

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 74

THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES AND THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS (continued)

“In the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes before and behind. And the first living creature was like a *lion*, and the second living creature was like an *ox*, and the third living creature had a face as a *man*, and the fourth living creature was like a *flying eagle*” (Rev. 4:6-7).

The four living creatures are in the “midst of the throne” denoting *kingship*. The four living creatures had four faces in the likeness of four different creatures, representing four aspects of *kingship* which are true in Christ Jesus and are also wrought out in the life of every son of God apprehended to share His throne. Each of the faces reveals an aspect of the attributes, characteristics, and qualities which qualify one to rule and reign with Christ in His kingdom. They are, furthermore, the four-fold manifestation of Himself to all mankind!

THE OX

In our previous message we considered the face of the *lion* which speaks of *strength* — power, authority, and dominion — for he is the most powerful of all the big cats, and is known as the king of the beasts, and the king of the forest, by virtue of his awesome prowess! This brings us to the face of the *ox* which is symbolic of *servanthood*, for he is the largest and most useful of all domestic animals and is historically a beast of burden, one that draws wagons, plows fields, can be milked, and gives meat — a servant to man from time immemorial. With the face of the ox, Christ is revealed and manifested as the *compassionate servant* of all. The firstborn Son of God did not come to lord it over people, or to compel them to obey Him. He came to serve! (Phil. 2:7). The service Christ renders is done with compassionate mercy and out of a heart of divine love. It is the greatest service ever! He stoops to touch and receive and bless every man right where he is, without condemnation or judgment. His is the service of redeeming love and transforming grace that draws a person to serve and obey Him. When He comes to us and draws us with the cords of lovingkindness, by the sacrifice of Himself, we can do nothing else but respond in love and devotion to Him who has redeemed us!

Only the spiritually ambitious man will lay hold upon the kingdom of God. To be spiritually ambitious is to earnestly desire God’s best — in His way and time, according to His purpose, and always and only for His glory. It means to seek first the kingdom of God in all things! It means to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, soul, and strength. It means to come only to do the will of the Father, and to do only what we see the Father doing. To be spiritually ambitious is the very *spirit of sonship*! There is a place for ambitious men in the kingdom of God! Jesus explained the process, “Whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be *servant of all*.” He did not turn the man away from the ambition to be great. He simply told him how greatness can be achieved — become the servant of all!

Then there are degrees of this greatness. If you want to be *great*, be “the servant of all.” If you want to be *first*, be “the bond-slave of all.” The servant and the bond-slave represent degrees of self-giving, and

they, in turn, represent degrees of greatness attained, namely, “great” and “first.” Beyond that is a level to which Jesus Himself attained. “The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to *give His life a ransom* for many.” In other words, since He went deeper than being servant of all, or a bond-slave of all, in that He gave His very life, so He becomes the Son of God upon the throne of the heavens, which is more than being great, or first, among a group — it is the acme of being! So the door is open for ambition. You may be least, or less, or great, or greater, or greatest, or first, or a son of God upon the throne!

Yet, it does not mean that we *give* in order to *get* — that is not the kingdom of God at all! We do not put on humility and serve others with the motive of becoming great, attaining to exalted positions of power and honor. If we are serving to gain advantage, to receive a position of authority over others, for the sake of authority, then we are not truly humble servants at all, but devious, cunning, crafty, deceptive, scheming, snaky, contriving, plotting, insincere hypocrites — and our motive is all wrong! That is not how the kingdom works! We do not serve to be made great — we serve because we **are great with God’s greatness!**

This is not a position of exercising power over others but of serving them. Serving **is** the power and the greatness! The motivation of the desires of those who are truly called to sonship is the same as the Captain of our salvation. Filled with the great love of God, the desire to attain to this position is to give ourselves in sacrifice and service for the deliverance and restoration of the rest of God’s creatures. Having attained to this deliverance from the bondage of corruption as the firstfruits of the creation, our only desire is to labor together with the Lord in the deliverance of the rest of His creation, to lift them up to the same level of life as He has lifted us. The heart of God, the heart of unconditional, unlimited, and sacrificial love and all goodness, is the greatest heart in the universe. It is not serving that *makes us* great, it is true divine greatness that *causes us* to serve! Oh, the mystery of it!

Let us see how beautifully Jesus taught this by His own example. Everything is prepared and set in order for the last supper, to the very water to wash the feet of the guests, as their custom was. Christ and His disciples gather in the upper room to eat and fellowship together on this solemn night. Each one waits for the other, for there is no servant available to perform the customary service of washing the guest’s feet. Washing feet was one of the basest tasks in the culture of Jesus’ day. It was a job usually done by a house slave. Just as we offer a visitor hospitality, so in Jesus’ time they customarily washed a visitor’s feet. Washing feet was undesirable responsibility: the roads were dusty well enough. But the filth of the road was more than dust! The transportation of that day was the camel, the donkey, the horse, and the mule. It takes little imagination to understand that the streets and roads were littered with their manure. The traveler’s feet would be covered with this as well as being caked with dust. The washing of feet was assigned to the lowliest slave because it meant handling the filth of the streets. This job was thought to be beneath the dignity of the “good man of the house.”

