

# KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 98

THE SEALING OF THE 144,000  
(continued)

*"And I heard the number of them that were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel" (Rev. 7:4).*

In order to understand the deep mystery of the hundred and forty-four thousand we must see beyond the veil of the flesh and the mists of the earthly and literal and see right into the very heart of God with the eyes of the spirit. My purpose in writing of these mysteries is that all who read might see WHO ISRAEL IS. There is a marvelous prophetic passage of scripture in the book of Genesis in which is related the experience of the very first Israel of God. *"And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy **name** shall be called no more **Jacob**, but **Israel**: for as a **prince thou hast power** with God and with men, and hast prevailed. And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved" (Gen. 28:24-28).*

It may stagger your imagination to hear what I now say, but once you grasp the truth, you will be mightily helped by it. The kernel of truth in the story related above concerns how Jacob became Israel, Prince of God. It's so very important for those who would lay hold upon the reality of sonship to study the life of Jacob who was first called Israel. For, as a brother we ministered with some years ago has written, "Jacob was not the only Israel, but he was only the *first* Israel of God! For you see, the word Israel simply means PRINCE OF GOD, and Jacob was only the first man that God called out of the world to deal with him until He had changed his nature from the nature of a schemer and a grasper and a supplanter, which was what his name Jacob meant by interpretation, to the nature of one who no longer went through life and thought to conquer life by his own scheming and grasping and supplanting, but became one who, completely helpless in his own strength, could take hold of God and say, I will not let you go until I get the blessing. And when God had changed Jacob's nature from the nature of a schemer, a grasper, and a supplanter to the nature of a **prince of God**, He gave him a new name to fit his new nature!

“The Bible says there wrestled a man with Jacob all night long. And toward the breaking of the day, when he prevailed not, the man touched the hollow of Jacob’s thigh and Jacob became absolutely helpless and could walk no longer in his own strength. And then the picture changes. No longer is the angel of the Lord wrestling with Jacob, but now Jacob is wrestling with the angel of the Lord! And he takes a fresh hold upon the angel of the Lord, and the angel of the Lord said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. The angel really didn’t want Jacob to let go, he was only testing Jacob to see how hard Jacob could hang on. And Jacob takes a fresh grip, and says, I will not let you go until I get the blessing! And the angel of the Lord says, What is your name? He says, *Jacob*, — schemer, grasper, supplanter. And the angel says, No, thou shalt no longer be called Jacob, but ***Israel, Prince of God!*** For as a prince hast thou power with God and men, for thou hast prevailed. No longer Jacob, schemer, grasper, supplanter, but Israel, Prince of God. And as such Jacob was only the *type* of all those in every generation that God calls by His Spirit, out of the world, to change their nature from the nature of schemer, grasper, supplanter, that is, *fleshly dependency and effort*, to a ***prince of God with power***. Then He gives them a new name to fit their new nature! Therefore, Jacob was the first Israel, for he was the first called out of the world that God might change his name and his nature.

“Out of Jacob came twelve sons and they were mighty ones, God’s Israel for that generation. Out of them came twelve tribes, and they were God’s Israel for their generation. Then, finally, out of the twelve tribes came Jesus, and while Jesus was in the world, He was God’s Israel, God’s Prince. Then out of Jesus came a generation of enChristed Israel and they were God’s Israel, God’s mighty ones, for their generation. Then over the last 2,000 years have come generation after generation of enChristed Israel. Each out of the previous generation, and they were God’s Israel for their generation and now, we who have been called and chosen by the Spirit of God out of the masses of the world and religious Babylon, that God might deal with us and change our nature, that he might change our name — *we are God’s Israel for our generation!*

“Dearly beloved, this is the place that God has been apprehending you and me for, waiting for us to come to from the day we were born! Yea, the river Jabok, where Jacob camped, is where we have been brought to the place of aloneness with God, separated from the world and religious Babylon. Here we sit completely helpless and the hollow of our thigh has been touched where we can no longer walk in our own strength. No more schemes to depend on, no more of our own thinking, carnal ways, and fleshly effort. The flesh has schemed and worked our way into a corner where we can’t go backward or forward, the only way we can look is up! Then the Spirit of God begins to wrestle with us through that long night of darkness wherein He seeks to change our *nature* from one who is always seeking to grasp and scheme and push our own way into the things of God, to one who has become completely helpless. No longer able to walk in our own strength, but in prayer and the spirit we take hold of God and say, I will not let you go until I get the answer! There is coming a breaking day for us; yea, our long night of darkness and testing is coming to an end, and the daybreak is coming to us where we’ll become that helpless in our own strength. And God will have finally changed our nature from one who continually tries to grasp and supplant our own way through by self-effort and fleshly striving, to one who, completely helpless, takes hold of the Lord, and in and by the spirit says, I will not let you go until you bless me with that new and greater thing that only comes from you!

