

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 76

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

“And the four living creatures *rest not day and night*, saying, *Holy, holy, holy*, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come” (Rev. 4:8).

The general interpretation of this scene is that it is up in heaven in eternity — but the passage says that “they rest not *day or night*.” Day and night are not associated with heaven — they are conditions on earth! “And the *earth* was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light *Day*, and the darkness He called *Night*. And the *evening* and the *morning* were the *first day*” (Gen. 1:2-5). I think most believers are very careless readers of the word of God, for in reality the scene John beheld in the spirit portrays no such thing as people imagine and the meaning is opposite to what has been taught. The four living creatures, as we have seen, represent ***kingship*** — those who rule and reign with Christ in His kingdom. The sons of God, God’s kings and priests, are those who shall rest neither day nor night in the earth as we trumpet the complete, perfect, and full knowledge of the glory of the kingdom of God and establish ***His holiness*** in every heart of man unto the ends of the earth. It is a symbol — not some weird animalistic creatures around a throne in some far-off heaven somewhere monotonously repeating again and again, for ever and ever, the *words* “holy, holy, holy,” but within themselves they proclaim by their very nature, spirit, ministry, and kingdom authority HIS HOLINESS!

“And when those living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to Him that sat on the throne...the *four and twenty elders* fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and *worship Him* that liveth for ever and ever...saying, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power...*” (Rev. 4:9-11).

The twenty-four elders, who represent ***priesthood*** — God’s kingdom of priests — now take John’s attention. Here they are seen prostrating themselves before the God of the throne which is enshrined in its emerald rainbow of life, light, and love. Now notice the word “when.” “*When* those living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to Him that sat on the throne...the four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him...” The “when” of verse nine indicates that the chanting of “holy, holy, holy,” by the living creatures is periodic and not constant. I would point out that the twenty-four elders are seen falling down in adoration before the God of the throne four times. Two of those times they do so alone — here, and in chapter five, verse fourteen. Two other times they fall down in accord with the four living creatures in chapter five, verse eight, and in chapter nineteen, verse four.

Inasmuch as the twenty-four elders fall down and worship whenever the living creatures cry, “holy, holy, holy,” it should be clear to any thinking mind that they are not constantly repeating the phrase through an endless eternity. Such a practice would have the elders falling and standing and falling and standing without end, which is absurd. And it certainly would contradict the words of Jesus when He taught us, “Use

not *vain repetitions*, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking” (Mat. 6:7). These are not literal scenes in any event, but beautiful symbols which convey to us the great truth that in the lives of God’s sons who are called to share Christ’s throne there is no spirit of self-importance, no grasping after power for power’s sake, no lifting up in pride, no sense that we have attained to this place by any works that we have done or by any self-effort on our part, but we are keenly aware that He has called us and chosen us *by His grace alone*, and HE it is who is worthy, and we have been made kings and priests to show forth the virtues and excellencies of HIM who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light and by His mighty hand exalted us to His throne of glory. What a word!

“And when those living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to Him that sat on the throne...the four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat upon the throne...*and cast their crowns before the throne*, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord!” (Rev. 4:9-10).

All the overcomers are receiving crowns according to their degree of overcoming, the inworking of God in their lives, and their spiritual maturity. There is an incorruptible crown (I Cor. 9:25), a crown of rejoicing (I Thes. 2:19), a crown of righteousness (II Tim. 4:8), a crown of gold, of divine nature (Rev. 4:4), a crown of glory (I Pet. 5:4), and a crown of life (Rev. 2:10). Each one of us, as we overcome, are receiving these crowns as a result of our spiritual growth and attainment in Christ. These are not, nor shall they ever be, literal crowns upon our heads, but speak of virtues, powers, and spiritual realities with which our lives are crowned, which are the very state of being out of which our kingdom authority flows. But when we realize by whose sacrifice, purpose, strength, and power we received these crowns, we will gladly cast them before His throne! It is beyond our human strength or ability to receive any one of these crowns. Only by the sacrifice of Jesus, the calling of His grace, the predestination of His purpose, the inworking of His life, and His great faithfulness to keep us and finish His work in us, could we ever have received these crowns. So we joyfully and respectfully cast them before His throne!

“And the four and twenty elders...cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: *for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created*” (Rev. 4:10-11).

It is wonderfully significant that it is the twenty-four elders who magnify God in respect to *creation*. Before we consider that thought, let us meditate for a moment upon God as Creator. It is my conviction that our God is spontaneously creative, not systematically creative. What I mean by that is that God does not employ a program in His creative activity. God is a God of spontaneity. God moves and acts not by system, but by the creative power and flow of His life. The life of God is the creative instrument of His nature.