Not one of the twelve thinks of humbling himself to do the job, for, after all, are they not the honored ones, the disciples of the very Son of God, the flaming apostles of the kingdom, the future rulers of the world! Even at the table they were full of the thought — who should be greatest in the kingdom that was then beginning to dawn. Suddenly, unexpectedly Jesus stood up from the table, and began to take off His inner layer of garments until He was stripped to the waist, wearing only His loin cloth. He then took a large towel and wrapped it around Himself, poured water into a large brass basin, and, beginning with one of the men at the end of the table, laid heavy emphasis upon His words of a few moments before, “I am in the midst of you as one that serves.” Oh, the wonder of it! on which angels gazed with adoring wonder. Christ, the Creator and King of the universe, at whose word all worlds and galaxies flooded the infinity of space, who might with one word have compelled any man or legions of angels to do His bidding, Himself chose the slave’s place as His own, taking the soiled, filthy feet in His own holy hands, and washes them. It was to this task that the Lord of glory stooped!

But listen more carefully to the divine *why* and *how* of this wondrous spectacle. Jesus does it in the full consciousness of His divine glory, for the apostle John records, “Jesus *knowing* that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God and went to God, rose...” What a startling combination of sublime cause with curious consequence! How could Jesus have done this? How could the Master and the King of the universe wash dung from His disciple’s feet? He could do it because HE WAS

SECURE IN WHO HE WAS. He *knew* that the Father had given all things into His hands. He *knew* that He had come from the Father and that He was the Son of God and was soon to ascend the throne. He *knew* that He was going back to the Father after He defeated sin, sickness, death, hell, and the grave. He didn't have to prove anything to Himself or anyone else. His life had already proven who He was to those who had eyes to see. And He didn't stoop so low to become a tyrant, to rule over this world by force. Oh, no! He came to heal and bless and deliver and transform, to **reign by serving!** Ah, yes, my beloved, once we thoroughly *know* who we are there is no need to proclaim it, no need to sound a trumpet, no need to wear a badge, to remind people of how special we are. Once we *know* that we are the sons of God WE ARE FREED TO SERVE!

You see, it wasn't *in spite* of the fact of His greatness that Jesus took the place of the servant — it was *because* of His greatness! The greatness of Jesus is the greatness of the Father's heart. The greatness of Jesus is the greatness of divine love and humility. The greatness of Jesus is the greatness of *sonship!* For the hands into which the Father gives all things nothing is common or unclean. Because one is the offspring of the God of all grace, compassion, love, mercy, and goodness, in whose hands all things are given, it is not difficult for him to stoop so low. In this taking the form of a servant, Jesus proclaims the divine order of the kingdom of God and the nature of the kings and priests who reign. The higher one stands in attainment in the kingdom, the more it is his joy to be servant of all! "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" (Mat. 20:27). "He that is *greatest* among you *shall be* your servant" (Mat. 23:11).

The higher I rise in the consciousness of being like Christ, the deeper shall I stoop to serve the creation around me. The reason why we so often do not bless others is that we wish to appear to them as their superiors in blessing, calling, or rank. But that is not the spirit of sonship! The truth is that only as a son can we truly be a servant. It was the Son of God who assumed the form of a servant and humbled Himself. Ah, beloved elect of the Lord, walk among men *as sons of the Most High God!* A son of God is only in the world to show forth his Father's glory, to demonstrate how God-like and how blessed it is to live only and always to find a way to love, bless, redeem, and restore God's fallen creation. Someone has well said, "God has three sorts of servants in the world: some are slaves, and serve Him from fear; others are hirelings, and serve for wages; and the last are sons, who serve because they love."

I once read a story which beautifully illustrates why the mighty God would stoop so low as to appear as a servant in His sons in order to restore creation. A little child was handed over to another by her own father — not because he wanted to part with her, but they were very poor, and so that she could have sufficient food and clothing, a good education and opportunity in life, he gave her into a rich man's keeping, letting her be adopted by the rich man as his own daughter. He then hired himself as a servant to the rich man where he was given a small cottage to live on the grounds. He was always there and daily kept watch over that little life until she matured; and the girl, as she grew up, always felt a peculiar bond with him and that she could always rely upon the unselfish love and wise counsel of him who seemed but a serving man. Her father, as she supposed him to be, was cold, demanding, and even cruel. The day came when he repudiated her in a fit of rage because she had brought what he perceived as shame upon his name. In that dark moment the serving man stepped forward, and flung his arms around her, shouting, with the fierceness of righteous indignation to the man who had so cruelly abused her, "She never was your child!" Then the girl knew why it was that she had felt such acceptance, concern, care, peace, and joy in the presence of the serving-man. She had listened to his language of love many a time, not knowing the speaker was her real father!

