

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 80

THE UNIVERSAL SONG

"And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and four and twenty elders *fell down before the Lamb*" (Rev. 5:8).

God's kings and priests fall down in adoration and worship of the Lamb, but beyond this they bow on behalf of all creation! "Break the seals, open the book, release the Christ within us, bring forth the manifestation of the Son, loose that sonship ministry unto which we have been called and destined" is the unutterable cry of their hearts. This longing of God's elect is graphically expressed in the words of the chorus given by the Spirit:

Thou mighty Christ, come forth in me;
My will, my way, I yield to Thee —
The barren sings a travailing song,
O praise His name, it won't be long!

THE HARPS

"And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, *having every one of them harps*" (Rev. 5:8).

The Greek word translated "harps" is *kitharan*, a word which is etymologically related to our English word "guitar." It refers to an instrument which was triangular in shape, having from seven to twelve strings. "At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto Thee" (Ps. 119:62). "I will also praise Thee with the psaltery, even Thy truth, O Lord my God: unto Thee will I sing *with the harp*, O Thou Holy One of Israel" (Ps. 71:22). Arising at midnight while the earth was silent and still, king David would place his small wooden harp over his heart and gently put his ear to the wood. As he began to pluck the strings with his fingers, the vibrations echoed through the harp and into his heart, shaking loose the perception of distance between himself and God. Closing his eyes, he would begin to play whatever music came to him, thoughts and words moving through his mind in harmony with the melodies. This music came in waves from within his spirit and overflowed onto the strings of the harp, and from there out into the universe. He became one with the music, and one with God.

As a shepherd long before he became Israel's king, David had been known as "the sweet singer of Israel." His psalms were personal songs of faith and love in the darkest times of his life as well as the grandest. They were composed from the depths of his heart, and fortunately their words were written into the Bible, where we can read them every day. But what about the music? Can you imagine what it would be like to hear a recording of king David himself playing his harp and singing the psalms? The music, too, survived — for a while. King David's special melodies and words went on to be taught to the Levites who played in the orchestra of the temple in Jerusalem. They were played and sung faithfully, at least twice every day, for hundreds of years until the temple was destroyed and Jerusalem razed to the ground.

As sometimes happens after long periods of time, the instruments changed form. The kinnor (lyre) gradually changed into a violin, and the harp evolved into the large orchestra harp we have today, complete with gold leaf overlay and pedals. These are both very beautiful instruments with amazing sounds, but they are connected no longer to the intention and purpose of the original harps of Israel, which were tools for prayer, prophecy, and transformation.

We must remember, of course, that the vision John saw was given in symbols. This means that just as the seven horns on the Lamb declare that Jesus Christ has all power, and not that He has suddenly turned into a four-legged monstrosity with seven horns, so, here, there is a message in the fact that the four living creatures (kings) and the twenty-four elders (priests) have every one of them harps. First of all this melodious instrument reveals the great truth that we, as God's elect, are called and chosen to be instruments of praise in which there will be found only perfect tuning. There will be no more of the carnal discord of egocentricity, professional form, and fleshly zeal which has marred our praise. Our spirits, perfectly tuned to the will and way of our Father, will sound a perfect unison with all of creation. As we ascend into the throne zone in our high calling in Christ, there is no dissonance in that glorious rendition, for every fiber of our being vibrates with the praise of the Lamb who has redeemed us and made us kings and priests unto God!

Secondly, the idea is not that every one will one day go to heaven and learn to play a harp, but that there is a realm in God where our entire nature and being throbs with heavenly harmonies, for the strings of our inner son are perfectly in tune with the mind and heart of our Father, because of the mighty transformation wrought by the life of the indwelling Lamb. As this is accomplished in us we all begin to fulfill the injunction of the psalm which says, "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright. Praise the Lord with harp: sing unto Him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings. Sing unto Him a new song; play skillfully with a loud noise. For the word of the Lord is right; and all His works are done in truth" (Psalm 33:1-4). You say, "But I can't sing and I don't know how to play the harp or any of those other instruments." That's *not the message!* The "harp" is a symbol of perfect praise pouring forth from all of God's elect. And not merely the *act* of praising, but the very *becoming a praise* and the *being of praise*, as it is written, "Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He *make Jerusalem a praise* in the earth" (Isa. 62:6-7). Again, "So have I caused to cleave unto me the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah (praise), saith the Lord; that they might be unto me for a people, and for a name, and *for a praise*, and for a glory..." (Jer. 13:11). Yet again, "Having predestinated us unto placement as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself...*to the praise of the glory* of His grace...in whom also we have obtained an inheritance...that *we should be to the praise of His glory*" (Eph. 1:5,6,11,12).

