded with such a whirlwind of feverish activity that come Monday morning I needed another “Sabbath” to rest and recuperate from the one I had just been through! I suppose I will make some enemies, but I must tell you the truth nonetheless. How much eager-beaver religious work is done out of a carnal desire to make good, appear successful, win friends and influence people, to build a kingdom and increase the cash flow! How many hours of prayer are wasted beseeching God to bless programs that He has never ordained and which are geared to the glorification of men! How much hard-earned money is poured out upon men who, in spite of their tear-in-the-voice appeals, nevertheless seek only to make a fair show in the flesh! I have no hesitation in saying that a charismatic personality and a shrewd knowledge of human nature is ALL that any man needs to be successful in religious circles today, including the “spirit-filled” ones. The shallowness of the average believer’s inner experience, the superficiality of his worship, the emptiness of his words, and that servile *imitation of the world* which marks the religious system’s promotional methods all testify that the whole program, instead of being a divine out-riding of *the*

Christ life, is naught but part and parcel of “the cares of *this world*.” The growth of the Lord’s people is so stunted by the control of man, fleshly programs, lying prophets, and a false gospel — there is no doubt at all that the bestial system has made war with the saints and has overcome them!

Oh! to escape religiosity that we might learn to worship God in spirit and in truth. And we rejoice to see how God is causing His elect to flee this care. To remain in the midst of all this activity and not become caught in its snare, is an escape which only God can work in us and maintain for us. Dear man of God; dear woman of God! Let us pull up by the roots the noxious, choking weeds of religious excitement and pseudo devotion and mis-guided service and seek the face of the Lord in deep humility until He comes and breaks up our fallow ground and rains righteousness upon us!

THOSE WHO DO NOT WORSHIP THE BEAST

“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, *whose names are **not written** in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*” (Rev. 13:8).

The beloved John informs us that “all the world wondered after the beast...and they worshipped the beast...and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.” Surely this would lead us to suppose that every living person upon earth does or shall worship the beast. But that is not quite true. There is one class of people who refuse to put their trust in this great power and to pay homage to the beast. And that class of people is especially described as those whose names have been written in the book of life of the Lamb. The called and chosen elect of God refuse to worship the beast! Oh, let us hear it! If our names are written in the Lamb’s book of life we *will not* worship the beast, because we worship our Redeemer who has redeemed us to God by His blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall *reign over the earth*!

It is interesting to note that in the genealogies of the Bible there are only two books which are identified: (1) “the book of the generations of Adam” (Gen. 5:1) — all mankind is in that book, but it is a book of death — and (2) “the book of the generation of Jesus Christ” (Mat. 1:1). The phrase, “the book of the generation,” is an unusual expression. It occurs only in connection with Adam and then in connection with Christ. The book of the generation of Jesus Christ is THE BOOK OF LIFE! It speaks of the life of Christ being generated, raised up and reproduced in us until we are fully like Him!

Every man’s name is written either in the book of the life of the Lamb, or in the book of the life of the dragon. When we see the “life” of the dragon manifested we recognize it by the fact that we have been there, we recognize the dragon in his identity, name, and nature. We experience this in our lives as we are growing in the things of God. Line upon line and precept upon precept the deceitfulness and wickedness of our own carnal mind, our own heart, our own fleshly Adamic nature, is revealed to us by the teaching of the word of God and the illumination of the Holy Spirit. The depravity of the flesh, the corruption that is in the world, and the folly of religion are fully revealed to us and we come to know *what is in man* and what are the *depths of Satan*. Oh, yes!

Our Father faithfully teaches each of His sons the difference between the precious and the vile, the holy and the unholy, the pure and the defiled, the truth and the error, and between life and death. I know, as no one on earth knows, including my wife, what darkness lurked in my own heart and what a monster I could have become except for the grace of God and the sovereign choosing of my heavenly Father. Thus, as the sons of God are being invested with the seven-fold spirit of sonship, which is the completeness of the mind and nature of Christ, to bring forth the kingdom of God in the earth, the dragon is reproducing the beast nature in the earth with its seven heads and ten horns. Only those whose names are written in the book of the life of the Lamb refuse to wonder after and worship the beast. The message is just this: only by the life of the Lamb, the life of God in our spirit, the new creation in Christ Jesus — only by *this life* do we have deliverance from the bestial nature and system of the world! Thank God, it holds nothing for us anymore!