Old father flesh, old father Adam, old father the devil repays all men with cruelty, injustice, baseness, lack, pain, fear, sorrow, and death. But there is a better Father — the One that sent you here, the one who has watched over you, cared for you, counseled you, blessed you, helped you, entreated you, wooed you and overshadowed you with His love as you have passed through this world of tears and trouble. Even when you knew it not, He was already your Father! And in Jesus He came as a servant to minister to your need, to lift and redeem and restore you unto Himself and His kingdom. And now, bless His name, He comes *in many sons* to reveal His heart of love to the whole vast creation and restore all things. We, as sons of God, are among men as Him that serveth!

This is the great miracle of sonship! It unites greatness and humility in a divine combination. It is the figure of an *ox* in the midst of a glorious *throne!* Oh, the wonder of it! This is the new creation in Christ

Jesus! The great secret lies in the indwelling spirit of Jesus. Being made partakers of His nature and mind we are able to stand before Pilate, and when he says, “Are you a king?” we answer, “Thou sayest it.” On the same night it is possible to kneel before our brethren with a towel and a basin of water, washing their feet — cleansing their walk — in the spirit of service and humility. Only in sonship do power and humility find their true relationships and their true balance. Have you ever seen the President of the United States cutting the grass at the White House? How about Queen Elizabeth scrubbing the floors of her palace? Or the Prime Minister of Canada cleaning the toilet? We don’t expect people of high position to do lowly and seemingly unimportant tasks. Yet Jesus has revealed the law of a Higher Kingdom, a kingdom where power and servanthood are joined together in a divine outpouring of love, grace, and goodness!

Lyn Gitchel, a dear friend of ours in Pennsylvania, once shared a precious point about the meaning of what we call *ministry*. She wrote, “The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and give His life a ransom for many. The whole idea that we have of “ministry” has got warped up in these days, and I believe we shall have to have a new picture of what ministry really is put into our minds by God. The word *ministry* comes from two Latin words, *minis*, (from which we get minus), which means *lesser*, and *tri*, which is the Latin word for *servant*. Now, when you think about it, a LESSER SERVANT is a whole lot different from what we think of when the word *ministry* is put in our minds. We think of accomplished pastors, famous evangelists, large meetings, crowds with a tremendous flow of miracles and worship, and people that can really hold your attention by their great preaching — and then we find that the word means LESSER SERVANT!

“The impact of this hit me recently and I’ll share the experience with you. For most of my life I have served in a professional capacity. Before I was an ordained minister I was a registered nurse. I have never really worked as a servant of any kind, until recently. A friend of mine was doing a little job here in town which involves helping an elderly lady who has had a stroke. You need to help her in whatever capacity she needs, from housework to bathing her. My friend had to leave town and, to help her out, I took the job. Nearly a year later I am still doing it! One day I was kneeling on the bathroom floor drying her feet when suddenly I said to myself, ‘Whatever am I doing here — I’m supposed to be an Ordained Minister!’ Immediately the Spirit of God answered within my heart, ‘You wanted to *minister*, didn’t you?’

“The time has come when we must understand that ministry is not preaching but servanthood. We are going to have to learn all over again what it means to serve people with the same heart of love that Jesus had when He walked among men. It was not beneath Him to lift a woman caught in adultery to her feet and speak a word of reassurance to her, nor was it beneath Him to eat at the house of an ungodly tax-gatherer and his friends. Jesus did not hire a huge auditorium and put out publicity announcing great meetings. He simply moved among men and women where they were and touched them with love, and healing, and compassion” — end quote.

There is the story of a man who desired from the Lord a true understanding of heaven and hell. One night in a dream he was told that he would soon receive this understanding. He was taken into a room where a few dozen people were sitting around a huge kettle of stew. Each one had only a long-handled spoon to eat with, and their arms were straightened so they could not bend them and bring the food into their mouths. The people were extremely upset and angry at their plight, shouting and cursing those who had done this to them. This, he was told, was hell. Then he was taken into another room which would be a picture to him of heaven. To his surprise, the room was identical. The large pot was there, as well as people with stiff arms and long spoons. There was one major difference, however. In this room, each one would smile and lovingly dip into the stew with his or her long-handled spoon and feed his fellow on the other side of the kettle! In this day we are being translated from hell to heaven within ourselves as we learn the ways of the kingdom which is the kingdom of *love* — by SERVING!

Every new year the Queen of England publishes her Honors List, conferring titles and decorations upon men and women who have rendered distinguished service to mankind or to the country or to the political party in power. I have in mind a little Honors List of my own! There is not much point in publishing it, because you will never have heard of these people. They include a dear sister who was poor in this world’s goods, who lived in a little house that approached being a shack, yet was committed to God’s purposes for this Day and vibrant with her love of God. She was always sharing the Word with the

neighborhood children who graced her porch, continually cooking and sharing with others, fixing up and maintaining a building for the gatherings of the saints, entertaining the ministries the Lord sent their way, and encouraging everyone. She never murmured or complained about anything that came her way.

