

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 143

THE DRAGON, THE WOMAN, AND THE MANCHILD (continued)

"And the great dragon was *cast out*...he was *cast out into the earth*, and his angels were cast out with him" (Rev. 12:9).

Throughout the book of Revelation we have seen the great truth that almost all the events in the book take place in one of three dimensions: HEAVEN, EARTH, and SEA. These are, of course, symbolical and prophetic terms! They represent states of being, life-styles, levels of consciousness, and dimensions of life within each of us. The *lowest* of these three realms is the sea. Throughout the book a number of things transpire in the *sea*. "And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the *sea*: and the third part of the *sea* became blood." "I stood upon the sand of the *sea*, and I saw a beast rise up out of the *sea*, having seven heads and ten horns." "And the *sea* gave up the dead that were in it." "Woe to the inhabitants of the *sea*, for the devil is come down unto you."

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

No one can dispute the fact that it is this restless, turbulent, raging, evil heart of the fleshly man that inspires every wicked and devilish perversion, and has filled the world with ever increasing confusion, faithlessness, immorality, falsehood, fraud, hatred, violence, greed, cruelty, strife, wars, bloodshed, and oppression. Ah, the *sea* is the *lowest realm* on earth, and this vast sea of fleshly, Adamic humanity represents mankind at his lowest point — as bad off as man can be! Individually, however, it speaks of the lowest aspect of our human nature and life — the *body* with its passions and lusts. The sea represents the physical, animal desires and impulses that are restless, driving, compelling, and raging out of control!

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

On the individual level the earth speaks of the *soul* — mind, will, emotion. It is an intellectual and even religious realm, but also the realm of the carnal or natural mind. Out of this realm comes our organized society, law and order, charities, good works, even good religious works which are deemed spiritual, but which do not originate out of the spirit. The man who walks in this realm of “earth” is that good neighbor of yours, a nice fellow, a good person, who wouldn’t cheat or lie to you or misuse you in any way, in fact, he may be helpful, caring, and compassionate. He may attend First Methodist or St. Mary’s Church; he may be a Sunday School teacher, a deacon, or board member; he is socially and religiously active, a God-honoring, flag-waving man, but has never ascended into the heavenlies and does not live out of a heavenly dimension. You can’t accuse him of any gross sin, or any wicked or ungodly act, but if you start talking to him in a spiritual realm he will look at you like you came from Mars. He has absolutely no idea, not the foggiest notion, of what you are talking about! The things that are real and glorious to you simply don’t compute! He doesn’t live in the sea, BUT NEITHER HAS HE BEEN TO HEAVEN!

The biblical expression, “the natural man,” refers to the “earth dwellers” and is rendered more accurately by many versions as “the *unspiritual* man.” The word “natural” is translated from the Greek word *psychicos*, which comes from the root *psyche* or soul. The words *psychology* and *psychiatry* also stem from the same root. *Psychicos*, then, is the *soulish* man or the *intellectual* man. In speaking of the natural or unspiritual man, the scriptures refer to the individual who is governed by his soul-life, or, to be more explicit: *self*. His behavior and actions are dictated by his intellect, reasoning, and soulful emotions. Because the soulful man is influenced and controlled by faculties which are not spiritual, he cannot accept what is of the Spirit. In fact, the things of the Spirit are to him sheer folly, nonsense, extreme, fanciful, and fanatical. They neither appeal to his emotions nor can they be understood by his rational mind. The soulful Christian substitutes reason for revelation; sentimentalism for spirituality; and rules, regulations, traditions, rituals, sacraments, pageantry, and programs for the inward living word of God by the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

Both the “heaven” and the “earth” dimensions exist in the visible church today. The “heavenly” people are those who cannot be content with a spiritual *status quo*. These are those who find themselves moved within their spirits to seek out the hidden things of God — who find a holy unrest and discontent within their hearts as they hear the inward call of the spirit to “come up higher.” These are those who seek God in the spirit, not in organizational structures; in the living voice of God, not in philosophical traditions; in wisdom and revelation, rather than creedal knowledge; in humility and holy brokenness, rather than in grandiose programs and promotions which make a splash and receive recognition in the eyes of men.

