

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 92

BREAKING THE SEALS (continued)

Before considering the significant and momentous events occurring under the *sixth seal*, it will be advantageous to first review one important principle that will greatly aid our understanding of almost all the scenes we behold not only under the sixth seal, but throughout the remainder of the book of Revelation. I would draw your attention to the fact that the vast majority of the events in the book take place in one of three dimensions: HEAVEN, EARTH, and SEA. These are, of course, symbolical and prophetic terms! They represent states of being, life-styles, levels of consciousness, spheres of existence, and dimensions of life within each of us.

THE SEA

The *lowest* of these three realms is the *sea*. Throughout the book of Revelation a number of things transpire in the sea. A few of them are as follows. "And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the *sea*: and a third part of the *sea* became blood." "I stood upon the sand of the *sea*, and I saw a beast rise up out of the *sea*, having seven heads and ten horns." "And the *sea* gave up the dead that were in it." "Woe to the inhabitants of the *sea*, for the devil is come down unto you." "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth...and there was no more *sea*."

Throughout the scriptures the sea is a type of the inner storms and turbulent nature of the Adamic man. The prophet Isaiah penned these inspired words: "The *wicked* are *like the troubled sea*, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked" (Isa. 57:20-21). Jude also described wicked men when he said, "These are *raging waves of the sea*, foaming out their own shame" (Jude 13). The beloved John, on the isle of Patmos, had a vision of a great whore sitting on *many waters*. The angel revealed the meaning of the many waters, saying, "the waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are *peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues*" (Rev. 17:15).

The natural sea is a great deep, an abyss (Gen. 1:2; 7:11; 8:2; Deut. 8:7; 33:13). The Psalmist wrote of this abyss of the wickedness of man, "They *search out* iniquities; they accomplish a diligent *search*: both the *inward thought* of every one of them, and the *heart* is D-E-E-P (an abyss)" (Ps. 64:6). To the enlightened mind of David the depth of iniquity of which the human heart is capable is so great that it is beyond the ability of man to comprehend. The heart of man is an *unfathomable depth*, or, as Jeremiah observed, "The heart is deceitful *above all things*, and desperately wicked: *who can know it?*" (Jer. 17:9). While John the Revelator saw a *beast* (bestial nature) rising out of the *sea* (abyss, depth) of humanity, Jesus expressed the same truth thus: "For from *within, out of the heart of men*, proceed *all these evil things!*"

No one can dispute the fact that it is this restless, turbulent, raging, evil heart of the fleshly man that inspires every evil and devilish perversion, and has filled the world with ever increasing confusion, faithlessness, immorality, falsehood, fraud, hatred, violence, greed, cruelty, strife, wars, bloodshed, and oppression. There are wars and rumors of wars and terrorism that strike fear into the hearts of men. Among the ruthless surging tide of unbridled crime, drugs, rebellion, illicit sex, disease, suffering, abuse, poverty,

sorrow, and injustice, we hear the groans of the dying. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain! Men's hearts are failing them for fear in looking after those things which are coming upon the earth. It is more than a raging sea of evil — it is a virtual *tsunami of self-destruction!* As we look at the sad earth today, it is plain for every eye to see that, flowing from the corrupt minds of the corrupt rulers of every corrupt government on earth, taught in the schools, practiced in business and in the courts, and propagated by the media and Hollywood, we find the evil fruit of sin and death manifesting itself. Everywhere on the planet mankind is being overwhelmed by its evil until the earth is filled with violence and the thoughts and imaginations of men's hearts are only evil continually.

The natural man is not getting better, as some affirm. The unregenerate man, old Adam, *is corruptible*. That means not only that he is dying, but that he is ***continually being brought into a worse state and inferior condition*** leading to destruction. He is on a never-ending ***downward spiral*** into oblivion. Is not this the terrible danger of the hour in which we live — enough bombs stockpiled to not only blow planet earth to smithereens but twenty more like it! And all in the hands of unpredictable, corruptible men, and terrorists everywhere on the prowl. You may suffer from the illusion that human nature has improved during the past sixty-five years since the horror of the Holocaust and the savage warfare in which fifty million men, women, and children were blown into eternity, but you are mistaken. Human nature *never improves*, old Adam can *never reform*, for his is a *corruptible nature*, growing steadily more vicious, deceitful, and immoral.

For us the seashore is a place of vacation, and a cruise across the sea is for many the dream of a lifetime. Not so for the ancients! To them the sea symbolized chaos and destruction and unrest. One description of this is found in Psalm 107:23-30. These things, gathered together in the concept of the hostile sea, represent a part of human existence. The disquiet that goes on in many souls is sometimes almost beyond bearing. Friend, have you ever heard someone who has passed through mental or emotional torment speak of its hell? Have you ever seen the quivering jaw of someone crying bitter tears after having taken all that a human being could be expected to endure? Have you ever tried to encourage someone who is in an impossible corner of life with absolutely no exit to be seen? Have you ever stood beside someone and felt by way of empathy a groan of inner misery so deep that it cannot even find its way into words? Some of you have known dear people who have so suffered. Some of you have experienced some of these things yourselves! But there is a place — a place in God's *new heaven* and in God's *new earth*, in the realm of the Spirit, where the anguish represented by the sea exists for us no more! "And there shall be *no more sea*." Thank God!

