

# KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

## FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

### Part 81

#### THE UNIVERSAL SONG (continued)

“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast *redeemed us to God by Thy blood...*” (Rev. 5:9).

Redeemed — what a glorious word! How deep, how high, how broad! Oh yes, it is true that we have been redeemed, but, like salvation, redemption is no single act or experience; as one has stated, it is “a crisis *leading to a process*” as we are progressively “loosed away” from one realm to another, from one mind to another, from one nature to another, from one state of being to another. Truly we are being freed from the dominion of the carnal mind, from a world of flesh-centered, self-assertive religious activities, and from the power of sin and death, first in spirit, working outward into the mind, will, emotions, and desires of the soul life, and finally in body by the mighty working of His power whereby He is able to change even our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His body of glory (Phil. 3:21).

The prefix “re” in “re-deem” means “again” (as in re-copy, re-wash, re-write). The main part of the word is from a root that means “to purchase, to buy.” So an article that is left in a pawn shop can be redeemed by paying the money that was borrowed, plus the interest charges. The item is thus re-bought or bought back. The word is also used when a company finds it possible to call some of its indebtedness, pay the borrower, and cancel the obligation: this is the *redemption* of bond issues. Spiritually, it means a **return** to that place, wisdom, knowledge, life, glory, and dominion which we once had in God before the ages were framed, ere this present cosmos or world-arrangement began.

The English word “redeem” translates three Greek words, each of which has a rich meaning in connection with our salvation and transformation. One Greek word, *apolutro*, means “to loose, untie, deliver.” Another Greek word used in the scriptures and translated by our word “redemption” is *agorazo*, the common Greek word for marketing. The noun *agora* means the market place, and the verb *agorazo* means to buy. In the New Testament the word is applied to souls. This would be readily understood in the ancient world, since there was a slave market that operated almost every day, and the traffic in slaves was very great. That Christ should have walked into the slave market and purchased, or redeemed, men who were slaves to the realm of carnality, sin, and death, would have been easily comprehended!

A missionary was working on a Bible translation for the Bambara people. Realizing that the idea of “being redeemed” might not mean much to them, he asked his Bambara translation helper, “How do you say ‘God redeemed us’ so that your people can understand?” “Why, we would say ‘God took our necks out,’” the helper replied. “But how would your people understand that?” “Oh, we remember that, long ago, raiders would come and take our people into slavery. They would put heavy iron collars on our people and chain one captive to the next in long lines to be taken to the coast. Sometimes a chief or friend would see a friend being led away and would want to free him, or redeem him. He could do this by paying the slave traders gold, silver, brass, or ivory. In redeeming his friend, he would ‘take his neck out of the iron collar!’” What a beautiful way to say that we are no longer slaves, unable to free ourselves from slavery to self, sin, and death!

Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, has redeemed us by His own precious blood! He has taken our neck out of the collar!

There is another Greek word which gives additional light on the thought of redemption. The word is *exagorazo* (*agorazo* with the prefix *ex*), and carries the idea of buying something **out** of the market. There is a difference between a purchase that is for resale and a purchase that is made in order to take an article out of commerce. For example, a dealer in rare books and works of art might purchase an item at a London or New York sale, and hold it for resale to a customer. Some pictures, books, manuscripts, and other art objects are bought and sold again and again. But finally, when a great work of art is bought by a museum, it is thus **TAKEN OUT OF CIRCULATION PERMANENTLY**.

In consideration of these facts which I have briefly stated there is another truth to which I would draw your reverent attention. The song of God's kings and priests proclaims, "Thou hast redeemed us *to God*..." Redeemed — **unto God!** We have been bought back to God as His own peculiar possession for a special and wonderful purpose. "Thou hast redeemed us unto God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast ***made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.***"

You have read what the scripture says of Moses: "This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? The same did God send to be a ruler and A DELIVERER by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush" (Acts 7:35). We find that this word "deliverer" is the same Greek word which in its various forms is translated ransom, redemption, redeem, and redeemed. The question follows, How was Moses a deliverer, a redeemer, or a redemption-price for Israel in Egypt? Did Moses pay a price to Pharaoh for Israel's redemption? Did he promise Egypt anything in return for allowing Israel to leave? Absolutely not! Moses paid Egypt exactly **nothing**. And yet, he was a redeemer and redemption for Israel! How can this be? *It was his own life which he poured out for Israel*, it was the freely giving of his life to Israel which led them up out of the house of bondage.

This is the most beautiful type of Christ's redemption! When Jesus Christ became our redemption He didn't have to pay redemption money to God. He didn't take His blood and say, "Here, God, is a price for the people." Nor did He go to Satan and say, "Here, Satan, is a redemption-price, now you let God's people go." NEVER! He, like Moses, poured His life out and freely gave it to the people! "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I WILL GIVE FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me" (Jn. 6:51,53-57). We are the ones who are receiving the redemption money, and receiving of His life we are able to get up and leave the filth of self, sin, and the world behind, and walk in the higher realms with Him.