The “earth dwellers” have heard no such call. They toddle about in the clothes of spiritual immaturity, feeding on the milk of the word, unable to see beyond the grandiose schemes and promotions of well-meaning but misguided infant spiritual leaders. They have not recognized that the work of God is in the deep, inward move of the spirit, nor do they comprehend that the church systems of man are but the world’s methods garbed in religious garments. The heavenly man, on the other hand, has discerned the shallowness of all religious things and understands that they do not, in reality, promote the kingdom of God, but hinder it. Deep within the spirit of every spiritual man is a response to the call to self-denial as the avenue to power with God. There is a moving within to truly follow on to *know the Lord* in all His glorious and eternal reality!

The heavenly man thinks *spiritually*. He who is of the earth thinks *naturally*. What is birthed in man’s mind are images which are literal and tangible, of the physical realm to which the natural man is limited. He sees heaven as sky and space, and earth as soil and rock. He sees God as a personage sitting on a literal throne and Jesus as a man sitting at His right hand. He sees “many mansions” as physical buildings in a place beyond the galaxies, and the New Jerusalem as a literal golden city with streets, trees, and a river. He sees God’s kingdom as a government established in Jerusalem, Israel or in London, England with Jesus and the saints occupying thrones there. He sees hell as a physical place with real fire and people in bodies tormented in the flames forever. He sees angels as creatures with wings. He sees the millennium as a period of one-thousand earth years. But to the heavenly, spiritual man, *all things have become new* and he *beholds in the spirit the DIVINE AND SPIRITUAL REALITIES BEHIND AND BEYOND ALL THE SYMBOLS AND SHADOWS!*

The *highest* of the three realms is *heaven*. This is the highest dimension of life, the dimension of *spirit*. Those who live out of the spirit are spiritual and heavenly! The Greek word for heaven is *ouranous* meaning **elevation, height, exaltation, eminence**. It has both physical and spiritual applications. The natural, soulish, earth man sees only the physical application, whereas the spiritual, heavenly man sees the spiritual reality. In its spiritual sense heaven bespeaks the eternal, invisible, and omnipresent *realm of the spirit* in which God and all celestial beings dwell — *far above* the realm of the physical, material, earthly, and corruptible. We shall still remember with a smile Zona Gale's parable of the tadpole: "What!" exclaimed tadpole to tadpole. "Do you mean that when you put your nose above water, there is actually something *else* than water to breathe? Absurd!" Let tadpoles chatter — there *is* a realm higher than this earth-realm! It is neither a geographical nor an astral location. It is not a planet, a galaxy, or a place. It is a **DIMENSION OF LIFE, REALITY, AND BEING**. It is a **SPHERE OF EXISTENCE, A PLANE OF CONSCIOUSNESS**. Every spirit life-form lives on a plane of spiritual awareness. Each of these planes constitutes a "heaven," a spiritual realm *above the physical*.

Heaven is all around us! It is as near as the air we breathe, closer to us even than the blood coursing through our veins. We are one with it, conscious in it, by virtue of our spiritual life. "He that is joined to the Lord *is one spirit*." We touch heaven as we touch God in our spirit. We behold heavenly things as with our spiritual mind we perceive and behold spiritual realities. We walk in heaven as we walk *in the spirit*. We think as celestial beings when we think and know by the *mind of Christ*. We act heavenly when we live by *divine nature*. Heaven is, furthermore, the realm of God's government — His infinite authority and almighty power. The kingdom is rooted *in our spirit*, the heavenly dimension of our life. As the Lord Jesus made known to us, "*The kingdom of God is **within you**.*"

No word written or spoken could hold more truth in this regard than the word of the apostle Paul wherein he speaks of "the power which God exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand *in the heavens, far above* all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come" (Eph. 1:20-21). These wonderful terms used by Paul are figures of speech. God is *omnipresent spirit* — He doesn't physically *sit* on anything! Nor does He physically have a *right hand*! It means that Christ is raised up permanently into that **highest spiritual realm** where He has all power and authority! The "throne" spoken of in other scriptures refers to His **omnipotent power**. So now we know where Christ ascended. **HE ASCENDED INTO THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION OF SUPREME AUTHORITY AND ALMIGHTY POWER!** And He sits there even as He dwells in your heart and also fills all things!