“When that happens God changes our name and gives us a new name to fit our new nature. Only the new name that He gives us is not just Israel, Prince of God. The name that He gives us is CHRIST — SON OF GOD! For then is fulfilled the scripture wherein Jesus said, ‘Him that overcometh...I will write upon him *my new name*’ (Rev. 3:12). ‘Thou art the CHRIST, the SON OF THE LIVING GOD’ — that’s who He is, and that is our new name! From that hour forth we have power with God and with men, and prevail over every battle that will ever come against us, for God has changed our nature from one who fights his own battles to one who has become completely helpless in his own strength and ability; one through whom *God fights!* Then the angel of the Lord says to us, What is thy name? Jacob, schemer, grasper, supplanter? No! From henceforth thou shalt have a new name. Not just Israel, Prince of God, but Christ, Son of God. And thou hast prevailed. Hallelujah!” — end quote. And these, my beloved, as Jacob-Israel of old, ARE THE TRUE ISRAEL OF GOD! “If ye be Christ’s, T-H-E-N are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:29). “Now *we*, brethren, as Isaac *was*, ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE PROMISE” (Gal. 4:28). “For *we* are the circumcision (Israel), which *worship God in the spirit*, and rejoice in *Christ Jesus*, and have NO CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH” (Phil. 3:3). That is Israel whose thigh has been touched! Oh, the mystery of it!

## THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL

Everything in the book of Revelation is a sequence. The seven trumpets flow out of the seven seals, the seven vials flow out of the seven trumpets. The book begins on the isle of Patmos, moves to the seven churches of Asia, and proceeds to the throne of God. It is a mighty stream of God, the river of life flowing out from the throne and flowing and flowing and flowing until all creation is watered, quickened by His life — all things made new! The seven promises to the overcomers are *seven steps* in the progression of our overcoming and receiving within ourselves the fullness of our inheritance. Some contend that there is no *processing* in God — everything was finished by the work of Jesus two thousand years ago. But the revelation, the unveiling of Christ within us, involves seven seals which are *broken one at a time*, and a work is wrought under each seal. Who can deny that that involves a *process* — and the work wrought in us through that process *is processing!* As each seal is broken there is a further activity of God in the soul and in the body, there is more light, more understanding, greater victory, maturity, glory, and power! Everything is sequential! And here in the names of the twelve tribes of Israel there is likewise a sequence — twelve precise *steps* in the progressive sealing of the mind of Christ in our foreheads! John was in the day of the Lord and from that vantage point he could see the end from the beginning, the whole process of God from beginning to end. Nothing was hidden from him, he saw in and by the Spirit the entire unfolding of the purposes, activities, and accomplishments of God within His elect and in all creation!

The 144,000 are divided into classes called by the names of the twelve tribes of Israel — the twelve tribes of those who are the Princes of God! It is a common mistake to think of these as the natural, fleshly tribes of Israel, either of the Jews or the ten-tribed house of Israel. But the Revelation is a *spiritual book* and these are *symbols!* If the four angels, the four winds, the four corners of the earth, the seal of the living God, the earth, sea, and trees, are symbols, then the twelve tribes that are sealed are likewise symbols! Can anything be plainer than that? These are *character names*, indicating the various aspects of character developed spiritually in every son of God. It doesn’t indicate different groups or companies of God’s elect, each company bearing the

characteristics of only one of the tribes of Israel. These twelve spiritual character traits represent *twelve steps* in our experience of Christ by which we progressively put on the mind of Christ and grow up into His mature nature and character — the nature and character of *sonship to God!* Twelve is the number of *divine government*, therefore these twelve steps bring us to the throne of God's kingdom to govern the world in righteousness and reign with Christ over all things!

Each step represents a new level of spiritual experience and maturity ordained for every one apprehended to sonship. Each tribal name reveals an attainment of the life and glory of God in our own experience until we find ourselves seated with Him in His throne. Twelve tribes speak to us of different dimensions of growth which all the Lord's elect must pass through. The twelve tribes are *twelve stages* by which we move out of one realm into another, out of one level of consciousness into a higher level of consciousness, and out of one state of being into a more perfect state of being. The twelve tribes represent twelve steps of ascent to the throne of the universe! We cannot reach the throne in all it means and is until we have passed through them all in succession. Each experience is greater than the preceding one! Each step through the tribes brings us closer to incorruptible nature and immortal life and the authority and power of the throne!

