

# KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

## FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

### Part 70

#### THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES AND THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS

"...and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev. 1:6).

With these wonderful words John introduces the New Testament church to Old Testament understanding. For the first time in the book of Revelation, here at the very beginning, he is bringing the Old Testament literal types and shadows over into the New Testament fulfillment. The Old Testament was all about natural, physical, earthly types and shadows of kingship and priesthood. Their kings and priests sat on physical thrones and offered animal sacrifices upon brazen altars in temples made with hands. But now John is raising this kingship and priesthood into a higher, spiritual dimension and announces to the saints that Christ now "hath made **us** kings and priests unto God and His Father." With this simple beginning John does what he will do constantly throughout the book of Revelation — refer to Old Testament *terminology* within the context of New Testament *spiritual reality*!

More than 270 direct quotations, or expressions, couched in Old Testament language, are found in the Revelation. Rooted in this fertile soil, it is like a tree yielding the rich fruitage of the inspiration of the ages. Because the whole Bible is a prophecy and picture of Christ, therefore this book, drawing its nurture from the prophets of old, and showing forth the reality to which they pointed, could be nothing else but THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST! As from the mountain ranges of the Pacific the gold was once washed down and buried in the deep valleys of California, so from the mountains of the scriptures, from Horeb and Sinai, from Hermon and Carmel, from Zion and Moriah, the precious ore of divine truth and reality has been brought down and deposited in this alluvial book, till it is everywhere glistening with gold seven times refined.

The books of Genesis and Exodus especially, together with portions from the Psalms and the Prophets, form the *seed-bed* for the whole Word of God. The deepest book in the Bible, theologically, is the book of Revelation because in it we see the harvest, the fullness, the consummation of every seed planted in the Old Testament. It is my conviction that one doesn't need CNN, Time, Newsweek, or USA Today in order to understand the book of Revelation. All you need is a good copy of the Bible, and the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God! Every symbol, every sign, every picture, and every figure of the Revelation is already described and defined in the books of Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets. All the information one needs to interpret the Revelation is already given in the pages of sacred scripture. Our problem is that we haven't understood the seed-bed, so we don't understand the harvest!

It is interesting to note that Genesis begins with a Garden, and the book of Revelation ends with the Paradise of God. In Genesis there is a river flowing out of Eden, whereas in the Revelation there is a river flowing from God's throne. In Genesis 2:12 there is gold in the Land, but in the Revelation there is gold in the City. In Genesis the tree of life is in the midst of the Garden, while in the Revelation the tree of life grows in the midst of the street and on either side of the river in the City. In Genesis there is the bdellium and the onyx stone, and in the Revelation there are all manner of precious stones. In Genesis God

walks in the Garden, and in the Revelation God dwells in the City. And we could go on and on for pages! The Word of God is more than a history book, my beloved, and more than a set of rules, laws, and commandments. A lot of people think we should throw the Old Testament away, and if that is what they think it is obvious they have no clue as to what it's about! The Psalmist, by the spirit of prophecy wrote, "In the volume of the book it is written of ME." Then Jesus said to His disciples, "These are the words which I spake unto you...that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, *concerning ME*. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures" (Lk. 24:44-45). With these things in mind it should not be difficult for any to see that THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST is *the subject* of the entire Bible, which meets its acme, culmination, fullness, and consummation in the revelation given to John on Patmos!

We must be careful to read the Old Testament in the Spirit of Christ, or we will think everything will be fulfilled *literally* some day *in time*, instead of seeing that the FULFILLMENT IS **IN CHRIST!** All the imagery and typology in the book of Revelation involving the temple, the ark of the testimony, the throne, the most holy place, altars, offerings, incense, fire, seals, wheat, barley, horses, trumpets, wars, Armageddon, tribes of Israel, Jerusalem, mount Zion, the lamb, living creatures, the lion, the ox, the man, the eagle, eyes, wings, robes, harps, vials, and so on, ALL have their fulfillment *in Christ*. THEY ARE FULFILLED **IN HIM!** They are not fulfilled in America, Russia, the Middle East, or the so-called Holy Land. Oh, no! Christ is the substance of all the shadows (Col. 2:17). Whatever you are looking for to be fulfilled, don't look at a spot on the map, don't look at a date on the calendar, just look into Christ in the Spirit!

