

# KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

## FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

### Part 89

#### BREAKING THE SEALS (continued)

“And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, Come! And I looked, and behold a *pale horse*: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him...” (Rev. 6:7-8).

There is a special significance to be attached to the description of the fourth horseman — he whose name is Death — and Hell followed with him. Death and Hell are specially linked in the Revelation. And since Christ came and *abolished death* (II Tim. 1:10) and *destroyed him* that had the power of death, that is, the devil (Heb. 2:14), He now boldly proclaims, “I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the KEYS OF HELL AND OF DEATH” (Rev. 1:18). And since the Christ now possesses both hell and death, for He has conquered them and taken them unto Himself, neither of them ride anywhere except by His authority!

This fourth horse is identified in the King James Bible as a *pale horse*. The translators had a difficult time with this word “pale” because its simple meaning is “green.” They couldn’t understand green in relation to death and hell, so they used the word “pale.” Other translators rendered it “ashy pale,” “sickly green,” “livid,” “color of ashes,” etc., in an effort to come up with something that would portray that which is sickly, hellish, or dead. One writer says, “The translation *pale* does not do justice to the horrible word used there! It is *pallid* or literally a *greenish-yellow horse*.” But, I ask — is that true?

Strong’s Concordance gives the meaning of the root word in Greek as simply “green.” The actual form of the word used in our text is *kloros*. The best key to discovering the meaning of any word is *usage*. This Greek word appears in only three other places in the New Testament. Let us look at how the word is translated there, and what its obvious meaning is by its usage. When Jesus was preparing to multiply the loaves and the fishes to feed the five thousand, we read, “And He commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the *green (kloros) grass*” (Mk. 6:39). Do you suppose Jesus was talking about pale grass, ashy pale grass, sickly green grass, livid grass, pallid grass, or ash-colored grass? *I don’t think so!* Everyone knows that grass is known for its green color. The next two references are in the book of Revelation, the same book where the word is translated pale. Notice now how it is translated in the other two places! “The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all *green (kloros) grass* was burnt up” (Rev. 8:7). “And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any *green (kloros) thing*, neither any tree...” (Rev. 9:4). If this is such a “horrible” word, with such a “horrible” meaning, as the commentator above characterized it, why is all grass, trees, and vegetation of all kinds defined as being this color? Obviously, the word means **green!**

We meet the color green under another symbol in chapter four of the Revelation. Caught up into heaven, beholding the throne of God and Him that sat upon it, John said, “And there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an *emerald*” (Rev. 4:3). Webster defines *emerald* as: (1) a *green* transparent variety of beryl used as a gemstone. (2) a clear *deep green* color. Ireland is called “The Emerald

Isle” because of the abundance of lush dark green vegetation. The rainbow around the throne reveals the great truth that the throne is not a power of destruction, but the very **power of life!** While most rainbows have more than one color, this rainbow was in appearance like unto an emerald — accentuating only the color *green*. Green in scripture is the supreme color of LIFE! Yes, there is death to the old, but in the throne we ascend to the highest dimension of life — divine, incorruptible, immortal *Life!* John fell as dead before the face of the One sitting on the throne — his old Adamic life, identity, nature, and mind slain by the fiery glory of God! But let your heart consider the words of this glorious One when He says to John, “Fear not. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore!” In other words, “Don’t be afraid to give up *your* will, John, *your* ways, *your* desires, *your* emotions, *your* plans, *your* hopes, *your* dreams, *your* thoughts, *your* carnal, human identity. Don’t be afraid,” says the Lord Jesus, “for I had to give them all up when I walked in the flesh. I died! BUT BEHOLD, I AM ALIVE FOR EVERMORE!” Therein is the power of both death and life! The consuming fire of God will absolutely destroy every vestige of the carnal mind and the flesh life. And then the rainbow of promise establishes within the covenant of divine, heavenly life and reality. Adam dies and Christ arises within us! This is the glory of sonship! We *die* to the old that we may *live* in the new! Thus, both death and life are wrought in us by the mighty Christ of God! Oh, the mystery of it!