Then Paul makes a remarkable statement. He says, "And He ***raised us up together with Him*** and ***made us sit down together with Him in the heavenly sphere***" (Eph. 2:6, Amplified). It will be a blessed day for us when God makes it clear to our hearts that we have *already* been raised up and given joint seating with Christ *in the very same heavens* where He is enthroned with His Father! **YOU ARE WHERE HE IS!** And you didn't have to leave planet earth to get there — it happened *in your spirit*! Jesus didn't ascend up into a *place*, He ascended into a higher dimension of consciousness and reality in the spirit. That is the true heaven — not visionary mansions, golden streets, or a flowing river out of the throne. The "earth dwellers" have no idea where the true heaven is, what heaven is, or *where we are dwelling* even while we stand right there before them! Therefore they exist in the consciousness of a lower realm out of which they think, walk, act, and live.

May I point out once more that when John beheld the dragon and his angels ***cast out of heaven, cast into the earth***, the apostle wasn't seeing the fall of Satan in the swirling mists of antiquity. Rather, John in the spirit beheld that fall of Satan that could only come when **the manchild company is caught up unto God and to His throne!** The truth is just this. It is only through the kingdom ministry of *Jesus* and His *many brethren* that Satan falls as lightning from heaven! There is no other fall of Satan in all the pages of God's holy Book! When the devils were subject to Jesus and His disciples at the preaching of the kingdom of God, Jesus saw the mystery of the kingdom unfolding before His eyes. The devils were subject to Him because the firstborn Son of God had already cast Satan down from the heavens of His life. Therefore He had authority over the devil's kingdom in both the heavens and the earth! The ministry of the firstborn Son is the proto-type of the ministry of the son-company in preparation in this very hour! The woman church has not been able to cast Satan down from their heavens, thus he continues to operate in their spiritual realms. It

is through the authority of *sonship ministry* that Satan is cast out of the heavens of his power. Only the sons of God can dethrone Satan! That is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth!

My next thought has already been expressed so aptly by brother Elwin Roach that I will simply quote his words. "It must be clear by now that this is a spiritual war, one on one, and such an enemy will not relent. But the day will come when there will be a mass assault upon the sons of God, and please be assured — *if we cannot run today with the footmen, how then can we contend with the horses?* (Jer. 12:5). If, however, we are not wearied with the individual footmen in our lives, and we rise to the occasion and cast the serpent out of those little hills and rout out the demons of their heavens, we shall do well in that great day when the dragon and all his angels are cast out. Yet, we must know that the greatest victory comes in casting them out of our own heavens, especially the dragon of religion and the demons of dogma. It is then that *salvation*, and *power*, and the *authority of Christ and His kingdom* will forever be known. It is then we can descend into the earth and move mountains! Once our heavens are made secure, once the dragon and his hoards have no longer a seat of authority, we who *ascended* to the throne can then *descend* and shake the earth! Our presence will ignite everything that can be kindled. The mountains of men — flesh, carnality, humanism, legalism, and all the rest — shall burn and tremble in the presence of *Heaven's Descenders, God's Holy Angels*. We can see it as being akin to mount Sinai when the Lord *descended* upon it."

NOW IS COME...

"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, *Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down*" (Rev. 12:10).

Yet, this victory is accomplished only through *warfare!* "And there was *war in heaven*: Michael and his angels *fought* against the dragon; and the dragon *fought* with his angels." We must not think of this "war in heaven" as a battle fought in some far-off heaven away back before the dawn of creation. If we have been deceived by the false doctrines of religious Babylon we may receive the impression that such is the battle presented, and that Satan and his angels rebelled against God and God employed the good and holy angels to expel them from heaven. But this explanation is soon proven to be impossible if we only consider what the text actually says. The great voice in heaven, or the revelation of the spirit within ourselves, tells us of the *result* of this spiritual battle. It tells us that *now* the salvation and the power of the kingdom of God have come, that the authority of *His Christ* has appeared (Rev. 12:9-10) — things which surely could not be said immediately following a rebellion of Satan and his angels in some pre-historical time! "Now is come," that is, *now has appeared, now has been revealed, THE SALVATION AND THE POWER AND THE AUTHORITY OF HIS CHRIST!* This is the *result* of the war in heaven and the casting down of the dragon!