The book of Revelation is without doubt one of the most important and wonderful books ever written. Vivid imagery marks the book of Revelation. There are powerful representations of scenes both in heaven and on earth. The central scene is the THRONE OF GOD. All other things are related to the throne. This throne is the very center of the universe. Not the physiographical center — but the *spiritual center!* The throne is a symbol bespeaking of that realm of God's absolute dominion and omnipotent power over all things. The throne is not a literal seat in some far-off heaven somewhere; it is the omnipresent dimension of God's sovereign authority and power.

In the book of Revelation all "heavenly things," that is, all *spiritual realities*, are revealed in their relationship to the throne of God. And while the King James Bible states that "*one* sat upon the throne," you will note that the word "one" in your Bible is in italics, meaning that the word does not appear in the Greek text but is supplied by the translators in an effort to clarify what they perceive to be the intent of the passage. And while it is wonderfully true that there is ONE sitting upon the throne, it is evident that that ONE is a CORPORATE ONE — a many-membered body! God is a God of corporateness. Christ is a Christ of corporateness. "For as the body is *one*, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, *are one body*, **SO ALSO IS CHRIST**" (I Cor. 12:12). While there is only one God and one throne, yet the God of the throne is ultimately and eternally manifested in corporateness through God's Christ, that vast company of sons who are themselves "the *fullness of Him* that filleth all in all." Therefore, He who sits upon the throne is One — yet that One is a Corporate One even as Jesus says, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne" (Rev. 3:21). This is that eternal unity of the many-membered FAMILY OF GOD of which Jesus spoke when He said, "That they all may *be one*; as Thou, Father, art *in me*, and *I in Thee*, that they may be *one in us*. And the glory which Thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be *one*, even as we are *one*: *I in them*, and *Thou in me*, that they may be made perfect **IN ONE**" (Jn. 17:21-23). It is indeed wonderful!

## THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES

"And *round about* the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And *out of* the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning *before* the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. And *before* the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and *in the midst* of the throne, and *round about* the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind" (Rev. 4:4-6).

As I stated earlier, in the book of Revelation all “heavenly things” are revealed in their *relationship* to the throne. Therefore in the passage just quoted, in addition to the beautiful description of the symbolic throne with its effulgent glory, our attention is immediately directed to certain objects *before* the throne, *round about* the throne, *in the midst* of the throne, and proceeding *out of* the throne. Each of these positions is vitally significant! Everything in the heavenlies is shown to be either in the throne, proceeding out of the throne, around the throne, or before the throne. This is a throne scene, and concerns sitting down with the Lord Jesus in His throne just as He overcame, and is set down with His Father in His throne. This throne cannot be seen with mortal eyes, yet it is a living reality in the lives of God’s chosen people! All that we both become and perform in God’s great *throneship purpose* is lived out either in the throne, out of the throne, round about the throne, or before the throne. That is the mystery of it!

Four wonderful beasts are brought into view. “And *in the midst* of the throne, and *round about* the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.” When I first heard about beasts in heaven I was just a child and young, not only in years, but in my walk in Christ. So therefore, the only way I could understand these beasts was to think of them in the natural, which could not have been! When you turn to the natural understanding and try to mix the natural with *heavenly things*, you move into the world of imagination and delusion. I never could understand the heaven I hoped to go to, and dreamed of so much — for how could this heaven have *beasts* in it? How did they get there? Did God have some celestial “pooper-scoopers” to keep the throne zone clean? Now, I understand, of course, that the heaven we are talking about is ***the realm of the Spirit in which God eternally dwells!***