Consider the scene! The green horse speaks of **LIFE**. Yet he who rides on him is **DEATH**! What a paradox! The purpose of the green horse’s Rider is to *kill*. Death is riding on life! What can it mean? Ah, the answer is so very plain and simple. ***Death comes by life!***

Many of us in our spiritual walk have been trying to “die” in order to live. We’ve had the idea that if we could overcome and conquer the death in us we would be able to live the life of Christ. But that is a contradiction of the law of life! Paul said it this way, “For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death” (Rom. 8:2). The law of the spirit of life in Christ is the law of our spiritual life — and it *supersedes* the law of sin and death! You see, my beloved, you don’t die in order to live — ***you live in order to die!*** It is the *law of the spirit of LIFE that makes us free from the law of sin and DEATH*. In fact, if you don’t live before you die, you had better not die! If you don’t have life before you die, there will be nothing left — not even a hope of resurrection, for it is the seed of life that guarantees resurrection. Do you know why Jesus was willing to die? He was willing to die because He could say, “No man taketh my life from me — I lay it down; I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it up again.” The one who lays down his life must have power to take it up again. If you have not the power to lay your life down, and take it back up, then may God help you not to die! You must live in order to die, so that when you die you can still live!

Christ’s life was secure in death because He had life before He died, and by that life He arose. Someone says, “But, I’m not going to die!” Well, do you know what the proof of me having life would be? The proof would be for me to say, “Go ahead, kill me...pull the trigger, man, because I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it up again.” A lesser degree of life is required to live and not die, than to die and still live, and bring yourself back again. When I have a quality of life that IS, then I can lay it down and take it up. So the law of the spirit of life *makes me free* from the law of sin and death! Life makes me free from death, not the other way around. It is not getting rid of death that enables me to live. Oh, no! Only life can get rid of death! You don’t destroy the death in someone to make him live, you give him life to swallow up the death! It is Christ in me that causes Adam to be brought to death, yet I live. I live and then die, and still I live. I’m not going to conquer something so I can have the victory — I must get the victory so I can conquer something! It is not victory that gives you power, it is power that gives you victory. GET LIFE, precious friend of mine, and all the death in you will take care of itself. Increase in life and you will decrease in death. These are divine laws, the laws of the kingdom of God!

While it is gloriously true that Christ has given His life to all men, to the whole world (Jn. 6:51), yet it is evident that there must be a progression in the development of that life in the experience of every man until every vestige of the death realm has been swallowed up, spirit, soul, and body. To those who walk in Christ there is an ever-increasing consciousness, growth, increase, unfoldment, maturation, and triumph of that life within. The mighty working of His power in us is followed by this very precious and understandable result: “If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell (makes Himself at home) in you, He that raised up Christ shall also quicken (make alive) *your mortal bodies* by His Spirit which *dwelleth in you*”

(Rom. 8:11). I believe I now see more clearly than I have ever done why it was that Paul, who, as you and I do, still dwelt in the hellish bondage of a mortal body, cried out, "For this corruptible *must put on incorruption*, and this mortal *must put on immortality*. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 15:53-57).

We are, indeed, terribly and horribly in bondage to the *body of this death*, and with us the *whole creation* is groaning, waiting for the day when the sons of God will deliver them from the bondage of corruption. I do not need to argue with any man to prove our present mortality in the flesh. If you must *sleep* to live, you are mortal. If you must *eat* to live, you are obviously mortal. If you must *breathe* to live, you are unquestionably mortal. If an eighteen-wheeler were to hit you on the freeway at seventy miles per hour and you would splatter all over the road, you are definitely mortal. We are all aware of our constant and unremitting decay as the aging process etches its marks upon us. Our present mortality is naught but death, although we live in the spirit. Think of it! Meditate deeply upon it and cling to this realm of death no more. Reach up, dear one, with the blessed arm of faith and embrace that bright realm above where that which is true in our spirit reaches down and *takes hold upon our outer man*, where this mortal *puts on* immortality, where death in all its aspects is *swallowed up of life*, where in that final victory of His life within, the sons of God will upon this earth shout in triumph over both death and the grave!

