

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 43

THE CHURCH IN PERGAMOS

(continued)

"Thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein *Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth*" (Rev. 2:13).

In this Study we come to Antipas, the Lord's faithful martyr. Is Antipas a symbol, or was Antipas an actual individual in the church in Pergamos? There is no historical evidence for a person named Antipas who was martyred in Pergamos. So let's analyze the word. Antipas is a compound word made up of the prefix "anti" meaning "opposed to" or "instead of," and in this sense is similar to the word "anti-Christ," denoting that which is opposed to, or takes the place of, Christ. Now the name becomes very strange! The second half of the name is "pas" which most scholars agree is a Greek abbreviation for "pater" which means "father." So — just as "anti-christ" signifies that which is against or instead of Christ, so "anti-pas" bespeaks of that which is opposed to, or takes the place of, Father! It is a description of something that takes

place in the lives of God's chosen elect! It is my conviction that we find here a double meaning — a *meaning within a meaning*.

The question follows — if Antipas is one who stands in opposition to, or usurps the place of, THE FATHER, how could he then be called “*My faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.*” This is indeed a mystery! Yet — is it not true that before any man can become a martyr of the Lord, all that is *opposed to the Father*, and all that *usurps the place of the Father*, must be **slain in him**? Antipas was martyred *where Satan's throne is*! He is, typically, slain in the realm of religion — right where practically *all* of the Lord's martyrs have been slain! You see, my beloved, Antipas is a type of the sons of God. What is contrary in most believers is the carnal mind and the religious spirit that usurps the place of CHRIST. That is the spirit of anti-Christ! But what is contrary in this Antipas class of people is not merely contrary to Christ, but stands in opposition to, and usurps the place of, THE FATHER. It is anti-Father! This should help us to see that this identifies them as *sons*.

What is slain in the sons of God is all that hinders their sonship to God, separating between them and the Father. The great purpose of Christ in our lives is to *bring us to the Father*! “No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” Anything that frustrates our pure relationship with the Father must be purged out of everyone called to sonship! All that interrupts our fellowship with the Father, all that prevents the knowledge of the Father, all that diminishes the glory of the Father, all that hinders our walk with the Father, all that thwarts our doing the will of the Father, all that short-circuits our obedience to the Father, all that prevents us from hearing the voice of the Father — all this must **go to the cross**!

The name Antipas identifies, not those becoming Christians, but those becoming mature sons! First, all that is contrary to the way of the Father must be *slain in us*, before *we* are able to present ourselves as a spiritual martyr for the kingdom of God. Those in whom everything that

is antagonistic to the mind, nature, purpose, and will of the Father has been brought to HIS CROSS, are then able to take up THEIR CROSS and follow Him! Can you not see the mystery? The divine implication is that Antipas is the symbol for THE WORK OF THE CROSS IN THE LIVES OF GOD'S SONS!

Antipas is characterized as “my faithful martyr.” I used to think that the physical martyrs who laid down their human lives were certainly greater in the kingdom and more qualified to reign with Christ than I could ever be. I did not understand in those days that scripturally and spiritually a martyr is one who is faithful in life, as much as in death — he may never be killed and still be a martyr! Most Christians mistakenly hold to the notion that all saved people will, by the grace of God, rule and reign with Christ in His kingdom. One great cause of this error among almost all classes of believers is the failure to understand the words of the Spirit in Revelation 20:4. “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were *beheaded* for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and *they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.*”

Many try to make this include all saints! Others think it means just all martyrs! Unfortunately, the Greek word here rendered “beheaded” in our King James Bible, is not fully understood. It appears nowhere else in scripture, except this one passage. But one fact stands out clearly. It cannot allude only to those who *died* as martyrs, for the scriptures are clear that some who die natural deaths will reign with Christ upon His throne! Furthermore, there were multitudes of believers who were violently tortured and abused in the early days of the church, as well as throughout church history. In the first three centuries alone, three million martyrs gave their lives for Christ! They were sewn into sacks with vipers. They were plunged into boiling oil. They were

covered with pitch and placed on sticks and lighted to illuminate the gardens of Nero for His debaucheries. They were turned out to the lions and devoured. They were crucified upside down. They were placed on red hot beds of iron. Read the history of the church!

Are all these to be excluded from this company that comes to life and reigns with Christ in His kingdom just because they were not “beheaded”? Only a few have been *beheaded*! Is this few the only ones that are granted to reign with Christ? Do you see the mystery? Ah, those who reign with Christ upon His throne are the *sons of God*! It is the *manchild* who is caught up unto God and to His throne (Rev. 12:5). In our Lord’s messages to the seven churches, He says that the *overcomers* are granted to sit with Him on His throne (Rev. 3:21). Are the overcomers only those who are literally and physically “beheaded” for the testimony of Jesus, and the word of God? Only *one* of the first apostles is believed to have been beheaded! The others, with the exception of John, all died violent deaths of martyrdom, but were not beheaded. Must all of us put our heads on a literal chopping block to be beheaded in order to rule and reign with Christ? No, a thousand times no! The very suggestion is absurd. That is not the testimony of scripture. Like everything else in the book of Revelation, the “beheading” is a *symbol*! Antipas is a *symbol*! His martyrdom is a *symbol*!