Everything that God creates is unique. He is a God of unlimited diversity, infinite variety, and inexhaustible capacity. We see this in the natural, physical, material creation. Scientists tell us that in the visible universe there are more than two hundred billion galaxies. They may be correct that there are that number of galaxies in the *visible* universe, but there are far more galaxies than that! You see, my beloved, not only is the creation co-extensive with the Creator in the sense that God has always been creating, but the creation is co-extensive with Him in His infinite Being. In other words, the only reason that the scientists believe that there are two hundred billion galaxies is simply because *that is as far as they can see!*

No man can see any further than the scope of his vision. God is infinite — unending, unlimited, unbounded, inexhaustible, and unmeasured. Not only is there no “place” where God is not, but God IS INFINITELY whether there is any “place” there or not. God creates out of the infinity of Himself. I don’t know how many galaxies there are, because there is *no end to them*. You would never find the outer extremities of the universe, because God created all things out of Himself, He upholds all things by the word of His power, He fills all things, and if you were to discover the limit of His creation, you would discover the limit of God Himself. Not only does God always do everything that He does, He also does everything that He does *everywhere He is*. God is *infinite*. If God does not create to the extent of His infinity, then there would be some “place” where He is not Creator. So there is no limit. There is no end to the creation simply because there is no end of God!

What an incredible field for diversity! Scientists know that even within the visible part of the universe stars are still being created. They are still coming into existence throughout the immensity of what we call space. The apostle Paul tells us that there are no two stars that are equal in their glory (I Cor. 15:41). Think of that! With my human brain I can't conceive of creating even two hundred billion trillion stars, making every one of them different, giving each of them a name and a glory that is unique from any other glory, and then realize that infinitely there are galaxies without number and without end, each with its own name and glory. It staggers the imagination!

Even in our little solar system each of the nine planets are very different from the others. You would think that if the scientific theories of origins were correct they should all be quite similar. But they aren't! How many snowflakes do you suppose have ever fallen upon the earth? They tell us that no two snowflakes have the same design! More than six billion people walk the face of this earth today, and there are no two fingerprints that duplicate. No two people are identical either in their appearance or in their DNA. Everyone is unique. God sets it all in motion by a word. When God speaks the superlative comes into existence. God is a God of unlimited diversity, infinite variety, and inexhaustible capacity. Behold the majesty and the glory of the almighty Creator of all things!

According to the very first statement in the gospel of John, that kindly Nazarene, that gracious Galilean, that wonderful Teacher and Healer who walked the paths of Galilee and sat beside its shores, was none other than the living God, the Creator of all things. John goes on to say that by Him were all things made and without Him was not anything made that was made. He is the Creator of all! He is the architect of the cosmos! He is the fashioner of the galaxies! He is the designer of suns, the artificer of planets and moons. He is the framer of the vast eons of time. The eternal, omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent God was born a wee baby; He visited this blue-green orb which He had delicately fashioned and spun off into its orbit.

The creation is God's just because all things were created and made by Him and therefore belong to Him. In the light of this truth I would like to reaffirm something that the world at large, and many believers, seem to have forgotten: THIS IS GOD'S WORLD! Long before time began, long before a single heavenly body inhabited the vast regions of space — GOD WAS. God has always been Creator. This creation we know is not the first thing God ever created, nor will it be the last. Yet this particular creation did not always exist! Long before the worlds were made, long before the billows rolled across the boundless seas, long before the mountains thrust their towering, snow-capped peaks up through the clouds, long before there was one flower, or the song of any bird, or the roar of any beast, long before there was any light, or the glory of daybreak, or the beauty of the sunset...yes, long before there was anything at all of this present creation...THERE WAS OUR HEAVENLY FATHER. Then the blessed word of God rolls back the curtain of antiquity and shows us God at work, creating all that is, and all that ever was. The very first passage of scripture establishes for all time and eternity the *ownership* of this world and the heavens above: "In the beginning GOD created the heavens and the earth." He made it, and it is His! No one can take it from Him. It was then that God wrote His signature of ownership — a signature that reaches from the earth to the farthest outposts of the cosmos.

The Psalmist David was perceptive in the Spirit when he wrote these immortal words, "*The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof, the world, and they that dwell therein*" (Ps. 24:1). Does the earth belong to the devil? Does the world belong to the devil? Do they that dwell in the world belong to the devil? Does *anything* on the earth belong to the devil? Did any of it, even before Calvary, belong to the devil? Not in David's day, it didn't! "*The earth is the Lord's!*" "*And the fullness thereof!*" "*The world is the Lord's!*" "*And they that dwell therein!*" Who do you belong to? Who do the nations belong to? Who do the wicked belong to? Who do Fidel Castro and Saddam Hussein belong to? IT IS ALL THE LORD'S! The devil doesn't own one square inch of it, nor does he own one poor wretched human on it. Isn't it wonderful!