Can you not see the mystery? In the natural the redemption price was paid to the slave owner or creditor; and it will clearly be seen that God operates by the same principle once we understand that that which had us bound was in very fact ***something inherent within ourselves***. Paul goes into a penetrating discussion of this in chapter seven of the book of Romans. He talks about each of our experiences in which the good thing we want to do, we don't do, and the evil that we don't want to do, we do. He says that in me, that is, in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing. He goes on to say, "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law *in my members*, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me *into captivity to the law of sin and death which is in my members*. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? *I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord*" (Rom. 7:13-25).

Ah, the law of sin and death works *within*, the carnal mind operates *within*, and the devil himself is but a figure for the bestial spirit of this world which sits enthroned *within* the very nature and heart of man. People have painted Satan as a huge, ugly, impish personage with horns, bedecked with a red suit, having a long pointed tail and carrying a pitchfork. In our minds he belongs in dark pagan jungles where frenzied worshippers hysterically practice devil worship. He belongs in ancient voodoo ceremonies where primitive

peoples offer human sacrifices to appease his anger. He belongs to the garden of Eden, spoiling life for Adam and Eve; to the Judean wilderness, tempting Jesus; to Berlin during the 1930's and 1940's, possessing and using Adolph Hitler, masterminding history's great atrocities. Certainly Satan is present in the above listed activities. But may I hastily add that he is not present there one whit more than he has been in your life and mine! The pen of inspiration truthfully records the fact that "*You* hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the *spirit that now worketh in* the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:1-2).

That ancient serpent slithers about in the lowest realms of man's earthiness, in the crooked thoughts, perverted desires, and unbridled emotions of the carnal nature, in all the corrupt motions of the flesh. *Within man* lies the *seat of satan*. We have been the captives of a power within us, slaves to our own bestial nature. So Christ did not pay a ransom to God in heaven, nor to the devil in hell, in order to redeem us and gain our release. Rather, He gave His life and poured it into us that the transcendent power of His Spirit within might break asunder the bands that bind us! Victory over the carnal mind is gained only by putting on the precious mind that was in Christ Jesus. Victory over the flesh is wrought alone by the mighty power of the Christ-life within. HE GIVES HIS LIFE TO US WHO ARE IN BONDAGE, AND THEN WE HAVE THE VITALITY AND STRENGTH TO ARISE AND RETURN TO FATHER'S HOUSE TO CLAIM OUR INHERITANCE. We cannot do it on our own, by any self-effort of our weak and helpless flesh, fettered by the shackles of our human consciousness and the power of sin and shame, but when He gives His life, and fills us with His strength, then *through Him* we are able to rise up out of our slave house and return to Father's house. Praise God, His life is given *as redemption TO US*, so that, as the apostle says, "Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is *made unto us...REDEMPTION*" (I Cor. 1:30). Hallelujah!

### REDEEMED BY BLOOD

"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God *by Thy blood...*" (Rev. 5:9).

I am indebted to the writings of the saintly Andrew Murray for some of the thoughts shared in this portion.

What is this stream of life from the Lamb upon the throne with the power to redeem us? The wonderful answer comes, "Thou art worthy...for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us unto God *by Thy blood.*" It is the *blood* of the Lamb that bestows this worth upon Him. The blood of Jesus is the greatest mystery of the ages, the deepest mystery of divine wisdom. Let us not imagine that we can easily grasp its meaning! God thought four thousand years necessary to prepare men for it, and we must take time in His presence, if we are to gain a knowledge of the awesome and marvelous power of the blood. I know of no word in the Bible or in human speech that contains such glories! This great and eternal truth shines with ever increasing brilliance from Eden's fragrant garden of long ago to the jasper walls of the New Jerusalem descending from God out of heaven; from Adam's covering of skins and Able's humble sacrifice of the firstfruits of his flock to the very throne of God Himself where, glorious in power and might, the Lamb reigns and the seven spirits of His divine life are sent forth into all the earth.

The blood of Jesus is of such vast importance to God the Father that He has decreed that there shall be (1) no remission (2) no salvation (3) no atonement (4) no redemption (5) no propitiation (6) no cleansing (7) no justification (8) no peace (9) no new covenant (10) no sanctification (11) no reconciliation (12) no entrance into the Holiest of all (13) no sonship, without the blood of Jesus Christ whose blood is called by Paul THE BLOOD OF GOD (Acts 20:28; Heb. 10:19-20).

Never forget, my beloved, that Jesus came as THE PRICE WHICH COVERS, the substance in the scale that replenishes all deficiency. He shed His blood — His divine life — pouring it out for us. Life and blood are synonymous. Spirit and blood are synonymous. Spirit, blood, and life are all different names for the same element. Jesus performed His mighty works by the shores of Galilee, but then He died, resurrected, ascended, was glorified, and then returned in mighty *spirit power* to indwell His body and to be the *miracle worker within*. Nothing less must become ours, than *His Life* — the divine life He lived in human flesh.

“As I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me,” Jesus said. The truth is so simple — He poured out His blood-life to us to quicken us again to the glory of God that belongs to man. When our spirit is quickened by His spirit we are brought to union with God! Christ gave Himself *for us* and *to us*. Our spirit must be quickened by His Spirit. **THAT IS THE POWER OF HIS REDEEMING BLOOD, OF HIS LIFE THAT RESTORES US TO OUR TRUE IDENTITY AS SONS OF GOD.** Oh, the mystery of it! That He might liberally pour His dear-bought treasures into benighted human storehouses, was the inspiration of Jesus’ intense human sacrifice.