In the book of Revelation a martyr is not necessarily a physical martyr any more than a beast is a literal beast, a dragon is a literal dragon, a horn is a literal horn, or the Lamb is a four-footed barnyard animal. The interpretation of this verse is clearly a spiritual one! That is the mystery. And when the blessed spirit of wisdom and revelation from God opens our eyes to comprehend the great truth of our spiritual beheading, we will have found the key to the very life of Christ. It refers to those who *live* as martyrs! A martyr’s grave was very often but a release from persecution, an easy way out. Martyrdom in the spiritual

sense does not necessarily mean an untimely death. The way into glory is through death: death to self, death to the flesh, death to the world, death to the carnal mind, death to the Adamic consciousness, death to the ego, death to our own way and will, death to the religious spirit — *living the crucified life!* It is the death process within us that removes from us all that is not of God. Isn't it wonderful!

This beautiful truth has often been missed because we have not understood that the New Testament word “witness” is from the Greek *martus* which is translated “martyr” in Revelation 2:13 and 17:6. When we think of “witnesses” we do not think of people who are being killed! But neither can we think of them according to the old religious idea of someone who goes door to door passing out tracts or one who makes it a point to speak about the Lord to everyone he meets. Such are often guided more by religious zeal than by the leading and wisdom of the Holy Spirit. Scripturally and spiritually a witness is one who gives his life for the testimony he bears! And I dare say it requires an enduement of the Holy Spirit to enable us to so lay down our life for the message we declare that WE BECOME THE MESSAGE, OUR WHOLE LIFE SWALLOWED UP IN THE MANIFESTATION OF THAT MESSAGE. A state of being that proclaims the truth regardless of whether we speak it or explain it or not. To witness to the truth is to give your life to that truth, to *become the truth!*

The sons of God are becoming kings, priests, and judges by the authority of the Spirit of the Lord and by being beheaded, or losing their heads. The King James Bible says beheaded, those who have their heads cut off. In some of the newer translations, one says they were executed for their testimony, another says they were cut with the ax. As I looked to the Lord about this I was reminded of the words of Jesus when He told His chosen disciples, “Whosoever shall lose His life for my sake...shall save it.” The head of every man, to begin with, is the old self, the ego, the carnal mind, the Adamic consciousness, the flesh. When I

went to school we were taught that self preservation is the first law of nature. And how we do try to take care of this natural, flesh man! We live for him, for his needs, his desires, his perceptions, his wants, his demands. These are the things the carnal mind is most concerned about, what self wants, what the flesh desires. As we progress in God to become sons of God, this old head must be chopped off, and a new head take his place!

This old self must be put to death, with his wills and desires, and Jesus have complete Lordship over our beings. Merely believing on Him does not produce this, and just claiming by faith the “finished work” does not bring an end to the Adamic mind. How very simple it would be if that worked! Paul would never have needed to say, “*Mortify* (put to death) therefore your members which are upon earth,” if the finished work did it all. It requires complete and absolute surrender to the Christ within, the “putting off” of the old man and the “putting on” of the new! Christ Himself must become the new head. This is what it means to be beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and the word of God. Christ can only testify out of our life as the living word of God when His Headship is established in our life!

Through the intense preparations of the Spirit, we are being delivered from the carnal nature and mind, delivered from the rule of self, and are receiving the mind of Christ! Truly, we are being “beheaded” for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God! This means we are “losing our head,” delivered of the carnal mind, released from the headship of the natural man, and are now under the true headship of Christ. All who are truly called to sonship have abandoned the wisdom and judgment of our own mind, our earthly and mortal perceptions, our opinion, our own will, and that of any fleshly or religious thing that has influenced, motivated, or controlled us, and we are now receiving His mind, His truth, His Headship, to do only His

perfect will. We have indeed been beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God! Isn't it wonderful!

We no longer worship the beast of man's carnality and ego, or the pomp and pride of the fleshly religious realm, nor do we have that "mark" on our foreheads. We have been beheaded — decapitated! We have given up our head, lost our life, surrendered our selfhood, our carnal mind, to receive the mind of Christ. By His mind we shall do the will of the Father just as Jesus did. The words Jesus spoke and the works Jesus wrought were never His own. The Anti-pas within Him, anything that was opposed the Father, was slain within Himself. He became Himself the faithful and true witness — the faithful and true martyr! And so it is with the sons of God! We are learning to speak only when He speaks and act only when He acts. If He is healing, then we step into the stream, and we heal. If He is not healing, we keep our hands and our prayers to ourself. If He is teaching, we teach. If He is not teaching, we hold our peace. If He is doing wonders, we do wonders. If He is resting, we rest. If He is doing nothing, we are content to do absolutely nothing, just as Jesus did in Nazareth for thirty years! We are being spiritually beheaded in order to be joined to Christ, and to rule and reign with Him. We are surrendering ourselves to Christ so that He controls our lives in the absolute sense of the word. Isn't it wonderful!