THUS FAR AND NO FURTHER

"Who *shut up the sea with doors*, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb? When I brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors, and said, *Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed*" (Job 38:8-11).

The above passage is a statement the Lord made concerning creation — how He arranged and limited the "great deep" at the time He was fashioning the earth as a habitation for man. He describes His action of dividing the dry land from the seas. At times, when there have been fierce hurricanes or terrible tsunamis sweeping the shores, has the thought not entered our minds of the devastation that would occur if no limits had been put upon those fierce and powerful waves? What if they should break forth from the invisible barrier which holds them in place and sweep far inland and engulf even the height of the mountains beyond! The scriptures assure us that our Father Himself controls the seas. Though storms may arise, and waves rage, they may boil and crash in fury, but their boundaries are set. No matter how strong the wind or how powerful the earthquake, they can go no further than God has decreed: "Hitherto shalt thou come, *but no further*: and *here* shall thy proud waves be stayed!"

The raging of the sea indicates that the forces of the flesh and the world are all against us! There is much opposition from our own carnal mind, and from the powers that be without, to the great plan and purpose of God that is before us! Sin and death are everywhere! Tyranny and conspiracy dominate the world scene and militate against the rule of the kingdom of God! If it were possible, carnality and death would overwhelm us! Death at its worst! The powers of sin and death control this world! But, praise God,

though the raging waves crash upon the shore and run up the beaches, yet they have to fall back within the boundaries God has set for them. In every temptation and trouble there is a place of refuge in a realm higher than the storm-tossed sea! Thank God, there are realms *above sea level*!

"The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea" (Ps. 93:4). It is certain that the Lord has the power and ability to control the mighty waves of the literal sea. But there is more involved here than just the literal waters of the oceans! It is the sea of humanity, the wickedness of man which "casts up mire and dirt," to which the Spirit would point us. The Lord is stronger and mightier than the masses of the world who wickedly cast up the mire and dirt of the carnal, evil works of the flesh. The "floods" of sex, rock music, drugs, crime, divorce, broken homes, abuse, profanity, licentiousness, and godlessness they lift up and by these floods they have deluged the world with sin, darkness, perversion, and shame. But the Lord shall speak peace to the troubled waters of wickedness! The abundant salvation and restoration of the Lord shall calm the troubled waters of the wicked! God is even now preparing a great "counter wind" to blow the waves back into their place, and by the ministry of the manifest sons of God all mankind shall be quickened to experience and manifest the righteousness, peace, and joy of the kingdom of God. Oh, yes!

It is the Lord *"which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people"* (Ps. 65:7). This passage is not speaking of the noise and waves of the literal oceans, but the noise and commotions sent through the earth as a result of the *tumult of the people*. Only the Lord can quiet the noise and calm the waves! Only the Lord can heal and soothe the passions of the flesh and the evil works of men! The carnal mind and the flesh nature constitute the "seas" within us, whereas the corrupt systems and evil works of this world make up the "seas" without. Only the Lord can still the ravings of the carnal mind! This has been His great work in His elect as He has moved mightily in us by His Spirit, raising up the pure and holy nature of Christ within. In this new day of the kingdom of God the Lord is prepared to speak to the noise of every sea, to the raging of every wave, and the tumult of all the people of the earth! The sons of God shall arise and through them Christ shall rule the world in righteousness and subdue every enemy and subject all things by that mighty power whereby He is able to still the noise of the seas and calm the anger of their waves. The Lord shall show that He is the one who *made the seas*, the seas are *His possession*, and He is the one who has *power over the seas*; then shall every enemy, the raging "seas" of man, bow at His feet.

The Holy Spirit has taught us that in every event of human history the Lord has had control. This was true in His dealings with men, and nations, and His own people, and each individual life in the past, and it is just as true today. The Lord has set the bounds, and bars, and doors, and limits to everything! Anything that may attempt to go beyond the boundary which He has set for it will fail. We see this principle so beautifully exemplified in the evil that fills the earth. In spite of men's wicked designs, intents, and plans, the evil of man has never had complete mastery over the events of earth. Many times throughout history an exceedingly corrupt regime came upon the scene, forcing men into an abyss of oppression. Yet even these tyrannical empires and wicked rulers were permitted to exist for just so long, and the Lord raised up another power in the earth to crush the evil into the dust. He says to the despot ruler who afflicts a portion of mankind, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." The prophet Daniel lived in such a time and he said, "This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it (even) the basest of men" (Dan. 4:17).