Let us look a little further at this Lamb’s book of life. It comes to us out of antiquity. Long millenniums ago Moses knew about the book and his place in it. After Israel had sinned by worshipping before the golden calf that Aaron had made, Moses said to the people, “*Ye have sinned a great sin: and now*

I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written" (Ex. 32:30-32). The five books of Moses were written before any others, except, perhaps, the book of Job; and in these earliest books of the Bible Moses pled for God to have mercy upon the children of Israel, "and if not, blot me out of THY BOOK which Thou hast written." These words speak of a Book written by God Himself which was older than Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, or Deuteronomy!

Notice — Moses didn't say, "...blot my *name* out of Thy book," but "...blot ME out of Thy book." Moses understood the deep things of the Lord well enough to know that God has a Book, and that *he himself* was a part of that Book! The prophet David also had knowledge of God's Book, for he intoned these significant words in his Psalm, "*Thou tellest my wanderings: put Thou my tears into Thy bottle: are they not in Thy book?*" (Ps. 56:8). And again, "*Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous*" (Ps. 69:28). A book of the living — that is, a book composed not of paper or parchment, but a book whose pages are *people*! Notice now how clearly the sweet singer of Israel confirms this beautiful truth in another of his inspired songs, "*Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in Thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them*" (Ps. 139:16). Can we not see that it was David himself, together with all the members, faculties, and attributes of his spirit, soul, and body, that was an integral part of God's wonderful Book!

This same David prophesied of Christ, using his own experience as a shadow and type of the coming One. "*Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is written in my heart*" (Ps. 40:6-7). Since David penned these words it is obvious that this "volume of the book" referred to was written before the Psalms! God wrote the law of His life in His Christ (Head and body) long before the Bible was written! The scripture indicates that the revelation Jesus was sent to bring to pass on earth was fully recorded in the "Volume of the Book" long before Jesus ever started to walk out His script in the earth realm. The nature of God written in Christ, the Logos, the Word, which was in the beginning with God, was the heavenly reality of that Book of Life that would be written and opened on earth. As Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature with His heavenly Father, He discovered who He was — He received a revelation by the Holy Spirit out of God's Book and saw Himself there in the Book. The Volume of the Book revealed His identity and destiny! Truly Christ was a chapter in God's Book!

With all emphasis I must declare that every man and woman of God who reads these lines is also to be found in God's Book. Each elect member of the *Christ body* has a ministry to fulfill which was fully recorded in the "Volume of the Book" a long, long time ago. In that long ago your spirit rejoiced in celestial realms with your heavenly Father. Obviously you did not exist there in your present physical form in that early time when "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7). And yet you were there — in spirit — because you are a son of God! The very genetics of your being are written there, your nature, who you really are, your true identity, calling, purpose, attainment, and destiny — the whole beautiful story is inscribed and recounted in golden hues there in God's Book, not in words of any tongue of men or of angels, but the very reality of your being *is* the page of God's *Living Book*. Oh, yes!

When Jesus read the Book *which He was* by the spirit of the revelation of the Father within, He proclaimed, "*Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is written in my heart.*" He said, "I'm in there, in the Volume of the Book." And the Book declared of Him that He delighted to do God's will and that God's law was written in His heart! When the Father revealed the Book to Jesus, that is what Jesus was permitted to read of Himself in the Book. And it was a sure word, for it was the Lord Himself, His very being, that was the page of the Book! And I do not hesitate to tell you, my beloved, *you* are in there, too! In the Volume of the Book it is written of you! And that which is revealed unto you of your Father concerning His will, plan, and purpose in your life is what is written in the Book, and it was written there of all your members when as yet there was none of them! Isn't it wonderful!

The wise man said, "*...of the making of many books there is no end...*" (Eccl. 12:12). The bookstores are filled to overflowing today with all types of books dealing with every aspect of earthly life. Even in the church world there are books setting forth every kind of viewpoint relating to God, the Bible,

doctrine, Christian experience, and church order. However the subject material of most of these books largely contains a message of religious tradition, false doctrines, and spiritual death. But God is also producing a Book — a Book containing a message of life! For the past two millennia God, by His Holy Spirit, has been unveiling the contents of this Book in the minds and hearts of His people!