A few years ago Lisa Herron shared a remarkable dream with us which is beautifully confirmatory to this present truth. I don't think it needs any interpretation for all who see and hear by the Spirit will grasp its wonderful message. Lisa wrote: "When I was a teenager, and still attending the local Assembly of God (although God was dealing deeply with me even at that time), I had a dream so real that I awoke confused. I *knew* it was from God, but at that young time in my life and in my walk with the Lord, I didn't fully understand it. Here's how it went:

"We were in the 'sanctuary' of the church, having a Sunday night service. One of the elders in the church (a man I thought much of, and

looked up to in my youth) was walking up and down the center isle, holding a long, gleaming sword in his hand, and he was weeping. He kept walking up and down, saying, 'Who will be willing to lose his head for the Lord?' I looked around, and no one seemed to be moving. I felt overwhelmingly in my heart that I knew that I had to do this thing, so I went to the center isle, hung my head over the end of the pew, and he beheaded me. In an instant I was upon my feet (never felt any pain) and I was looking around at the people. It felt as though my head was totally *full of light* — like my head was transparent, and there was only light there. I was so full of joy and began to implore the people, 'Please do it. It doesn't hurt at all, and you'll see things as you never did before. It's wonderful! Don't be afraid!' But no one followed" — end quote.

As we follow on to know the Father in sonship, the Lord is taking greater control of our lives. He who shall rule and reign over the earth and all the universe, must first rule and reign in the lives of His elect. Christ is indeed reigning in our lives, for we are aware that we are no longer in control of our lives! Another One, Christ, the inner son, now controls our lives according to His eternal purpose, and **it is the Lord!** You will know that Christ reigns in your life when you truly realize that you no longer control your own life. Your destiny and mine are fixed in God! Christ is now reigning in us in greater and greater measures as we grow up into the Headship of Christ.

Unless you be deceived by those who have been deceived after seeing this truth and have received error and all sorts of false ideas about how the sons of God will come forth, let me make it very clear to you that God has one means by which He is going to bring forth the manifest sons of God. That is by the **working of the cross!** The divine message of the cross is God saying that Jesus is our true example in all things. Just as He was crucified and died on a cross, coming forth as the resurrected Son of God, so we must be crucified in order to be manifest

sons of God. Jesus died upon the cross to save us from sin and death and hell, but until we **take up OUR CROSS and follow Him** we cannot ascend His throne to reign with Him. He did not die for us to give us His throne, He died for us to *save us*. The so-called “finished work” does not secure a place upon His throne for us! Not only is He our Saviour; He is also our *example*, that we should *follow in His steps* (1 Pet. 2:21). As He died, so we must die. As He was crucified on the cross, so our flesh-nature must be crucified. We must come to complete death-to-self. Our human consciousness must die so that Christ can come forth in us in all His glory. Through this we will be the manifest sons of God!

Some today have abandoned the message of the cross, clinging instead to the idea that Jesus paid it all, and therefore they can reign with Him no matter how carnal or fleshly they are; their old man is dead with Christ, so there really is no further working of the cross for any of us. How I wish the cross had ended at Calvary! How delightful it would be if I did not need to “deny *myself*” or to “take up *my cross*” and follow Him! If only the throne was by grace! If only the finished work took care of it all and I could just breeze into sonship and ascend the throne on the merits of Jesus! But Galatians 5:24 *still* must be fulfilled in the life of every son of God: “And they that are Christ’s have *crucified the flesh* with the affections and lusts.” What *I crucify* is upon *my cross*, not His. Yet, is it not wonderfully true that my cross is simply His cross brought effectually into my life!

Yes, my beloved, in spite of His cross sons of God still have to *die to self*! This is accomplished by the Spirit of God leading us through the refining, purifying fires of testing. As the pressures and persecutions of *this world* come against those who are moving on in the Spirit of God, the very test and fire will be our purifying fire. It will teach us His ways and purge out our dross making us smaller and smaller in our own eyes. As we surrender more and more to Christ, it makes our old self die daily until he is completely dead so that Christ can come forth in

us. Some deny that this is a process, but I have not met the man yet in whom perfection has *not* been a process!

“He that loveth his life shall lose it, but he that hateth his life shall keep it.” Did I quote that aright? “He that *hateth his life*.” Did our Lord indeed say that? Did John understand his Master aright when he so reported Him? Ah, our Lord is here speaking plainly, putting the right word, and only the right word, upon the thing. There is no doubt about it! Jesus certainly said, “He that *hateth his life*.” Now, do not be offended at this noble doctrine of deep hatred preached by Christ! It is not our neighbor we are to hate; it is not our enemy: is not even our more talented, successful, and blessed friend: it is OUR **SELF**! Our very own carnal life! We have no hatred left for anyone else; it is all poured out upon our **self**. Until we are brought to the urgency of this we cannot “take up our cross” and follow Him! I have heard it said that we must love ourself, and unless and until we learn to love ourselves we cannot apprehend our sonship. Not so! It is true that we *do* love ourselves! Oh, how we do! “Love your neighbor as *yourself*.” That is not a command to love yourself. It is a command to love your neighbor! It is simply a statement of fact that all men do indeed *love their self*! That is why Jesus emphasized that we must hate our own life and *deny ourself*, taking up our cross, in order to enter into life!