Some hold not to this truth, choosing rather to believe that they are a self-sufficient god within themselves, needing no Redeemer beyond the development of their own inherent divinity. Thus they bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that *bought them* (II Pet. 2:1). Do away with this wonderful stream of the precious blood of Christ as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, and every room within the towering temple of *spiritual reality* comes crashing down to earth! The love of God became a man, the love of God became human flesh, the love of God in Jesus Christ has flowed into our spirits and souls and bodies as the precious blood of Christ to wash away the veil of carnal consciousness and quicken us again to our true heritage in God. “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed by such corruptible things as silver and gold from your vain manner of life received by tradition from your fathers; but with the *precious blood of Christ*, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” Hallelujah for the blood!

Multiplied millions of believers in all lands hold the blood of Christ to be precious. The word *precious* means of great price or value, costly, of great desirability, honored, esteemed, or beloved. But there must be a reason why the blood is precious! Through many years of my Christian walk I never learned of *any reason* why it is esteemed except that God counts it to be the most valuable and precious of all blood to Him. I was never told whether it was intrinsically valuable or if it was valuable because of what it could and did accomplish. To be intrinsically valuable or precious means that it is of itself precious and does not necessarily need to accomplish any work to get its value. For example, the value of precious gems is determined not so much from their usefulness but from what they are within themselves — their intrinsic value — and that is why people desire to own them even though they can really *do* nothing. On the other hand, there are certain medicines, extracted from plants, which cost a thousand or thousands of dollars for one pill or injection. These actually have little intrinsic value, but their value is derived entirely from what they can do! My sincere prayer is that the spirit of wisdom and revelation may enlighten the eyes of our understanding so that we clearly see that the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ was and is precious both in respect to its *intrinsic value* (for it is the life of God!) *and* because of *what it could and did and does now do!*

In the blood of Jesus the power of the divine life dwelt and worked — hence its intrinsic value. He was a specially prepared body to contain a *specially prepared blood* that was to be *the life* of all humanity. This blood was precious from the fact that it was a unique blood which would do something for all humanity that no other blood could ever do. It was the Word that became flesh, who was made man. It was the life of God that dwelt in Him *in a measure* that no other man had known! God gave not the Spirit by measure unto Him! If the spirit in Jesus, which is the life and the blood of Jesus, was in no way different from the spirit or life of every other human being, then why is it that He was able to walk through this realm of sin and death and both remain sinless and manifest the very fullness of divine life on the human plane, while each and every other son of Adam has sinned and come short of the glory of God *including you, my precious brother, sister, and including me!* The fullness of divine life gave His blood, every drop of it, an intrinsic value. The blood of a man is of more worth than that of a sheep. The blood of a king is counted of more value than hundreds of common men. The blood of the firstborn son of God! It is in vain the mind seeks for some expression of its value; all we can say is, it is His own blood, the blood of the Son of God!

Oh, the wonder of it! Jesus Christ was *the Word made flesh*; He was not old Adam’s flesh imbued with God’s life. He was the second Man, the Man from heaven, the God-man, head of a new species of Men, a new creation of God in the earth, each member of which is a SON OR DAUGHTER OF THE MOST HIGH! The life is in the blood. As the value of this life, so the value of the blood. In Christ there was the life of God; infinite as God is the worth and the power of that blood! In Christ there was the life of man in its perfection; in His humility, and obedience to the Father, and self-sacrifice, that which made Him unspeakably well-pleasing to the Father. The blood of Jesus, God and man, poured out in death, was the

perfect fulfillment of God's will, and a perfect victory over self and sin and death. Therefore it was, that in the blood of the everlasting covenant Jesus was raised from the dead; that in the power of that blood He entered the highest heaven; and *that precious blood is now and forever available to us with all its incorruptible power*. His blood is His divine spirit of life which has come into us, and he that is joined to the Lord *is one spirit*. The precious blood of Christ is just Christ Himself, Christ in us — our hope of glory!

### THOU HAST MADE US KINGS AND PRIESTS

“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us unto God...and hast *made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth*” (Rev. 5:9-10).

Many translations use the word “*them*,” as this is the song of the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders. A number of Bible scholars disagree with that and confirm that “*us*” is the better and correct translation. Dr. Seiss in his “Lectures on the Apocalypse” gives the following explanation: “Some of the best manuscripts read ‘*them*’ in place of ‘*us*’; but the sense is not altered by it...for the subject is settled by the preceding declaration to be the persons singing the song, namely, by the phrase ‘*redeemed US*’; the genuineness of which must be considered established since the discovery of the Codex Sinaiticus.” It is therefore the four living creatures (kingship) and the twenty-four elders (priesthood) who are both redeemed *unto God* and *made kings and priests unto God*!