Honor also goes to a brother who prayed earnestly and is credited with “praying down” a mighty move of the Spirit of God many years ago, by which others with whom he was associated were propelled into world-wide fame, while he unpretentiously cherished the deep truths and hope of sonship and the reconciliation of all things, continuing in prayer, setting an example of righteousness and humility before his family and community, regularly visiting the widows, orphans, and shut-ins. I honor another brother whose name I do not even know who, during our Conferences in Florida years ago, would sweep and clean the meeting place until the wee hours of the morning (without being asked — it wasn’t his responsibility!), while most of the brethren and the preachers were enjoying rich fellowship over a mid-night spread of food at the local restaurants. The one thing that these quiet heroes have in common is that they lived the *spirit of servanthood* without pretense or any motive other than a pure love and the deep desire to bless creation and advance the kingdom of God into men’s lives. Truly such are to be called *great* in the kingdom of heaven! In the spirit of these precious ones we see THE FACE OF THE OX IN THE MIDST OF THE THRONE!

That there are different levels in the kingdom of God, from the least in the kingdom to the greatest, Jesus clearly taught. He told His disciples, “Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is *least* in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he” (Mat. 11:11). On another occasion we read of Jesus’ disciples that “they disputed among themselves who should be the *greatest*. Jesus sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be *first*, the same shall be *last of all*, and *servant of all*” (Mat. 9:34-35). Christ Himself was the greatest among them! He said, “I am in the midst of you as he that serveth.” He was the humblest, and therefore, the greatest, but had He no authority? He had authority in heaven and on earth! Because He takes the place of deepest humility, does that strip Him of His kingly authority? Not at all! It intensifies and magnifies it! Both the *lion* and the *ox* are *in the midst of the throne!* They reign there together! This is revealed so powerfully in the Lord Jesus.

Many Bible commentators endeavor to make a case for the idea that the characteristics of the four living creatures are portrayed in the four Gospels: Matthew showing us Jesus as the lion of the tribe of Judah; Mark revealing the Lord as the ox, the servant of all; Luke portraying the Lord as the Man above all men; and John manifesting Christ as the eternal Word, or the flying eagle. Personally, I find very little ground for this. The truth is, if I were picking one of the four Gospels as a portrait of Christ as the ox-servant, I would choose the book of Matthew. There are more passages concerning greatness through servanthood in the book of Matthew than in all the other three Gospels combined! You will note that nearly all the scriptures I have quoted on the subject in this message are taken from the gospel of Matthew!

Christ was the greatest, yet He took the place of the lowest. He who stooped from the highest heaven, not only to earth, but to the deepest hell, who descended into the deepest depths to seek for erring and sinful men, is greatest. That is why He exercises authority today in the heavens and on the earth! He now takes the highest place as the Head of the body, the High Priest of our profession, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, and the Head of *all* principality and power. He is the greatest! And He is *still* the servant of all!

He that would rise to be the highest,
Must first come down to be the lowest,
And then ascend to be the highest
By keeping down to be the lowest.

God has called a people aside in this hour and brought them to a place of brokenness, humility, and nothingness in the eyes of the world and the church systems of man. We have obeyed the word the apostle Peter admonished, “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time” (I Pet. 5:6). God is about to exalt His sons, but it shall be the exaltation of humility.

Many years ago amidst a great moving of the Spirit of God the revelation of sonship fell with wonder upon our ears and burst with glory within our hearts. We sat enraptured for hours, day after day, and were taught by the Spirit about the Father and His purposes and about that elect company He has called, apprehended and chosen to be His sons to rule with Him in His kingdom and restore all things. We learned that these sons would have power unlimited — power over everything! Power over sin, power over sickness, power over demons, power over the elements, power over the nations, and power over death. We were going to rule and reign in power, and our eyes sparkled like diamonds in the noonday sun and our hearts swelled with joy in expectation of the wonderful position and authority we would soon have in the kingdom. We could think and talk of nothing else but the power we would have, and in our glorying we tried at times to usurp and demonstrate this power. We were intoxicated with illusions of grandeur as we pressed our way into the kingdom and the exalted position of sitting on the throne with Jesus and ruling the world and the vastnesses of infinity forever.

Little did we understand in those early days that the way **up** is **down!** The carnal mind would have us believe that the way **up** is **up**. Thus we have pressed our way into ministry, pressed our way into the kingdom, stood on the promises, demanded of God our “rights,” presuming even to *command God* to do this and that, and sought to seize the throne. It is true, elect of the Lord, that God wants to take us UP — high into the realms of God — UP to the throne — but God would have us know that the way UP is always DOWN! The one who serves the people well as a *priest* is the one who will also reign well as a *king*. “They shall be *priests*...and they shall *reign*.” That is the order! Though He is calling us to be kings with authority over all, yet our inner spirit must be that of a servant, that we might freely minister out of a contrite spirit and a broken heart the compassion and love of God right down where creation is. Do you want to know *what manifest sonship is?* CONSIDER JESUS! Jesus was the most lowly and humble of all men, and also the most powerful and authoritative. He was not a super-duper-elite-country-club Son of God. He didn’t bounce onto the platform under the lights with a flare of worldly showmanship and then disappear out the back door to escape contact with the people. Oh, no! He was the *ox* in the throne bearing the burden, pulling the wagon, plowing the fields, and giving His life to be meat for mankind. That is the mystery!