There is an understanding that has been quickened in the consciousness of the "called out ones" to know that ALL the earth — is the Lord's. Not just a tree or two, not just a mountain or two, not just a nation or two, not just the church, not just those apprehended to sonship, but all the earth is the Lord's and the very fullness thereof. We are His whether we know it or not, we are His whether we like it or not, whether we desire to serve Him, or whether we are presently in rebellion against His will. God has everything and

everyone in the palm of His almighty hand! He is Sovereign! Job said, “In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath (spirit) of *all mankind*” (Job 12:10).

The prophet Daniel penned these inspired words: “The Most High...liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth **according to His will** in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?” (Dan. 4:34-35). God is saying to us that He is sovereign. Another way to express that truth is: God owns the earth and everything in it — He does what He wants to do and nobody can stop Him from doing it. In particular He is sovereign with what He does with the earth. God does not have to ask anybody’s permission to do anything He wants with any part of the earth or anyone on it — and none can hinder or resist Him!

If the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, then we need to somehow come to understand that God has never at any time dealt with satan on a percentage basis. God never did tell satan that he could have ninety percent and God would be satisfied with ten percent. Neither did God ever say that satan could have ten percent and He, God, would settle for ninety percent. WITH GOD IT IS ALL! ALL belongs to Him! First, because He created it, and second, because He redeemed it. Just as you may temporarily leave a valuable watch at the pawn shop and later return to redeem it, so God assigned to satan a temporary and limited sphere of influence over the creation, for the outworking of His wise and wonderful plan, but HE HAS NOT CEDED OR TRANSFERRED OWNERSHIP OF EVEN ONE INCH OF IT TO SATAN FOR A POSSESSION. The reality is, after giving the adversary a limited lease and sphere of operation, God came down in the Person of His Son and **redeemed the world and everything and everyone in it!** In the same way that you get your watch back from the pawn shop when you redeem it, so God gained full control of the whole world when He redeemed it. To say that there is any part of God’s creation that satan now sovereignly controls or that he will possess forever is a blatant repudiation of Christ’s redemption and a horrible blasphemy against God.

The scriptures clearly reveal how **ownership** is the central factor in both creation and redemption, the link that binds them together. Two things are inherent in ownership — *purpose* and *responsibility*. Do you know that if a person makes or buys anything He surely has **purpose** in mind for it? And is it not equally true that when a person makes or buys a thing he then assumes the **responsibility** for it? The man who purchases a good hunting dog has a definite purpose in owning the dog, and if he is not a hunter he will not buy it. With ownership of the dog there comes the responsibility for the dog, to feed and care for it and treat it humanely. You have, I suppose, sometime bought something? As you have paid your money for it and it was delivered to you did you not have a plan for it? And are you not now responsible for it?

More than forty years ago Lorain and I bought a house in Sarasota, Florida. It was a lovely little two bedroom white frame house, entirely adequate for that time. Some years later the Lord led us to Mississippi to live and minister among a group of saints, and we were there for almost two years. During this time we rented out our house in Florida. The original tenants left, and we rented the house to a man and his wife and grown son, none of whom we had previously known. It is almost unbelievable what those people did to that house within the space of a few months! If you have had rental property you *will believe it!* Evidently they didn’t sweep those beautiful hard wood floors even once, the dirt was ground so deeply into the wood until the entire finish was ruined. Windows were broken, the holes stuffed with plastic or rags. Water had been allowed to run over the kitchen and bathroom floors, loosening the tile. The furniture was demolished, sofas and chairs propped up on bricks with great gaping holes staring insultingly at us. On and on the disaster went! The place was completely “trashed.” Needless to say, because we were the **owners**, it didn’t take us long to swing into action! The tenants were promptly given notice and evicted. Then followed the long, tedious and expensive process of **restoration**. Ah, **because we owned the house** we had **purpose** for it and **responsibility** to it. On the basis of that purpose and responsibility we were willing to spend the money that had to be spent, and expend the energy involved in long days and weeks of hard work until **all was restored** to its original beauty and usefulness!

We are not in this life as the result of our own scheme or plan. We did not make ourselves, therefore we do not own ourselves! The Psalmist declared, “Know ye that the Lord He is God: it is **He that hath made us, and not we ourselves**. We are His people, and the sheep of His pasture” (Ps. 100:3). **God is**

responsible for our existence, for it was He who issued the grand fiat: “Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness.” It was God who sent us here! It was God who planted the garden eastward in Eden and put man in it! It was God who drove the man out of that garden! You see, my beloved, GOD IS RESPONSIBLE for our existence here in the flesh, lowered into the realm of vanity, sin, and corruption. Oh, yes! God is responsible! The whole human race is God’s responsibility because He is both Creator and Owner. We are here because of our Father’s plans, desires, purposes and will, just as your children are in this world because of your plans, desires, and will. God is a God of principle! Having begun a work, He will assume responsibility for it, care for it, and finish it and not throw it aside because it was marred by sin and death. This, too, was part of His plan!