Truly we yearn for this change, for our desire is not to be unclothed, but to be clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life (II Cor. 5:1-5). Yes, we groan inwardly for this transformation to take place! I continually meet up with brethren who confess that they have *already* put on physical immortality and incorruption, and that they have *already* by-passed the grave and cannot and will not die. I must be very honest and frank with you, my beloved brothers and sisters. I have not one whit of a desire to live forever IN THIS BODY OF HUMILIATION. When this mortal puts on immortality there will be a **mighty change!** When Jesus was transfigured (metamorphosed) on the holy mount, and when He came out of the tomb in the power of resurrection **there was a mighty change!** There is no more frightening thought, no more repugnant possibility, than the idea that I might live forever in this present body of humiliation! Thank God, there is to be a **change!** "Who will transform and fashion anew the body of our humiliation to *conform and be like the body of His glory and majesty*, by exerting that power which enables Him even to subject everything to Himself" (Phil. 3:21, Amplified).

The thought of merely adding deathlessness to this body of humiliation, with no substantial change, the very suggestion of such limitation, that I might have to daily bathe, use the bathroom, anoint my body with deodorant, brush my teeth, and rinse with Listerine throughout eternity — the hint that I might retain this base form, that I might remain *as I am* unendingly, falls as far short of what I conceive of a body ***transformed and fashioned like unto His body of glory and majesty*** as hell falls short of heaven! The body of incorruption shall resemble this vile body no more than does the oak tree resemble the chemical elements of the earth which were raised up into the substance of the tree by the mighty working of the subtle and mysterious life-force sown in the earth as a seed. The bottom line is just this — if you think you have an immortal body in your present form — **FORGET IT!**

Sons of God! If we would be fashioned like unto Him, co-sharers of His glory and power and wisdom as God-men, we must not simply rest content with the faith that trusts in the cross and its pardon; we must *follow on* to know the fullness of the New Life, the life of glory and power in human nature, injected into mankind through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, of which the Spirit of the glorified Jesus is the witness and the source. Now, practically everything in relation to our sonship depends upon the clearness with which this great truth that I have stated is recognized. The Holy Spirit of God inspired the message of these words, "Much more then, ***being now justified*** by His blood, we ***shall be saved*** from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we ***were reconciled*** to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, **WE SHALL BE SAVED BY HIS LIFE**" (Rom. 5:9-11).

The double provision of Christ is here clearly set forth: ***reconciled*** by His ***death*** — ***saved*** by His ***life!*** Christ's ***death*** is the atonement, reconciling men to God, granting a full and free admittance back into

Eden's lovely Garden from which our disobedient foreparents were once banished. But Christ's *life* is the *tree of life* in that Garden, the source of the life which shall work in us the complete transformation into the *divine nature*. Sin, sickness, sorrow, fear, and death are all part of a *power* in our life; let us fully understand that it can only be met by another *higher power*! The power of sin and death works all through our life. The death of Christ, which is the atonement, reconciles us to God; but only the *life of Christ* can come against the power of sin and death and deliver our life from destruction. Reconciliation places us, in God's eyes, back in Eden's garden; but the tree of life is the power that delivers our life from the dominion of sin and death! Remember — sin began *in the Garden*! Death began *in the Garden*! So just getting back into the Garden (reconciliation) is not enough! You can sin there and you can die there! We must eat from the tree of life! He redeemeth my life, by His life, from death! So Christ's life, not His death, living in our life, absorbing it, impregnating it, transforming it, *causes us to live*! This is the meaning of that profound sentence in which Paul records the first work of salvation and pointedly distinguishes it from the second great work of salvation, saying, "If when we were enemies we were *reconciled* to God by the *death* of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we *shall be saved by His life*!" Aren't you glad!

Can we not see by this that the Rider on the green horse whose name is Death is, like all the other Riders, our Lord Jesus Christ. The Death is HIS DEATH! And His death rides upon LIFE! That is, His death reconciles us, but only His Life can swallow up the death in us! Death and Life! Death riding upon life is not the picture of some grotesque, hideous, morbid, ghoulish, macabre event to come upon mankind in the outer world during the great tribulation. Oh, no! Death and life are *spiritual issues* and they revolve around the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. DEATH COMES BY LIFE — **that is the message!** We cannot die to live — we must live in order to die!

#### THE FOURTH PART OF MEN KILLED

"And I looked, and behold a green horse: and His name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto Him over the *fourth part of the earth*, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth" (Rev. 6:8).