All death is not the same death. Many think that when the scriptures speak of death they always refer to the death of the body. The truth is, in the New Testament, death only occasionally speaks of the death of the physical body. When Jesus says that we must take up our cross and follow Him, He does not mean that we all must be martyrs, laying down our bodies upon a wooden cross, to fly away to heaven. Jesus died physically upon the cross, the figure and the pattern of the death of old Adam. But Adam in us is not crucified by hanging on an outward, wooden cross. Paul says, “Mortify (put to death) therefore your members which are upon the earth...” (Col. 3:5). He also said, “I die

daily.” And again he said, “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” In each of these passages he speaks of a death that still must be experienced within each of us, in addition to Christ’s death upon the cross. And in none of these passages is he talking about leaving this body and going to some far-off heaven somewhere; he’s talking about dying to that outward, external, physical, human, carnal realm of appearances of old Adam’s life here and now as we walk upon this earth! That’s why he’s saying, “To die is *gain*.” There is no gain in going to the cemetery, but to die to the carnal mind is to *gain* the mind of Christ. To die to the flesh nature is to *gain* the divine nature. God gives us the opportunity every day to die! Are we taking up our cross *daily* and following Him?

The death of the cross was the death reserved for criminals and for the vilest of men. What would you think of a person who had a gold chain about his neck with a pendant of an electric chair on it? Or a hangman’s gallows? Or a guillotine? Or a gas chamber? Or a hypodermic needle? “How gross, how repugnant, how macabre, how gruesome, how insensitive,” you say. “How terrible to think that anyone’s mind is that death oriented!” Let me tell you something, my beloved — in the day of Christ a cross was an instrument of *execution*, no different than the gas chamber or the electric chair today! It was the place where criminals and the scum of the earth were put to death. It was not a pretty or inspiring symbol! And Jesus said we are to deny ourselves and take up our cross — our gas chamber, our electric chair, our hangman’s noose — and follow Him! It’s a place of execution. It’s the place where you are brought to your extremity, where the natural mind, the human consciousness, the carnal life reaches its final catastrophe!

So Jesus came to reveal the cross. And it is there at the cross that Paul says of this outer, carnal, fleshly ego man, “I AM CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST.” You must see that by the Spirit! If the apostle was speaking by

natural understanding he would have put it in the past tense — “I **was** crucified with Christ” because it is a great historical fact that Jesus the Christ was ignominiously crucified on a hill outside Jerusalem two thousand years ago. If he was speaking of an historical event where twenty centuries ago Jesus hung suspended between heaven and earth — and if in some mystical sense we were there with Him on that cross, crucified on that cross, and died with Him *then* on that cross — he would say, “I **was** crucified with Christ.” But in the Greek text the verb is in the *present perfect tense*. And while the present perfect tense denotes an action that is completed — I *have been* crucified with Christ — it may also, according to the rules of grammar, indicate an action that *is continuing unto the present*. What the present perfect tense clearly is **not** is the PAST TENSE — I **was** crucified. This is why the King James translators chose the wording, “I **AM** crucified with Christ.” Thus, the cross is not merely an historical event — it is an eternal reality! The work of the cross continues! I hang on that cross with Christ, not on Golgotha’s hill two thousand years ago, but in that blessed moment when by the Spirit of God I am called to embrace it! Christ **was** crucified. I **am** crucified. And I am crucified **with Him** because the cross is an eternal reality! Oh, the mystery of it!

In spite of the awful fact of Calvary’s dreadful scene I would be remiss if I failed to tell you that the *cross of Christ* is not a cross of wood. The cross on Golgotha’s hill was undoubtedly a wooden cross, but the cross of Christ that the apostles preached, and that they gloried in, and by which the world is reconciled to God, and which does its powerful work in us, is something more than a wooden beam! When in wisdom and holy expectation our Lord exhorted His disciples, saying, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up HIS CROSS, and follow me,” He was not making reference to a cross of wood, but to a cross that would bring death to one’s own identity, will, and ways, and identify his life henceforth with the life of Christ. If He had meant a literal, wooden cross, then only those who are literally,

physically crucified could ever *follow Him!* And can we not see by this that if *our cross* is not a wooden cross, then truly *His cross* was not a wooden cross! People think such shallow thoughts about these things. But we are dealing with deep, eternal, spiritual realities!

The DEATH OF THE CROSS is in some mysterious and divine way the gateway to the LIFE OF THE CROSS. The wooden Roman cross upon which Jesus was crucified was not actually HIS CROSS, for the cross of Christ IS the *power of God* unto salvation to all who believe, and that wooden cross no longer exists, having decayed back into the dust long centuries ago; yet should you find a piece of it there would be no magical, saving power emanating from it! All the handwriting of the ordinances of the law were nailed to HIS CROSS, the scripture says, but should you have been there on mount Calvary that day when Jesus hung between heaven and earth you would not have seen the first five books of the Bible nailed to the cross! By HIS CROSS the world is crucified to us, and us to the world, but the whole world is not hanging somewhere today upon that cross, being crucified to us. Such literal thoughts are absurdities. The whole world is reconciled by the blood of that cross, yet not one of us has seen any physical blood by which we were brought into fellowship with God. That is the mystery. Ah, the cross of Christ is something deeper, higher, grander, more transcendental than the pieces of wood upon which Jesus hung!