Harps were used in Israel with singing and dancing to express joy in the presence of the Lord. One example of this is in the second book of Samuel where we read, "And David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord on all manner of instruments made of fir wood, even on harps...and David danced before the Lord with all his might...so David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet" (II Sam. 6:5,14,15).

The harp in scripture is also symbolic of the prophetic ministry. As the incense connects with the priest's ministry, so the harp connects with the prophet's! We read that the prophet Samuel informed king Saul, "Thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place, with a psaltery, and a tabret, *and a harp before them*, and they shall prophesy" (I Sam. 10:5). We read that king David set apart the sons of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, "*who prophesied with a harp*" (I Chron. 25:1-3). And in Psalms 49:4 we read, "*I will open my dark sayings upon the harp.*" The harp, therefore, is symbolic of the prophetic ministry in the highest sense of the word! Thus, the holding up of these incense prayers and the prophetic harps together before the Lamb as He takes the book out of the right hand of Him who sits upon the throne is both the prayer and the prophecy contained in the *new song* which they sing, declaring their kingship and priesthood and the great truth that they shall reign over the earth (Rev. 5:10). It is also the prayer and the prophecy pointing to the *universal song of all creation* proclaiming blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever! (Rev. 5:13). It is the prayer and the prophecy proclaiming the great truth that God's company of king-priests shall bring the triumph of God's kingdom to pass in all realms of the heavens, the earth, and the underworld! It is truly wonderful!

It is interesting to note that when Israel was in the Babylonian captivity, their harps were silent (Ps. 137:2). That the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders, God's king-priests, are seen bowing before the Lamb while playing the harps of God indicates the fullness of the joy of the Lord in their hearts, as well as their prophetic and creative word unto creation. By the victory of the Lamb they have joyfully and authoritatively entered into their ministry from the throne of God to deliver and restore *all things*. These victorious overcomers are seen celebrating the true joy and power of the kingdom of God! They are experiencing within themselves the reality of the kingdom which is righteousness, peace, and *joy in the holy Ghost!* With kingdom joy, vision, and power they are ready to reign!

The harp is mentioned several times in the book of Revelation and in chapter 14:1-2 we read, "And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of *harpers harping with their harps*." In this passage we find this great company standing with their Redeemer upon mount Zion. Zion, of course, represents the very highest position attainable in the kingdom of God! Such are the ruling class in the capital city, the New Jerusalem, prefigured by king David who dwelt on the natural mount Zion of old. And this company standing with their Lord can represent nothing other than they who have followed the Lamb experientially all the way from the death of mount Calvary to the power and glory of mount Zion, and will now reign with Him upon His throne for evermore (II Tim. 2:12; Rom. 8:17).

The hundred and forty-four thousand on mount Zion are said to have "His Father's name written in their foreheads" in distinction to those who, in Revelation 13:16, take the mark of the beast in their foreheads. The mark of the beast denotes that those who bear it have subscribed to the mind — the doctrines, ways, methods, spirit, blasphemy, idolatry, and nature of the bestial system of this world, including the carnal, man-made, religious systems. Therefore the mark which these hundred and forty-four thousand bear denotes that they are not defiled with the antichrist doctrines, philosophies, methods, and shame, but are in every respect perfected in the divine nature and the will of their heavenly Father.

Accompanying this company of the manifest sons of God is heard the *voice of harpers harping with their harps*. Just as in chapter five of the Revelation, these sons of God are filled to overflowing with the fullness of the joy of the Lord and the song of praise unto God and the Lamb! In all these symbols we see that joy, rejoicing, prayer, praise, and worship are all a vital part of *reigning!* We will understand the deep significance of this more and more as we look unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith "who for the *joy* that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is *set down at the right hand of the throne of God*" (Heb. 12:2).