The scriptures are abundantly clear that “YE are the temple of the living God” and the throne of God is *in His holy temple!* With this wonderful realization firmly abiding in our hearts we are better prepared to grasp the truth Christ clearly gives us that it is from the throne of that temple which *we are* that God now speaks by His Spirit. The lightnings, thunderings, and voices “out of the throne” are God speaking out of His kings and priests who sit with Him upon His throne. So what are these “beasts” in the midst of the throne? These are not some kind of weird animalistic creatures out of Star Wars on a far-away planet called heaven. That is foolishness! We’re seeing men who walk here upon the earth in the exaltation and glory of the God-man, Christ. These are characteristics that are fulfilled in those who are the sons of the living God. My beloved, this is ***you*** in this picture! God is revealing Himself ***in you!*** Few believers understand the great truth that God is not external. Earth’s voices must fall silent here, for only by revelation of the Holy Spirit can a man know that God dwells in him and that he dwells in God. What eternal purpose would be served by the knowledge of some weird creatures flying around a throne somewhere out beyond the Milky Way? We must know what is for us in the revelation of Jesus Christ! Today I see more clearly than I have ever seen that the revelation of Jesus Christ is in and through the body of Jesus Christ. Sweet mystery of the ages!

Let us get a firm mental picture of this scene which John saw in heaven, in the realm of the Spirit. He saw the throne of God and God sitting on the throne. And in the middle of the throne, and also encircling the throne, were four beasts, full of eyes in front and behind. These each had six wings, and their faces were like a lion, an ox, a man, and a flying eagle. In a circle around the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and on these thrones were twenty-four elders clothed in white robes and with crowns of gold on their heads. In the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a lamb as it had been slain. Before the throne, evidently between the elders and the throne, stood seven lamps of fire burning. Outside the circle of the elders stood the great multitude of the redeemed from every nation and tribe on earth; they were clothed in white robes and had palm branches in their hands. Around all this were the angels of heaven, an innumerable host — myriads upon myriads, thousands upon thousands. What a scene!

The word “beasts” is an unfortunate translation, being necessarily associated in our minds with the brute creation and that which is typified thereby. It is not the Greek word *therion* which in thirty-five instances in the book of Revelation is translated beast, meaning “a wild and ravenous beast,” thus denoting an animal of ferocious disposition. It is, rather, the Greek word *zoon* which signifies simply

a “living creature” and is so translated in nearly all modern translations of the Bible. In the Revelation the word *therion* is used as a type of the base corruptible and fleshly nature of the natural man and of the brutish and tyrannical kingdoms of *this world*, ruled by the carnal, depraved, and vicious nature of unregenerated men. The word *zoon*, however, means **living creature**, or a **creature expressing life**. It comes from the root *zao* from which also is derived the word *zoe* which is used always in reference to *divine life* or the *life of the ages*. All of these words denote that which is alive or is lively! How significant, then, that these four **creatures of life** are found “in the midst of the throne” and “round about the throne,” occupying the central position in the throne while emanating as an essence, glory, and power out from the throne.

This term “in the midst” is very significant! The prophet Ezekiel once saw far in the distance a great whirlwind moving toward him, and in the whirlwind a fire. As it moved closer and closer, and his eyes were opened more and more, he beheld in that fire the four living creatures, until finally he beheld the Almighty in the midst thereof. The picture is clear — these are in some way identified with, or representative of, “HIM that sits upon the throne.” A further key to their identity is found in Revelation 5:6 wherein we read, “And I beheld, and lo, **in the midst of the throne...stood a lamb** as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.” Ah, notice the divine parallel: “**In the midst of the throne...stood a lamb**” and “**In the midst of the throne...were four living creatures.**” Both the Lamb and the four living creatures are thus *manifestations* of the *authority and power of life* in the One who sits upon the throne!