As soon as the dragon is cast out of our heaven it is said, "NOW *is come...*" Let us UNDERSTAND! In that blessed moment when the accuser of the "brethren" of our Lord is cast out of the heaven of our spiritual understanding and experience there is immediately a realization that says, "NOW...not today, not tomorrow, but *right now is come* "salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: *for the accuser of our brethren is cast down!*" In other words, the kingdom of God, the righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost is fully manifest in us because the old mentality of sin consciousness, doubt, questionings, and the temptation to misuse the power and glory given to us in sonship is completely eradicated from our thought processes, desires, emotions, inclinations, and value system.

My heart sings a thousand hallelujahs, for now in our heavens is heard a *loud voice* proclaiming that now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ. Oh, yes, a LOUD VOICE! It is a powerful proclamation, an inward knowing beyond question or dispute. And the voice of the dragon is not heard in our heaven anymore! Your spiritual man, Christ in you, cannot hear the voice of the dragon. Now he is heard only on earth, for he has been cast out into the earth. He is heard only by the carnal mind of men who walk after the flesh. But in heaven, whose voice? *The voice of the Son of God!* His is the loud voice, the powerful word proclaiming our triumph!

Once Satan is cast out of the heaven where our spiritual life reigns we see all things as they really are and there is no more condemnation. Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we're *free at last!* That is what evokes the proclamation, "NOW is come *salvation!*" Someone says, "But I thought we already had

salvation!” We do, but the salvation mentioned as now impending refers not to salvation from the guilt of sin but to salvation in the sense of deliverance and completion of God’s transforming work in us. Salvation means total and complete deliverance, health, wholeness, soundness, victory — incorruptible life! Peter wrote about this *full salvation*. “Who are kept by the power of God through faith *unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time*” (I Pet. 1:5). The Amplified Bible says it so beautifully, “Who are being guarded by God’s power through your faith *till you fully inherit that final salvation that is ready to be revealed for you in the last time.*”

“NOW is come *strength!*” The reference to strength (Gr., *dunamis, power*) implies that God is going to strengthen His sons and manifest the fullness of HIS OMNIPOTENT POWER in and through them. No more weakness, no more susceptibility to the wiles of the devil, for we have overcome him — we are truly *overcomers!* There is to be a revelation of the fullness of the power of God now invested in the firstborn Son of God who testified, “*ALL POWER is given unto me, in heaven and in earth.*” This time, His power will be revealed through His body to set mankind free from the power of sin and death, bringing deliverance and restoration to the world!

“NOW is come the *kingdom of our God!*” where there is no lack, no imperfection, no fear, no torment, no bondage, no sickness, sorrow, pain, or death! The kingdom of God is more narrow in scope than the region over which God rules as Sovereign. At all times and in all circumstances God has dominion. He is Lord of ALL. Even evil men and vile deeds in their worst expressions are under His sway and scepter. Satan is a servant of God as an adversary to challenge us so that we may grow stronger in the Lord. Yet wicked men have not entered into the kingdom of God! Neither has Satan, though he does God’s bidding, been translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son. All men are subject to God’s *sovereignty* — if He willed them to be changed at this time or to be gone, they would be gone! But when we come to the *kingdom*, the scriptures speak of a “calling” to the kingdom of God, of “entering” into it, of its being “shut” or of people being “cast out” from it, of its being “sought,” “given,” “possessed,” “received,” and “inherited.”

The kingdom of God is limited to that domain where God’s *saving power* has defeated all opposition, broken down every wall, transformed all that is contrary to God’s nature, mind, and will, and has brought men into willing submission to His authority. Where the nature of God and the mind of Christ have mightily conquered, the state of things is called *the kingdom of God*. Where hearts are changed, where sin and error and darkness have been defeated, where truth and righteousness advance, where the will and ways of God are raised up as reality and life in a people, where the mind of Christ rules out of union with God — *there* the kingdom of God *is come!* In the kingdom it is no longer God ruling *over you* by sovereignty, but the life, mind, heart, nature, power, wisdom, knowledge, and will of God *entering into you, becoming your very own reality*. Can you not see the mystery? As soon as the dragon is cast out of our heavens a loud voice proclaims, “**NOW IS COME THE KINGDOM OF OUR GOD!**” It is indeed wonderful!