Some time ago the following prophecy came forth, declaring, "For surely men fill balloons with helium, and the balloons rise, and bear men up into the air to great heights. And as they ascend, and cast out their ballast, they ascend even higher. What they have done, and the heights to which they ascend, is not because men have lost the pull of gravity, but because they have hitched themselves to a heaven-bound substance, and have cast aside the weights that hold them to the earth. So, my people, I would say unto thee, cast aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset, and hitch thyself to the heaven-bound substance that will bring thee into my presence. For I would say unto thee that *praise* is heaven-bound! It is directed toward the throne! It has a power and a force that will carry it to the throne! And in the midst of thy praise, thou shalt find thyself being lifted into the heavenlies, casting aside every weight, every condemnation and guilt. In the midst of thy praise thou art lifted into the heavenlies. I would bring thee up, and *have* brought thee into heavenly places where thou hast known in thy spirit newness of life, where thou hast found a new dimension of the Spirit. The hour is at hand when I have a people that through their praises shall rise into the heavenlies. And as they cast aside every weight, they shall rise even higher *into the throne!* And as their praises become heated up, ascending up into the heavenlies, **SO SHALL THEY ASCEND HIGHER INTO THEIR GOD!**"

Before we speak further about reigning with Christ, let us open our hearts that God may speak to us and show us the ways of His throneship. Many years ago the Lord spoke suddenly and powerfully to me, saying, "I have N-O-T COMMANDED YOU TO PRAISE ME!" I was astonished, incredulous, speechless

at His word! In my understanding I was absolutely certain that God *had repeatedly commanded* us to praise Him! I rushed home, got my Strong's Concordance, and began a search of all the scriptures on praise. How clearly then the truth dawned on me! Yes — we are commanded to praise — but, with the exception of the first commandment (and we are not under the law of the ministration of death written and engraven in stones) the command was not issued by GOD! Instead, *men of God*, caught up in the Spirit of God, beholding in spirit the splendor, beauty, glory, and majesty of God, cried out in spirit, "*Praise ye the Lord!*" I quickly discerned the pattern. It is never God speaking in the first person, declaring, "I command you — worship Me!" There is no such command anywhere in the word of God! God speaks of worship and praise, not in terms of an imperative. It is always the man of God, with the veil drawn back from his vision, getting a glimpse of the Lord of Glory, as the prophet Isaiah said, "In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw the Lord...high and lifted up." He *saw* the Lord, high and lifted up! We can only ascend into the heights of God by first *seeing* our great and mighty God high and lifted up! As we see Him high and lifted up in the heavens of God's Spirit, worship and praise are the natural response from every obedient heart. That, my beloved, is the *beginning* of all true worship and praise!

This is what is happening in the lives of God's called and chosen elect in this significant hour! Have not the heavens been opened to us? Have we not beheld the beauty of the Lord, and have we not inquired of Him in His temple? Oh, yes! We have *seen* the Lord in and by the Spirit, high and lifted up, with His train filling the temple. We have beheld the beauty of the Christ within, and now we worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness! Notice especially the three ingredients in the new song sung by the hundred and forty-four thousand. "And I heard a voice from heaven *as the voice of many waters*, and as the voice of a *great thunder*: and I heard the voice of *harpers harping with their harps*" (Rev. 14:2). Many waters, great thunder, and the harping of harps! The many waters speak of volume, a great company of sons; great thunder speaks of mighty power, and harps speak of the prophetic flow in worship and praise. The message is clear — there is power in the prophetic praise of God's elect!

In fact, the passage where those beautiful words are found, "*Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness*," is taken from the Psalm which describes a great *thunderstorm* that sweeps off of the Mediterranean and crashes over the hills of Lebanon and down into Judea, wrecking havoc on every side. David, the psalmist, tells us that here the majesty and the power and might of God was revealed in the crashing lightning and the clap of thunder. Here we see the power of God's arm which is stretched forth through the prophetic worship and praise of His people! The many waters, the clapping thunder, and the harping of harps are all symbols of the power of prophetic praise! And it is this mighty power of prophetic praise that devastates the carnality of the earth realm in preparation for the revelation of the glory of God.

Let us consider again for a moment the fact that God does not generally command us to worship or praise Him. We could easily understand how God who made us could order us to do what He wants us to do. After all, He is our Creator! We could even understand how He could command us to say what we should say or even to think what He would have us to think. And He does, indeed, do that. The spirit of inspiration has taught us that every thought should be brought into captivity to the obedience of Jesus Christ. But, to go into that innermost closet, that deepest recess of the human heart of our love and affection and to say that we *must love*, and to say that we *must praise*, to command us *to worship*, seems to be a contradiction in terms.