Never under the Old Testament Aaronic order of priesthood, apart from one example, do we find where a king exercised the office or ministry of a priest. In the Levitical order the offices of king and priest were separated, there were those who reigned as kings, and there were those who were the Lord's priests. Kings could not intrude into the priest's office, and priests could not sit on the throne. Judah produced the kings, and Levi produced the priests. On one occasion Uzziah, king of Judah, tried to assume the role of priest and “went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense” and was smitten with leprosy in his forehead (II Chron. 27:16-20). God had separated the two offices for that time, and the one was not to intrude into the other.

Melchizedek is the sign, the symbol, the first example of a priest designated in the word of God. He was called a priest of God long centuries before the Old Covenant order was established for the Levites to be the priests of Israel. Thus, the first or beginning example represents the pattern or true design of God for what He considers a priesthood. Melchizedek had royal blood in his veins, he claimed the title of kingship. The very meaning of the name Melchizedek is “KING of righteousness” and this righteous King was also the Priest of the Most High God. What was always kept asunder under the Law Covenant, by divine wisdom and purpose was united in Him who was “made like unto the Son of God.” Melchizedek was “made like” the Son of God, and we find in the book of Hebrews that the Son of God is made a high priest “after the *Order of Melchizedek*.” It is the glory of Christ and His many brethren as KING-PRIESTS that Melchizedek so wondrously prefigures! A new order has arisen in Jesus Christ. He is a King-Priest! And He has made us to be Kings and Priests, a Kingdom of Priests, a Royal Priesthood unto God! “They shall be *priests* of God and of Christ, and shall *reign* with Him...” (Rev. 20:6).

The principle idea attached to the title “king” is that of authority and rule; to the title “priest” that of mediation, mercy, ministry, and reconciliation, drawing men nigh unto God, and God nigh unto men. Why is Jesus seated as a priest upon the throne of the heavens? It is that man may be blessed, and that God may be glorified in man! As priest He lives only for others, to bring them near to God. He lives as king only that He might reveal the kingdom — the power, authority, dominion, and glory — of God in and through us!

Deep down in the heart of men there is a strong and instinctive demand for a priest, to be a mediator, to lay one hand on man, and the other on God, and going between both to bring the two together into unification. This instinctive consciousness of the need for someone to help us to enter into oneness with God is the reason why all the ancient pagan religions had a priesthood. A priest or priesthood infers that there is a reason why such has been called into play. It denotes that there is an *estrangement* between God and His creatures and the priest ministers to bridge that gulf and bring about peace or at-one-ment. Many today proclaim that there is no estrangement, no separation between God and man, that it is only a false

sense of duality in man's *mind*, that he has only to see that he himself *is God*, and as soon as his true identity is recognized, he can proceed to manifest out of his divine self. If that is the truth then man did not truly fall, there was no sin in Eden, and no penalty for that sin; God did not Himself *drive* man out of paradise, Adam just sort of stumbled out while sleep-walking, there was no need for Jesus to come to ransom us with His precious blood, and there certainly would be no need for the Melchizedek Priesthood! Nor would there be any purpose in any scriptural teaching of forgiveness by God, atonement, justification, regeneration, new birth, or the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Jesus should have just come and told us who we really are, and explained to us that none of these things can add anything whatsoever to our inherent divinity, and gone back to heaven.

Webster's dictionary defines priest as: a mediatory agent between God and man. In the Old Testament the word priest is translated from the Hebrew word *cohen*, the root meaning of which is "one who stands up and draws nigh for another." The Greek word, in its root, means "to minister." Thus, a priest is one who "draws near and ministers on behalf of another." And the priest always draws nigh and ministers in **two directions** — drawing nigh to God on behalf of the people and drawing nigh to the people on behalf of God. The priest stands and ministers to the Lord on behalf of the people while, on the other hand, he ministers unto the people on behalf of the Lord. The ministry of the priest is an intermediary or go-between ministry. He reaches out with one hand and takes hold of God; he reaches out with the other hand and takes hold of humanity; and he brings the two together by virtue of his priestly administration.

"Thou hast *made us* kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." "Made us" are words pregnant with meaning. Let me give you an illustration. The name of the Son of God is Jesus. That is His correct name. That is His full name. The name of the eternal Word of God who stepped across the stars to the planet earth to be born in a stable in the village of Bethlehem, is Jesus. That is His complete, proper, full name. His name is Jesus! The angelic messenger appeared to the virgin girl Mary and announced, "Thou shalt call His name JESUS, for He shall save His people from their sins" (Mat. 1:21). Someone says, "But the angel didn't say His name was to be Jesus because that's English — His name was given as Yahshua." Incorrect. The common people of Galilee did not speak Hebrew in the time of Jesus. They spoke Aramaic. Undoubtedly the name was given to Mary in the language she understood. We know it in English as Jesus. And whatever language it is spoken in it still means the same thing, "the salvation of Yahweh." So when the mighty Gabriel appeared, he said, "Call the child that which will be descriptive or characteristic of what He is going to be and do. Call His name that which will describe His accomplishment." The messenger said, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, or thou shalt call His name Saviour, FOR He shall save His people...call Him God's Salvation because He is the Son of God MIGHTY TO SAVE."