The following prophecy from the late Norene Nicholls has come into my hands at this time, and it surely speaks for this Day. “A strange and wondrous thing is about to come, for the Lord has spoken to those that will hear, and their ears have been sharpened. There is a gathering of the royal family, and the shepherds of Israel shall become **rulers on the thrones**. They have stood in desolate places and listened to the low sound of the sheep — even a little flock in a wilderness place, but now it shall change. The shepherds who have proven their worth in **aloneness** shall now come forth to be acknowledged of those who would not have Me to reign over them in times past. Behold the thing is at the door! Some have chosen high places for themselves, but others have allowed the Lord to choose for them, and thus have they been separated from their brethren and lost to sight. But now shall events bring forth the deserted ones and show them before kings who are really not kings at all. The scepter of these kings shall be righteousness and the girdle of faithfulness shall be upon their loins. They shall be recognized, not because they are of great stature nor commanding of personality, but they shall be recognized because **the Spirit of the Lord is upon them!**”

“Men shall no longer gather to men, but *the men of God shall gather to the establishment of truth* where the angels activate the holy ground. There shall strange but wondrous things take place, for **instructions from the presence of the Lord shall be heard**, and kings shall lift their voices in confidence and courage at the declaration. And, there too, shall be **that peculiar anointing reserved for kings come into being**; and that anointing shall teach you all things. Then from that pillar of truth shall the kings issue forth to do exploits and turn the aliens back from the shores of the land promised. Be not afraid nor amazed, for the Lord has spoken in verity and truth and shall bring it to pass. No longer shall you stand idly by and wait for another day, but there shall be activity of a new source — yet activity that is effortless and quiet. You shall slip quietly into palaces and judgment halls and speak a word in season. You shall stand before prelates and counselors, but not one of your words shall fail. You shall see the manifestation of what you have spoken, and men shall shut their mouths nor argue the point. This is a strange work to be done, but it shall come by the decree of God and stand unmovable before heaven and earth. The closing of the day is also **the opening of the Day**, and to this time have you been called. So it is and shall be” — end quote.

THE FACE OF A MAN

The third living creature had a face as a man. The face of a man indicates *intelligence* — for it is this which distinguishes man from the brute creation. It is intelligence with understanding, knowledge, and wisdom, for Adam was created in the image and likeness of God, revealing in his noble face the inward nature and character of God, and was thereby given dominion over all the works of God's hands. Every son of God is being filled with this divine intelligence with heavenly understanding, knowledge, and wisdom. We can never reign apart from these!

Let us consider these three ingredients in intelligence. The first is *understanding*. Understanding is an ability and function of the *mind*. Without mind there can be no understanding! A man's understanding corresponds precisely to the condition, development, and quality of his mind. Every created life form possesses mind and the understanding of the creature is limited by the quality of its mind. Quality of mind is first and foremost an inherited characteristic. For instance, a cat thinks like a cat, knows as a cat, understands as a cat, and acts like a cat because it was *born* a cat, therefore possessing the brain and mind of a cat. Until recently we had a cat in our home. This cat would come and lie in our room or curl up on my lap while I watched the evening news. While I was very interested in the news stories, the cat had positively no interest at all! He couldn't care less! It's not that he didn't see the pictures flashing across the screen or hear the sound from the speakers, he could see and hear just fine, but he had no *understanding* of them, so he just curled up and went to sleep! It simply isn't possible for cats to understand things human. Humans are of a different and higher order than are cats. Cats may see men, and observe their movements, yet there is no common ground of knowledge. The cat has no true comprehension of what it sees. It discerns only things pertaining to its own realm. It has positively no understanding of the ways of man, or of the meaning of his movements, or words, or plans. Cat minds function on the level of cat nature, while human minds function on the plane of human nature!

Likewise, God, the Spirit, is of a different and higher order of life than is the natural, Adamic man! The mind of the natural man functions on the level of human nature whereas the mind of God functions on the plane of divine nature. There is no common ground of understanding or knowledge between the two. Therefore, the natural man, the Adamic man, is totally incapable of comprehending that which pertains to the realm of God! God is of a different and higher order than is the natural man. Paul stated it so well when he said, "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). For natural minds to comprehend things spiritual is equally as impossible as for cats to comprehend things human! There is no common ground of knowledge. So, until humans receive of *God's Spirit*, the Spirit that knows and understands the things that pertain to the realm of God, it is impossible for them to have any understanding, either of God, of His word, or of His ways.