Yea, it is more than that! Were God to force us to worship and praise Him He would thereby display the most proud, egotistical, conceited, self-centered, and vainglorious personality in the universe! Have you never met an egoistic, self-seeking person reeking with the odor of their own self-importance? I have known men who were obsessed with their importance and power who manipulated others to constantly fawn before them and heap flattery upon them. There is something in me that has always detested such and found them among the most despicable specimens of manhood. Shall we now attribute such contemptible characteristics to the great and glorious God? Can you imagine a man saying to his wife, "Thou shalt bow before me, thou must pay homage to me, thou shalt love me, thou must adore me, thou must obey me, and thou must rehearse in my ears continually how great and handsome and wonderful I am!" What kind of love and affection would a woman give to a man like that? Yet, we have heard the notion taught that God is good and He knows He is good; that God is holy and knows He is holy; that God is great and knows He is great; that God is omnipotent and knows He is omnipotent; therefore He is justified in commanding our respect, love,

and praise. But what is worship? It is simply man's **response** to the REVELATION OF GOD! When we truly *see God as He is* we *will* worship Him and our worship will be in direct proportion to the clarity of our vision of Him. God has no need to command us to worship — He reveals Himself for what He is! That is why the law covenant has been done away, it is weak through the flesh, and man *cannot perform* in obedience to an outward commandment. It doesn't work! But the response of all who behold the King in His beauty is ever the same — the revelation redounds in blessing and honor and glory unto God because He is the ***all-glorious and altogether lovely One!*** He is ***worthy!*** Worship is man's response, not God's command. And the response of the man to whom the Lord has truly unveiled Himself is as natural and spontaneous as breathing!

Contrary to what the great masses of Christians believe, praise is not an instrument by which we can "get" things from God — it is our response to His reality within ourselves. The Psalms are inspired songs of praise. Praise, not pity. That is the repeated message found in the Psalms! Praise for the goodness and greatness of God and for the constant care He gives His creation runs deep throughout the book. It carries, also, the spirit of a deep devotion to God, and a willingness to trust Him in any circumstance. It overflows with testimony of God's love, His faithfulness, His righteousness. The truths found in the Psalms reveal God's undying love and unfailing care for man. But they do it in a special way — through praise! As it says in Psalm 107, "*O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!*"

Praise, of course, is not something we plug into so that things will work out for us. The very thought, "*Praise God!*" recognizes the presence and power of God right where we are. As someone has written, "God is not moved by the breath of praise to do more than He has already done, nor can the Infinite do less than bestow all good, since He is unchanging wisdom and love." Praising God, then, isn't meant to *persuade Him* to help us. That is how little children think, and conspiring, manipulative women who through flirtations and flattery obtain favors from men. We do not approach God in that false, fleshly, devious manner! Praise, rather, lifts our burdens by opening our eyes to God's presence within us, and we gain a fresh perspective by discerning the true character of our heavenly Father.

Can praise actually help us in practical ways? Not if we're trying to ***use praise as a technique***. But if our praise is the spontaneous outpouring of joy and gladness as we become more and more conscious of God's Life, Light, and Love, then praise does have a practical impact on our life, for God inhabits the praise of His people and there is the revelation of HIMSELF! Praise does its work *in us*, not in God! As we ascend into the heights of God on the wings of prayer and praise we begin to "*Praise the Lord from the heavens and praise Him from the heights*" (Ps. 148:1). It is in our ascension to the ***throne zone***, where we join in the voice as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder, and as the voice of harpers harping with their harps, that we begin to rule and reign as heavenly kings upon mount Zion, declaring that creative word of the Lord through prophetic worship and praise which has the power to break every yoke, delivering and transforming all creation. Oh, the wonder of it!

The inspired Evelyn Isaacs wrote, "The land of the miraculous is our native land. If people would continue praising Him they would enter into the unceasing *praise of the spirit*. It is then, all the powers of gravity would lose their hold and men would ascend from plane to plane. There is no space in heaven, on earth, or underneath the earth where spirit is not! It has no dimension, and goes beyond the extremest point of the imagination. There can be no greater fullness than that of spirit, nor can there be any greater height or depth. No mortal mind or eye can scan immortal heights, neither can depths be plumbed. No substance can bring greater expression than that of spirit for its immensity and density are unscanned. No space is devoid of that which is substance, so we may cease reasoning with the finite mind and rise to the infinite. Those who are flooded with the spirit, are not ordinary men, and unless God's people are moved into the place to which they are called, they too will die" — end quote.