There is a branch of literature known as *biography*. Biographies are the histories of individual lives, an account of a person's life, written or told by another. If the author of the book is the person about whom it is written it is called an *autobiography* — the story of one's own life written by oneself. The Book of Life is called in John's vision, "The Book of The Life of The Lamb." That is how it is in the Greek text. If I were to give you a book titled THE BOOK OF THE LIFE OF GEORGE WASHINGTON, you would understand at once that it is a biography or an autobiography of the life of the first president of the United States, George Washington. That book should contain everything you always wanted to know about George Washington! Each and every detail of his life would be there: where he was born, who his parents were, where he was raised, the schools he attended, the girls he dated, who he married, how he became general of the army, and finally president of our great nation. In the same way, THE BOOK OF THE LIFE OF THE LAMB is the autobiography of God's Lamb, the record of who He is, what He is like, and what He does. Everything you always wanted to know about the Son of God is contained in this wonderful Book of the Life of the Lamb! It is not a literal book, of course; it is not a parchment in some far-off heaven somewhere. Oh, no! The sons and daughters of the most High are themselves the LIVING RECORD AND REVELATION of the life of the indwelling Lamb. It was to the apostle Paul that the revelation was given that the Book of Life, the Book of the Lamb, the Book of the Generation of the Son of God is a *people*. "*Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life*" (II Cor. 3:3,6).

Throughout the march of the ages men and women have recorded an innumerable multitude of life-stories of the mighty ones who have trodden this earth and influenced the events of history and the destinies of men, movements, nations, and empires. Each and all of those biographies were meaningful to someone, often to many, but never in all the history of the world was there a life lived out before the universe of mankind that was so overwhelmingly important, so all-embracing, so transcendent in its nature and so far-reaching in its results as the life of Jesus Christ. Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, in His earthly life and ministry, in His death, resurrection, and ascension IS THE FIRST CHAPTER OF THIS GLORIOUS BOOK OF THE LIFE OF THE LAMB!

Let us now return to our text. "*And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*" That is the way it reads in the King James Bible, but that is not how it is in the Greek text. The word "names" is not plural, it is not "whose names are not written in the book of life" but "whose name has not been written..." It is a singular name! As we read these words of truth, surely we must realize that name in scripture signifies a *nature*. There is only one name or nature which is not written in the Book of the Life of the Lamb, and that name or nature is Adam. All who conceive of themselves as "just human" — that human nature has never been written in the Book of the Life of the Lamb! That is the name or nature of the first man who is of the earth, earthy. That nature and that identity of old Adam has never been written in the book of life. Rather, it is found written in "the book of the generations of Adam" (Gen. 5:1). That is the natural man who receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned (I Cor. 2:14). Adam's mind is the carnal mind, which is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed *can be* (Rom. 8:7). That is not the Christ man, but the man who is put to death by Christ! It is not a name of life, but a name of death.

The only thing that can happen to those who live out of human nature is to be purified by the fire, and our God *is* a consuming fire! "*And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire*" (Rev. 20:15). Those who realize that they are spiritual beings begin to live out of a spiritual consciousness and the Christ-life within is the name or nature that is written in the Book of the Life of the Lamb! Oh! that men would awaken to the truth that they might see where reality dwells; that their eyes might be opened to see the truth that the nature of the new man, Christ, is the nature of the life of the Lamb! Those who reveal out of their being the life of the Lamb are themselves the *Book* of the Life of the Lamb, the

epistle of Christ known and read of all men, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. Aren't you glad!

The revelation of Jesus Christ — that's what the book of Revelation is all about! It tells you of the revelation of HIM. The breaking of the seals, the galloping of the horses, the blast of the trumpets, the sealing of the saints, the beasts, the heads and horns, the blood flowing, the battle of Armageddon, the vials, the judgments, the city coming down — all that is written in this book relates to the unveiling, the uncovering, the revelation of Jesus Christ in the lives of His elect in this great day of the Lord. This revelation has been taking place in measure throughout the church age, but we have now come to that time unto which all the ages have been converging — the dispensation of the *fullness of times*! It is my deep conviction that we are standing at the consummation of the old age of the church, the completion of all things that pertain to the church age. All the sages and all the prophets of all the ages have prophesied of this grace and this glory that should come unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. We are now living in a new age, a new day of the revelation of the fullness of the glory of the Lord before the face of all nations!