With what truth did Paul write to the saints, saying, "For who could really understand a man's inmost thoughts except the spirit of man himself? How much less could anyone understand the thoughts of God except the very Spirit of God? We have now received not the spirit of the world but the Spirit of God Himself, so that we *can understand* God's generosity towards us" (I Cor. 2:11-12, Moffatt). The spirit of man in the unregenerate individual is truly the offspring of God who *is spirit*, yet it does not serve the Lord, for it is in darkness, and knows not from whence it came nor who or what it is. This is easy to understand! If a human baby were placed in a dark room and kept there in captivity without contact with other humans or the outside world, it would grow up knowing neither from whence it came or what it is. It would be unable to talk, unable to understand those who do talk, unable to walk, and incapable of functioning at all in the human world. It would be less than an animal! But let someone discover its plight, give it light, get it in contact with other humans, expose it to the world about it, shower it with love and attention, and it will grow up comprehending and corresponding to the world to which it belongs! That has been the precise state of every man born into this world of Adamic consciousness! Man's spirit, truly the offspring of God, has been buried, concealed and locked up in the dark room of the dreadful deep beneath the outer shell of our soulical consciousness and the limiting confines of the mortal body. There has been no fellowship with that *spiritual world* from which we came and to which we pertain! But our Lord Jesus Christ is the One who has come to rescue us, and He is that "TRUE LIGHT which *lighteth every man that cometh into the world*" (Jn. 1:9). The wise man has told us that the *spirit of man* is the *candle of the Lord* (Prov. 20:27).

Ah, when HE lights our candle, when *our spirit* is quickened by *His Spirit*, there is awakening, illumination, comprehension, and we begin to see into realms of spiritual life and reality to which, heretofore, we had been blind. This involves more by far than someone informing us that we are a spirit, a spiritual being, and that we should therefore actively begin to live out of our spiritual reality and identity instead of from the intellect of our soul and the desires of the body. That would be like someone sticking their head in through the window where the little child I described is in captivity, and saying to it, "You're a human being, you can talk like a human being, walk like a human being, act like a human being, now get up and act like it!" That's not enough! It is not by mere information or human effort that we can live out of spirit — the spiritual life! The awakening we must receive involves the sovereign, dynamic, living, quickening, redemptive operation of God within our spirit effecting the actual standing up within us of a new creature raised up by the power of God through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost (Titus 3:5). Regeneration is a renewal that consists of the inbreathing of God's Spirit into our spirit, effecting union with His life. Only man, of all God's glorious creation, can be penetrated and lighted up within by the mind of God, to have an understanding of things unseen by the inspiration of the eternal Father, in one word, to be spirit, and have the consciousness of God, and contact and communication with the heavenly realm, being irradiated, permeated, filled, enabled, glorified by His infinite Spirit and His divine fullness. It is indeed wonderful!

And then after men receive of God's Spirit, and are quickened and awakened by it, the depth of their knowledge and understanding is wholly in proportion to their growth and development in the realm of the spirit. The mind of Christ must be "put on" and we are transformed *by the renewing of our minds*. Upon being born again we realize that we are actual sons of God, yet babes, "babes in Christ." And the understanding of newborn babes is limited in the extreme! They cannot have a deep knowledge and comprehension until they have passed through many experiences, been schooled in the wisdom of heaven, grown up into the stature of mature divine life, and been filled with the mind of God, the spiritual mind being fully developed within.

We who have received of God's Spirit have been renewed in the *spirit of our mind*, that is, we have taken on a new mind originating in a newly quickened Christ-consciousness, so that we now think and act as an entirely new creation, a new man, a new creature. As we have followed on to know the Lord, more and more we have found our darkened minds giving way to this new creation mind which is the *mind of Jesus Christ*. Paul wrote, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." The mind that was in Jesus was the Father's mind! Because He was fully possessed of His Father's mind, He was able to say, "I and the Father are one." This is the reality into which every son of God is being brought! In every son who reigns with Christ in those glorious ages to come, it will be the mind of our heavenly Father that will rule the world and all things and all realms. The Father has purposed that He will rule the universe by that man, the many-membered Christ, whom He has chosen, and those sons, every one, will be possessed with the Father's mind!

All understanding is in the mind, therefore, the understanding of God is in the mind of Christ, which is the mind of the Spirit, which is the mind of the new creation man. We do not understand the spiritual realities of the world of our heavenly Father with our natural minds. It is not the same mind that understands how to drive an automobile that understands the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Oh, no! It is the new mind, the spiritual mind that comprehends things spiritual. When the firstborn Son of God received the seven spirits of God He received the *spirit of understanding* (Isa. 11:2). This was not the understanding of the same mind that made furniture in Joseph's carpenter shop! This spirit of understanding is the very MIND OF GOD — to know and understand as God knows and understands! The mind of Christ is being developed today within every son from one stage to another until we understand *all things* as our heavenly Father understands! Can you not see the mystery? THIS IS DIVINE INTELLIGENCE, THE FACE OF A MAN IN THE IMAGE OF GOD IN THE MIDST OF THE THRONE!