Since He would be the salvation of Yahweh unto His people, call Him Saviour. Some who read these lines are now saying, "Hold the fort, Eby; isn't His first name Lord and His last name Christ?" NO! Neither Lord nor Christ is a name. It is important that we understand that. Christ is not a name. Christ is a position. Christ is an office. Christ is a title, as also is Lord. Christ is a description of an individual who holds a particular office. If I were to say to you, "What is the name of the first man to hold the highest office in the United States of America," you would say, "His name was George Washington." And if I said to you, "What was his office?" you would say, "President." He was called "President George Washington." You understand immediately that his name is distinct from the title which designates his office. Now we might call him "Mr. President," but that's not his name, we're calling him by his office. His name is George Washington; his office is President. When I speak to you about King, that is an office. When I speak to you about Prime Minister, that's an office. Christ is an office — it's not a name. Christ comes from the Greek *Christos* and means "anointed," or better, "The anointed One." When we're talking about the Son of God, we're saying that His name is Jesus — Saviour. His office is Christ — the Anointed One. Jesus *is* the Christ, the anointed One of God. And God has *made* this same Jesus to be both LORD and CHRIST. **Made!** Jesus was *made* Lord, and Jesus was *made* Christ. It is something He *became* after He was named Jesus. And now the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders proclaim, "For Thou hast *made us* unto our God **kings and priests**: and we shall reign on the earth!"

This passage is one of rare beauty. It is like a precious diamond, the effulgence of whose radiance dazzles the mind. It is a drop of pure distilled essence, whose fragrance fills the rooms of the heart of every man and woman who has been apprehended of the Father for His high and holy purpose. It is a joy

forevermore and a challenge to all who comprehend its message. It must be engraved deeply upon every heart of God's Royal Priesthood. It exalts and glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. "THOU HAST MADE US!" THOU! There is so much depth to that word that I am afraid we often do not perceive it. It is like a beautiful star-studded sky on a bright clear night and one cannot even begin to grasp the vast depth that lies above us. So it is with these marvelous words: "Thou hast MADE US TO BE KINGS AND PRIESTS!"

Hear now the testimony of the prophet Isaiah. "But ye shall be *named* the priests of the Lord: men shall call you the ministers of our God...for as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord will cause righteousness to spring forth before all nations" (Isa. 61:6,11). The inspired prophet summed up in one bold statement what it means to be a priest of God. "Ye shall be *named* the priests of the Lord: men shall call you the ministers of our God." There is a marvelous significance in that word "named." Named! You shall be **NAMED** the priests of the Lord. This passage forcefully reveals the great truth that all who would be priests of God must be re-named, they **MUST UNDERGO A CHANGE OF NATURE**, to become priests by name, that is, by nature, so that priesthood is not merely a title given to them but a nature lived out through them. Oh, yes! If our spiritual minds can grasp the fact, to be *named* the priests of the Lord means to be *natured* the priests of the Lord, to be so imbued with the priestly nature until we *become a priest* in our very state of being. We think like a priest. We speak like a priest. We act like a priest. We love like a priest. We minister like a priest. We reconcile like a priest. We represent men to God, and God to men as a priest. This is what the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders are declaring, "Thou hast *made us* unto our God *kings and priests!*"

Kings and Priests! Can you see the parallel between those two? It is the king who reigns and the priest who serves. All the holy sons of God shall *reign* as kings, and they shall *serve* as priests! These kings and priests "reign over the earth." It is evident that our reigning as kings and priests *over the earth* is directly related to the fact that the seven spirits of God are from the throne of God *sent forth into all the earth*. These two statements are made in the same chapter, only four verses apart. Can we not see by this that the seven spirits of God are sent forth into all the earth through the agency of those kings and priests who are given authority over the earth and are made ministers of God unto the earth realm.

He makes us kings and priests! That is the present work of God in the life of each member of God's elect who has received the call to sonship. Though in our natural constitution we may have had a very different disposition, God is breaking, purging, changing, and transforming us, working into us the character of a king and the heart of a priest! We may once have been vain, but God is making us solid, serviceable and useful! We may have been proud, but God is making us humble! We may have felt empty and useless, but God is filling us up and making us valuable! Some of us have been very weak, but the Spirit is now making us exceedingly strong in the Lord and in the power of His might! We may have once been ignorant and unlearned among men, but today the Lord is filling our minds and spirits with divine wisdom and spiritual understanding! Our nature may previously have been shy, cold, distant, and indifferent, but the fire of the Holy Spirit is making us bold, warm, concerned, caring, and out-going! Perhaps we were once critical, angry, hateful, or spiteful, but our Father is transforming us to be loving, kind, gentle, sweet, long-suffering, merciful, forgiving, and reconciling! It is indeed wonderful! Our mighty God is in this hour dealing with all His sons and truly He is *making us to BE KINGS AND PRIESTS!*

Jesus, the High Priest of our profession, and the King over all the kings, does His wonderful work *within us*. He imparts His own life, power, and ministry. We cannot have the kingship and the priesthood in full power except as the power of *His Life* is fully inworked in us. As we truly come to understand this, we then see what is meant by the fact that we are called to be kings and priests, because we have the very life of the King and the High Priest in us — not merely imputed, but the King of glory and the High Priest of the heavens Himself dwelling powerfully within us and working effectually through us, praise His wonderful name! This is something far greater and higher than my own "Higher Self." This is His Spirit joined to my spirit — one spirit in the union of life.