As the Lord, by the raising up of His life within us, brings death to our flesh man, we note that under this fourth seal, with it green horse and Rider, power is given to Him over *the fourth part of the earth* and the purpose of this power is *to kill*. Since this is the *fourth* and *final* horse, and seeing that after this fourth seal the symbols change abruptly, and there are no more horses, it becomes clear that this fourth horse is the concluding blow by which the Lord finishes His work in us to bring death to the carnal, natural man of flesh. The Rider of this horse is given power over the fourth part of the earth-realm, to kill with the sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth. How many horses are there? *Four*! What's being revealed here is that the first three horses have dealt with three aspects of our natural life, but there's a fourth part of our "earth" that still must be worked upon by the Lord. Now He comes into our experience to deal with the whole fleshly man, and when all four horses have completed their purpose in us a particular work within us is brought to consummation.

This "fourth part of the earth" is clearly that portion of earthiness not already dealt with by the preceding three horses. It bespeaks the conclusion, consummation, and termination of the process! It means the final subjugation of our soulical selfhood and everything within us that is contrary to the life of the spirit. And all the instruments necessary to accomplish this are in His hands and at His command! This is further confirmed when the *fifth seal* is opened, for there we see the *finished product of this death*! "And when He had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar *the souls of them that had been slain...*" (Rev. 6:9). The "souls" of them that had been slain — the soulical life done away, symbolically "under the altar" where the blood and ashes of the burnt offering are found! We are being "killed" as to our earth-life as these horses run through our mind, earth, and experience, but we are also being made *alive unto God* as the Lord breaks the seals off of the Christ in our spirit so that the life of the Lamb be revealed out of this book which we are. Though shrouded in symbols hard to be understood by the natural mind, these are all beautiful *spiritual realities* wonderfully fulfilled in each and every life of God's elect!

There are four instruments by which Christ brings the demise of our natural, human, Adamic identity. First, "to kill with the *sword*." Here we do not read "to slaughter" as in the second seal, but to *kill*. Also the

term translated “sword” is different. It is not the *machaira* but the *rhomphaia*. It is not the sacrificial knife or short sword but the long and heavy great sword, like the one with which David cut off Goliath’s head. So how were those “souls under the altar” slain? Ah, the answer is found later on in the Revelation: “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the *souls* of them that were **beheaded** for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they *lived and reigned with Christ* a thousand years” (Rev. 20:4). **BEHEADED!** Their carnal mind, their human consciousness, their Adamic identity, like the giant’s head, was cut off! That is spiritually what God is doing in all of His sons! By this action He raises up within us *another head*, even the mind of Christ! It is indeed wonderful!

Secondly, “to kill with *hunger*.” It means that one of the Lord’s methods in dealing with the desires, passions, and lusts of the flesh is to “starve them to death.” We think we cannot overcome, that our own will is too strong, but as His life is raised up in us we find ourselves abstaining more and more from those things which are of the flesh, for they are overwhelmed by a greater desire and passion only for HIM. The more the presence and glory of God fill our lives the less the Adamic nature is fed and fueled by the influences of the world, until the desires of the flesh simply burn themselves out and now we hunger and thirst only after Him, and such, He said, “*shall be filled*.”

To walk both after the flesh and after the spirit is morally impossible. “No man,” as Christ so often emphasized, “can serve two masters.” And yet, as a matter of fact, here is the child of God being in relation to both worlds — flesh and spirit. With sin and purity, with light and darkness, with the carnal mind and the spiritual mind, with God and the devil, the confused and undecided soul is now in relation. What is to be done in such an emergency? How can the New Life find deliverance from the ever-persistent call of the flesh? The ready solution to the difficulty is — **TO DIE!** Not for our “old man” to die, for he is already crucified with Christ, but for us to ***die to sin***, or to ***kill the evil desire lurking in our bodily members***.

To die to any reality is to withdraw correspondence with it, to be cut off from all communication with it. If I cut my arm off from my body, so that it has no correspondence with it, nor receives anything from it, it will die. The solution to the problem is just this — for the spiritual life to ***reverse continually*** the processes of the fleshly life! The spiritual man having passed from *death unto life* — the fleshly man must next proceed to pass from *life unto death*. Regeneration of the spirit in short must be accompanied by degeneration of the flesh, the carnal mind.