All who are called and chosen of the Father as king-priests are diligently climbing up that ascending pathway! We are daily applying ourselves to this walk! By the strength and power of the Christ within, we are pressing upward through one tribe at a time. The twelve tribes were not all birthed at the same time! The head of each tribe was born in his time, one after another, until all twelve had been birthed! This is a picture of our progression in spiritual life from one tribe to another! As we pass from tribe to tribe we experience within ourselves all that each tribe embodies. When we have arrived at the last tribe — Benjamin — we will be *sons of the right hand!* We will have experienced within ourselves all the authority, power, and dominion of God's omnipotent throne! Once the reality of each of the twelve tribes has been progressively fulfilled within us, the victorious believer is then complete, mature, and has attained the first resurrection and the glory of manifest sonship. We will be able to rule over all things as sons of God! God's promise to Abraham in the long ago will at last be fulfilled in all its glorious and eternal reality — *"in thee, and in thy seed, shall ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH BE BLESSED!"*

Before proceeding into our study of the twelve tribes of Israel, there is a very important truth which we should all understand in this connection. One of the tribes of Israel was omitted from the list of tribes given us by the Holy Spirit in chapter seven of the Revelation. That tribe is *Dan*. Dan means "judgment." When the dying Jacob blessed his sons, he said of Dan, "Dan shall *judge his people*, as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a *serpent* by the way, an *adder* in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward" (Gen. 49:17). Abrupt, fragmentary, and enigmatic as these words are, they startle us by the way they raise questionings within our minds about the nature and role of Dan. We are looking upon a specially sealed company, an hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of Israel. But Dan is not found among them! In Jacob's prophecy over Dan, the patriarch's first words concerning Dan imply a strange, dangerous, and low place — if not the lowest place — for him. When the tribes of Israel crossed the Jordan and conquered the promised land, Dan was given a portion on the extreme northern border of the land. He retained his place as part of the nation, but was far removed from

most of the action. And if we naturally ask, Why? the answer is in the verse quoted above: “Dan shall be a *serpent*...an *adder*...that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.”

Plainly these are negative characterizations which associate him in some way with the power of the adversary, and a dark, sinister role among the tribes. The word “serpent” denotes the idea of wisdom and cunning (Mat. 10:16). The serpent’s weapon has always been his mouth — specifically, the *venom* that comes out of that mouth! The word “adder” in Hebrew means “to snap at, thrust out the tongue” and fits the idea of spoken venom as a weapon of jealousy and anger. God gave Dan the commission to judge Israel righteously. Keen observation and spiritual discernment are necessary for a judge! These gifts were given to Dan, but instead of using them aright, he became a backbiter, a cruel critic, a condemner. The gift intended for a blessing, when perverted, became an injury, causing others to fall. The cruel critic, the one who always detects the evil in others and speaks of it first, has the gift of judgment misdirected. None who persist on that course can inherit the throne, for the manchild occupies the throne whereas the “accuser of the brethren” is cast out of the heavens of dominion! The most famous Danite was Samson who judged Israel for twenty years, but sold out his anointing to the Philistine seducer, Delilah. The history of the tribe of Dan is darker than the history of any other of the twelve tribes. Jeroboam, Solomon’s servant, set up a golden calf in Dan and put high places throughout Israel, causing Israel to sin.

The spirit of unrighteous judgment, vindictiveness, and condemnation is the spirit of the church world today! The judgment preached and expressed in the church systems is the spirit of the serpent, for it presents God’s judgments as punitive, vindictive, destructive, and eternally tortuous rather than a loving, purposeful correction. That’s the serpent, it bites you when it shouldn’t, and its bite is deadly! Jesus crushed the serpent’s head, he has no more power to bite you, yet the preachers still put the deadly venom of condemnation, destruction, and eternal damnation into their proclamations of judgment, characterizing God as a vengeful, implacable tyrant ready to cast men into never-ending hell fire for the slightest offense. Dan does not represent the righteous judgment of the sons of God, but rather the unrighteous, heinous, hateful judgment of a maniacal despot.

When we come to the sealing of the twelve tribes Dan’s name is left out. The omission is absolute — the tribe is cut off from its brethren and its name blotted out. This one tribe is deleted and another is added. In like manner there was a deletion from the number of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, and an addition. Judas was cut off from his apostleship, and Matthias was added (Acts 1:15-26). God took something that didn’t pertain to the order of sonship, and added that which complemented or fulfilled the spirit of sonship. So when vindictive judgment was removed, Levi, the tribe of the *priesthood*, who had no inheritance in Israel, and was not normally included in the list of tribes, was added. Can you not see the mystery? The spirit of condemnation and vindictive judgment was **removed**, and mercy and reconciliation were **added**! “To wit, that God was in Christ, *reconciling the world unto Himself, NOT IMPUTING THEIR TRESPASSES UNTO THEM; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation*” (II Cor. 5:19). THAT is the spirit of sonship! Mercy, grace, reconciliation, deliverance, redemption, restoration, and life for all! Yet — that includes even Dan! People possessing the spirit of the tribe of Dan are not finally cut off from the goodness of God, for in Ezekiel’s glowing prophecy there is a portion for Dan (Eze.

48:1). No man is eternally cut off from God! But those of the spirit of Dan are not included in the company of the manifest sons of God!