Imagine this headline in today’s newspaper: *Cure Found for Death!* Newspapers would soon be sold out. Everyone would be scrambling to find out what this fantastic announcement had to say. But suppose the article under the headline reported that a traveling teacher has announced that he personally is the cure for death — he has not made a scientific discovery nor found some secret fountain of youth — but by revelation he has proclaimed *himself* as the source of life and immortality! We might begin to suspect that he’s just another religious teacher who has gotten carried away with delusions of self-importance, even if he has raised a few dead people back to life. And when we read about his claim that the only way to escape death is to believe in him, we’d say, “How preposterous!” Perhaps it’s not surprising that relatively few people take Jesus’ bold statement seriously — “He who believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die” (Jn. 11:25-26). After all, it’s probably the most startling claim anyone has ever made! Why should anyone believe it? We should believe it, not because Jesus raised Lazarus after he had been dead for four days, but because Jesus Himself arose after He died for us — and because He still lives today! The Lamb that was slain is in the midst of the throne, and He has sent forth from the throne the very *spirit of His life* into us by the power of the Holy Ghost! It is a glorious fact, for we have received it! Christ alone has the credentials to claim that He can give life and immortality to men!

The Greek word *zoe* is the word used throughout the New Testament for the **God kind of life**. There are three primary Greek words translated “life” in the New Testament. *Zoe* is the first, always used when speaking of divine and spiritual life. Then there is *psuche*, denoting natural, soulish, or human life. The third is *bios*, meaning the affairs of this world and our living in it. Jesus declared that He came into the world for one purpose — “I am come that they might have *life*, and that they might have it more abundantly” (Jn. 10:10). The Greek word translated “life” in this verse is *zoe*. This eternal life He came to give us is the very nature of God! “For as the Father hath *life (zoe)* in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have *life (zoe)* in Himself” (Jn. 5:26). And again, “In Him was *life (zoe)*; and the *life (zoe)* was the light of men” (Jn. 1:4). By His *zoe life* God imparts His very nature, essence, substance, and being into our human spirits! *Zoe*, then, means what we call eternal life, or God’s life, or divine life. This new kind of life is that which *quickens the human spirit*, awakening us and making us alive unto God! This has already happened in those who believe. This life effects great changes in our lives, transforms our minds, and raises up the image and likeness of God within us. Ultimately this is the heritage of every son of Adam! “Therefore as by the offense of one (man) judgment came upon *all men* to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon *all men* unto justification of *life*” (Rom. 5:18). “I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the *life of the world*” (Jn. 6:51).

Only the life that is both divine and eternal can be counted as life, for every other kind of life ends in death. Only life which is immortal can be considered life, for that which is immortal is unchangeable; it remains the same and continues living even after passing through any kind of blow or destruction. A life which is subject to any change, weakness, or death is neither unchangeable, indestructible, immortal, nor eternal. Such cannot be considered *life*! Only that which is *divine*, the *God quality of life*, is truly life. Though a man might claim that he has put on immortality in his body and will never physically die, if his body is still capable of being splattered on the highway by a Mack truck, he obviously does not have *life* reigning in his body! Even Jesus could die physically, until He came forth in the power of resurrection in a body possessed by divine life. That divine body could pass through any kind of blow or destruction without being affected in any way. He could pass right through the wall, appear and disappear, and nothing could overcome Him. What does it mean to have life? It means to have God Himself! Life is a mighty power! We will know the full power of that life when we have come to live fully out of that life. This life is centered in the throne. The One in the throne is the *LIVING ONE*! How do we know this? "...those *living creatures* give glory and honour and thanks to Him that sat on the throne, who *liveth for ever and ever*" (Rev. 4:10).

In the midst of the throne! The four "Living Creatures" are four manifestations of LIFE — the LIFE OF THE GOD OF THE THRONE! They are four representations of NATURE — the NATURE OF THE GOD IN THE THRONE! The four Living Creatures are four expressions of the POWER AND DOMINION OF THE THRONE! If you want to know what the God of the throne is like, then take a look at the four Living Creatures in the midst of the throne. In them is manifest the attributes of the life of the God of the throne. If you wish to know the nature of the authority, rule, and dominion of the throne, then understand the nature of the four Living Creatures in the midst of the throne; for these embody within themselves the character of the dominion of the God of the throne. Not only do they represent the life and nature of the God of the throne; not only do they express within themselves the character of the dominion of the throne — they likewise reveal the very life, nature, character, and dominion of A-L-L WHO SHARE THE THRONE!