The Lord set a limit for the insane plans of Hitler to exterminate the Jews and rule the world. His armies were able to overrun Europe and invade Russia, but then the word of the Lord went forth among the nations, saying, "Thus far shalt thou come, and no further!" The Lord held the ruthless and godless communists of the Soviet Union at bay for seventy years, saying to them, "Thus far shalt thou come, and no further!" When they reached the limit the Lord determined for them they receded like the waves of a troubled sea. His word reaches to the evil and subtle powers of Babylon, the great whore which sitteth upon the nations, oppressing them under threat of hell-fire should they not pay their homage, and He says to them, "Thus far shalt thou come, and no further!"

In our personal experiences there are trials, testings, troubles, temptations, emotions, problems, and perplexities that come upon us and try the metal of our character in Christ. Some of these experiences are

permitted for a short time — others are of longer duration — but our mighty, omnipotent Lord of all stands before His elect who are faced with principalities and powers of darkness and the outbreaks of the carnal mind and fleshly nature, saying to all those dark powers, “Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.” Marvelous are the promises of God to those who know His power over the seas! Paul understood this great control of the Lord over every raging wave when he wrote, “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who *will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape*” (I Cor. 10:13). This is the measure used by God to determine what trials, testings, and provings are necessary for us to endure. When our need and God’s purpose has been fulfilled and satisfied, we can rest assured that His voice will command the waves.

Indeed sometimes our trials and the demands of the flesh seem so fierce and oppressive, so difficult to bear or to withstand, but as we remember that we are being shaped for a place of authority and power in the kingdom, and by His magnificent design, we are fortified to learn the lessons that He has for us in each experience. The Lord says to our trials and temptations, “Thus far shalt thou come, and no further!” Just as a builder shapes a stone or a piece of wood to fit into a specific spot in the home he is constructing, so our Father has a particular place in His kingdom in mind for each of His elect, and He is fashioning us to fit into our place in His holy, spiritual temple. A carpenter or stone mason does not randomly form a piece of building material, and then hunt for a place for it to fit. Oh, no! It is cut and shaped and sanded and planed, or is hewn and carved, so that it will exactly fit the place for which it was intended. Truly the Lord is *in control* of our ways and His voice commands all the forces used to conform us to His image! Rejoice then, beloved, for He who has created all things, limits the power and influence of the flesh and evil which are arrayed against the Lord’s anointed, allowing only as much as will serve His purposes. He controls all things and allows only that which will serve Him in the preparation of His elect. Isn’t it wonderful!

Terry Crisp once graphically expressed it this way: “Personally speaking, have you ever had times when, for no apparent reason, and for no particular fault of your own, everything around you was dark and mysterious; when nothing seemed to make any sense, and the spiritual realm was silent? Pressures mounted...problems loomed...and you were wearied with attacks from the Adamic nature. Have you ever been there? There have been times when those same fleshly feelings suddenly rushed over *us*, when foreign emotions crowded in around us, and when carnal attitudes pressed themselves upon our minds, all of which were diametrically opposed to our spirits. They were not invited, but they came, nevertheless! And we could not explain them. They were just there...one after another...continuously knocking at the door...repeatedly seeking opportunity and acceptance from us. Try as we may in our own strength, we just couldn’t stop them from coming! However, when we cried unto the Lord for deliverance, then, He suddenly appeared in the clouds. He broke through the veil with ‘the brightness of His coming,’ and showed Himself mighty to save! Praise God! He made sense of the situation, by showing us the underlying motives and principles involved. *‘Then the channels of the waters were seen*, the foundations of the world were discovered at Thy rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of Thy nostrils.’ He showed us the activities occurring ‘beneath the surface,’ so to speak, and allowed us to see the scene as He saw it!” — end quote.

Every tense situation is alive with the movement of God,
As He is inworking His purpose deep in the heart of this clod.
All of the rolling and surging, as billows sweep over the soul,
Bespeak of the hand of His mercy holding in perfect control.
For all the measures of pressure are obedient to His command,
Thus far shall they come, but no farther, their limit His wisdom planned.

— Ray Prinzing

Brother Prinzing also shared the following in this connection. “Betimes men will start a situation over which they eventually lose control, and they regret that they ever started it. GOD HAS NEVER LOST CONTROL, and therefore never has any regrets. HE knows at just what point along the way He must exercise His restraint, put a bend in the road, change the dispensation, and thus ease the situation while He continues to work out His plan of the ages. So often through the years I have seen those circumstances evolve in our life where the pressures built, we were brought to that point where the proverbial ‘one more straw would break

the camel's back.' Either we would cave in, or the whole situation would explode — and then GOD EASES IT, pressures slacken, and we carry on. It may take years before the whole thing is resolved, because God has an extended purpose in it that is being wrought out, but in HIS CONTROL He allows the pressures to build, and He causes them to lessen, for He is in full control all the way, working all things after the counsel of His own will, and for our ultimate good” — end quote.