While men are busy blaming others for the world’s problems, and the devil for their own, God Himself as Owner of all takes His great responsibility for all, and therein lies the foundation of the whole scheme of creation and redemption. Romans 11:36 says from the Diaglott, “Because *out of Him*, and *through Him*, and *for Him* are all things. To HIM be the glory for the ages. Amen!” The Amplified Bible beautifully renders this, “For *from Him* and *through Him* and *to Him* are all things. For all things originate with Him and come from Him; all things live through Him, and all things center in and tend to consummate and to end in Him. To Him be glory forever! Amen.” To say the least, it will give us great peace of mind and heart if we can see and understand that God as Creator and Owner **takes responsibility** for the world today! **God is responsible** for every human being that has ever lived, is living, or ever will live. **God is responsible** for every nation, every government, every empire that has risen and fallen, and every condition and circumstance of all mankind today and in every time and place since the foundation of the world. And because He is responsible and has great and eternal purpose for His creation HE WILL DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT!

This great truth is what makes our text so utterly awesome! “The *four and twenty elders* fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him...saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: FOR THOU HAST CREATED ALL THINGS, AND FOR THY PLEASURE THEY ARE AND WERE CREATED.” It is deeply significant that the twenty-four elders are the ones making this wonderful declaration. The twenty-four elders are God’s **Royal Priesthood!** It is this Royal Priesthood that is proclaiming that God *created all things for His pleasure*, and therefore He brings forth the glory and the honour and power of His kingdom. The seed of this beautiful thought is found in the words of the Lord to Israel when they stood before mount Sinai. “Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: FOR ALL THE EARTH IS MINE: and ye shall be unto me A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS, and an holy nation” (Ex. 19:5-6).

I have often characterized the above passage as the GREAT DIVINE SANDWICH. A sandwich is two slices of bread between which is placed meat, fish, cheese, or the like. Three items are necessary to make a sandwich: two outer items — two identical slices of bread — and in between another, and different, item. Such is the structure of this passage! There are two statements of like nature surrounding and enclosing another and different kind of statement. Notice the two outer statements: (1) *Ye shall be a PECULIAR TREASURE unto me above all people* (2) *Ye shall be unto me a KINGDOM OF PRIESTS, and an holy nation*. Then “sandwiched” in between these two wonderful promises is this remarkable word: **FOR ALL THE EARTH IS MINE!** Can we not see by this that the purpose of God to establish in the earth a Royal Priesthood is rooted in the great fact that **ALL THE EARTH IS HIS!** That all the earth is His answers the *why* of priesthood. “*Because all the earth is mine...YE SHALL BE UNTO ME A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS.*” The message is clear — God is preparing a priesthood because He owns the earth, the whole world, and all that dwell therein! The priesthood is His instrument that reaches out with one hand and takes hold of God, reaches out the other hand and takes hold of humanity, and by virtue of the priestly ministration *brings the two together into oneness*. The Royal Priesthood is the *ministry of reconciliation* to restore all things and all men back into God again!

I believe that God loves all lost men and women. There are lost men in jails and prisons and mental hospitals. They are in saloons and brothels and in sickness and pain and sorrow and ignorance and sin and death and judgment and hell, and God loves them all with an undying love. He still remembers them and remembers His Son on the tree, suffering and dying on their behalf, pouring out His

wonderful life for them all. And in the redeemed body of this resurrected and glorified Son He now prepares a Royal Priesthood after the order of Melchizedek to restore all mankind back into the image of God. "*Because all the earth is mine, ye shall be unto me a KINGDOM OF PRIESTS!*" is the word of the Lord. The earth, the world, and all that dwell therein belong to God first because He made them, and second because He redeemed them, and now He is sending forth His many-membered body of priests to reclaim for Him that which He has created for His pleasure.