In another place in the Revelation (8:3-4) the voice of many waters, the voice of great thunder, and the harpers harping with their harps is presented under another figure, that of incense offered upon the golden altar, and the smoke of the incense ascending up before God. All the sacrifices of the heavenly realm into which God's elect are now translated are *spiritual sacrifices*. The altar upon which the spiritual sacrifices are offered is Christ Himself, as it is written, "BY HIM therefore let us offer the *sacrifice of praise*

continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with *such sacrifices* God is well pleased” (Heb. 13:15-16). The “sacrifice of praise” in no way infers that we must consistently and persistently mouth words of praise and thanksgiving unto God when we in no way *feel* like doing so. That is the idea many people have! They feel they must “wring” some praises out of their soulish senses in order to offer a “sacrifice” of praise to God. To the contrary, the sacrifice of praise must be the very BEST of our powers, like the lamb without blemish, painstakingly selected and carefully and reverently brought to the Tabernacle door. In the awesomeness of His presence and glory we launch joyfully down our little rivulet, until we are borne out into the great ocean of praise, which is ever breaking in music around the person of Jesus.

Praise is one of the greatest acts of which we are capable; and it is the transcendent service of heaven and the throne. In that blessed realm of spirit God’s kings and priests ask for naught, for they have all and abound; but throughout the cycles of glory the inhabitants of those bright worlds fill them with praise. We are the priests of creation; it becomes us to gather up and express the sentiments of the Father’s will for all men and to speak them by the creative power of prophetic worship and praise. Mighty things begin to happen on earth when we speak out of the heavens of God’s Spirit! “And the angel took the censer, and filled it with *fire of the altar*, and *cast it into the earth*: and there were *voices* (the *prophetic word* of the Lord), and *thunderings* (the *power* of the word), and *lightnings* (the *illumination* of the word), and an *earthquake* (mighty shaking and change in the earth realm)” (Rev. 8:5). The worship and praise of the order of sons is not essentially that which is offered in the assembling of the saints, in which much is often soulish instead of spiritual, but it is the constant outraying of the nature, love, grace, mercy, and power of God in all and unto all. This is the greatest of all spiritual sacrifices! And by the power of these spiritual sacrifices everything in our earth, and in that earth outside of us, shall be wondrously changed and restored back into God again!

THE SYMPHONY OF LIFE

A brother related the following experience. “When I first went to Nashville, Tennessee, some friends, thinking they were doing me a favor, called me and said, ‘We have tickets for the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra that’s coming to town, and we want to take you as our guest.’ Well, I love music, but I know nothing about it, and I can’t sing it — I always help congregational singing by keeping quiet. Frankly, I couldn’t think of anything more boring than a whole evening of symphony! But I had to go because they were so kind and I wanted to be polite, so I accepted graciously and went along.

“I had never been to a thing like that before, and I was impressed by what I saw. We went in, took our seats, and in a few minutes there began to drift out from the sides the musicians. They were in shirt sleeves for the most part, and each man went up to his instrument and started tuning it. The fellows with the fiddles too big to put under their chins sawed back and forth — oh, it sounded terrible. The fellows with the little ones they put under their chins squeaked up and down with those. The ones with the horns — oh my, nothing was in harmony. It was a medley of discordant, confused noise. Then after they got through with that kind of a disturbance, they all disappeared again, went out through the wings.

“Another five minutes went by when all of a sudden the lights in the auditorium went off, the lights on the platform came on, and the musicians walked out. This time they had on their coats. My, they looked so nice. Each one came out and stood or sat at his instrument. Then there was a hush in the auditorium, a spotlight was focused on the wings, and the conductor stepped out. When he did there was thunderous applause for him. He bowed. Then he came to the podium and picked up a thin little stick. He turned around again to the audience and bowed, then turned his back to the audience, lifted that little stick — total silence came over the auditorium, you could have heard a pin drop — then he brought that little stick down. And, my friend, there were goose pimples all over me. I never heard such music in all my life. Oh, what harmony, what wonderful harmony there was!” — end quote.

I tell you today God is preparing His sons for the greatest symphony the world has ever heard, a symphony of divine wisdom, omnipotent power, and unconditional, unbounded love. The sons themselves will be the symphony! All the chords of God’s nature, wisdom, and power will be struck in them. At this present time, as God is fine-tuning our lives, it seems as if every man is tooting his own horn, everyone is

playing his own little fiddle; it sounds like everything is out of tune, a medley of discord. But as God deals in our lives, teaching us His ways, writing His laws in our hearts, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, establishing His will and transforming our beings, He is creating within each of us a chord of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Our minds and our souls are now being renewed, through repentance, by the Spirit of God. Through the crucible of daily experience by the dealings of our Father we are learning to perceive and fully understand by the wisdom of the mind of Christ instead of thinking with old Adam's carnal mind. As God by His refining fire purges out of us the trusting in our own strength, our confidence in the flesh, the inbred mentality of Babylonish religion, and the spirit of the world, what a raucous screeching is emitted from our lives!