Listen to the words of the apostle Paul as he presses this beautiful truth home to the hearts of the understanding saints in Colosse: “If then you have been raised with Christ to a new life, thus sharing His resurrection from the dead, aim at and seek the rich, eternal treasures that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. And set your minds and keep them set on what is above — the higher things — not on the things that are on the earth. For as far as this world is concerned you have died, and your new real life is hid with Christ in God. **SO KILL (DEADEN, DEPRIVE OF POWER) the evil desire lurking in your members** — those animal impulses and all that is earthly in you that is employed in sin: sexual vice, impurity, sensual appetites, unholy desires, and all greed and covetousness, for that is idolatry...but now **PUT AWAY AND RID YOURSELVES COMPLETELY OF ALL THESE THINGS**...for you have stripped off the old unregenerate self with its evil practices, and have clothed yourselves with the new spiritual self, which is ever in the process of being renewed and remolded into the fuller and more perfect knowledge upon knowledge, after the image of Him who created it” (Col. 3:1-10, Amplified).

Can we not see by this that as we nurture the new spiritual life, seeking those things which are above, setting our minds upon those higher things, the desires of the flesh are truly *starved to death*, they *burn themselves out* as they are overwhelmed by our greater desire and passion for our new heavenly life. Oh, yes, they are killed by *hunger*! Yet this is only one of the four instruments the Lord has in His arsenal to totally destroy the man of sin in our temple!

Thirdly, “to kill with *death*.” To *kill* with **DEATH!** How does one kill with death? What can this cryptic statement mean? It sounds contrary to the principle I shared earlier concerning *living to die*, instead of trying to *die* in order to *live*! Yet it is not contrary, but complementary. Both are true in their own order — the same truth from different facets, or the other side of the same coin. The simple truth is that if you are

*trying to die* in order to live, then you are trying to *commit suicide!* That is the difference. We cannot kill ourselves, or bring our flesh nature to death by any self-effort. This work is wholly the work of God! HE is the only one who *can do it*. And what an ingenious process He has! To kill with death means a death *by* death. Later on in the book of Revelation the same great truth is presented thus: "Death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. ***This is the second death***" (Rev. 20:14). Now let us turn this around for clarity. "The second death ***IS death and hell cast into the lake of fire.***" Therefore we have exactly the same meaning either way it is stated. What is the second death? It is the first death and hell cast into the lake of fire! "Our God is a consuming fire." This fact is extremely *important!* The second death is not merely the lake of fire. Nor is the second death men being forever tortured in the lake of fire. Oh, no! The Holy Spirit has made it very simple and exceedingly plain. The second death is the first death and hell CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE. That is the Holy Spirit's definition, not mine!

Can we now open the eyes of our understanding to see that everything cast into the lake of fire pertains to DEATH? Death itself is cast into the lake of fire. Hell, the realm of the dead, is cast into the lake of fire. And those whose names are not written in the *Book of Life*, that is, those who are *dead* in trespasses and in sins, who also inhabit hell, are cast into the lake of fire. I am not talking about the dead out in the cemetery, or the spirits of the departed, but those who are dead to God, dead to truth, dead to reality, dead to purity, dead to the life of the spirit — ah, that is every man who is living and walking after the flesh, indeed, it is the natural man, the carnal man, it is ADAM! It is my "lower self," the first man who is of the earth earthy. This man is dead! When death and hell and the dead are cast into the lake of fire, that is the ***end*** of death and hell and sin and sinners, for God shall destroy the whole realm of death in the lake of fire. He shall burn up hell in the lake of fire, He shall destroy death in the lake of fire, He shall consume sin in the lake of fire, and He shall get rid of old Adam in the lake of fire! Our God is that consuming fire, and the fire is *the second death!* It is the death of death! Oh, the mystery of it! Therefore the Lord Himself is the one named Death riding the green horse, for He is the consuming fire which ***is the second death*** which forever ***destroys the realm of death!*** That is the mystery.