Because all the earth is His, and because Jesus is the redeemer, God is raising up the body of Christ, a royal, kingly priesthood, sons of the God of heaven to reign in mighty spirit power and authority over the earth, not to be little human dictators, but with an irresistible outflow of life and light and love, touching God with one hand, and humanity with the other, bringing the two together, that God may indwell all men by His Spirit and live and rule in them in power and great glory. The kingly nature in us is not to dominate other men's lives, but to deal with and break the power of self-hood and rebellion and sin and death and the devil that men may be quickened to God. Kings have power and authority, priests reconcile in mercy and love. God's Royal Priesthood shall reveal to all realms the awesome POWER OF GOD'S LOVE AND GOODNESS, until all men bow low before Him and with worshipful wonder and joy proclaim, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, for Thou hast created all things, and *for Thy pleasure we are and were created!*"

All who have received the call to sonship have also received a vision of their destiny in God, of what they are being prepared to do for creation. They are here by divine appointment. They have been born for this hour. They have been called and chosen and are being made faithful. They have been drawn out of and separated from all the religious realms that they might learn the higher ways of the kingdom of God. The message of the hope of sonship and the high calling of God in Christ Jesus is going forth in power in this day and circling the globe as thousands of the Lord's people are heeding the call to this unique walk in the Spirit. God has removed from the hearts of these the foolish desire to "fly away" to some far-off heaven somewhere, as He unfolds within their ransomed spirits the heavenly knowledge that God has created all things for His pleasure, and all the earth is His and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein; and for this sublime purpose He has ordained a priestly people!

The good pleasure of God is that which gives Him satisfaction; it is also His delight, His desire, His enjoyment, His contentment, His fulfillment, and His purpose revealed and fulfilled! When the twenty-four elders, God's priesthood company, say of Him, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and **for Thy pleasure** they are and were created," they are proclaiming a fully restored creation! Therefore we may be absolutely certain that the same merciful and loving Father would never plan to destroy this world and send billions of people screaming into the torments of hell fire forever and ever. Such false doctrines come out of the carnal mind of man which is never able to receive the things of the Spirit, and are contrary to the wonderful truths of God and His wise and glorious purposes for the works of His hands. God will not fail and because of some unfortunate and unforeseen circumstance beyond His control, lose the very thing He made FOR HIS PLEASURE!

As a priest of the Most High God I claim this earth for God, for He made it. I claim this earth for God, for Jesus has ransomed it with His blood. I claim this earth for God, for the earth is the Lord's. The sea is His, for He created it. His hands formed the dry land. I claim everything that comes out of the bowels of the earth for God, "for all the gold and the silver is His." I claim every man in El Paso, and in Miami, and in New York, and in Calcutta, and in Manila, and in Moscow, and in Beijing, and in the whole wide world for God, for "it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves," and he made us "for His pleasure." I am not willing to cede even one thing or one person to the devil, as some wickedly do, for this is *my Father's world* and I am an *heir* of God and a joint-heir with Christ. He that overcometh shall *inherit all things!* This world and everything in it and every man upon it is part of my inheritance! I am asking my Father for my inheritance even as He has instructed me I should: "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen (nations) for *thine inheritance*, and the uttermost parts of the earth for *thy possession*. Thou shall break them with a rod of iron...be wise now therefore, *O ye kings*: be instructed, *ye judges of the earth!*" (Ps. 2:8-10).

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

The call of God in this hour is for a people to move from the candlestick realm to the throne room. This is the Father's great purpose for His called and chosen elect in this new Day of the Lord! Years ago Douglas Wilson penned words that are just as fresh and meaningful for us today. The next several pages of this message is taken from his article titled JOSHUA AND CALEB. May God bless it to your heart!

In all the time that Joshua, Caleb, and the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness, their next realm, their next age, was just a short distance away from them. Had they gone directly from Egypt into the promised land, it would not really have taken them very long to get there. It has been said that it was a journey of eight to ten days. And naturally, the wilderness was even closer than Egypt to the promised land! The coming age, especially for Joshua and Caleb, was not some place a long way off, but it was so very close by. It was of very easy access, yet they could not get into it.

At least some of us are realizing in this hour that the next age, or the next REALM IN GOD of which we speak, isn't in some far distant place, but it is close by. And yet, here we are, apparently unable to enter into it! We find ourselves to be a people unknown to ourselves. We are one type of people, living in one type of age or realm, being prepared for another age or realm that is just over the line, so to speak, from us. Actually it is no farther from us now than it was from Israel when they were in the wilderness! Yet we are prevented from entering in. This we know — Caleb and Joshua had to wander in the wilderness for forty years until all the unbelievers died. After that they could enter in. We had always been taught that **all** who came out of Egypt, except Joshua and Caleb, had to die before the rest of them could enter into the promised land. But this did not bear witness to our spirit, so we began to read and discovered it was not so. It did not work out like that at all. All of those who could not go in were the soldiers, the men in the army, who were over twenty years of age, and who would not believe that they could take the land. All those who were under twenty years of age, and the women, lived on, just as Joshua and Caleb did. It was these soldiers who had to die in the wilderness! They were the unbelievers who were under God's orders to take the land, and they refused to do it, saying they could not, and thus declaring that in their judgment, God was a liar.