We all seem so different, and Father's purposes in us appear disparate. What a motley crew the sons of God appear to be today! But you, precious friend of mine, are an instrument designed to be a channel of Life, Light, and Love. And Jesus Christ is the Master Conductor, and wants to play the strings of emotions and thoughts and desires and nature within you until you become a son indeed, the Song of the Lord in the midst of the earth. Your life, when it is hid with Christ in God, becomes a beautiful thing; your thoughts and actions all in unison with God are running along the lines that lead to God, for they diverge not. When the hour strikes for the unveiling of God's sons, Jesus Christ the Lord is going to lift His Scepter — oh, the harmony that will sound forth from all His many brethren! Then the world shall see the fullness of Christ, which includes Christ the Head, and Christ the body, in all the life and glorious harmony of the kingdom of God!

Every knee on this globe, and in the heavens above, and in the underworld, shall bow before the majesty of the glory of the Lord as they awaken to hear the pure melodies of the harmony of God in His sons. Never again will they be satisfied with the discordant notes of this world's pleasures and programs, nor the off-beat of the religious systems of man. As they hear the pure song that flows from the heart of God in His sons, all men shall hunger and thirst to be filled with the same, the harmonious chord of the righteousness, peace, and joy of the kingdom of God. We have not yet witnessed the glory of God's manifestation in the way it is going to be expressed! We have not seen the hand of God move in the way it is going to move! The Lord spoke through prophecy years ago, at the time of a mighty move of His Spirit, and said that He was moving by His *little finger*, and I tell you when He moved that little finger there were tremendous things that happened, glorious things took place. But now — just think of the glory that shall come when He moves by His *hand* and makes bare His holy *arm*!

I read the story of a young man who happened to visit a church one Sunday. He listened to the church service and heard an organ offertory played — a Bach toccata. When the service was finished, the young man inquired as to whether he could play the organ. "Oh no! Only our church organist is permitted to play that instrument." But the young man persisted. Finally, they agreed to let him play one piece of music. He looked over the stops, carefully set them, and then he played the same number that was played for the offertory, a Bach toccata. There were still people lingering around. They listened — enthralled, and when he finished, everybody applauded. The organist asked the young visitor, "What is your name?" He said, "My name is Johann Sebastian Bach. I wrote that music!" And the organist exclaimed, "Oh, to think that we almost would not let the master himself play the instrument! Only now have we heard the real music come out." YOU, dear one, are the very *harp of God* to be played from the theater of the throne of God! The Master Musician is now arising within all of God's sons. He offers us the harmonies that He alone can create. He, the firstborn Son, is leading us to mount Zion where the divine symphony appears to fill the earth with the strains of the celestial song, and to fill all creation with the universal song. As we allow Christ His place within, every drop of blood is singing the praise of God; every pulsation of heart is a joyful harmony keeping steady time. The Conductor of this Symphony knows every part and every player and is able to execute all phases to its grand conclusion. Discord only enters when we take our eyes off the Conductor or mistake another player's notes for our own.

GOLDEN VIALS FULL OF ODORS

"And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and *golden vials full of odors*, which are the prayers of the saints" (Rev. 5:8).

The word translated “vial” is better rendered “bowl.” The present day use of the word vial usually relates to a small, slender bottle. The word in the Greek text is *phialas* and refers to a flatish, and rather broad vessel, used for both drinking and priestly services. In the Septuagint the Greek word *phialas* is used to translate the Hebrew word for the flat bowls used in the tabernacle of Moses and the temple in Jerusalem. The throne room where this vision takes place is none other than the most holy place of the heavenly, spiritual temple of God by the Spirit! Therefore we may understand that these golden bowls which are described as being “full of odors” are the antitype of the utensils used by the priesthood to contain incense for worship. This is in keeping with the definition of the “odors” spoken of in our text, for it is stated plainly that they are symbolic of the prayers of the saints. The “odors,” therefore, are the pleasant scents of the incense rising from the golden receptacle in the hand of the priest. Since the elect, represented figuratively in this vision as the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders, are a “royal priesthood” or a company of “king-priests,” this is in keeping with their possessing golden bowls that exude sweet incense. It is significant to note that in Luke 1:9-10 the incense was burned at the time of prayer, for incense is a type of the prayers of the saints!