It is my deep conviction, and I say it with all reverence and respect to my blessed Lord and Saviour, but the truth is that Jesus in the natural suffered no more on the cross than thousands of others who were nailed to a tree, or thousands of others who died on the rack during the Roman inquisition, or thousands of others who were burned at the stake, fed to the lions, or made blazing human torches at the Circus in Rome. The physical suffering was no greater. The cross of Christ refers to a greater spiritual cross and a greater spiritual death, of which the "old rugged cross" was merely the symbol. The cross of Christ first had its

manifestation that day in heaven, when the Word of God, “being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but **made Himself of no reputation**, and **took upon Himself the form of a servant**, and was **made in the likeness of men**; and being found in **fashion as a man**, He **humbled Himself**, and **became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.**” Fierce as was His suffering at Calvary, that fearful hour of agony and blood was but the final act of a life of the cross as step by step He descended from the majesty and glory of equality with God to the fearsome moment when in anguish He cried, “My God! My God! Why hast Thou forsaken me?” Truly, as the scripture testifies, He was the Lamb “*slain from the foundation of the world*” (Rev. 13:8). No wooden cross there! The cross did not begin at Calvary!

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

The eternal cross in the heart of God, the eternal cross of Christ, now becomes your cross and you are crucified with Him, a participator in that same eternal death to all that is unlike God, to all that falls short of what God has chosen to be. I am crucified, nevertheless I do live, yet it’s not “I” that lives, but the Christ who lives in me! That is the power of the cross! The outer sense realm, the carnal, the vain, the fleshly, the passing, is placed upon that cross and crucified in order that the inner life of the spirit might find release. We only become holy as He is holy,

and pure as He is pure, when the cross becomes an eternal reality in our lives. When the cross is no longer an historical event to be claimed, or a doctrine, or a truth to be believed, but the cross is forever established in our heart, effectually working in the crucible of our experience, the cross in our heart will produce His nature within, the nature that willingly surrenders and cancels all that is not of Life, Light, and Love.

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

The inward man, however, is not perishing, he is not experiencing the cross; HE IS BEING RENEWED! “He that is *joined to the Lord* is ONE SPIRIT.” The spirit, the inward man, the real *you*, is not conformed to the image of God by death, but by union! Its condition is changed by **adding an ingredient**. His Spirit is added to **our** spirit. When *our spirit* is quickened by *His Spirit* we are born of the Spirit — brought alive again to God! The inner man is receiving quickening and being renewed. But the outer man is put to the cross and is dying! It was on the cross that Jesus poured out His blood (life, spirit) for the life of the world. That is the divine paradox! It is both death and life. I am crucified and I live. I am perishing and I am quickened. Something is taken away and something is added. It is divine chemistry! It is union by fusion! And an entirely NEW CREATION is the result!

"*I am being crucified*" is an alternate rendering of the Greek. The cross has very practical applications in our everyday lives. You see, my beloved, the Lord faithfully prepares the places, situations, circumstances, and experiences whereby our self-life is brought to the futility of itself and laid down. The cross is painful! This is no mystical, glorious experience by faith. The cross is the power of God working by actual crisis' in our lives whereby, like the prodigal son, we come to the end of *our self*, and we arise and go to the Father. When we forsake trust in the flesh and the way of the flesh, that the spirit might rule, death has been worked in us, releasing His life to be expressed as our life. We are crucified and we live! Aren't you glad!

We are moved to overcome self once the Holy Spirit powerfully reveals to us the nature and power of self. Self is the identity of the carnal mind. "To be carnally minded *is death*," the inspired apostle tells us. Self, when it is brought to its destination, then and there, self is death; but so long as self is acting, self is quite lively, and apparently deathless; but when self has been brought to its destination, then and there, when the cloak is pulled off of self, you will see plainly, self is death, and self has always been death, but has been dressed up in sheep's garments.

We overcome death by firstly overcoming self and every "self-opinionation" and establishing our consciousness in the recognition of God's presence, by denying self whole-heartedly, and living in the consciousness of God's presence. Oh, how wonderful to realize we can overcome self, and can do away with self, by subduing by the spirit our selfish tendencies, fancies, and pleasures; our selfish thoughts, ideas, concepts, and ways. When we put away these characteristics of our human, earthly, carnal mentality, we "mortify" or put to death self in our constitution. We then become a NEW CREATURE in reality by walking and living after the spirit rather than after the flesh!

Now God's called and chosen elect have come to the place in consciousness in this great process of salvation where we understand that the *mystery of self* is the *mystery of death*. The way we can rid ourselves of the last enemy, and overcome the last enemy, which is death, is by ridding ourselves of self, by denying our self, by taking up our cross unto the perishing of the outer man with his desires and demands, by gaining the victory over all our self nature. When this is accomplished completely, we will have victory over death, the last enemy! As it is written, "For to be *carnally minded is death*; but to be *spiritually minded is life*..."