The Book of the Lamb's Life tells a complete story. Each member of the Christ-body is like a page or chapter in this blessed Book. Each one tells a portion of the story. Each contains only a measure of the revelation of God in His Christ, Head and body. The wonderful thing about it is, that while God revealed Himself in so many ways, in so many forms, through so many people down through the ages, He is now gathering together (compiling) the revelation that came forth and the experience of every one of them. It is all becoming focused in this glorious company of God's sons. The complete revelation of God is divided into hundreds and thousands, yea, millions of little pieces and fragments which were revealed through the lives of men and women by their experience of God on the earth. But now, at the transition of the ages, God is taking all the experience and wisdom and knowledge and grace and glory and power that men have received and is forming it in a company of sons and is about to stand this company up as the full and complete and total revelation of His personality in the earth. This company is the finished product, the Book fully written, published, and released into the world. **THESE ARE THOSE WHOSE NATURE IS FOUND WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LIFE OF THE LAMB!**

Your calling, the reason Christ quickened you, was to make you consciously a part of Himself, to bring you into a calling unto glory, to a place where God by His Spirit could express Himself through you, so that you could bring the revelation of God into the earth. The multitudes of earth have read many books, even many religious books of a thousand different kinds, but few have read even one page of THE LAMB'S BOOK. Oh, how mankind needs this Book released in their midst! Your life and everything that is happening to you is designed to train you for a royal position in God. The only reason God sent you here from the realm of spirit, lowered into the bondage of corruption, was to process you that in your visible, physical, material form you might become the image of God, the revelation of the invisible God to the material world.

The Lamb's Book of Life, God's New Covenant — seek it not in the starry skies, nor in the sweet by and by — seek it in a life transformed. This is His monument — not in cold stone, nor in chiseled marble, nor in plaques of bronze, not in ancient parchments, not in weighty documents, but given by the very finger of God upon human hearts and in human lives. Here is the covenant that will last when time is obsolete, when the sands of the ages have run out, when the elements have melted with fervent heat. Andrew Murray once asked, What does it mean to have a law in the heart? It means this: to have the knowledge and the will and the nature and the power of God *inspired into us*. For example, when I speak of an acorn, how do I know it will grow up into a mighty oak tree that may stand for a hundred years? Because the law of the oak tree has been written in the heart of the acorn. The acorn may be small, and the oak tree may be spreading its branches for a hundred years to come, but it was in the acorn. Even so with Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant, the One on whom I can depend to make the covenant true. Christ Jesus is to see that the Spirit of the Lord God shall be and live in me, rule in me, conquer in me, and work out all His blessed purposes in me. Christ, the High Priest, is Mediator of the Covenant for this blessing too — a life that lives out the law written in the heart. And may I add — as the Lord Jesus is the Surety for us of the Covenant, so *we* in Him are the Surety for the rest of creation. Thus, the New Covenant is not a document nor a decree — it is a *people*! The Book of Life people are the Covenant for all men to see, read, and receive. Great is the mystery!

“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in *the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*” Again, read those words with care for they are taken from the King James Bible. The Greek text, however, reads a little differently. Actually, the Greek text is a little tricky to properly interpret, but I personally am convinced that the Emphatic Diaglott does give the correct rendering when it says, “And all who dwell on the earth shall worship him, ***whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the scroll of the life of that Lamb who was killed.***” You will notice, precious friend of mine, that it is not the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world as we have previously supposed, but rather it was the writing of our name in the Lamb’s Book of Life which took place before the foundation of the world! In the light of this truth it will be instructive to consider all the scripture passages which make reference to that which transpired away back there before or from the foundation of the world. They will either confirm or deny the statement made above. All that is revealed in the New Testament concerning that which was ordained and accomplished from “before the foundation of the world” is found in the following passages.

*“All these things spake Jesus unto the multitudes in parables...that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will **utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world**”* (Mat. 13:34-35).

*“Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, **inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world**”* (Mat. 25:34).

*“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: **for Thou lovest me before the foundation of the world**”* (Jn. 17:24).

*“According as He hath **chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love”* (Eph. 1:4).

*“For we which have believed do enter into rest...**the works were finished from the foundation of the world**”* (Heb. 4:3).

*“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was **foreordained before the foundation of the world**, but was manifest in these last times for you”* (I Pet. 1:18-20). Note that the spotless Lamb was *foreordained*, that is, selected, chosen, set aside, appointed to become the sacrifice, and this selection and appointment was made before the foundation of the world. But it does not say that the Lamb was *slain* before the foundation of the world. Obviously, that was reserved for when he was *manifest for us* when He came to earth.

*“The beast that thou sawest was, and is not: and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, **whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world**”* (Rev. 17:8).

Ah, in that final passage even the King James Bible states that it was *our names* that were written in the book of life *before the foundation of the world*! Can any doubt that this is also the correct rendering of the passage in Revelation 13:8? That would certainly make the two statements agree!