In this connection the words of brother Paul Mueller are so filled with depth and inspiration: “We are told that our prayers are kept and preserved as odors, or as incense, in ‘golden vials’ in the realm of the Spirit. Every prayer we have ever prayed by the Spirit and in the will of God, is preserved as incense in golden vials in the heavenlies. Some of us have come to the place, spiritually, where we have no words of our own to pray. We do not know what to pray for as we ought, so we allow the holy Spirit to pray for us. And when the Spirit makes intercession for us, we can only lament ‘*with groanings which cannot be uttered*’ (Rom. 8:26). The Spirit is then making ‘*intercession for the saints according to the will of God*’ (Rom. 8:27). And this Spirit-begotten intercession is being kept as incense in those ‘golden vials’ in the heavenly realm of the Spirit, to be answered in Father’s time.

“Perhaps the most urgent, spiritual prayer expressed by the intercession of the saints is this prayer from the words of Jesus: ‘*Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven*’ (Mat. 6:10). In this brief and simple prayer, every need of mankind and of the whole creation is presented before the Father. When the kingdom fully comes to earth, and God’s will is done everywhere and in every situation, there will be no need, no lack, anywhere. But all mankind and the whole creation shall then know the salvation of the Lord, and the peace, joy, righteousness, and love of God. Every need we have is met in the kingdom of God! This truth will be borne out and fully manifested when the will of God is done in all the earth. When we fully comprehend this great truth, we will cease our vain, religious babblings, and will then seek His kingdom, and for His will to be done in our earth, as well as in the earth all around us” — end quote.

When by the grace of God the truth of this holy vision bursts upon you, you will know assuredly that every prayer you have ever prayed by the Spirit and in the will of God, is preserved as incense in those “golden bowls” in the heavenly realm of the Spirit. They are not merely “preserved,” but are reserved unto the day when THEY WILL BE ANSWERED! Every one will be answered! God has a time for everything under the sun, and I can assure you, my beloved, matters not what thing, small or great, that you have interceded for in and by the Spirit — it shall be done! No matter whether it is done today, tomorrow, a year from now, twenty years from now, or in some distant time and age, every prayer is reserved in the golden bowl in the heavenlies, the incense arises continuously as a sweet savor in the nostrils of the Lord, and that word shall accomplish all that has been spoken. Some have prayed for the salvation of loved ones, for the move of God in some life or people or nation, or any one of a thousand other things, and the loved ones have died, and other situations look hopeless, yet our Father has every one of those prayers reserved unto *His time* for their fulfillment, and not one of them shall fail. Aren’t you glad!

THE NEW SONG

“And they sung a *new song*...” (Rev. 5:9).

There is a very real relationship between the golden bowls of incense which represent the prayers and praise of the saints, and the “new song.” In the temple worship at Jerusalem, in the days of Christ, there was a distinct relationship between the offering up of incense within the holy place and the worshipper outside.

A word of command was given when the time of incense arrived and the worshippers fell in absolute silence before the Lord, spreading their hands in supplication and adoration. Then, as the priest offered the holy incense upon the golden altar, the priests and people in the outer court chanted the traditional prayer, "It is true that Thou art Yahweh, our God and the God of our fathers: our King and the King of our fathers; our Saviour and the Rock of our salvation; our Help and our Deliverer. Thy name is from everlasting, and beside Thee there is no God. A NEW SONG did those who were delivered sing unto Thy name by the shore of the sea. Together did all praise and confess Thee as King, and say, Yahweh who saveth Israel shall reign."

"They sung" in the text should be rendered "they sing," present tense, denoting continuous adoration and praise on the part of the redeemed. Every inner desire and outward act and expression rise like sweet incense in the presence of God and the Lamb. "A new song" designates a special song composed for some great occasion. The Spirit spoke through the prophet Isaiah, saying, "*Behold, the former things are come to pass, and **new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them. Sing unto the Lord a new song, and His praise from the end of the earth***" (Isa. 42:9-10). In this beautiful passage it was the passing of the former things and the declaring of **new things** that evoked the **new song** of praise unto the Lord! It bespeaks of a new order to begin with the unfolding of a new purpose in God.

Every time the Spirit of God unfolds new dimensions of truth to our hearts, effecting further transformations into His image, bringing us into a new place in God and a further appropriating of our inheritance in Christ, a new song is born! The old song was good and true for its time, but we can sing the old song no more, for a new day has dawned, a new word has gone forth, a new glory has arisen, a new reality has been birthed within, praise His name! While this is not all it means, yet it is true that many songs we sang in church when I was a boy growing up I cannot sing today because they no longer express what God is speaking and doing in my life. Some of them are so far from the truth as I now know it, that I cannot bear even to *listen* to them, much less sing them!