While I am quoting from other brethren let me add this beautiful line from brother Elwin Roach. “We may have puzzled at the significance of Jesus calming the wind and sea, and also walking upon it during the storm; but it is now becoming clear. If He had not done so, it would have been a testimony that there are two elements He could not conquer — the *wind* and the *sea* — that is, the *spirit* of the world, and the *nations* of the world.”

The sea Jesus conquered was the sea of Galilee, and Galilee was known as the land dominated by the Gentiles or the nations. In Matthew 4:15 it is called “Galilee of the Gentiles.” Calming the sea of Galilee is a parable with momentous implications! All the Old Testament scriptures which speak of Yahweh as the One who controls the seas are thus seen fulfilled in Christ! Oh, yes! Christ is the manifestation of God upon earth, and He it is who has power over both the *wind* and the *waves*! Little wonder that the disciples were so astonished at this miracle and cried out, “What manner of man *is this*, that even the wind and the waves *obey Him*!” How wonderful is the knowledge that our mighty and omnipotent Christ who dwells within us is THE CONQUEROR OF THE SEA! He rules the winds and the waves within each of our lives, and with Him we shall rule and reign over every *spirit* and over every *nation* of men in the glory of the kingdom of God upon earth!

Ah, the *sea* is the *lowest realm* on earth, and this vast sea of fleshly, Adamic humanity represents mankind at his lowest point — as bad off as man can be! Individually it speaks of the lowest aspect of our human nature and life — the *body* with its passions and lusts. The sea represents the physical desires and impulses that are restless, driving, compelling, and raging out of control! God is now in the grand process of bringing men out of the lowest realm of the sea of vanity, sin, and death, up into the highest realm of heaven, the realm of the *spirit*, to the fullness of His life, nature, wisdom, authority, and glory. This shall be fully accomplished by the omnipotent power of God's word and by the moving His Spirit, and not by man's carnal mind, self-efforts, or worldly wisdom.

THE EARTH

The second realm is that of the *earth*. In contrast with the sea and heaven, the *earth* is the symbol of the second dimension of life, a realm higher than the sea, but lower than heaven, an intermediary realm which at its highest peak kisses heaven, and at its lowest level embraces the sea; and yet, in the true sense it is, of itself, neither heavenly nor degenerate. The sea, as we have seen, comprises the masses of restless, surging, sinning, warring men who live only and always after the unrestrained desires of the flesh (body realm). Heaven, on the other hand, speaks of those who have been quickened, raised up, made alive in Christ, seated together with Him in the heavenly places, who walk only and always *in the Spirit*. Those who “dwell upon the earth,” however, are a moral class, religious folk, with many up-right citizens of the community and church-going Christian people in their ranks; but these, while not overtly wicked, are not spiritual either, but in most aspects of their daily lives “mind earthly things.”

On the individual level the earth speaks of the *soul*, but only in the aspect of the “good” of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. These are the three entities that grew in the midst of the garden of Eden! The tree of life represents the *life of the spirit*; the tree of knowledge, on its “good” side, represents the *life of the soul*; and the evil of that tree stands for the *sin in our members, the body realm*. The *soul*, which is situated between the spirit and the body, is our inner, psychological part which includes our good human desires, emotions, will, and intellect. The desire is the organ for fancy, motivation, and aspiration. The emotion is the organ for pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy. The will is the organ for formulating opinions, making decisions, and inciting actions. And the mind is the organ for thinking and considering. These *senses of the soul* are **psychological senses** and comprise man's ego or self, giving him self-consciousness and enabling him to be a social being and contact the psychological world around him.

The soul is an intellectual realm, but also the realm of the carnal or natural mind. It is the realm of “good” but it is not the realm of *Life!* Out of this realm comes our organized society, law and order, charities, good works, social activities, education, the arts, and man-made religious realms which are deemed spiritual, but which do not originate out of the spirit. The man who walks in this realm of “earth” is that good neighbor of yours, a nice fellow, a good person, who wouldn’t cheat you or lie to you or misuse you in any way. In fact, he may be helpful, caring, and compassionate. He may attend First Methodist or Saint Mary’s Church; he may be a Sunday School teacher, a deacon, a board member; he is socially and religiously active, a God-honoring, flag-waving man, but has never ascended into the heavenlies and does not live out of a heavenly dimension. You can’t accuse him of any gross sin, or any wicked or ungodly act, but if you start talking to him out of a spiritual realm he will look at you like you came from Mars. He has absolutely no idea, not the foggiest notion, of what you are talking about! He doesn’t live in the sea, he doesn’t wallow in the lusts of the flesh, in pornography, crime, drugs, adultery, dishonesty, or any lustful or hurtful thing. BUT NEITHER HAS HE BEEN TO HEAVEN! THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT ARE NOT LIVING REALITIES TO HIM!