Why is Jesus seated as a *priest* upon the *throne* of the heavens? He reigns as King to bring the dominion of His kingdom into our lives, and as Priest He lives only for others, to bless and lift us with His life, to bring us near to God. He makes us kings to give power and efficacy to the priesthood. He reigns as a priest! It is because of this that the idea of authority stands out so prominently. Jesus fills us with a kingly

disposition; He enables us to rule over sin, over the flesh, over the devil, over the world, over MEN. In the midst of all circumstances and difficulties, of all opposition or cruelty, of all powers of the flesh, the world, and the devil, the son who yields himself to be made king by Christ lives in the joyous certainty that he is one with Him who has won the victory, and that He that is *in him* is more than conqueror!

He makes us priests that we might serve; that we might bring men near unto Him; that we might be filled with the fullness of the seven-fold intensified spirit of the Lord so as to be a channel for the outflowing of His glorious life unto creation. How else shall the creation be delivered from its bondage to corruption and find its identity in the glorious liberty that belongs to the sons of God? As priests through the blood of Jesus we live for others, to pray for them; to work among them; to love and bless them; to reconcile and redeem them; to bring them to God! To be a king is marvelous beyond words, but to be a priest is no idle self-seeking blessedness. It is a compelling power to enter into God's presence on behalf of mankind; the power to receive from the Lamb all the blessings, benefits, and provisions of His wonderful life, and to receive and carry and distribute them! "And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne... stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns (power, kingship) and seven eyes (vision, discernment, communication, priesthood), which *are* the seven spirits of God ***sent forth into all the earth...***and hast ***made us... kings and priests:*** and we shall ***reign over the earth.***"

However clearly we see by the eye of revelation and faith the truth of this realm of kingship and priesthood, however earnestly we desire it, however firmly we think we grasp it by faith, all will not avail — GOD HIMSELF MUST DO IT! God Himself must admit us into His presence, and make His face to shine upon us. And as the path to kingship and priesthood, God Himself must write His law in our hearts, unfold in us the new divine nature in such power of the Holy Spirit, that it is HE that works within us both to will and to do. God Himself must by the Holy Ghost so shed abroad His love in our hearts, that to love becomes as natural to us as it is for a dove to be gentle. God Himself must by the Holy Ghost so fill us with the nature of righteousness that to be righteous becomes as natural to us as breathing. God Himself must by the Holy Ghost so clothe us with the mind of Christ, that to think the thoughts of God becomes as natural to us as are the self-serving thoughts and desires of the unregenerated man. God Himself must by the Holy Ghost so make us vessels of mercy that to be merciful becomes as natural to us as the emotions of anger and retaliation are to the carnal nature. And God Himself must through the Holy Ghost give us His *power!*

Consider, dear brother, sister, is it not God Himself who has faithfully directed all your steps, who has initiated each circumstance of your life, who has given sight to your poor blind eyes and caused you to behold the majesty of *His purpose*? Is it not God Himself who has led you out of the blinding traditions and enslaving bondage of Babylonian religion, and nurtured you and brought you to the place in which you stand in Christ today? I do not hesitate to say that no more than you can *save yourself* can you *make yourself* an overcomer, *bring yourself* to perfection and maturity, or *of yourself* apprehend the beautiful ministry of kingship and priesthood to God! Those who apprehend in this hour are those who rest in His love, trust in His power, embrace His promise, and have no confidence in the flesh.

## THE SHAPE-SHIFTERS

There is a teaching about "shape-shifters" that is prominent among certain occult, new age, and UFO cult movements. The belief is that there are certain "aliens" or "space creatures," namely those specified as *reptilians*, who possess the ability to shape-shift or change their forms to appear as humans or other entities. One writer (David Icke) who is deep into this explains, "Shape-shifting is the ability to change physical form, in this case between a human and reptilian appearance. The ancient Danaan brotherhood of initiates and magicians called Telchines on the island of Rhodes could shape-shift into any form, according to the Greek historian, Diodorus. Shape-shifting is a common theme in tales of esoteric 'magicians' and high initiates. I have been told by hundreds of people all over the world, from every walk of life you can imagine, about their experiences of seeing well known and less well known people transform into a reptilian form before their eyes and then go back again. There have been reports of shape-shifting reptilians for thousands of years. In the Indus Valley and Hindu culture their serpent gods called the Nagas were one example. The serpent 'sea' or 'fish' gods of Sumer and Babylon were said to be able to change shape and look human whenever they chose. Another version of shape-shifting are the so-called 'Men in Black' who appear and disappear according to witnesses. The story of Jekyll and Hyde is also symbolic of shape-shifting" — end quote.