The second ingredient in *intelligence* is *knowledge*. All of the Lord's people are admonished seek after the knowledge of the Lord! The apostle Peter exhorts, "But grow in grace, and in *the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*" (II Pet. 3:18). Paul's earnest desire for the saints was that they might "walk worthy of the Lord, *increasing in the knowledge of God*" Col. 1:10). Something of the magnitude of this knowledge of God is expressed in these words of inspiration, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the *knowledge of God*! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!

For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counselor? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever!" (Rom. 11:33-36).

As the mighty oak lies hidden in the tiny acorn, so the knowledge of God lies concealed in the seed of Christ planted in the womb of our hearts. As the great oak inches heavenward year after year, so the knowledge of God bursts forth from realm to realm out of the life of God in our spirits. "Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is **renewed in knowledge** after the image of Him that created him" (Col. 3:9-10). Renewed in knowledge! What a revelation that is! And the knowledge that is being renewed in us is the knowledge we possessed when once we were in the image of God! That is the clear meaning of those words. The new man is being **renewed in knowledge**, and that knowledge restores to us the consciousness of God's image and likeness.

One can only be *renewed in knowledge* by refreshing or recalling something he has known before. We often read over such statements so lightly and carelessly, missing the true implication and import of the words! The scriptures are very clear that each of us came into this world out of the bosom of the Father. Before the Creator formed you, He knew you. He didn't know you in your present physical form as Joe Smith or Sally Brown, but He knew you *as spirit*. God spoke to you about His plan for your life before ever you were formed as an embryo in the womb of your mother. Paul states it so clearly when he says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 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. 1:3-4). The Amplified Bible reads, "Even as He *chose us, actually picked us out for Himself in Christ, before the foundation of the world.*"

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 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 seventy years ago. Now I find that the thing God is doing with humanity began in eternity! It didn't begin in time. It began before the ages were framed! God loved me, knew 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 by His Word — in Christ — *as spirit* before He exhaled me *as spirit* into a very unique body upon earth.

Each of us were born into a mortal, physical body and into a world of darkness, sin, and death. Our spiritual life was buried, covered, encased, concealed within the prison house of a natural, worldly, human consciousness just as the little child I mentioned earlier was imprisoned in a room with no ability to relate to the world he was in or to understand, express, expand, or function on that level. But this was according to God's plan! It wasn't Adam that created the cunning serpent or invented the desirable tree of the knowledge of good and evil or placed in man's path the way of death. Oh, no! It was God who planted the garden eastward in Eden and placed all these things strategically in it! But God had both a purpose and a plan! Paul speaks of an action of God involved in that plan when he says that we are "in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, *promised before the world began*" (Titus 1:2). This is indeed wonderful! We were born into this world with a *promise* from God — the promise of eternal life! This promise of salvation and life more abundant was given us *before the world began*! When we came here we were born with a promise! How could God make such a promise to us if we were not there *with Him* before the worlds appeared? Furthermore, we were **predestinated at that time** to be the manifest sons of God! "For whom He did **foreknow**, He also did **predestinate** to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8:28-29). Not only were salvation and sonship promised, the kingdom was promised also! "Then shall the King (Jesus) say to 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).

All these wonderful things happened to us, and many more too numerous to mention at this time, before we entered this world as a human being. But do you **remember** any of it? Can you remember when you were there with the Father? Can you remember Him informing you of the plan, the purpose, in

sending you to earth? Can you remember what was said, what you knew, what you agreed to, and why, and what you had when you were there with the Father? Do you remember being chosen in Christ, promised eternal life, promised a kingdom to reign in, and predestined unto placement as a son of God, before the foundation of the world? Do you remember the beginning of your journey?

Ah — **YOU ARE REMEMBERING!** Do you know how you're remembering? The answer is simple — all *revelation* is but a *remembering*! Someone says, "Oh, brother Eby, the Lord showed me such and such — I've had a revelation and I see thus and thus." Yes, you had a revelation! The reality is, however, that what you perceived as a revelation was simply God **reminding you**; He woke you up, refreshed your memory, and caused you to *recall* knowledge you once possessed before you entered this mortal state of limitation and confinement! We should always be fervently aware that a *revelation* is an *unveiling*. That is the meaning in the Greek. To have something revealed means to have it unveiled. There have been masterpieces of art and sculpture that have had a day of unveiling. Michelangelo was famous for the unveiling of some of his great works. But you see, my beloved, the *unveiling* is not the *creation* of the thing unveiled! The unveiling is simply the *revelation* or *uncovering* of something which *already exists*! Spiritual revelation is not the impartation of either knowledge or experience that you have never known before. Not at all! Spiritual revelation is the uncovering of the secret knowledge of God within our spirit. Revelation is a remembering! The whole purpose of the Holy Spirit's moving upon us in our journey in God in this life in the flesh is to cause us to remember the realm from whence we came, who we are, what our purpose is — that we might complete the journey and fulfill that purpose! That is the mystery.