This is the *life of the throne*! The throne means *kingship*! The One on the throne **REIGNS**! This is the glory of the *sons of God* who reign with Christ! This is the fourfold character of God revealed through the dominion of God from the throne. This is God's identity through His kingdom administration in and through those who share *His kingship*, to reconcile and restore all things into God again. The four Living Creatures are the four faces of God revealed in His power, grace, wisdom, and exaltation. The four Living Creatures are the fourfold nature of God revealed in dominion. When the power, grace, wisdom, and exaltation of God have been raised up in that earth which *you are*, as it is in heaven, you will behold the four Living Creatures within yourself! Ah, precious friend of mine, if you have received the call of the overcomer to "sit with HIM in His throne," then all that the four Living Creatures represent is even now being wrought out in your life, their nature becoming your nature, for naught but the nature of the Lamb and of the four Living Creatures can stand "*in the midst of the throne.*"

My spirit thrills with the harmonies of heaven as I contemplate these things and the glories typified by the four Living Creatures unfold within my spiritual understanding, for truly they reveal the nature of throneship, the realm of God's omnipotent power and sovereign dominion. They bespeak the position and ministry of **KINGSHIP**. God **REIGNS**! The Lamb **REIGNS**! The four Living Creatures **REIGN**! The overcomers **REIGN**! The manchild **REIGNS**! All are **IN THE THRONE**! What else would you do in the throne? And if you would share that throne as a king in God's kingdom, then the nature of God, which is the nature of the Lamb, which is the nature of the four Living Creatures, is now becoming *your nature*, too! "And...the four Living Creatures and the four and twenty Elders...sung a new song, saying, Thou art worth to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed **us** to God by Thy 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 on the earth**" (Rev. 5:8-10). There we have the clearest possible identification of the four Living Creatures. They are God's kings! They represent His kingship! They are they that reign! Not in heaven — *on the earth*! They are God's government on earth!

Now let us consider for a moment the fact that these Living Creatures are *four*. When ancient man went outside of his home and looked about him, he had no conception of the modern world as we know it. No Copernicus had ever opened his eyes to the vast significance of the universe. To him the world was a great flat surface with four boundaries, east and west and north and south. There were four winds from the four sides of the earth. Thus, when he thought of the world he thought in terms of **four**. Four became the cosmic number. The world in which men lived and worked and died, was conveniently symbolized by four. There were four corners of the earth; four elements of earth, air, fire, and water; four seasons, and four phases of the moon; the great “World Powers” as revealed to the prophet Daniel were four in number: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Four is the number of all that is worldly, world-wide, or universal. Thus, the four Living Creatures in the midst of the throne, who reign on the earth, signify the world-wide, all-encompassing, and universal power and dominion of the life of God from His throne!

What power pertains to those who are seated with Christ in His throne! And you, dear called and chosen of the Lord, are seated with Christ in the highest of the heavens! You are not seated there to sing and shout and dance all over God’s heaven. Oh, no! You have been apprehended to His throne to rule, to reign over the earth! Simply speaking, to reign is to exercise authority for God — to rule all things. God’s one intention from the beginning has been that He may make man in His image and likeness and *give him dominion* — that he may reign for Him in the universe. Although this matter of reigning will not be completely realized until the manifestation of the sons of God, yet today God wants it to have a beginning on earth. If any believer has not yet reached the degree of reigning for God, he has missed God’s purpose in creating man. There must be such people prepared by God that through them the authority of God can be executed and the kingdom of God can come to pass upon earth.

The Lord says, “Behold, I have given you *authority* to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the *power* of the enemy: and nothing shall in any wise hurt you” (Lk. 10:19). True, the King James Bible states that Christ has given us “power” to tread on serpents and scorpions, but the Greek word is *exousia* meaning *authority* or *jurisdiction*. When Jesus speaks of the “power” of the enemy, however, He uses a different word, *dunamis*, meaning *power*. Our English words dynamite and dynamo come from that Greek word. Praise God, all that the adversaries of this present age have is POWER — but what the Lord gives us is AUTHORITY! This shows that authority is greater than power and can control power; therefore authority is over power. People talk about the power of the adversary; yes, the adversaries do have some power, but they have ABSOLUTELY NO AUTHORITY! The satanic realm has been stripped of all authority!