Personally, I take such theories and claims with a *very big* grain of salt! Yet — there *is* a true realm and reality of shape-shifting! We see it in the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus during the forty days prior to His ascension. Most of those who saw Jesus did not immediately recognize Him — only after some subtle familiar action were their eyes opened and it dawned upon them who this person was! In the garden of the tomb Mary had seen a “gardener.” Two of the disciples had seen and conversed with a “stranger.” The eleven in the upper room saw the Master as He formerly appeared. Later, a group of them saw Him on the lakeshore, and thought it was a “fisherman.” He was with them forty days after His resurrection, but they saw Him only on a few brief occasions.

The entire time that He was manifest to them, had it all been crowded into one day instead of being at intervals during the forty days, would probably have been less than twelve hours, or one-eightieth of that entire time. This being true, it is evident that He was present with them *unseen* about seventy-nine eightieths of that period of forty days. And even when they did have *manifestations*, they were not (except once, on behalf of the doubting Thomas) in a form exactly like the one they had known so intimately for three and a half years, and had seen but a few days before. It is not once intimated that they knew Him by the familiar features of His face, nor even that He was recognized by the same appearance as in other manifestations. Yes, He was different, so different that they were puzzled to understand Him, and to know just how they could still be His disciples.

“After that He appeared in *another form* unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country” (Mk. 16:12). He appeared unto them in another form — not another Person. It was the same Christ and Lord! But there was some difference of manifestation. That is the plain truth coming to meet us out of the region of mystery where for us the final truth of things dwells. After His resurrection Jesus was still to His disciples Jesus — but with a difference. He was the same, yet not the same. There was something about Him which differentiated Him from the Christ of the garden, and the hillside, and the country road, and the seashore. The disciples never doubted that He was the same Jesus with whom they had passed through the corn-fields, and walked the highways, and sailed on the blue water of Galilee. But the human form which was soon to pass from their midst already seemed to be becoming less recognizable to their view. In a little while they would see Him no more — that is, as we see one another in the flesh. Soon the vision of the living and ever-present Christ was to be internalized, reserved wholly for the inward eye of every quickened and transformed spirit. But it seemed that already, in anticipation of this new order of things, the old order was changing, and the outward form of the Master was speedily becoming less and less the essential medium for the revelation and recognition of His unchanging personality.

The record of the appearances of Christ during those forty days before the ascension tells us that the spiritual senses were now predominating over the physical, and the spirit played an ever larger part in the realm of perception. It is abundantly clear that the Christ they saw and recognized was no mere apparition or illusion, but it is equally clear that those who sought to recognize the Lord in the same way they recognized one another now needed their physical senses to give way to the spiritual faculties of the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God, the eyes of their understanding being enlightened that they might truly KNOW HIM!

Form plays an important part in our physical and material reckonings, outward appearance is so necessarily the basis of our judgments in this gross material realm. But all who have been called to sonship to God are now learning the important lesson that, even as the same Christ came to Mary Magdalene, to the disciples by the sea, and to the two who journeyed to Emmaus in forms which they did not immediately recognize as Him, so that spiritual life which Jesus revealed in His resurrection, and which He revealed in even greater measure by His ascension and return as the power of the Holy Spirit, may express itself in more than one form of manifestation as it is raised up in the hearts and lives of God’s elect. “He appeared in another form.” He is always doing that! Would that we were always able to see and recognize Him! Would that our faith were deep enough, would that our love were broad enough, would that our insight were keen enough, to recognize Him in all the forms and fashions of His coming unto the children of men!

Some find Christ as Mary Magdalene found Him in an instant when He called her name. Some find Him as they are led in the paths of His will, like the disciples who cast their net in the sea of Galilee, and

found it was their Master and Lord they were obeying. Some take the journey to Emmaus — they meditate upon Him, converse with Him, and their hearts burn within them — then they discover Him in the breaking of bread by His hand. At the center of all spiritual experience there lies the same eternal truth, for it is the same Christ who meets us all; but many are the forms we encounter as we each experience Him in a different way! Some may find Him in blessings and experiences, while others find Him with Job in the severity of testings and trials, being brought very low upon the ash-heap of stripping and desolation, tested to the uttermost until at last they break through the gloom and shout with the voice of triumph, “I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye *seeth Thee!*” (Job 42:5). Therefore let not the man who has met the Christ in the form of a gardener doubt that He was ever seen by the waters of Galilee; and let not him who has encountered Him on that dawn-lit beach think it improbable that He ever walked and talked with the travelers to Emmaus.

“HE APPEARED IN ANOTHER FORM.” That is Christ the great shape-shifter! It is the same Christ revealing Himself to men in another form. So, my beloved, as we ponder the mysterious manifestations of the risen Christ among the faithful and devout disciples, let us remind ourselves that this same Jesus is in our midst, and we must be ready to recognize Him as He becomes manifested to us from day to day, from realm to realm, from glory to glory, by the power of the Spirit. The Lord Jesus comes to us in different ways. There are many modes and forms of the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ! To those who suppose that they have attained to all God has for them, whether in the precincts of Babylon, in the deliverance of the feast of Passover, in the glory of Pentecost, or some who think they have already ascended into the highest heaven of their high calling in the feast of Tabernacles, to each I now say by the word of the Lord — we are going to have another manifestation! It is dawning. It has begun even now. It is the same Lord Jesus, yet even now His many brethren are beginning to behold Him in the glory of His Kingship and Priesthood, the Lamb in the midst of the throne, sending forth the seven-fold intensified spirit of God into all the earth, to be manifested in a further unfoldment of Himself, in the glory and power of manifest sonship!