How I long to see the end of sin and sinners and death and hell! The time is coming, praise His name! God's kingdom shall rule over all and God Himself shall be All-in-all. There shall be neither sin, nor sinners, nor death, nor hell. There shall not be one man abiding in a death realm, nor even one foothold of death in the life of any man. It is clear that God does not *destroy men* in the lake of fire, nowhere does it say that, for that would be a contradiction of terms. How can you destroy death by creating death? How can you abolish death by bringing men under the power of eternal death from which there is no escape? Oh, no, it is not men who are destroyed in the lake of fire — it is *sin* and *death* and *hell* and the *dead Adamic nature* that are destroyed. Oh, how wonderful that is! "And the last enemy that shall be destroyed is *death*" (I Cor. 15:26). "And there shall be *no more death*: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:4). Thus, the lake of fire is nothing more nor less than THE DEATH OF DEATH! "And power was given unto Him to *kill...with death.*"

The following words by Ray Prinzing give precious insight into this beautiful truth. "The first Adam died to God and righteousness, and became alive unto sin. The last Adam died unto sin (Rom. 6:19), and liveth unto God, and so fulfilleth all righteousness. The first made all men sinners, the last makes all men righteous. The lives and the deaths of the two Adams are thus greatly contrasting the one to the other. The FIRST DEATH was a transition from life to death, the SECOND DEATH is a transition from corruption to incorruption, from mortality to immortality. Transformed from the carnal mind to the spiritual mind, which is life and peace, which transformation is wrought by a dying out to the one realm, to come alive to the higher realm. Because — the second death is prepared to purge out and burn away sin and its results, and so doing cleanse all of God's universe.

"Death came minding self and flesh. Now God makes death overcome itself. It is by death that death is rendered powerless, and there arises an upspringing, a new life. It takes death to destroy death, and thus Christ 'did taste death for every man' — 'that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage' (Heb. 2:9,14-15). Since we are all under the effects of the first death, it is appointed unto us to die once more — not physical death, we are already in a state of mortality — but now a dying out to this present death state. We conquer this death of the carnal mind (for to be carnally minded *is death*) by dying to it —

only God could use such a process bringing victory, but praise God, He is destroying the first death with the second death” — end quote.

When the process is complete, and the last soul has emerged from the warfare of the Four Horsemen, fully yielding to the Lordship of our Saviour, then at last shall be fulfilled the wonderful promise: “And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be NO MORE DEATH, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make ALL THINGS NEW. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are *true and faithful*” (Rev. 21:3-5).

There are a couple other aspects of *death killing death* that I would mention in closing. The first is the DEATH OF THE CROSS. Paul tells us something very striking about the cross. He says that “the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is **the power of God**” (I Cor. 1:18). How can the cross, which is an instrument of death, be the very power of God unto salvation? The *death of the cross* is in some mysterious and divine way the gateway to the *life of the cross*. The cross which is the power of God is certainly not the old rugged cross Jesus hung upon on mount Calvary. Only if we possessed an actual piece of the wood from that cross, and that wood possessed some magical, quickening powers, could we say that the wooden Roman cross upon which Jesus was crucified is the power of God!

That wooden cross no longer exists, having decayed back into the dust long centuries ago. And yet, all the handwriting of the ordinances of the law were nailed to **His cross**, the scripture says; but should you have been there on Golgotha’s hill that day when Jesus was hung between heaven and earth you would not have seen the first five books of the Bible nailed to His cross! By **His cross** the world is crucified to us, and us to the world, but the whole world is not hanging somewhere today upon that cross, being crucified to us. Such literal thoughts are absurdities. The whole world is reconciled by the blood of that cross, yet not one of us has seen any literal blood by which we were brought into fellowship with God. That is the mystery. We are talking about things that exist *in the spirit*. Ah, the cross of Christ is something deeper, higher, grander, more transcendental than pieces of wood upon which Jesus hung!

When God brings the cross into our lives to deal with the death in us, He doesn’t bring it to us out of two millenniums ago — He brings it out of the living reality of the dimension of spirit **right now!** When by the quickening of the Spirit you saw Christ dying, you did not see Him dying twenty centuries ago, but *in spirit* you beheld Him. God brought Him out of that long ago into your NOW. God brought Him into your present. And you saw Him bleeding and dying, not two thousand years ago, but right now in this moment you beheld Him by spirit. And in spirit Paul exults with unspeakable joy, “I AM crucified with Christ!” Not then — NOW! Not I *was* — I AM! It is neither history nor a future event. The cross did not begin at Calvary, nor did it end at Calvary! It’s an accomplished fact in the eternal NOW.