Never doubt this reality for a moment — the only way God could have loved you, chose you in Christ, and picked you out for His own *before the foundation of the world* is that you truly existed in Him and with Him before the appearing of the worlds. Nothing can be plainer than that! Yet we have supposed that we were just recently, in this life, apprehended of God to sonship. I thought the work of God began in my life nearly eighty years ago. Now I find that the thing God is doing in humanity began in eternity! It didn’t begin in time. It began before the ages were framed. That is when the Father loved Jesus and foreordained Him as the Lamb of God, and that is also when the Father loved us and predestinated us unto placement as His sons (Eph. 1:4-5). God knew me, loved me, chose me, counseled with me, and picked me

out for His unique purpose before the foundation of the world. My origin was in God! God begat me of Himself *as spirit* before He exhaled me *as spirit* into a very unique body upon earth. And He knew you! He loved you! He chose you! And He has sent you! Clarity is coming to the sons of God. Understanding, perception, consciousness, expression, purpose, destiny, God is awakening all of this in us. He is awakening within us that reality we knew with the Father from before the foundation of the world, when our name, our nature, was written in God's Book. And you are here by divine appointment. Isn't it wonderful!

CAPTIVITY TAKEN CAPTIVE

"And he that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and faith of the saints" (Rev. 13:10).

INDIVIDUALLY, it is the flesh, the old Adamic nature, that leads us into captivity. It is the beast of the carnal nature that makes war with the saints and overcomes them. It is the bestial nature of the natural man that is given power over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. Furthermore, he that killed us, or that which brought death to us, now must be slain in us. The natural man, and the spirit of the world generated from that man, is the one who leads us into captivity and slays our spiritual life. The natural man is the one who is being brought to death. There are two swords — the sword by which the beast makes war against the saints, which is the *word* of the beast, his mouth speaking great things and blasphemies — and the sword of the spirit which is the *word of God*, the sharp two-edged sword which comes from the mouth of God's Christ, Head and body. The beast is slain by the sword of the spirit, and the spirit of the world is brought into captivity by the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. That is the mystery.

CORPORATELY, God's kingdom is a body politic. And there are two parties: God's righteous government and the opposition. The opposition, deceived and deluded by its own nature of darkness and rebellion, has been trying throughout the ages, by any and every means, to gain control of the government. But it has been a disheartening battle. The decree of the Almighty is, *"And the government shall be upon HIS shoulders, and of the increase of His government...there shall be no end...to order it, and to establish it with judgment and justice from henceforth even for ever"* (Isa. 9:6-7). Because this rule can never cease, every apparent victory of the adversary, in the end, has turned out to be a defeat! The human race fell to the deception of the opposition at the very beginning. But instead of that being a victory for the adversary, it turned out to be a blessing for the human race. For now, not only will men be restored to what was lost by the fall (Acts 3:21; I Tim. 4:10; I Jn. 2:2; Heb. 2:9; Rom. 5:18), but those who are called and chosen are translated in Christ to the heavenly realm, to a position as far removed from the perfect Edenic state as the east is from the west.

The opposition even went so far as to crucify the King, the Prince of Peace. But that seeming defeat for Christ's cause was a signal victory, for on the third day the crucified One arose from the tomb to a higher and more glorious dimension of life in the power of resurrection, thus breaking the sway of death and delivering all who were in bondage from its clutches. Because He arose, so shall every son of Adam arise! Because He conquered sin, sorrow, death, and hell, ultimately every man shall receive the blessing and benefit of that triumph! *"The hour is coming, in the which ALL that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth"* (Jn. 5:28-29). The whole creation is awaiting the ultimate triumph of this victory! Truly, *"All creation is yearning, longing to see the manifestation of God's sons. For the creation was made subject to futility, not of its own choice, but by the will of him who so subjected it; yet with the hope that at last the creation itself would be set free from the thralldom of decay to enjoy the liberty that comes with the glory of the children of God"* (Rom. 8:19-20).

The kingdom of the righteous One has not been established in its fullness and perfection over the whole world of mankind. We are yet passing through a period of preparation in which those who prove themselves faithful to the rightful King, are being prepared and sealed, and now expectantly await the day when, upon the full manifestation of the kingdom, they will be raised to great honor and power and majesty, to reign as heavenly kings and priests over the earth, to bring life and light and liberty and blessing and glory to all peoples!

The message is clear and the word is sure — ***He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. HERE IS THE PATIENCE AND THE FAITH OF THE SAINTS! HALLELUJAH!***

To be continued...

J. PRESTON EBY