God described to the children of Israel the land into which He would take them. It was a land flowing with milk and honey, a land of hills and valleys that drinks water of the rain of heaven, a land which the Lord cared for, a land in which He would bless their seed, and prolong and multiply their days **as the days of heaven upon earth!** They would be placed in a land, a realm, a dispensation about which they knew nothing and that would be entirely different from anything they had known before. He commanded them as to how they should live and walk in the land, and what kind of people they would be unto Him. Now multitudes of people today will not believe we can have days **right now** that are as the days of heaven on earth! They cannot believe it, because they are looking for heaven away off somewhere amongst the starry skies. The people to whom God was speaking these words, were a people of one type and of one dispensation, and He was telling them something about the kind of people they were going to be, and the kind of land in which they were going to live. It was a realm of which they had no knowledge. God told them that their future home was to be nothing like the land of Egypt they had left. The valley of the Nile was the richest known spot on earth. It is so yet today. But God told them their future home was not so, for in Egypt they sowed their seed, then tread on the water wheel, in order to water that seed. But in the promised land they would have rain from heaven! It was to be an entirely new realm, with entirely new conditions and circumstances. It was to be a new age, a new dispensation, a new realm in God, and God was right then getting them ready to go in and take it and occupy it. It was to be as heaven on earth!

That was all in the natural, earthly realm. God was preparing a people for another realm, another age, another dispensation in this realm of flesh. This is a type of what God is doing today! Most of us have no conception of what God is doing in our lives and bodies. Just because we cannot see or feel something being done, is no sign that God is idle and doing nothing within us. We often think that there has to be a lot of external manifestation taking place for God to be doing something. But on the natural plane, termites can invade a building and work, and unless the building is inspected, no one will know of that work until the building is so weakened that it falls. Just so, we have little conception of that which God is doing in the lives and bodies of those people He is working with and that He is preparing as HIS

SONS for that age which is to come. There is so much that we don't understand at this time, but we do know that God is working, preparing an elect company to bring deliverance to the whole of the groaning creation in the age and the ages that lie before us.

As we approach the new age of the kingdom of God there are many Joshuas and Calebs in the land today, being prepared to enter into the coming age, the promised land of this day. Though they will enter the same land, their training and their present lives are completely different, for they have a different destiny in the land to come. Shall we say it like this? Caleb was of the people. He was out in the multitudes in the camp. Caleb had absolutely nothing to do with the tabernacle. He had nothing to do with the ministrations of the priests. He had nothing to do with the ministry of Moses in any way. But Joshua is referred to as the minister of Moses. And in the first chapter of the book of Joshua we find God telling Joshua that Moses is dead, and that *he* was now to arise and go over Jordan, and that as God had promised the land to Moses, so would He give it to Joshua, and every place where the sole of his foot trod, was his.

As we have said, we too are in a time of preparation. A people is being prepared for the coming age, and those who are being prepared particularly, *are not the Calebs*. To a certain extent the Calebs are being prepared, in that they possess a different spirit and they see and know that something different in God is coming. They are willing to wait, even in the midst of unbelief, God's time to enter into the next age or realm in God. But all their preparation is to bring them to a place in which they can *wait in faith*, for they are a kind of people who will inhabit the land. But for the Joshuas there is something else! In Exodus 33:8 we read, "And it came to pass that when Moses went out to the tabernacle, all the people rose up and stood every man at his tent door and looked after Moses till he was gone into the tabernacle. And it came to pass as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle. And the Lord talked with Moses. And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent door. And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he (Moses) turned again into the camp, *but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, DEPARTED NOT OUT OF THE TABERNACLE.*"

Moses was taken up with the work and care of overseeing that vast multitude of people. God had told Moses to move the tabernacle outside the camp, and so when the people saw Moses going out to worship, they would also stand and worship, every man in his tent door. When Moses passed through the tabernacle door, then the cloudy pillar would descend in order to seal off the tabernacle so that God and Moses might commune together. Moses was the one lone man who had access to the Holy of holies whenever he desired to go into it. He was above the high priest in this, for he was the friend of God, and he had need of God's communion frequently. God did not speak with Moses as He would with the high priest, but as to a friend. And the people saw the cloudy pillar come down and when the time together was finished, the cloudy pillar would rise and Moses would come again into the camp. He would have to go back into the multitude in the camp, to judge them and to watch over them, to be their leader, fulfilling the work that God had given him to do.

But God had His hand upon a young man, Joshua, and that young man did not depart out of the tabernacle. The time came when God commanded Moses to lay his hands upon Joshua and impart to him the very same spirit that he (Moses) possessed. God gave unto Joshua the very same promises and the same powers that He had given Moses. No man could stand before him! Wherever he placed his foot, that was his! God told him that just as He had been with Moses, so would He be with Joshua. Joshua was to be strong and of good courage. He was not to fear, for God was with him, even as He had been with Moses.