## JUDAH

“And of the tribe of *Judah* were sealed twelve thousand” (Rev. 7:5).

Let us consider this highly unusual statement. If we were talking about the natural Israel, the proper order would be to begin with the firstborn son of Israel — Reuben. It would read, “And of the tribe of *Reuben* were sealed...” The people of Israel were extreme devotees of the proper order. Listing the eldest son first is as much a part of Old Testament order as were the feasts of Israel! In every previous genealogy, the list of tribes *always* began with Reuben. Now we come to the book of Revelation and the order is changed, and the tribe of Reuben is not listed first. Here we find the tribe of Judah listed in the first place. There is a wonderful reason for this! The book of Revelation is not a historical or prophetic book either *about* the fleshly Israel or addressed *to* the natural Israel. It is a *spiritual book* addressed to a *spiritual people*, the church, which is the *body of Christ*! The reason we have the tribe of Judah listed first is because it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah, and He is the *firstborn* of a *spiritual seed* which is the spiritual and true Israel of God! He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and by His spiritual and heavenly kingship and dominion we are raised up into the seed of Abraham by the Spirit. “Now therefore ye are *no more strangers and foreigners*, but fellow citizens with the *saints*, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God *through the Spirit*” (Eph. 2:19-22).

What I am declaring is not what is referred to as “replacement theology” which just throws the natural Israel out and brings the Gentiles in. What God did was draw a larger circle, and the circle is just this: “Anybody who comes to me to be covenantally related to me must come by the *new birth*, for “verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be *born again* (Greek: *from above*) he cannot *see...enter* the kingdom of God” (Jn. 3:3,5). Jew, Israelite, Greek, Russian, African, Asian, or whatever, there is only one way into the covenant of promise, and that’s not by physical birth or natural genealogy, for “in Isaac shall thy seed be called” and Isaac comes by a *supernatural birth*! The firstborn of this heavenly lineage is our Lord Jesus Christ who is the Lion of the tribe of Judah whose right it is to rule, to sit upon the throne of Israel, which is the throne of the Lord within us. As it is written, “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto HIM shall the gathering of the people be” (Gen. 49:10). *Shiloh* is the Lord Jesus Christ! We are not dealing with a natural Israel in the book of Revelation, but with a spiritual seed brought forth out of the loins of Christ by the new birth. This Israel *begins* with the spiritual and heavenly tribe of *Judah*!

When the aged Jacob lay dying he commanded his twelve sons, who were destined to be the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel, to come to his bedside that he might impart to them his prophetic blessing. “Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father” (Gen. 49:2). The twelve boys dutifully assembled to hear their father’s all-important final words. Israel pulled himself up to sit on the edge of the bed and his sons gathered

themselves around him. We are not told what emotional reactions the twelve sons had as each heard his respective blessing, but contained in the blessings were exhilarating highs and depressive lows as Israel prophesied of their destinies.

Let it be thoroughly known and understood by every reader of these lines that the list in chapter seven of the Revelation is a list of persons, and the first, the Leader, of this list is the tribe of Judah! The tribe of Judah is now, under the new covenant, counted as the tribe of the FIRSTBORN. Jesus Christ is the Lion of the tribe of Judah! He is, furthermore, the “*firstborn* among many brethren”! He is the “*firstborn* of every creature”! He is the “*firstborn* from the dead”! He is the firstborn among many brethren, and that means that He is not the only son of God, He is the *first* son of God, there is a vast company of sons destined to grow up into His likeness, to share the fullness of all that He is and has. He is the firstborn from the dead, and that means that He is not the only one to rise from the dead, He is the *first* to rise from the dead, and multitudes shall follow. He is the firstborn of every creature, and that means that He is in the position to restore the whole creation and every living being in it to find their one head in Him, that God may be all in all. It is indeed wonderful!

From earliest times the firstborn son held an honored position in the family. The law of the firstborn is divinely recognized throughout the scriptures in both the sphere of the family and in that of the nations, and also in the heavenly regions as well as the earthly. God commanded to Israel that the firstborn son should inherit twice as much of the father’s estate as any other child (Deut. 21:17). To this son fell also the right and responsibility of control in the family, subject to the father; and also, in the older eras at least, the firstborn son acted as the family priest. The firstborn came into considerable prominence at the time that God delivered His people from slavery in Egypt. Among the Egyptians, the firstborn were dedicated as sacred to the sun god Amon-Ra, the supposed preserver of all the firstborn. The tenth plague that the Lord brought upon the Egyptians served to discredit this god and showed up his inability to protect the firstborn. By obeying God’s instructions concerning the slaying of a lamb and the splashing of its blood upon the doorposts and upper part of the doorway of their houses, the Israelites did not lose their firstborn in death, whereas all the firstborn of the Egyptians, both of man and beast, were slain (Ex. 12:21-29).