Ah — "If any man will come after me," Jesus said, "let him deny himself..." We thought it meant deny the liquor store, deny the theater, deny the pool hall, deny the mini-skirt, deny communism, deny the church system and the antichrist. But ME? Sweet, precious little Me? Deny MYSELF? We would rather deny the liquor store and the antichrist than to deny OURSELF! But very little will be gained by self denial, unless we also take up our cross and follow Jesus! There is a dimension of the cross that lies beyond the mere crucifixion of our old nature. That is necessary, but there is also that aspect of the cross that involves that load, burden, pain, or sacrifice which could, if we choose, be laid aside, but which is willingly carried or endured for the sake of the Father's purposes and for creation. It is that which in the natural we *would* lay aside, but spurred on by the realization that there is no other way to fulfill God's plan and bring deliverance to the world, we willingly endure OUR CROSS.

Jesus didn't have to endure the cross! "Looking unto Jesus — who **for the joy that was set before Him, ENDURED THE CROSS, despising the shame**" (Heb. 12:2). Even on the night He was taken, He declared that He could yet, at that late hour, pray to the Father, and He would send more than twelve legions of angels to rescue Jesus from such a fate! (Mat. 26:53-54). The Father would have honored His

prayer! He went to the cross because He had purposed in His heart to fulfill the scriptures, and to deliver creation from the tyranny of sin, sickness, sorrow, limitation, and death, *through the cross*.

Why did the love of Christ lead Him to the cross? Because nowhere in Him did SELF rise up and say, "I have had enough of it." Nowhere in Him could self say, "I should not have to suffer so much," or "I should not have to give so much." When Judas betrayed Him, there was no place in Him where self could rise up and say, "I trusted this man to be the treasurer, and now he has sold me down the river." Or when Peter denied Him, "I gave him the keys to the kingdom, and now he denies me!" He could truly say, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" (Jn. 14:30). There was no ground in Him where the carnal mind could do its work. The path of sonship is truly one of denying ourselves, submitting to the cross as the Lord applies it to our lives, and following Him all the way. The road to mount Zion passes through the hill of Golgotha. This is a WALK which requires all that we have and all that we are.

There is no place where self is a more cunning and deceitful devil than in the realm of our SPIRITUAL LIFE. Volumes have been written on the crucified life — the surrender of our will to God, of becoming nothing, that He might become everything. I am sure that some of my readers have sung the little chorus that expresses this beautifully:

“Lord, take me and break me until I’m
nothing,

And make me and mold me until I’m
something;

Then take me and use me for your glory

Until all that I am is You.”

Moses partook of this spirit when he turned away from the throne of Egypt to identify himself with his brethren, a race of slaves, that he might through suffering and sacrifice bring deliverance to them all.

Paul demonstrated the same determination when he left his place in the Sanhedren to join the despised and persecuted followers of Jesus, that he might not be disobedient to the heavenly vision, and that he might bring salvation to the Gentiles. He was following hard after Jesus, BEARING HIS CROSS, when he declared, “I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that **bonds and afflictions abide me**. But none of these things move me, **neither count I my life dear unto myself**, so that I might...testify the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:22-24).

But taking up the cross is not enough. It must be taken up *daily*! That is what Jesus said. And by that we know the cross is more than the crucifixion two thousand years ago! That only lasted part of one day! The cross must be taken up willingly, and carried faithfully, without complaining. It is easy to make a consecration in a meeting, during the heat of an inspiring consecration call — but that has nothing to do with taking up our cross *daily* and following Jesus! Christ never took a vacation from His cross! His whole life and ministry, from the manger to the tomb, was a daily bearing of the burden of the call to sonship.

When Jesus came to earth He died to all that He was as God to become a man. But when He came to the Jordan He died again — He died to all that He was as a man to be the Son of God! When He went down into the watery grave of John’s baptism to “fulfill all righteousness,” He offered there all the capabilities, potentials, ambitions, desires, and talents He possessed *as a man*, bringing all to the cross, surrendering completely to the Father, reserving nothing for Himself, a burnt offering, a sweet smelling savor unto God! Finally, Jesus

died to all that He was as a Son, that He might live again in the glory He had with the Father before the world was — the incorruptible, eternal, unlimited dimension of **SPIRIT**. For when Jesus was crucified, risen, and ascended, He returned to the FATHER, to the SPIRIT, where He now dwells in the life that is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. He ascended up far above all heavens THAT HE MIGHT FILL ALL THINGS! (Eph. 4:10).

Our Lord died to all that He was as God to become a man. He died to all that He was as a man to become a Son. And He died to all that He was as a Son to be revealed in the glory of the Father! His crucifixion was the *continual laying down* of SELF, and the outpouring of LIFE. It meant dying to everything in every realm that was anything LESS THAN GOD. For us it pioneered the way of victory over the flesh, over the ego, over the human consciousness, over the Adamic value of life, which is also victory over sin, sickness, sorrow, limitation, and death.