As already stated, the soul is the mind, will, emotion, and desire of the natural man. Before the apostle John on Patmos heard the voice calling him to “Come up hither,” John was in his own mind, his own will, his own emotion, and his own desires. There is nothing wrong with that! These were not ungodly or corrupt, but neither were they the Spirit of God or John’s own spirit. We need to think *spiritual sense* about these things! The “flesh” is the realm of *sin in my members*. It is a lower realm than the soul. I am acting in my soul when I study at school, drive my car, chat with my neighbor, do my work, play with the grandchildren, or go to a concert. I am in no way acting *fleshly* — that is, out of a sinful nature. Now, if while driving my car I deliberately run someone down, or, if while chatting with my neighbor I lie to him or insult him, or, if instead of going to the concert I go to a nude dance club, *then* I am *in the flesh!* Yet, when I am doing very natural things I am not sinning. I am merely moving in my soul life. There *is* something wrong with walking after the flesh, for “the *works of the flesh* are manifest, which are these: immorality, impurity, indecency, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, ill temper, selfishness, divisions, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like...” (Gal. 5:19-21).

John came to be “*in the Spirit.*” It is a blessed thing to be in the Spirit! God is making a spiritual man today! When God formed man of the dust of the ground, he became a living soul. Adam was sinless when he came from the hand of his Creator, and he lived and walked in the dimension of his soul. It is natural to live in the soul realm! Adam was of the *earth, earthy* (I Cor. 15:47). He was also a *living soul* (I Cor. 15:45). Can you not see by this why I say the *earth-realm* is the *soul-realm*? The soul realm is not wicked — it is just natural. You don’t have to do a thing to get into the soul realm. We were all born into this world in that realm! When we came out of our mother’s womb we weren’t born in heaven, nor were we born in the sea. We were born *on earth, into the earth, in the soul realm!* But Adam *did* have to do something to fall down into the *flesh realm* — he ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He disobeyed the warning of the Lord to Him! He partook of the fruit of a lower realm and added *evil* to his good. He *sinned!* That is just the difference between the “flesh” and the “soul.” You have to sink to a lower level to be in the flesh. In the flesh is a dark realm, a rebellious realm, a sinful realm, a wicked realm of perverted self-hood, corruption, and unrighteousness.

The soul may have a dark side, for I mentioned earlier that at its lowest level the earth-realm touches the sea, while at its highest peak it kisses heaven. But the soul can be beautiful! What can be more beautiful than the innocence of a child, though they know nothing of the spirit? It is the soul that enjoys traveling to far-away places with strange-sounding names, quaint cultures, and exotic vistas. It is the soul that is moved by the strains of beautiful music, that stands transfixed before a colorful sunset or the majesty of mountain peaks. It is the soul that loves, as a man loves his friend, his children, or his wife. The soul may be lifted up to touch the high realms of the Spirit of God! In such a moment the sweet singer of Israel exulted, “Bless the Lord, O my *soul!*” And in the magnificat the virgin of Galilee cried out, “My *soul* doth magnify the Lord, and my *spirit* hath rejoiced in God my Saviour!” The soul can also sink into the domain of the flesh and revel in base things, for “the *soul* that sinneth, it shall die.” But the soul itself, of itself, and by itself, is neither evil nor spiritual. It is just the soul. Natural. The soul is incomplete and seeks union. It finds union with either the flesh or the spirit! When it walks after the flesh, it dies. When it walks after the spirit, it lives!

“The first man Adam was made a *living soul*; the last Adam was made a *quickening spirit*” (I Cor. 15:45). It is in conscious union with Christ that we become “in the Spirit.” This was John’s “rapture”! In this rapture John became a *spirit-man*. He became one who *heard*; who *turned*; who *saw*; who was *caught up into heaven*! His own consciousness, life, identity, and reality were swallowed up in the vision of Another! He moved out of being an earth-dweller to being a heaven-dweller!

Earth, or the soul realm, is also a religious realm which is man-centered, need-conscious, and revolves around flesh-oriented activities. Because of the soul the whole world is *religious*! They have religion but no life and no power. It is only as God Himself increases in the life of the child of God that power can increase, and this can never happen until *self* decreases. Oh that God’s people could realize that it is **“Not by MIGHT nor by POWER, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts”** (Zech. 4:6). The might and power here spoken of refer to man’s might and power — not to God’s. To the natural and not to the supernatural. There are two sources of power! Many great church organizations today boast of their “power,” “influence,” or “popularity” in their community. Their power and influence are derived from the magnificence of their great church plants, the efficiency of their organization, the appeal of their programs, outreaches, entertainment, and ceremonies, their numerical strength, their connection with the “right” people — those with wealth and influence and prestige in this world. Their fine talent, and soothing worship services, their beautiful forms, and exciting teaching and preaching, all help to make them popular — to give them power in a world of “religious,” “respectable” *earth dwellers*. It is from such as these that Paul has warned us that we must separate ourselves. **“Having a form of godliness, but DENYING THE POWER THEREOF, from such turn away”** (II Tim. 3:5). These people would be greatly displeased if God should interrupt the controlled orderliness of their procedures by moving in a supernatural way by the power of His Spirit!