How meaningful then is the verse we quoted earlier. "Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man (human consciousness) with his deeds; and have put on the *new man* which is RENEWED IN KNOWLEDGE after the image of Him that created him" (Col. 3:9-10). I like the Amplified Bible's rendering: "And have clothed yourselves with the new *spiritual self*, which is ever in the process of *being renewed* and *remolded into fuller and more perfect knowledge* after the image and likeness of Him who created it." How grateful we are that in the midst of all the darkness of *man's knowledge*, our God is bringing forth a light, even the light of the *knowledge of the glory of God* in the face of Jesus Christ. This wonderful light and knowledge is shining in our hearts, the Daystar arising, progressively increasing and breaking forth out of the lives of a firstfruit company. Those apprehended by God for this Day are discovering that the light is indeed growing brighter and brighter, and their one and only all-consuming desire is that they might KNOW HIM "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." THIS DIVINE KNOWLEDGE IS THE INTELLIGENCE OF THE FACE OF A MAN IN THE THRONE!

The final ingredient in intelligence is *wisdom*. Wisdom is simply the ability to discern and *properly use* the understanding and knowledge one has acquired! As the firstborn Son of God Jesus had within Him the *spirit of wisdom* (Isa. 11:2). How did it manifest itself? In His waiting to hear what the Father spoke! "Morning by morning He wakeneth mine ear to hear, as they are taught" (Isa. 50:4). Perfect teachableness was the mark of the firstborn Son on earth. This is the mark of the Spirit in all the sons! "What things so ever He shall hear, these shall He speak." The life is the light; as the Spirit finds our life in perfect obedience to Him, He teaches by what He works in us. Wisdom is learned *through experience*! This is the meaning and object of all the testings, trials, provings, processings, and dealings of God in each of our lives in this significant hour. God is teaching us wisdom! Wisdom is in knowing the *ways* of the Lord! Knowing the ways of the Lord goes beyond revelation — such holy knowledge comes by experiencing the contrasts between the fruit of *man's ways* and the results of *God's ways*.

In his first letter to the Corinthians Paul draws the contrast between the *wisdom of this world* and the *wisdom of God*. He says that none of the princes or rulers of this world know the wisdom of God! They do not learn the ways of God, but the ways of man, which are the ways of *human intellect*. Human intellect is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil! It is the food of the serpent! It was in seeking wisdom that man fell. "And when the woman saw that the tree was...a tree to be desired to *make one wise*, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat" (Gen. 3:6). It was in the pride of man's wisdom that heathenism had its origin. "Professing themselves to be *be wise*, they *became fools*" (Rom. 1:23). We see this today in much of the so-called "science" which promotes the most ridiculous of theories as

scientific fact. The theory of evolution, for instance, is so absolutely untenable as to be laughable, yet multitudes of scientists and professors with doctorate degrees earnestly teach it to millions of students with a straight, serious face, as though it were unquestionable, indisputable, historical fact. Professing themselves to *be wise* they have *become fools!*

It was in man's wisdom, philosophy, and the search after truth (science) that the Greeks sought their glory. It was in the external knowledge of God's will, in their constant extrapolation of every jot and tittle of the law into an elaborate system of legalistic phobias, that the Jew made his boast. And yet when Christ, the WISDOM OF GOD, appeared on the earth, Jew and Greek combined to reject Him! Man's wisdom, whether in possession of a revelation or not, is utterly insufficient for comprehending God or His wisdom. As his heart is alienated from God, so his mind is darkened that he cannot know truth aright. Even when in Christ the light of God in its divine wisdom and love shone upon men, they knew it not, and saw no beauty in it.

And so the great apostle Paul says, "My preaching was not in persuasive words of *man's wisdom*, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the *wisdom of men*, but in the power of God. Howbeit we *speak wisdom* among the perfect: yet a wisdom *not of this world*; but we speak *God's wisdom* in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which none of the princes of this world knoweth. But unto us God *revealed (uncovered, caused us to remember)* it through the spirit. But we received, not the spirit which is of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that we might know the things...of God; which things also we speak, not in the words which *man's wisdom* teacheth, but which *the spirit* teacheth" (I Cor. 2:4-15).

Intelligence — understanding, knowledge, wisdom — THIS IS THE DIVINE QUALITY REVEALED IN THE FACE OF A MAN IN THE MIDST OF THE THRONE! IT IS THE MIND OF CHRIST IN THE SONS OF GOD! IT IS AN EXPRESSION OF THE LIFE OF GOD WHICH QUALIFIES ONE TO REIGN WITH CHRIST UPON HIS THRONE! Isn't it wonderful!

To be continued...

J. PRESTON EBY