The Lord gives us authority in order to deal with all the power of the enemy. We may illustrate this by an automobile moving along the street. Although it has hundreds of horsepower under the hood, yet a traffic policeman has authority over it. When he blows his whistle the mighty engine must slow to a whisper and the car must stop. That is authority over power! Again, it is like an army. Although it has great power with its men, tanks, airplanes, guns, and bombs, yet the General has the authority. Nothing moves or does anything until he gives the order! He has authority over power! Authority is over power and controls power, therefore authority supersedes power. The Son of God who sits upon the throne has given us *authority* over all the *power* of the enemy! Rejoice ye kings and priests! You have authority to speak to the power of the adversary and that adversary must obey your word! You have authority to command every stratagem and work of the enemy, that its hold be broken. You have authority to speak life to men, situations, and nations. That is the wonder!

What a reign God shall bring forth through His king-priest company! Who shall banish cruel oppression? Who shall drive savage war with all its horrors, from the face of the earth? Who shall stay the ravages of famine, pestilence, and disease? Who shall free the sad world from murder, suicide, hatred, and crime? Who shall release the prisoners of sin and death, and wipe all tears from off all faces, that there be no more crying, neither sorrow, nor pain anywhere in God’s beautiful earth? The moan of the world’s agony comes to me as the surge of the sea upon a rocky shore. Alas, Lord! for the sorrow, bondage, sin, torment, and death which all our efforts cannot undo, and all our sympathy cannot banish. What can’st Thou do for these, O Lord? And I hear the Lord’s whisper from within my deepest spirit. “The sons of God are arising to set creation free. As the sons arise in the power of my *peace* — fear,

hatred, and violence shall cease. As the sons arise in the authority of my *victory* — oppression and tyranny shall end. As the sons arise in the strength of my *righteousness* — the bondage of sin shall be broken and mankind released into my holiness. As the sons arise in the intelligence of my *mind* — ignorance and superstition shall surrender to my wisdom. As the sons arise in the quickening of my *life* — death's hold shall be broken and the way of life opened to all mankind. As the sons arise in the splendor of my *light* — the darkness shall flee away, the sorrowing shall be comforted, the meek exalted to reign, the broken-hearted healed, and the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Hallelujah!

The anointing of the sons of God shall be an anointing *without measure*, and the message of these sons shall be a message stripped of all the ineffectual absurdities that have been preached throughout the years. The sun is sinking in the western sky of this age of the “in part” measure of the candlestick realm. A new day is dawning for those who have received the call to “*Come up hither*” to the throne realm. And there shall be an exultant victory! For now the day is dawning when “**ALL** nations shall come and worship before Thee” (Rev. 15:4). “And...all nations...shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to **KEEP THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES**” (Zech. 14:16). It cannot be denied that throughout the church age all nations have never come up to worship the Lord. They don't today! Iraq doesn't come. Israel doesn't come. Saudi Arabia doesn't come. China doesn't come. Tibet doesn't come. And the list goes on and on. Furthermore, none can deny that throughout the church age those nations that have come to worship the Lord have worshipped Him in the feasts of Passover and Pentecost. But there is a day, glorious day! when *all nations shall know the Lord and feast with Him in the blessing and glory that flow from the FEAST OF TABERNACLES!* Aren't you glad!

I have met men who professed that they had no desire, no ambition whatever, to rule and reign with Christ. It is enough, say they, to know that we are saved by grace and shall make heaven at last. In fact, I have been greatly criticized by some for my hope of inheriting the kingdom and sitting with Christ upon the throne of universal dominion. In the eyes of these accusers I am vain, conceited, self-righteous, presumptuous, heretical, and power-mad because I cherish the beautiful hope of sonship and rulership in the kingdom of God. I do not hesitate to tell you that it is none other than Christ Himself who has graciously bidden us to overcome and share with Him His authority over the nations and all things! He would both be king *in us* and exercise His regal power *through us*. Such high and holy purpose for those who go all the way with Him is merely the tangible expression of the approval of God, and we may no more deny Him the pleasure of fulfilling His purpose in us than we may renounce it once it is conferred. **HE WHO DESPISES A THRONE DESPISES HIM WHO CONFERS THE THRONE.** This was one of our Lord's rebukes to the Pharisees — “The glory that cometh only from God *ye seek not*” (Jn. 4:44).