God claimed as specially His own all the firstborn males of Israel. These were in the highest sense HIS FIRSTBORN! But then God substituted in their place the tribe of Levi, the priestly tribe, so that this entire tribe became especially His firstborn son. They were to grow up — to be educated, disciplined, and trained — to live and serve the peculiar property of the living God, separated from all others by the very hand of God, hallowed unto Him, sanctified as His ministers on behalf of all to whom He would show His mercy and power. The Levites were in fact the TITHE AND OFFERING of the people unto God. Aaron was to “offer the Levites for an OFFERING of the children of Israel” and thus they were “wholly given” unto the Lord to do nothing but serve Him and His people.

Jesus is the firstborn among many brethren, but the entire house of sons is called the “Church of the Firstborn” — the body of that firstborn Son who is become the Head of the Order of the Firstborn! Jesus was the firstborn and as such received the inheritance of the firstborn. But

by His graciousness and love and purpose we share with Him — counted as heirs of God and JOINT-HEIRS WITH CHRIST in the inheritance of the firstborn!

Let us use this illustration. At the performance of an opera, the first part of the evening is given over to the playing of the overture. As I understand it, the overture is made up of, or contains, parts of all the main numbers of the whole opera. The overture is an overall pre-view, or glimpse of the opera throughout until the end. But following the overture, the action goes back again to the beginning, and the whole opera is performed in its detail unto the finish. Thus the overture presents the plot in portions, and points to the end, so that one who has never heard it, will have a view of the action and the climax of it. But, as I pointed out, following the overture the action returns to the beginning and the detail of the whole plot is played out. However, both the overture and the detailed action come to a common end or result.

Let all who read these lines grasp the great truth that THE MANIFEST SONS OF GOD ARE THE OVERTURE OF GOD'S WHOLE GREAT DRAMA OF SIN AND REDEMPTION! Jesus is the overture for the sons, while the sons are the overture for all creation. The working out of redemption and restoration into the image of God is revealed in THE MAN CHRIST JESUS. He is the first, and so far, THE ONLY PERFECTED MAN. This gives us knowledge of two wonderful things! Through Jesus we have the knowledge of the END of God's great drama of sin and redemption — MAN IN THE IMAGE OF GOD! But we also have the knowledge of the dealings and processings by which man is brought to that end. And WE ARE THE OVERTURE, the preview, the firstfruit, the demonstration of all God's wonderful creative and redemptive purpose, presenting upon the cosmic stage of the universe the final end that God has in mind for His whole vast creation, praise His wonderful name!

Jesus is the *firstborn*! And that is where our sonship *begins*! We must be *born of the seed of the firstborn*, be a member in the *church of the firstborn*, and a part of the *body of the firstborn*, who is the *Lion of the tribe of Judah*! You've got to start with Jesus or you will go nowhere in God. Truly HE is the *way*, the *truth*, and the *life*, and no man comes unto the Father but through HIM! Not only does no man come to the Father except through Jesus, no man can come to *sonship* to God except through Jesus! HE is the *firstborn* among many brethren! As the first born it is He who received the "double portion" of the inheritance that *through Him* and *with Him* we may receive and share in it as joint-heirs. That is the mystery. HE is our *Elder Brother*! HE is the *High Priest* of our *profession*! HE is the *Captain* of our *salvation*! HE is the *Forerunner* who has entered in beyond the veil *for us*! Never forget it, my beloved!

The central truth in the sealing of the tribe of Judah is just this. The *sealing* bespeaks a knowing, an experiencing, and putting on of Christ in a deeper, fuller, and more powerful measure. It is here that we meet JESUS, no longer merely as our Saviour, Healer, Baptizer, and Blessor, but as the SON OF GOD with power! As we are sealed in the tribe of Judah the revelation of HIS SONSHIP and OUR SONSHIP IN HIM breaks with wonder within our illumined consciousness in the power of the Holy Spirit. In that blessed moment we behold Jesus as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the King of Israel, the Prince of the kings of the earth, and the Lord of the universe! We see Him upon the throne of His Father! When we are spiritually birthed or sealed as a member of the elect of the tribe of Judah, we are quickened to the reality and the realm of sonship, to see as we have never seen, to hear as we have never heard, to understand as we have



never understood the Father's purpose for us, receiving within ourselves the witness of the spirit in the *call to sonship*! I'm sure that all who read these lines who have received the call to sonship, remember the day or the time or the season when each was initiated by the dealing of the Father into this NEW REALM IN CHRIST. From that time forward we knew and understood with great clarity and deep conviction that we are no longer merely believers, or disciples, or Christians, but indeed SONS OF THE LIVING GOD!