Someone has pointed out that we live in a world that rushes like a car with the accelerator jammed to the floor and the body thrown back in the seat. Life exists at a high rate of speed, a dizzy blur to the passengers on board. The extreme pressures of demanding schedules touch our jobs, our homes, and our churches, at times threatening to shear the very rivets of our being. The religious world’s schedules are no exceptions. They move in the same earth-conscious time demands. We have lesson preparation, Sunday School class, Morning Worship Service, Children’s Church, carry-in dinners, Sunday School picnics, rest home ministry, church soft ball league, evening church, after church fellowship, youth group activities, mid-week services, weekly Bible studies, committee meetings, deacon meetings, missionary groups, choir practice, prayer meetings, prayer breakfasts, Full Gospel Business Men’s Meetings, visitation programs, hospital calls, Bible Clubs, Vacation Bible School, work nights, discipleship sessions, and counseling. Phew—! The soulish Christian substitutes reason for revelation, emotionalism, zeal, and good works for spirituality, and man-made rules, regulations, and traditions for the inward law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus!

The world today has its own religious dictionary of definitions of “God” and “Spirit” and “Church” and they think and speak in the framework of those definitions. But GOD SPEAKS A DIFFERENT LANGUAGE and has a different dictionary of definitions by which He speaks to His people and according to which He works. If all the multiplied practices and methods employed by the churches today *were suddenly swept away* it would in all probability *cease to function*! If the churches had to drop all their rituals, forms, programs, ceremonies, and special activities; all their confirmations, baptisms, and communion services; all their special singing, organ music, and altar calls, they would feel as though they had been stripped naked and could not serve God in any way. All this simply demonstrates the terrible fact that the faith and dependence of the churches *is not in God*, but is in the trappings they have accumulated to themselves throughout the centuries. The thought that God is perfectly able and fully willing to run His church without the aid of anything in the way of *soulical contributions*, is found to be abhorrent to the average church member. These are they that DWELL UPON THE EARTH! You will find them mentioned many times throughout the book of Revelation!

In the earth realm one can *touch* the sea, and one can *touch* heaven, but one doesn’t dwell there! The hour of temptation is to “try them that *dwell* upon the earth,” the Spirit says (Rev. 3:10). The Greek word for “dwell” is not the ordinary *oikeo*, but the strengthened form of the word, *katoikeo*, meaning those who have

settled down upon the earth, who have identified themselves with it. They are content to remain in a carnal, soulish, natural-minded state of being! The man of earth lives out of the dimension of the first man Adam — the *living soul*! It is a soulical realm of life.

Ray Prinzing outlined the truth of this in such simple yet powerful terms:

The body is the “sense” conscious realm.
The soul is the “self” conscious realm.
The spirit is the “God” conscious realm.

When the flesh controls you, you are carnal.
When the soul/mind dominates you, you are soulish.
When the Spirit rules within you, you are spiritual.

He went on to say, “While a man is triune — spirit, soul, and body, of these three **the soul** is the dominate feature of our natural life. The body is the portrayal ground for the action of the soul. The body may be at rest, but the mind carries on continuously, whether we are awake or asleep. Strong emotions may surge within us, whether we express them or not — but if we do, it is through the body that they are revealed. Thoughts may rush through our mind continually, but only as we speak and act them out through our body, do others know what is in our mind. Yet the soul, being the feminine part of our being, must be joined to some spirit-force that it might gender life to bring forth that which would be expressed. The spirit of man is insufficient in itself, and so seeks to be strengthened by other spirit-forces. If the human spirit is one with the **spirit of the world**, it is self-evident that all of the emotions, impulses, thinking, and operation of the will, shall bear the mark of the world upon them. But — if we join our spirit to the Spirit of God, until HIS life controls our being, then all that is brought forth out of the womb of the soul would be that which bears the mark and the image of God. That is our deep desire!” — end quote.

HEAVEN

The third and *highest* of the three realms is *heaven*. This is the highest dimension of life, the dimension of *spirit*. Those who live out of the spirit are spiritual and heavenly! The Greek word for heaven is *ouranous* meaning **elevation, height, exaltation, eminence**. It has both physical and spiritual applications. In its spiritual sense it bespeaks of the eternal, invisible, and omnipresent **realm of the spirit** in which God and all celestial beings dwell — *far above* the realm of the physical, material, earthly, and mortal. It is not a geographical or astral location. It is not a planet or a solar system or a galaxy or any kind of place. It is a **DIMENSION OF LIFE, REALITY, AND BEING**. It is a **SPHERE OF EXISTENCE**. It is a **PLANE OF CONSCIOUSNESS**. It is *above* the earthly not in terms of space or location, but in respect to *kind, quality, and state of being*. Every life-form lives on a plane of awareness. Each of these planes constitutes a “heaven,” a spiritual realm *above the physical*.