Throneship involves far more than mere power over men's lives and events. **IT IS A MINISTRY AND AUTHORITY TO BLESS.** I might add that it is the greatest ministry available with the largest capacity to bless. The purpose and scope of this kingship ministry is stated by the apostle Paul in these words, “That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together into one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him” (Eph. 1:10). We do not desire the throne for what we can get out of it, for our own fame and fortune, but for the infinite potential it holds for blessing and restoring creation. Today the world is full of broken hearts, the hospitals are crowded, the cemeteries are being filled, even nature itself is groaning. You go down to the seaside and you can hear the sob of the waves, you go to the mountains and you can hear the low sigh of the wind in the tree tops, you walk through the forest and you can hear the anguished shrieks of the animal kingdom. Creation is groaning, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God!

It is not more preachers we need. It is not more radio broadcasts or television programs. It is not more missions and missionaries. It is not more tracts or even Bibles. It is not more programs and crusades. It is not another revival. All we need is the cry of the groaning creation and the prayer of the travailing saint to be joined with the unutterable longings of the Holy Spirit, all crying in unison and harmony for the manifestation of the sons of God. Oh, how my heart cries for it! There is an elect people who, even as I pen these words, are being made participators in this grandest of all dramas of history. Their prayer, praise God, is soon to be answered!

Ah, my brother, my sister, do not sell creation short! Do not settle for less than God's best! All creation is standing on tiptoe, waiting and counting on you. If you love Israel; if you love the Chinese; if you love the Africans; if you love the Muslims; if you love all the nations and kindreds of the earth who know nothing of the Saviour; if you love the sad, the tormented, the impoverished, the deceived, the sick and the dying; if you love the multitudes held captive in the blindness and stupidity of religious systems; if you love the burdened brute creation; if you love the mountains, the trees, the rivers, and the oceans so mindlessly being destroyed under the hand of greed — you will joyfully welcome the hope of the manifestation of God in His sons; for it is the hope that shall bring to the groaning creation emancipation from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God; to Israel, her Messiah; to the heathen idolater, the knowledge of God; to the rebellious, correction; to the sick and dying, health and life incorruptible; to the bride, the presence of the bridegroom; to the captives of religious Babylon, the living reality of the Spirit and the Truth; to mute nature, blessed release from the cruelty of man and the blight of the curse.

One of the amazing features of human experience is man's capacity for ascent and descent. No creature of God throughout the vastnesses of infinity is capable of ascending to such heights and descending to such depths as is man. The carnal mind has never been endowed with the ability to measure the limits of man's upward reach, for "the natural man receiveth 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). Revelation, however, has given the spiritual man a vision of the possibility of his rise into dizzy heights of splendor and glory.

Man is not destined to ascend to heights *angelic*. Man is not programmed to become either angel or archangel. The man Christ Jesus is Himself the revelation of man's destiny and of Him it is written, "Being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art my *Son*, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a *Son*? And again, when He bringeth the firstbegotten into the world, He saith, Let all the angels of God *worship Him!* But to which of the angels said He at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool?" (Heb. 1:4-6,13).

"*Now are we the sons of God*, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but...we shall be *like Him*," proclaims the Word of God. Divinity through sonship to God is the limit of man's ascent. He may be *like* the Son of God who *is* God, blessed forevermore. Sons of God must learn to think of themselves as a totally different sort of people. We are indeed a peculiar people, for we have been begotten again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead and have become new creatures in Christ Jesus, the very sons of very God. We have been lifted by Christ into a heavenly realm and all our behavior and ambitions have altered their course. So much are we become inhabitants of a new sphere that we discover that we are no longer citizens of this present evil world. We have acquired a new citizenship in a celestial realm, both experiencing and enjoying the rights of citizens of that higher world.