It is appropriate at this point that I share the inspired words of brother Charles Schmidt who has penned a message that should be heard by every man and woman and young person who has received the call to sonship. Brother Schmidt wrote: "One of the present prevailing topics in many Spirit-filled circles is that of *sonship*. And this issue of maturity, of God-likeness, of the magnitude of our inheritance in God is to be the foremost issue of the hour! Amidst the wealth of scriptural truth that is to be brought forth on the subject of sonship there is, however, also to be heard the sound of a tone from time to time that is neither scriptural, nor true, nor set for the enrichment of the saints of God. It is one of the gravest errors ever to be written or uttered in connection with the subject of sonship. It is summed up in the following statement taken from the tape of an exhortation on sonship. *'All too long we have put Jesus on a pedestal. It is time to take Him off the pedestal and move up into the place where God has ordained for us to move in.'* And, all too often, what has not been so bluntly stated as this has been implied or suggested in other ways.

"First of all, I observe that those who hold such diminishing views of our Lord Jesus and yet propound the vastness of our sonship inheritance are actually thereby doing the most to hinder men from being brought into fullness, for actually all the prospects of inheritance and fullness and wealth are treasured in none other than the person of Jesus Christ. It is of *'His fullness (that) we all received, and grace upon grace'* (Jn. 1:16). If He is depreciated, then also are we! If *'the church is His body, the Fullness of Him that filleth all in all'* and His Fullness is depreciated, then by so much also is the treasury of the saints depleted!

"We may rather safely conclude that the greater and grander and more excellent Jesus Christ appears, the more of His fullness we as His members can believe to appropriate! Yes, some are blindly lowering Jesus so as not to feel His stature too high for their reach, but God has *'highly exalted Him'* and we are to rejoice that we are joined to Him there by faith and as members of His body are made full in Him! The apparent endeavor of some to lower Jesus a bit and then exalt us some is that we all, the Son and the sons, may appear on the same level. This, however, is unscriptural. We are told in the Song of Songs that the Shulamite confesses her lover to be...*the CHIEFEST among ten thousand — DISTINGUISHED, PREEMINENT, SOLITARY IN EXCELLENCE AMONG TEN THOUSAND'* (Song 5:10). The ten thousand may be ten thousand sons of God — but HE is still 'solitary in excellence amongst' them. He is the HEAD; they are His Body!

"There is a singular worthiness about Jesus Christ that makes Him ever 'THE KING of kings and THE LORD of lords.' That we should be made kings and lords in Him is scriptural. But that He Himself, by virtue of His own eternal majesty, should be 'THE KING of kings and THE LORD of lords' is exactly as scriptural. Regardless of how emphatic the demand that we should be *'like Him,'* He still shall stand as having *'the preeminence in all things'* (Col. 1:18); as *'highly exalted'* with every knee bowing to HIM and confessing HIM as *'LORD to the glory of God the*

*Father*' (Phil. 2:8-11). Indeed He is exalted as *'far above all'* (Eph. 1:21). As has been said before, that we even appear at all, no less that we should appear with Him in glory, is purely by His mercy and solely by virtue of our union with Him who is our living Head.

"But some are not even content to lower Jesus in their estimation to the same level as the sons of God — they would even exalt the possibilities of our sonship beyond that of the sonship of Jesus! The support is found by partially quoting John 14:12, *'the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do.'* Greater works! Therefore greater sonship! Therefore greater than Jesus! The obvious omission is what deflates the balloon — *'greater works than these shall he do, because I go to the Father.'* Had He not gone to the Father, He could not have come again in us; and it is only HIS PRESENCE IN US that allows of any 'greater works'! The 'greater works' are actually HIS! His ministry in His Universal Body is destined to be greater than His earthly ministry in Galilee! The Gospels indeed are simply *'all that Jesus began both to do and teach'* (Acts 1:1). And the Acts and the Epistles are but greater continuations of His doing and of His teaching through His many-membered Body. Do we then exceed Him? No! But rather His Universal Ministry in us exceeds His former Judean ministry! And this keeps the proper perspective!

"Consequently, no individual saint could ever be Jesus or ever be equal to Him, no more than an individual part could ever equal the whole. Jesus is unique! He is the *'one of a kind'* Son of God! *'One of a kind'* is the best translation of the Greek word *monogenes*, usually translated as *only begotten*. Whereas we are sons of God, Jesus is 'monogenes,' the unique, one-of-a-kind Son. It takes all of us together to express Him and to flesh Him out on the earth. But He alone — singular, solitary, and unique — expresses all of the Father's fullness, and He alone fully within Himself fleshes out the invisible God! Jesus' incarnation is, therefore, *unique*. His Godhood is *unique*. He is the King of all other kings and the Lord of all other lords! He stands supreme, solitary, and singular. He is the Head, and we, all together, are HIS BODY. He is the Vine — the root, the stems...we are the branches in Him.

"One final observation before we conclude. Many will think that this is all just fine as long as we relegate this supremacy to *Christ* but not to *Jesus*! Subtle distinction, but none-the-less there in the minds of some and none-the-less erroneous. The Christ — that is, the eternal nature of God is indeed worthy to be supreme, some may reason, but Jesus, the man of Galilee, is like a worn out coat — to be hung up somewhere in the museum of Jewish history" — end quote.