A song in scripture represents both *praise* and a *message*. It is praise that bears a message, or beyond that, praise which is birthed out of revelation and experience with God. You can tell the spiritual level of a person by the songs he sings! A person's "song" will always express his depth of understanding and relationship with God. When we receive new revelation from the Lord, experientially inworked into our lives, a new song is created. I look back over old sermons, and sometimes I have to say to myself, "I could not preach that again." Thank God, He has been teaching me through the years of my walk in Him, leading into a fuller knowledge of truth and a deeper walk in the Spirit. Oh, yes! There is continuously a **new song** — a new revelation, a new message, a fresh word, a higher experience in God for this day, and for all the days to come! Those who sing the new song have outgrown the old ones. They no longer express our experience or satisfy our needs.

God is even now preparing a people, a royal priesthood, sons of the most High; and while the church world continues on with its time-honored traditions and childish delusions, singing about flying away to cabins in the corner of gloryland, or to mansions over the hill-top, a people is arising in the earth with a new and wonderful vision — to become kings and priests unto God — their hearts vibrating with the melodious strains of a **new song**, the song of a people with a purpose, a company gathered out of the generations, grown up into the fullness of Christ, conquering every enemy within and without, which in due time shall be led forth to be the manifest expression of His image, character, and nature, the revelation of His glory, power, and dominion, with an outflow of life and light and love sent to change the course of history, transform the nations, and restore all men and all things back into God. What a song!

Ah, those who receive *this call*, those who hold *this vision*, those who cherish *this hope*, indeed sing a **new song** which can be learned by none but those apprehended, the firstfruits of His redemption. This is the ineffable, preeminent Song; ineffable because it strikes a chord, the vibration of which cannot be discerned by the carnal man; preeminent because it is the Song of the Lamb who stands in the midst of the throne, the King of kings and the High Priest of *our profession*, who in all things has preeminence!

This "new song" is undoubtedly the truth of the divine purpose of the ages, or "present truth," as we often call it. David, the sweet singer of Israel, wrote, "O sing unto the Lord a new song..." (Ps. 96). It is the song that God gave David at the time of the dedication of the ark of God on mount Zion...and it concerned

the “new thing” that God was doing then. But it was really prophetic of the “new thing” that God is doing now! In that day David had brought the ark to its place on the natural mount Zion, but today the Lord is bringing His vast company of sons to the heavenly mount Zion in the Spirit! Our new song is the song of His glory, of His authority, of His dominion, of His throne, the song of His righteous judgments in the earth that bring His kingdom to pass in every tongue and tribe and people and nation.

Many of those who now read these lines sense the establishment of a new order by the glorious appearing of Christ within. Within my innermost being there is an understanding and a hope that refuses to be quieted or stilled. It is the hope of overcoming all things, awaking in His likeness, with a greater glory and power than anything we have known in the past. My spirit sings the glad Hosannas of a new morning of joy, because of the vision of the greater glory and life of Christ now being raised up in His body on earth. And that song within persists until it purges out all the negative influences of the past, and cleanses me throughout. Ah, my beloved, does your spirit within you sing the glad Hosannas of this new day? Does this new song, this new word, this new working of life and resurrection power purge out all the error, carnality, sin, and death, making you pure even as He is pure?

This indeed is the glory of this new day to which we have come! The glory of Christ is now arising upon His elect sons. He is among us now in a new and greater degree of His presence, and His greater presence within is imparting a new song of joy and victory. Our long battle for the land of our inheritance is coming to an end. We are approaching the heights of mount Zion where reigns the King! There is a new song within. There is a new hope within. There is the dawn of a new day within. It is Christ, the Captain of our salvation, who abides within. He is the voice within, the thunder within, the lightning within, the melody of the harp within! He is the High Priest of our profession within us, the firstborn among many brethren within us, the Forerunner within us, giving a fresh word of promise and fulfillment!

If we have learned this “song,” there is surely much cause for “abounding with thanksgiving,” for it means that our great and heavenly Father has taken us into His confidence and revealed to us the hidden things of His eternal purpose. Thereby He has dispelled the darkness with which we were surrounded, and brought us out of our Babylon of confusion. The many unanswered questions which raised only doubts and fears within, have been clarified by the clear revelation of the Spirit. Now we see His glory as it is made up of His infinite wisdom, almighty power, divine righteousness, and unconditional and abounding love. Truly the Lord has put a new song in our mouths! It is a song which grows more melodious as we continue to sing it unto the Lord and to one another, and ultimately to all creation! And what joy and peace that song will bring!

To be continued...

J. PRESTON EBY