The cross was not an accident which came to Jesus at the end of life. He was born, and lived, and died under the shadow of the cross. He knew it was there all the time, but never once did He shun the cross. Never once did He fail to take up His cross *daily*. There was never a day that He could say, “This day is my own. Today I will do my will. I will go about my Father’s business again tomorrow.” Never an experience came into His life of which He could say, “This is mine to enjoy. The will of the Father must wait until this is over. Then I will continue on in my calling.” Even in His times of sorrow He could not say, “My own grief is so great. It is only right that now I should be comforted! Let them minister unto me, now.”

To the eyes of the world it would seem that it was only on that dark night of Calvary that “He went forth, bearing His cross.” But He had been bearing His cross all His life! He had been bearing His cross before ever His baby ears heard the lowing of the cattle in the stable of His birth. He had been bearing His cross in Nazareth, the place of no good

thing, as there He grew in the knowledge of the Father and His plan. He had been bearing His cross as He went forth among the people, poor, despised, lonely, misunderstood, ridiculed — willingly, that He might bring many sons unto glory! He paid the price! And we are paying the price today as we follow in His steps, forsaking all that we might apprehend that for which Christ also has apprehended us. The world may not see nor understand your cross and mine. But each of us has his own cross. And *God sees!* And he that loses his life for the sake of Christ, the same shall *save it* (Mk. 8:35). This is life more abundant — the life of SONSHIP! The life of sublime purpose! The life of transcendent power! The life of eternal glory!

Many years ago brother Bill Britton sent out a couple selected items whose message is just as true and fresh today as it was then. I do not know who was the original author of these, but I share them for your edification.

DYING TO SELF

When you are forgotten, or neglected, or purposely set at naught, and you don't sting or hurt with the insult or the oversight, but your heart is happy, being counted worthy to suffer with Christ — THAT IS DYING TO SELF.

When your good is evil spoken of, when your wishes are crossed, your advice disregarded, your opinions ridiculed, and you refuse to let anger rise in your heart, or even defend yourself, but take it all in patient and loving silence — THAT IS DEATH TO SELF.

When you lovingly and patiently bear any disorder, any irregularity, any impunctuality, or any annoyance; when you can stand

face to face with waste, folly, extravagance, spiritual insensibility...and endure it as Jesus endured it — THAT IS DYING TO SELF.

When you are content with any food, any offering, any raiment, any climate, any society, any solitude, any interruption of the will of God — THAT IS DYING TO SELF.

When you never care to refer to yourself in conversation, or to record your own good works, or itch after commendation, when you can truly love to be unknown — THAT IS DYING TO SELF.

When you can see your brother prosper and have his needs met, and can honestly rejoice with him in spirit and feel no envy nor question God, while your own needs are far greater and in desperate circumstances — THAT IS DYING TO SELF.

When you can receive correction and reproof from one of less stature than yourself, and can humbly submit inwardly as well as outwardly, finding no rebellion or resentment rising up within your heart — THAT IS DYING TO SELF!

THE PADDED CROSS

Some unknown author wrote the following:

“Well, here I am Lord. You said, ‘Take up your cross,’ and I’m here to do it. It’s not easy, you know, this self-denial thing. I mean to go through with it though, Lord. I’ll bet you wish more people were willing to be disciples like me. I’ve counted the cost and surrendered my life and...it is not an easy road.

“Do you mind if I look over these crosses? I’d kind of like a new one. I’m not fussy, you understand, but a disciple has to be relevant these days. I was wondering...are there any that are vinyl padded? I’m thinking of attracting others, you see. And if I could show them a

comfortable cross I am sure I could win a lot more. Got to keep up with the population explosion and all. And I need something durable so I can treasure it always. Oh, is there one that's sort of flat so it would fit under my coat? One should not be too obvious.

"Funny, there doesn't seem to be much choice here. Just that coarse, rough wood. I mean, that would hurt! Don't you have something more distinctive, Lord? I can tell you right now, none of my friends are going to be impressed by this shoddy workmanship! They'll think I'm a nut or something! And my family would be mortified!

"What's that? It is either one of these or forget the whole thing? But Lord, I want to be your disciple! I mean, just being with you, that is all that counts, but life has to have a balance too... But you don't understand, nobody lives that way today! Who is going to be attracted by this self-denial bit? I want to, but let's not overdo it! Start getting radical like this and they'll haul me off to the funny farm — know what I mean?

"I mean, being a disciple is challenging and exciting and I want to do it but I have some rights, you know! Now let's see. No blood, O.K.? I just can't stand the thought of that, Lord.

"Lord? Lord!

"Now where do you suppose He went?"

One might soar high on the sweet wine of revelation and understand all the mysteries of how the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, how they shall sit on thrones, how they shall judge the world and angels in the age and the ages to come, how they shall deliver the creation from the bondage of corruption, and this is all truth, for it is a pure vision which shall be fulfilled. But I cannot be too forceful in my effort to show you, beloved ones, that long before a man ever

partakes of such marvelous realities, he will have been thoroughly dealt with by the hand of God, the self-life being abased before the Lord, every rock of pride and every root of self-ascendancy purged out, so that our only desire will be to see the LORD glorified! Before we share His throne we will have learned quite well what the Spirit meant when He inspired the man of wisdom to pen these significant words: “He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his own spirit than he that taketh a city” (Prov. 16:32).