### THE MULTITUDE "BEFORE" THE THRONE

"After this I beheld, and, lo, a *great multitude*, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood *before the throne*, and *before the Lamb*, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And one of the Elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? And whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation (pressure) and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are *before the throne of God*, and *serve Him* day and night in His temple: and *He that sitteth upon the throne shall dwell among them*" (Rev. 7:9-10, 13-15).

This is the great company of the redeemed of all ages who wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. But note their location relative to the throne: "After this I beheld, and, lo, a



great multitude which no man could number...stood *before the throne*, and *before the Lamb*.” The Lamb is IN THE THRONE — REIGNING upon the throne! The four Living Creatures are IN THE THRONE — KINGS reigning with Christ! But the great multitude is not in the throne; it is “before” the throne. The great multitude is not “reigning” with Christ upon the throne; it is “serving” Him who sits upon the throne. These do not rule and reign as kings, but they are redeemed, washed in the blood of the Lamb! These have been delivered out of the sin and death and travail of this present evil age, and receiving the life, joy, and victory of Christ’s redemption are now “servants” of God. These did not “grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head,” to become kings and priests upon the throne, but by His matchless grace they have become beloved children of God and serve Him in His temple “before” the throne — that is, in the Holy Place and the Outer Court. They are blessed indeed! “He that sitteth upon the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore...for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes” (Rev. 7:15-17).

The imagery is drawn in allusion to the encampment of the children of Israel in the wilderness. God is represented as sitting upon His throne in the tabernacle of Moses, within the Most Holy Place, between the cherubim, upon the throne of mercy. There “before” His throne camped the tribes of Israel, three tribes on each side of the tabernacle, and He that sat upon the throne dwelt among them.

Israel is used in many instances to typify the church, the body of Christ. For instance, when they left Egyptian bondage, they were a type of God’s children who hear His call to come out from the bestial spirit of this world and follow Him into His kingdom. But while Israel is thus and in other ways used to represent the body of Christ, yet as we are now viewing it, *in its relation to the tabernacle in the wilderness*, it is a wholly different type. In this setting the whole of Israel lay totally *outside* of the tabernacle, *outside* of the place of sacrifice in the Outer Court, *outside* of the ministry of the priesthood in the house of God, *outside* of the presence and glory of God, separated by the white curtain of Christ’s righteousness from all that lay within. Thus “the Camp” was separated from all holy things by the curtain of white linen surrounding the tabernacle, representing to those within a wall of righteousness by faith, but to those without a wall of unbelief which hindered their view of, and access to, the holy things within. Therefore Israel, in its relationship to the tabernacle, represents the *whole world of mankind* that is outside of Christ, excluded from His promises, separated from His presence, estranged from His life, barred from His glory, having no hope, and without God in the world.

The Outer Court of the tabernacle represents the condition of justification, entered through faith in Christ, the “gate.” There was only one gateway into the Court, the type thus testifying that there is but one way of access unto God — one “gate” — Jesus! “I am the way...no man cometh unto the Father but by me.” “I am the door, by me if any man enter in he shall be saved” (Jn. 14:6; 10:9). It was at this gate that the sin-offering was slain, and it was on behalf of the *whole Camp* that the blood was sprinkled upon the mercy seat of God’s throne in the Most Holy Place. The Camp of Israel represents, on one hand, the whole world of lost mankind and, on the other hand, the great multitude of the redeemed which no man can number that stands “before” the throne and “before” the Lamb, “serving” God.

Someone will surely inquire, “How can the same Camp represent *both* the lost world and the redeemed saints? The answer is very simple! *We were all sinners before we became saints*. J. Preston Eby was once a sinner; now he is redeemed: the same man, but transformed into a new state of being, with a new relationship to God. It is the blood of the Lamb that makes all the difference! “To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling *the world* unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them” (II Cor. 5:19). “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ” (Eph. 2:13).

To be continued...

J. PRESTON EBY