It was necessary that Moses leave the tabernacle and return to the camp, but it was necessary that His servant Joshua remain in the tabernacle for special training. As we understand it, Joshua was constantly in the place of ministry unto the Lord. He was continually in the place where the priesthood operated. He was in that place where the people were bringing their offerings for sin and where those offerings were being sacrificed. He remained in this place day after day, and year after year, absorbing all that went on in the tabernacle. God had given Joshua a privilege and a work which had been denied

Moses. He came into a place that Moses never possessed! Moses had led the people out, but God now provided a young man, Joshua, the son of Nun, or the son of *perpetuity*, to perpetuate and carry forth into new dimensions all that had been started in Moses. This Joshua was to lead the people into the promised land! He was to give to every man his inheritance! For this reason, Joshua COULD NOT LIVE A LIFE LIKE CALEB. He could not be just one of the people, another face in the crowd, another pebble on the beach, living the same way, doing the same things. He must know the mind and the will and the purpose and plan of God! He could not have just a vague knowledge of it, He must acquaint himself with each and every detail of it. He must know the boundaries of each tribe, what they were to get, and what they were to do. It was his place to *give out the inheritances to all the people of Israel!*

In this we find a true type of those **sons of God** whom God is preparing today! We have seen this for some time, and we know by personal experience it is true. This class of people is greatly misunderstood, criticized, and condemned, because they are not doing a great number of wonderful things. They are not generally performing great healings and astounding signs, wonders, and miracles. They are not out conducting great crusades, no vast throngs are following them, and the fact of the matter is most of the people stay away from them! Such people are not participators in the activities of the rest of God's people, even those who will become inhabitants of the land. They are not Calebs, not out in the camp with the tribes. Perhaps not even going out to gather their supply of manna for that day! God has separated this company of people from all those things.

Rather, they are of the class of people who are in the tabernacle, **DWELLING IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD, LEARNING OF THE WORK AND THE POWERS OF THE AGE TO COME!** God had a Moses to go out and minister to the multitude in their wilderness walk. Moses and the judges were to minister to the people and all their fleshly needs. But none of this was for Joshua! He never did have any ministry such as this! For forty years Joshua spent *all his days in the tabernacle*. Moses, who ministered to the people, would often come in to commune with God that he might receive the message and the word of God, so that he might go back out and minister to the people.

But Joshua stayed right there in the presence of God! He was absorbing the very life, power, wisdom, knowledge, and spirit of God, *so that when the proper time came*, God could say to him, "Moses my servant is dead, now it is time for your ministry." At that time Joshua would rise up, for all the ministry of preparation would be over. All the work and ministry of the man Moses was now finished, for the people were now at the borders of the promised land, **the new age and realm in God**. It was time for the children of Israel to enter the promised land! It was time for the people of Israel to receive their inheritance! It was time for the fullness of God to be revealed! Now was the work of Joshua to come to pass! He was to bring them into that land, a land of rain and one that flowed with milk and honey. A land entirely different from the Egypt they had left. Now all the tedious training of Joshua would begin to bear fruit! All the years of loneliness and application to the plan of God would lead that vast multitude into a new land, into a **new age**, and give them their full portion!

Knowing that human nature in that day was just like human nature of today, we see the possibility of some saying, "How is this? How and why is Joshua being elevated up over all the rest of us? He has done nothing but sit out there in the tabernacle for forty years! He never healed anybody. He never prayed anybody through to the baptism in the Holy Spirit. He wasn't out holding crusades and saving souls. He wasn't even part of a recognized ministry! He never preached any marvelous sermons. *He just spent his time in the tabernacle.*"

All through those forty years, God was getting a man ready to bring the people far beyond what they were receiving from the hands of Moses and the judges — **INTO THEIR INHERITANCE!** Moses and the judges were merely preserving the people in their wilderness condition. God had Moses and the judges to take care of the natural things for the people in their carnal state of being, to continually bless, encourage, and revive them lest they faint in the wilderness. Some of us are well aware of these facts. Even though we did possess such ministries in the past, yet at this time, many of us are not functioning in the ministry of a Moses, nor in the ministry of any of the gift realms where men minister very much unto the people in their natural, fleshly realm of healings, material needs, blessings, revivings, etc. It seems we are set far apart from the multitude of the people, and from the accepted type of ministry, and most

Christians do not want much to do with us! But with this company of people, God is working and preparing them for a future ministry and work.

As we stated, God has people, many of them, who are ministering unto the multitudes the things of the natural realm, the loaves and the fishes. But there is another class of people, and God is dealing in a different way with them. They are being prepared to know the plans and purposes of God, not just for this age, but for the ages to come, that they might lead the people into the full inheritance God has for them. There must be someone who will be capable to lead the people in, and get them established in that greater glory which God has prepared for His people. Caleb put in his days with the rest of the people, Moses and the judges put in their days maintaining the people in their wilderness state, but Joshua remained always in the tabernacle, absorbing the mind and life of God for the inheritance to come!