Learning to rule one’s own spirit is not easy, in fact it requires that our spirit be joined to His Spirit, so that we are fortified and strengthened in the inner man, and thus able to gain control over all our impulses and emotions. The varied dispositions of human nature are not easily bridled or broken; the restlessness, the defensiveness, the quick reactions to pressures, frustration, and anger; fear, worry, hurt, and self-assertion all must be overcome, conquered, rendered inactive by the overwhelming reign of HIS LIFE within. Many like to govern others, issue orders, call the shots, manipulate, control what is going on about them, in the church, etc., while they cannot bridle their own thoughts, attitudes, moods, and emotions, nor crucify the lusts and passions of their own flesh.

The Amalekites were an ancient and nomadic marauding people who lived in the southern part of the land God promised to Abraham. When Moses was leading the children of Israel through the wilderness toward their promised land, the Amalekites attacked them with a vengeance at Rephidim. The Lord took note of their unprovoked fury poured out upon His people, and there is a scripture that says, “The Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation” (Ex. 17:16). When the scripture says “from generation to generation” we generally think this means it will last forever. But just because God said “from generation to generation”

does not mean that there will not be a time when God will say, “It is over now; I will make an end of Amalek.”

When the kingdom was ushered in and Saul was anointed king of Israel, the Lord spoke to Saul through the prophet Samuel, saying, “Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and *utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass*” (1 Sam. 15:2-3). Saul gathered together a great army, attacked the Amalekites, and conquered them. God gave a great victory! Saul did not, however, obey the word of the Lord. He did indeed destroy all the people, but he took king Agag alive. He also saved the very best of all the sheep, oxen, and lambs to offer as a thank-you offering unto the Lord! But the Lord was not pleased with this. He was angry with Saul, and Samuel said to him, “Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, *to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.*” Because of this disobedience the Lord wrested the kingdom from the house of Saul and gave it to David!

Amalek represents the flesh. We know that there must come a time in the ushering in of the kingdom in our lives when our continual warfare with Amalek, the flesh, must once and for all come to an end. The Amalek problem must be settled! It is not going to plague us forever! Yes, we have had war, the flesh wars against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. Not only have we experienced this warfare within ourselves, but in every move of the Spirit, in every fresh realm that we have moved into in our progression into God, we found that Amalek was there, there was conflict, the flesh rose up and sought to rule, and there has been war from generation to generation. But there comes a time in the ushering in of the kingdom of God when the thrones

are being set up and the Lord brings forth a kingship in His people so that the Amalek problem is dealt with.

You see, my beloved, in dealing with Amalek, the flesh, it is the preserving of the *good* that is the snare! Yes, Saul destroyed all the bad, all the vile and corrupt, but he wanted to save king Agag and the good! May God teach us in these days that in the destruction of Amalek it is the destruction of the *good* as well as the *bad* that He is after! God is moving on in this hour! As He brings us into our sonship He is causing us to take stands and positions, not against the bad of the flesh simply, but against things that are good. Of course, if you stand against things that are good and were started by God, formed by God, ordained by God, and blessed by God, it appears as if you are an instrument of the devil out to destroy the work of God! But God said once, "That which I plant, I will pluck up" (Jer. 1:9-10; 18:6-10). I rejoiced for years because I saw that "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath *not* planted, shall be rooted up" (Mat. 15:13). Now we must rejoice when we see God pluck up that which He *has* planted!

The Lord declared, "That which I build, I will destroy." We are to rejoice when we see God destroy that which He built! Unless God has done a work in our spirits by the Holy Ghost, we cannot believe that. We think that God only destroys the corrupt harlot system of religion. But our concept is that if God built it, the only one out to destroy it is the devil! But God says, "I will destroy." May these days in which we now stand be the time when all God's called and chosen elect are prepared to lose the good as well as the bad, prepared to see God pluck up that for which we have given our life to see it planted, where we see God break down and destroy that for which we have sold ourselves out, which is LESS THAN WHAT GOD IS AFTER! When God has planted something, after a while we become idolatrous about it. Idolatry is really the self-life projecting itself into it so that it turns into an idol, because we cherish the thing God has done in us above obedience to God when He

says it is now time to move on. We want to preserve it, memorialize it, make it an offering unto the Lord, because it is the very *best*. We don't understand sometimes that when we cling to what God *has done* at the expense of what He *is doing*, that which was started in the spirit winds up in the flesh! It may appear to be *very good flesh*, but it still pertains to the kingdom of Amalek.

Most of us have no problem as to our bad, we know the flesh and all that it represents must go to the cross. But all of us have areas in our lives which we think are good: a devotion, a commitment, a consecration, a faith, a knowledge of the word, a form of worship, a way of gathering, which are as much "self" as the bad temper, the wrong attitude, the sharp tongue, the worldliness, the lust, and the rest of it. God is saying that everything must go! All that falls short of His fullness and perfection, all that would be immortalized and perpetuated in our lives on a realm less than His ultimate purpose, must be brought to the cross. That which is left will only be Christ Himself being formed in us!