Heaven is naught but the biblical name of the **REALM OF GOD’S SPIRIT**, the invisible and omnipresent dimension of Spiritual Reality. And it is all around us! It is as near to us as the air we breathe, closer to us even than the blood coursing through our veins. We are one with it by virtue of our spiritual life. “He that is joined to the Lord is *one spirit*.” We touch heaven as we touch God in our spirit. We behold heavenly things as with our spiritual mind we behold spiritual realities. We walk in heaven as we walk *in the Spirit*. We think like celestial beings when we think with the *mind of Christ*. We act heavenly when we live by *divine nature*. Heaven is, furthermore, the realm of God’s government — His infinite power and almighty authority. The kingdom of God is rooted *in our spirit*, the heavenly dimension of our life. No word written or spoken could hold more truth in this regard than the words of the apostle Paul wherein he speaks of “the power which God exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand *in the heavens, far above* all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come” (Eph. 1:20-21). These wonderful terms used by Paul are figures of speech. God is *omnipresent spirit* — He doesn’t physically *sit* on anything! Nor does He physically have a right hand! It means that Christ is raised up permanently into that **highest spiritual realm** where He has all power and authority! The “throne” spoken of in other scriptures refers to His **omnipotent power**. So now we know where Christ ascended! He didn’t necessarily “go” anywhere. He

simply vanished out of this lower material and physical sphere of existence and ASCENDED INTO THE OMNIPRESENT, INVISIBLE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION OF SUPREME AUTHORITY AND ALMIGHTY POWER!

Then Paul says, “And He *raised us up together with Him*, and *made us sit down together with Him in the heavenly sphere*” (Eph. 2:6, Amplified). It will be a blessed day for us when God makes it clear to our hearts that we have already been raised up and given joint seating with Christ *in the very same heavens* where He is enthroned with the Father. YOU ARE WHERE HE IS! That is the true heaven — not visionary mansions, golden streets, or a flowing river out of the throne. And yet Christians continue to sing, “When we all get to heaven...” Most Christians have no idea where heaven is, what heaven is, how to get to heaven, or where they are! Therefore they live in the consciousness of a lower realm out of which they think, walk, act, and live.

Those who are God’s called and chosen elect in this hour have been taught of God, they have been given an understanding for they have been quickened, made alive, raised up into the higher than all heavens, and in consciousness, in spirit, in reality are seated even now in the heavens in Christ Jesus! People think they are where their natural mind tells them they are. They have missed the spirit reality altogether and understand not that they are born from above and their citizenship is in heaven! That high and holy realm is not a place away off beyond the galaxies, but a place *in our spirit* where we rise up above our earthiness and learn to compare *spiritual things* with *spiritual things*. It is there that we discover *reality*!

Dear ones, how can we live in the heavens? Just by being *in Christ*! Christ has ascended. Christ is now Himself the highest heaven in this universe! Most of those who read these lines understand what it means to experience the ascended Christ, to daily live out our lives in the victory and triumph of the Son of God who dwells in our spirit, and in whom we dwell in blessed union, far above the sorrows, strife, sin, problems, perplexities, limitation, struggles, fears, disappointments, and death of the carnal realm. THIS is sonship! In spirit I hear the wonderful words falling upon the ears of the prophet of Patmos, “Rejoice, ye heavens, and *ye that dwell in them!*” Oh, yes! We dwell there! That’s *us* he’s talking about! This should help us see how it is that the promise of the Lord is fulfilled in us, “I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all *the world*, to try them that *dwell upon the earth.*” Sons of God do not “dwell upon the earth!”

Those who dwell in heaven, who walk in the spirit, who think with the mind of Christ, who live out of divine nature, have no need to be “tried” as men who dwell in an earthly state. There is no processing in heaven! There is no condemnation, no judgment, proving, purging, refining, correction, discipline, or testing of those who live and dwell and sit in the ascended Christ! Those who truly walk after the spirit are not depressed, perplexed, worried, or victimized by any kind of “earthly” situation. When our affections are set upon *things above*, where Christ sits at the right hand of God, and where we sit with Him and in Him, we are resurrected and ascended, for the Christ with whom we are joined in spirit is the Christ who has ascended into the heavens! When you stand in union with Him you are high above the mountains, not in the valleys. You are in the heavenly places, far above the earth-realm. The things of earth grow strangely dim for those who truly are *in Christ*.