It is a great and glorious fact that our spirit has not been crucified. If our spirit were crucified we could not say, “I AM crucified, and I LIVE.” When we speak of death and resurrection we speak of two corresponding principles in the present. I AM crucified, and I AM alive. That is how Paul stated the case. Those are dual, present, and continuous realities. I am and I am! I AM crucified, and I AM living. But what is crucified? Not my inward man — but my outward man! Paul put it this way, “Though our outward man *is perishing*, yet our inward man *is being renewed* day by day” (II Cor. 6:16). The outer man, the sensual man, the soulical man, the carnal mind, the flesh — *is perishing*. He is not perishing because he is getting old and getting ready to go to the cemetery. Oh, no! He is perishing because of **the work of the cross in us!** This is a spiritual work!

“*I am being crucified*” is an alternate rendering of the Greek. The cross has very practical applications in our everyday lives. You see, my beloved, the Lord faithfully prepares the places, situations, circumstances, and experiences whereby our self-life is brought to the futility of itself and laid down. The cross is painful! This is no mystical, glorious experience by faith. The cross is the power of God working as death by actual crisis’ in our lives whereby, like the prodigal son, we come to the end of *our self*, and we

arise and go to the Father. When we forsake trust in the flesh and the way of the flesh, that the spirit might rule, death has been worked in us, releasing His life to be expressed as our life.

Now God's called and chosen elect have come to the place in consciousness in this great process of salvation where we understand that the *mystery of self* is the *mystery of death*. The way we can rid ourselves of the last enemy, and overcome the last enemy, which is death, is by ridding ourselves of self, denying our self, taking up our cross unto the perishing of the outer man with his desires and demands, by gaining the victory over our self nature. When this is accomplished completely, we will have victory over death, the last enemy! Someone says, "But, brother Eby, I thought you said we don't *die* in order to *live*, but we *live* in order to *die*." That is true! But the mystery is in the cross — the cross that kills the flesh **IS THE POWER OF GOD!** The power of God is the life of God, the Spirit of God. Can you not see the mystery? The cross is not the old rugged cross, it is the cross in the heart of God, the eternal cross in the realm of the spirit, and that cross comes into our lives as **HIS DEATH IN HIS LIFE WORKING DEATH AND LIFE IN US BY HIS DEATH IN HIS LIFE, HIS CROSS IN THE SPIRIT!** Understand that, my beloved, and you will understand a *great mystery!*

This grand truth is further portrayed for us in Moses' and Aaron's mighty acts before Pharaoh in the land of Egypt. Did not Moses and Aaron and the magicians of Egypt employ the very *same signs* and perform the *same feats*? Aaron threw down his rod and it was turned into a serpent. But then the magicians of Egypt were called in and they all threw down their rods, and their rods became serpents also. But Aaron's rod, in the form of a serpent, ran after them and swallowed them all; and then it became a rod again in Aaron's hand. It was a serpent destroying the serpents! Serpents destroyed *by a serpent* — that is the mystery.

Did not the Lord Jesus say, "And as Moses lifted up the *serpent* in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up...and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw **ALL MEN UNTO ME**" (Jn. 3:14; 12:32). The Lord was referring to the time when Israel murmured against Moses in the wilderness, complaining that there was no food nor water, and they were tired of the same old diet of manna every day. The Lord sent judgment into their midst in the form of fiery (burning) serpents and they bit the people, and many Israelites died. The people then repented and asked Moses to pray that the Lord would take away the serpents. So Moses prayed for the people. Then the Lord instructed Moses to make a *fiery serpent of bronze* and raise it up on a pole; and everyone that was bitten, when they looked at the bronze serpent attentively, expectantly, with a steady and absorbing gaze, were healed from their bites and lived. The Lord Jesus used this experience as a type of *Himself being raised up upon the cross* — all who have been bitten by the serpent that brings sin, sorrow, limitation and death — that ancient serpent which is the devil and Satan — by simply *looking unto Him* all are healed and given *life!*