Joshua was an entirely different man! As we meditated upon these things, we saw clearly these two different classes of people. There are those who are in the multitude of all God's people, yet God has done something in them to give them a spirit that is different from the rest. They have received a glimpse, a taste of the glories of this higher realm and know that it is something marvelous beyond where they are living. They have tasted of the powers of the world to come, and know they shall enter into it. But they are still like Caleb, willing to stay in the multitude and put up with all the slanderous reports about the land or the age to come, and wade through the unbelief all around them and just wait for the day of entering in.

At the same time, however, God has the Joshuas placed off somewhere in the tabernacle, *in the presence of God*. It doesn't have to be in four walls, or certain kinds of meetings, but just in the presence of the living God! Apparently they are doing nothing, but they are absorbing the spirit and the life and the knowledge and the wisdom and the purpose and the plan of God. How important this is! When Moses' ministry is over and done, when all the natural ministry of the church orders and religious systems is finished, then God will lead out the Joshuas, having completed their training, and they shall lead the people into the next realm in God, into the next age!

We are sure that we are in such a position now. We are in one age, and we are being prepared for something, though we have only caught faint glimpses of the glory and wonder of it. We do not understand all the workings of God, because we do not know exactly what we are going to do in the future, how it shall be done, or even what we are going to be. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be" (I Jn. 3:2). Therefore it is sometimes hard to understand the training we are receiving, for our training depends entirely upon **what we are to be** in the next age or realm in God. So we cannot question God concerning the "whys and wherefores" of all we are experiencing in our lives in this hour, and in the lives of others.

The new age was not very far from Joshua and Caleb. It was just over the line, just beyond Jordan, and so it is in this day. This new age *lies before us*, and the glory of it is beginning to be made known unto us by the Spirit. Caleb and Joshua knew the way into the promised land, for they had visited it in a fleeting moment, yet they were forced to await the proper time to enter. Caleb must needs remain with the multitude, and Joshua must be prepared to take the whole multitude into the coming age. We have a wonderful experience ahead of us in the Lord, and we are grateful for it. It is not of our choosing, but of His, and we know He will perfect that which concerns us! — end quote.

That is a powerful word from the pen of Douglas Wilson. He has passed on, but he will stand in his lot in the day of manifestation. As I read this, I was reminded of a story out of history. Several centuries ago, the Emperor of Japan commissioned a Japanese artist to paint a bird to be put on display in the Emperor's gallery. Months passed, then years. Finally, the Emperor went to the artist's studio to ask for an explanation. The artist set a blank canvas on the easel and in fifteen minutes completed the painting of a bird that became a masterpiece. The Emperor asked why there had been such a long delay. The artist then went from cabinet to cabinet; he produced armloads of drawings of feathers, tendons, wings, feet, claws, eyes, and beaks of birds; these he placed one by one before the Emperor. The Emperor nodded and left the studio. He understood. The exquisite beauty of the painting completed in fifteen short minutes was merely the result of long years of research, preparation, and work!

Our Father shall have a glorious firstfruits company of sons in His own image which He shall put on display before the entire universe as the revelation of His own bountiful grace and matchless glory! The day of that unveiling shall surely come, and will not tarry. In the meantime, and to that end, the blessed Holy Spirit of God is patiently and unrelentingly operating in the lives of His apprehended ones so that we may be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. This conformation cannot take place in an instant, nor by a superficial experiencing of God. It does not happen in a single “experience” one night at an altar, nor can it be imparted by prophecy with the laying on of hands. The hour of our quickening unto God and His great plan was no more than the declaration of the divine purpose; it is just the beginning of the long work. The whole process is a detailed and painstaking progress “until Christ be formed in you.” When the work is fully finished, the day shall then arrive when there will come to us a new and living and powerful moving of His omnipotent Spirit and the completed work will flash forth in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye; the grand and glorious portrait of God’s Christ, exquisitely wrought upon the canvas of our lives, that He might *display in the ages to come* the transcendent riches of His grace and goodness...for we are God’s own handiwork, created in Christ Jesus! (Eph. 2:7,10).

The new, with its glory, shall come to the fore,
Proclaiming the Kingdom is nigh at the door.
Yet, strange the confusion as some try to stay
Entwined with the old, though it’s passing away.
While some try to mix the old with the new,
To be torn by the strife, and the rending in two.
For saviours shall come and His fullness declare,
With beauty for ashes, and treasures most rare.
What ages have veiled as the old order reigned,
Shall burst into view at the time He ordained.

— Ray Prinzing

To be continued...

J. PRESTON EBY