In the book of Revelation everything that comes out of heaven is good and wonderful! Angels, great and mighty, come out of heaven (Rev. 10:1; 18:1; 20:1). Voices of wisdom, revelation, and power come out of heaven (Rev. 10:4,8; 11:12,15; 14:2; 18:4-5; 21:3). The all-conquering army of God, Christ the firstborn with all the holy sons of God, come out of heaven (Rev. 19:11-14). And a city, a glorious city, the New Jerusalem, comes down from God out of heaven (Rev. 21:2,10). The throne of God is in that city, the Lamb is on the throne, and every overcomer is on the throne! So heaven is a wonderful realm, and I live there. All who live and walk in the spirit live there. Individually, I live there *in my spirit*. Collectively, we all live there in our walk with God in the spirit.

All three expressions, *those who dwell in heaven*, *those who dwell on the earth*, and *the inhabitants of the sea*, recur a number of times in the book of Revelation. They are descriptive phrases, denoting a spiritual state, not an actual location anywhere in the universe. Are you, dear friend, a dweller of the heavens, or an inhabitant of the earth? If you are looking after those things which are coming upon the earth, if you mind

earthly things, if your great concerns are about some “beast government” that will rule the world, or which world leader might be the antichrist; if every new technological development, computer chip, or laser makes you fearful of taking the mark of the beast, if earthquakes, storms, tsunamis, wars, and every new political development is interpreted in your mind as the fulfillment of some imminent “end-time” prophecy, then surely you will live out your life on the level your vision beholds and you will be captured by the bestial system of this world, for “all who ***dwell on the earth*** shall worship him!” (Rev. 13:8).

All who have their vision focused on the “below realm” stand in jeopardy, for the false prophet “deceives those who ***dwell on the earth*** ...telling those who ***dwell on the earth*** to make an image of the beast” (Rev. 13:14). The sea and the earth are the realms of the beast: “And I saw a beast coming up out of the *sea*...and I saw another beast coming up out of the *earth*” (Rev. 13:1,11). The earth-realm is the sphere of the dragon’s power and authority, for “the dragon was thrown down...he was thrown down to the *earth*, and his messengers were thrown down with him...Woe to the inhabitants of the *earth* and the *sea*! because the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath” (Rev. 12:9,12). Woe to the people who believe the natural, earthly report, who live in an earthly consciousness, who are focused on earthly events, rather than the heavens of God’s Spirit, rather than the spiritual reality that is locked up within each of us. Woe to you! Why? Because the devil is come down to you and he has great wrath, and he is there to torment you until you realize that you don’t belong in the earth anymore. You belong in the heavens! What is happening in the heavens is all that pertains to you! Satan is bound to the dust realm, and he is there to remind you that dust is not your heritage, you belong to the heavens where you walk with God in the spirit!

It is in the “below realm” that the judgments of God are being poured out, and those who have their habitation in this realm will find no escape. “Woe, woe, woe to the ***inhabitants of the earth*** , by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!” (Rev. 8:13). Those believers who spend their time worrying about a world government, the Illuminati, the Council on Foreign Relations, the European Union, communism, terrorists, conspiracies, or any other earthly thing will have no solace or security, but will find themselves in constant fear and dread, as Jesus forewarned, “Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for ***looking after those things which are coming on THE EARTH*** ” (Lk. 21:26). Take note that the *fearful* are among those who have their part in the lake of fire! (Rev. 21:8), for these have not learned to dwell in the secret place of the most High, under the shadow of the Almighty; they have remained ***inhabitants of the earth*** .

Well did Mark Toohey write: “The ***dwellers in heaven*** have ascended above the distress of the natural, earthly realm of strife and confusion, for they have set their vision on the realities of a higher realm. They have found themselves seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, abiding steadfastly in the strength of His Spirit, resting securely in the joy of His presence. These have the uncanny ability to sleep soundly in the bow of the boat while all around them the storms rage. The dwellers in heaven are the manchild company ‘caught up to God and His throne’ (Rev. 12:5). The dwellers in heaven are the 144,000 who stand victorious with the Lamb upon mount Zion ‘having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads’ (Rev. 14:1). These are the overcoming saints standing upon the sea of glass who sing a new song of victory, deliverance, and praise (Rev. 15:2-24). The dwellers in heaven are the New Jerusalem coming out of heaven from God (Rev. 21:2). The dwellers in heaven are ‘those who are with Him who are the called and chosen and faithful’ (Rev. 17:14), and ‘the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, who were following Him on white horses’ (Rev. 19:14) as in righteousness He judges and wages war. Those who have ascended into the heavenlies have no fear of an earthly beast, for they are beyond his grasp, even as he ‘opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His ***tabernacle*** , that is, ***those who dwell in heaven*** ’ (Rev. 13:6). God is calling a people to ‘ ***come up hither,*** ’ and to walk in the reality of such a dominion in this very hour!” — end quote.

To be continued...

J. PRESTON EBY