Can we not see by this that the devil who lurks in the carnal mind of man *is a serpent* and the Christ *became a serpent* to deliver us from him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. The serpent is destroyed by a serpent! Can there be any greater mystery than this? The message is clear — Christ swallows up all the serpents of the adversary! Christ heals, restores, and gives life to all who have been injected with the venom of the serpent in the carnal mind, the human consciousness, nature, and identity. How do we overcome the devil who goes forth as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour? We send forth the Lord's powerful lion of the tribe of Judah to destroy it! How do we overcome the bellowing bulls of Bashan? We send the Lord's wild ox (unicorn) against them! How do we overcome the weakness of Adam's flesh in us? By the very indwelling power of Him who the Father sent in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, who overcame sin in the flesh, and sent the spirit of His victory into us, that we now may also fulfill all righteousness! You see, my beloved, we have not received the Spirit of the eternal God who **can** overcome all things. Oh, no! Rather, we have received the Spirit of God who came in the flesh of Jesus Christ and **did** overcome all things *in the flesh!* We have received within us the Spirit of the One who **has** overcome the flesh, the world, and the devil in a human body just like ours! It was *by flesh* that *flesh was conquered!* By the spirit in Jesus the flesh of Jesus was sanctified, separated unto God, and proved greater and more powerful and of more value than the flesh of Adam, so much that Jesus could say, "Except ye *eat my flesh* and *drink my blood*, ye have no life in you." Can you now see the mystery? The Christ rides into our earth upon the green horse and kills the death of Adam's mind and nature through the life poured out by the death of Himself upon Calvary. He kills with *death!* Yet that death is truly a *poured out life!*



Now finally, we read that the Rider on the green horse was “given power...to kill...with the *beasts of the earth*” (Rev. 6:8). The “beasts of the earth” are figures of the various aspects of the bestial (fleshly) nature within mankind! Ray Prinzing has pointed out that in a way unique, mysterious, and amazing the Lord is able to marshal the bestial nature of men about us, so that they are His instruments to bring to death in us things that are not pleasing to Him. These are all part of the testings, trials, temptations, and troubles that come to each of us as challenges by which we learn to draw upon the life of the Christ within to become more than conquerors in all things.

One of the fundamental laws of creation is that an **opposing force** is necessary for growth, and to produce strength, stamina, and endurance. Any living thing that grows up without any opposition is weak and powerless. God’s new creation man must be strong and powerful, and any one or any thing that desires to be powerful must wrestle with some contrary force. Any man who wants to develop muscular power to be strong, must spend weeks and months and years in vigorous training doing heavy exercises, lifting heavy weights, using the *opposing force* of gravity to *develop his strength*. A man who wants to be a great wrestler, doesn’t just wrestle when he is in the ring. At his training center he has his wrestling partners with whom he wrestles by the hour. They are adversaries — but they are what makes him strong! If he didn’t have them he would be weak and powerless in the ring.

A boxer has his punching bags and sparring partners, with whom he spends hours every day. Those *opposing forces* are indispensable to develop strength. A plant that grows in a greenhouse sheltered from the winds and rains, pampered day after day, may grow large, but it is inherently weak, and if suddenly exposed to the elements will wither and die. But a plant that is constantly exposed to the fierce winds and pounding rains, burning heat and chilling cold, is strong and not easily destroyed.

One who grows up in a sheltered environment, who is pampered all his life, grows up a weak, spineless individual. Adversity builds strength of character! If we were never exposed to trials and tribulations, to temptations and testings, to the conniving and evil and buffetings of men around us, we would spiritually grow up weak indeed! In “church” is not where one truly learns to live the Christ life! The more we are exposed to adverse circumstances, the more we have to wrestle with the allurements, enchantments, and hostilities of the world, the more we are challenged by the sin and death around us, the stronger we become. **ALL THE SONS OF THE MOST HIGH MUST BE STRONG IN THE LORD AND IN THE POWER OF HIS MIGHT!** Our Father wants us to be strong, so He has wisely given us wrestling partners to wrestle with, so we will become strong. These are the “beasts of the earth” by which the fleshly mind and nature within us is *killed!* These beasts of the earth represent *men with bestial natures* who are adversaries to us. How they tear in pieces and devour the flesh!

The Psalmist summed it up in these inspired words: “For Thou, O God, hath proved us: Thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. Thou broughtest us into the net; Thou laidest affliction upon our loins. THOU CAUSED MEN TO RIDE OVER OUR HEADS; we went through the fire and through water: **but Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place**” (Ps. 66:10-12).

To be continued...

J. PRESTON EBY