Before concluding brother Schmidt's message I would like to insert here this observation. The notion that there is a "Christ" apart from "Jesus" is nowhere supported in the scriptures. Yes — Christ is corporate, a composite body, a many-membered man, of which Jesus Christ is the Head. He is also the firstborn; as Head the one who in all things has preeminence. Listen to the Holy Spirit speaking through Paul: "For IN HIM dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead *bodily*. And YE ARE COMPLETE **IN HIM**, which is the head of all principality and power" (Col. 2:9-10). A many-membered Christ implies that each member possesses an *identity*. We certainly understand that in the natural each member of a body has its own identity! We know the difference between an arm, a foot, a kidney, a heart, and a stomach! Do you suppose, dear one, that in order to be a member of the Christ-body that you must lose your identity as an individual with a particular place and function within that body? Is it not

true that should every member of Christ lose his identity Christ would cease to BE either a *body*, *many-membered*, *composite*, or *corporate*? If you do not forfeit *your* place, identity, and function in that many-membered body, how could it be that the resurrected MAN Jesus, who is the Christ, has relinquished His place and function as Head of the body? Nothing could be plainer! Nothing could be grander!

Oh, no, the flesh and blood man, Jesus of Nazareth, is not the Jesus we know; but the RESURRECTED MAN, JESUS OF NAZARETH, IS EXALTED AS HEAD OF THIS GLORIOUS BODY! After Jesus' resurrection, ascension, and return in the power of the Spirit, Peter spoke to the lame man at the gate of the temple, saying, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: in the name of JESUS CHRIST **OF NAZARETH** rise up and walk...and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength" (Acts 3:6-7). Oh, yes, this was not some "cosmic Christ" who made the lame man whole — this was the RESURRECTED AND ASCENDED **JESUS OF NAZARETH!** Don't try and do away with the man Jesus, Jesus of Nazareth, my friend — He lives still, He has an identity still, we have one God and one mediator between God and man, the MAN CHRIST JESUS! He is still a man, He is still Jesus, He is still Jesus of Nazareth, and He is still a member of the Corporate Christ with an identity and function just the same as *you* have an identity and function. He is the HEAD! And we are the members of His body! And that is THE CHRIST! There is not some "cosmic Christ" that exists apart from these called and chosen and glorified men who make up the Christ. There is not one scripture in the whole body that suggests such an idea! It is an imagination of carnal reasoning, an interpretation of erroneous thinking.

"JESUS CHRIST"! Oh, the glory of His name! "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is *above every name*: that at the name of **Jesus** every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that **Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11). Reading this passage we can see clearly that it is NOT at the name of J. Preston Eby that every knee shall bow and every tongue confess! Nor is it at the name of some "cosmic Christ consciousness" that every knee shall bow and every tongue confess! It is not even at the name of "Christ," the many-membered, corporate One, that every knee shall bow and every tongue confess! Oh, no! It is at the name of JESUS that every knee bows and every tongue confesses! JESUS is the name above every name! Not "Christ" — but **JESUS!** God has exalted HIM! Nor does every tongue confess that J. Preston Eby is Lord, to the glory of God the Father! Nor yet does every tongue confess that the "cosmic Christ consciousness" is Lord, to the glory of God the Father! Nor does every tongue confess that the "Corporate Christ Body" is Lord, to the glory of God the Father! Oh, no! *Every tongue* shall confess that **JESUS CHRIST IS LORD**, to the glory of God the Father! He is Lord! JESUS! How sweet the name! How glorious the name! How powerful the name! How exalted the name! We cannot divorce the "Eternal Christ" from JESUS OF NAZARETH! It is Jesus of Nazareth that God raised from the dead, raised up far above all heavens, gave the name above every other name, and made Head of that Christ-body which we are. That is the only Christ there is!

Now to conclude brother Charles Schmidt's writing on this subject. "I wish to sound a solemn warning in conclusion. We are fore-warned in the *literal translation* of I John 4:2-3 that 'every spirit that ANNULLETH JESUS IS NOT OF GOD: and this is the *spirit of the anti-Christ*

(opposer of Christ), whereof ye have heard that it cometh.’ It is one of the most dangerous things to annul or to diminish or to depreciate Jesus in any way — either by implication or by omission or by direct statement or by statements that could be misunderstood — *for by thy WORDS thou shalt be justified or condemned.*’

“To touch HIM is to touch the very heart and core of our faith. To degrade Him in any way is to be as foolish as the branch that is cut down and destroyed the vine from which it was growing in order that men might not be hindered in noticing the branches. To undermine Him is to destroy the very foundation of everything we have in God — for it is all in Him. He is the fullness — the entire plenitude of everything that God is. He fills everything everywhere with Himself. He upholds everything by the word of His power. He is creator of everything, sustainer of everything, and ultimate possessor of everything. He is the whole creation — and Jesus is His Name! Everything has life in Him. And in everything everywhere He is preeminent. Everything has been placed beneath His feet, and He has become Head over everything to the church, which is His body! And it is only because of His wonder and His beauty that we shall shine as the stars forever — for we are conjoined to Him, united with Him, alive in Him, filled with Him, seated with Him — made sons of God in Him, this Beloved WHO IS our very life! Amen!” — end quote.