All of us have this treasure in earthen vessels, and we are continually being *changed* from glory to glory! For years the Lord had put me on His potter’s wheel and made me a certain shape. For years I was an evangelist and, whenever the Lord wanted to move in the soul-saving, evangelistic realm, I was right there. No problem at all! I was in the evangelistic shape. My whole mind and desire was conformed to that ministry, my whole heart, everything. All about me was conformed to that. But if God wanted to move in any other way through me, He could not. That was my shape! If He came in that shape I said, “Come, Lord Jesus.” If He came in another shape I couldn’t handle that, so I said, “Go, Lord Jesus.” I had not yet learned about shape-shifting!

Most of us have had a certain shape and we have been hardened to that. The only way the Lord could appear to us and appear in us and appear through us, would be in that form. It has been the Baptist form, the Pentecostal form, or the Charismatic form. It has been the evangelistic form, the apostolic form, the prophetic form, the divine order form, the healing form, the deliverance form, the miracles form, the tongues-speaking form, the prophesying form, the worship form, the word of faith form, or a hundred other forms. But the highest glory of the ministry of Christ is embodied in those two wonderful offices: KING and PRIEST. He is indeed “the King eternal” and “a Priest forever” after the order of Melchizedek! And while we truly praise God for all the manifestations and ministries of this present “in part” realm, so graciously bestowed, yet our hearts cry out mightily for a *greater reality* and a *higher ministry* that proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb for the deliverance and transformation of the entire creation. Our deepest desire is that He may so thoroughly transform us into HIS IMAGE, so completely CHANGE OUR SHAPE until we fully *become* all that Kingship and Priesthood mean.

There is a wonderful contrast drawn in Revelation 4:11 and 5:10, wherein it is stated, “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for Thou hast CREATED ALL THINGS, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created...and Thou hast MADE US unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.” Oh child of God, consider how great and full of meaning these words are! “Thou hast CREATED *all things*...Thou hast MADE *us*.” There is a world of difference between the terms “create” and “make.” Away back yonder in the dim and distant ages that are gone it was written, “And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God CREATED AND MADE” (Gen. 2:3). The phrase “created *and* made” is a faulty translation, and it is so

indicated in the margin of some Bibles. It should read, “which God created *to* make.” Young’s Literal Translation renders this verse, “And God blesseth the seventh day, and sanctifieth it, for in it He hath ceased from all His work which God had PREPARED FOR MAKING.” Another translation says, “And God proceeded to bless the seventh day and make it sacred, because on it He has been resting from all His work that God has CREATED FOR THE PURPOSE OF MAKING.” In other words, God created the whole vast universe for the purpose of forming or making it into something He still had in mind!

And now comes the word — “Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood...and hast MADE US unto our God kings and priests.” Ah, “things” are created, but “kings” and “priests” are MADE! If you are a king-priest, there is something about you that is not ordinary; you have distinct and distinguishing characteristics. You are no longer a part of the problem — you have been so thoroughly transformed from the spirit of self and of this world system until you have become in your very state of being *the solution to the problem*. What is a king? What is a priest? Who are the king-priests today? They are those who are indwelt by the Christ and are living in the Christ and by the Christ to manifest Christ! None of us are the finished product, but, praise God, as this reality is raised up in us more and more God is **MAKING US to be kings and priests unto Him!**

“Make” means to *alter the form or change thoroughly*. There can be no kingship or priesthood without first a thorough change! Sin, self, greed, hatred, criticism, retaliation, ego, unconcern, immaturity, pettiness, unrighteousness, condemnation, all must be dealt with by the cross. Thus, we are not seeking just a salvation experience, the forgiveness of our sins, covering over the past, and hoping for the best in the future, but we desire that the Spirit of God, working mightily within, shall bring a thorough change in us, until every word, will, attitude, action, and reaction shall flow from *His heart* unto all about us. You can be a believer and die and go to heaven without such a thorough change, but you can **NEVER BE A KING OR PRIEST WITHOUT IT!**

“It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13). “GOD working in you.” What a marvelous expression! We know how combustion works mightily in the cylinder, forcing up and down the piston, giving power to the engine. We know how sap works mightily in the branches, forcing itself out in leaf, blossom, and bud. We know of incidents where men were so possessed of devils that they spoke and acted as the inward promptings compelled them. These express but weakly the idea of the “inward working” of God, which towers infinitely beyond. Have we not all been conscious of some of these workings? We have known them when the breath of holy resolution has swept through our natures: every sigh for the will of God; every strong and earnest desire to be like Him; every appetite for spiritual things; every impulse to live and sacrifice and give for others; every aspiration to love and lift and restore the groaning creation; every prayer lifted heavenward in intercession for weak, needy, suffering and sinful humanity; every cry of the heart for the kingdom of God to come and His will to be done in earth as it is in heaven — all these are the result of His inworking and the promise of the Kingly and Priestly Ministry!

To be continued...

J. PRESTON EBY