The significance of Judah being listed first among the tribes of God’s sons who are sealed is spiritual truth concerning those who are born out of the tribe of Judah, those who comprise “the church of the *firstborn*, whose names are written in heaven” (Heb. 12:23). Jacob’s dying prophecy to Judah was this: “Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies: thy father’s children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion’s whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be” (Gen. 49:8-10).

There is an inexhaustible storehouse of spiritual truth in that wonderful prophecy! All that is said of Judah speaks of overcoming, strength, power, authority, dominion, and rulership. These characteristics reveal the awesome purpose and destiny of each apprehended son of God! But since only the *names* of the tribes are given to John, it is obvious that these are *character names*, so we will not explore all the facets of the lives of the twelve sons of Israel, but will restrict our meditations to the meanings of the names. The significance of Judah’s name is revealed in this portion of Israel’s prophecy, “Judah, thou art he whom *thy brethren shall praise...*” It is appropriate that Judah would *be praised* by his brothers since his name means *praise*! The account of his birth makes this clear: “And Leah conceived again, and bore a son: and she said, Now will I *praise the Lord*: and therefore she called his name Judah; and ceased bearing” (Gen. 29:35). Thus Judah, whose name means *praise*, will *be praised* by his brothers who will recognize his position of leadership.

It doesn’t mean merely that Judah was a praiser — one who continually offered up spiritual praise unto God. I do not doubt that Judah was a praiser, but praise is often associated in our minds with singing, thanksgiving, and noise — but true praise lies beyond what one speaks — it is a state of being. “Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren *shall praise...*” Judah was not known for

*praising*, rather *he was praised* because his life *was a praise unto God!* There is a principle I have alluded to over and over again through the years, namely: The highest form of anything is TO BECOME that thing. Thus we see that the highest form of praise is not shouting words of adulation to God, it is when we become a LIVING PRAISE in our state of being, emanating the virtues and excellencies of Christ! We are to BECOME HIS PRAISE in the earth, not to just praise, but a state of being that redounds to His glory. Our Elder Brother and Pattern, our Lord Jesus the Christ, is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the strong One of this glorious tribe, who was ruled by the mind and will of the Father at all times and in all things. His life *was a praise* to God! It was in harmony with the purpose of God and revealed the character and glory of God. That, my beloved, is where we begin our journey into the fullness of God, to the heavenly mount Zion, to the throne of God and the Lamb!

Before we received the call to sonship we were great *praisers*. And truly He is worthy of *all our praise!* We praise Him still! Not, however, as many who simply love the “atmosphere” of praise and get a “high” from entering into a realm of praise that makes them feel emotionally whole. If we are praising for what “we” get out of it, then we have missed the whole point of praise! Many people so esteem that wonderful “atmosphere” or “feeling” derived in the realms of praise that they truly *worship praise* more than they worship the Lord! Some do the service of praise because they believe that praise brings the presence of the Lord. The truth is, however, that it is the *presence of the Lord that brings praise!* In the days of the great Latter Rain outpouring of the Spirit the people were caught up in realms of the “high praises” of God, and it was glorious far beyond any attempt to describe! Yet — many lost sight of the fact that it was not praise that brought the Rain — it was the Rain that evoked the praise! Never in the scriptures were men moved to praise God in order to bring a revelation of His glory. Instead, it was when the Lord came to them, and appeared to them in His glory, that men were moved to praise and exalt His greatness!

In the book of Revelation we have the same picture; it is only when the Lamb is revealed standing in the midst of the throne that the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders sing their hymn of praise, followed by the voice of many angels, and every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, crying out, and saying, “Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever!” It was not the praise that brought the revelation of the Lamb! Rather, it was the revelation of the Lamb in His glory and majesty that evoked this universal paean of praise!

When the Father sovereignly apprehended us unto the high calling of sonship, we were drawn out of the world, and out of the carnal church systems of man, separated unto God to *be a praise* unto Him! Our sonship calling begins when we are sealed in the tribe of Judah, the tribe that is to *be praised*, and it begins with a word from the Lord spoken into our spiritual ear, “You are not called to be an ordinary believer or Christian — you have been chosen of the Father to be a special people unto His purpose, to become His expression and His praise unto all the ends of the earth!” What a calling!

To be continued...  
EBY

J. PRESTON