According to the good pleasure of His will the purpose of God from eternity focused on the kingdom. A kingdom not of this world, a kingdom not of men blindly ruled and over-ruled by the unobserved sovereignty of an unknown God, but a reign in the hearts of willing and loyal subjects. The story is told of a king who was famous for his abhorrence of waste — so it was quite surprising when he came into the room where his aides were assembled carrying a breathtakingly beautiful pearl in his hands. Showing it to the first of his aides, he asked, “What do you think this pearl is worth?” “Oh, many trunks full of gold, your majesty,” he replied. The king said, “Smash it!” “It would be an insult to the king to destroy such a beautiful pearl,” replied the aide. The king turned to a second man and showed him the pearl. “How much do you think this pearl is worth?” he asked. “One cannot put a price tag on such a beautiful pearl as this,” replied the second man. “Smash it!” said the king. “Such senseless destruction is unthinkable,” replied the second aide. The king turned to a third man. He was a humble laborer who, in return for a kindness he had shown the king, had been invited to live in the palace. “What do you think this pearl is worth?” he asked the man. “More than all the gold I have ever seen in my entire life,” he replied. “Smash it!” said the king. Without a moment’s hesitation, this man took the pearl to where there were two large rocks and in an instant, reduced the pearl to a thimbleful of useless dust. “The man is mad!” cried the others in the room. Holding up his hand to quiet the murmurs, the laborer said, “Which is of greater value; a beautiful pearl or *obedience to the king’s command?*”

The kingdom of God that I am proclaiming today is composed of that company of elect sons of God who have aligned themselves with God; who listen to His voice, who put on His mind, who obey His commands, who walk in His nature, who do His will and carry out His divine purpose in the heavens and on the earth. They are the loyal subjects of His kingdom and ever do His bidding. Their King is the Lord God Almighty and He is also their Father. They obey without question; for it is their nature to do only and always those things that please the Father! They are the true citizens of the kingdom of God. They are first under His rule and authority, but they are ambassadors of that divine kingdom. They are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ! They are destined to share His glory and sit with Him upon His throne! They are the members of the government of God and the kingdom of heaven is expressed through them, and the power and the glory of the kingdom is being committed into their hands for the age and the ages to come!

This is the kingdom Jesus came and announced, taught, personified, demonstrated, and brought into reality among men. Are all Christians in the kingdom of God? Perhaps you have heard someone say, "All Christians have Jesus as Saviour, but not all have Him as Lord." A young boy might put it this way: "I am the son of my father, but I don't want him to tell me what to do." The kingdom of God in its simplest definition means that JESUS CHRIST IS LORD! He must be Lord *in* us, and He must be Lord *through* us. This is the mark of sonship! This is the power of the kingdom! Of those sons of God who cast Satan out of the heavens of their minds and hearts it can now be said, "NOW is come the kingdom of our God!" These sons are themselves the embodiment, revelation, expression, and manifestation of the kingdom. If you have seen them, you have seen the kingdom, for they *are* the kingdom. The kingdom comes to pass in them when the dragon is cast out of their heavens! They become the government of God prepared to reign with Christ, to subdue and restore all things to God. The final thing they must subdue *within themselves* is the great red dragon!

"NOW is come the *power of His Christ!*" Oh, how the world needs that! I often think of this when I observe the feverish activity of the church world. We live in a world of aggressive and high-powered leadership. Men are enamored in the religious world with big organization and great projects. That the machinery has become too heavy is due to the fact that men are operating it with human labor, fleshly strength, and carnal means instead of running it with power from above. They are filled with doctrine and program, tradition and church activity, ceremonies, rituals, entertainment, soulful excitement, sensational hype, and lying signs and wonders, and though they profess it to be Christ's work, they would not know Christ if they met Him on the street. Oh, let us awake from such vanities and come to know HIM in the *power of His resurrection!* The powers of heaven are at our disposal for they are *our Father's powers* and we are the sons of His love. And God *does* have a plan for the salvation and deliverance of all humanity!

Earth's power is very helpless power. Ah, yes, Jesus has real power — "power over *all flesh*, that He should give eternal life *to as many as the Father has given Him*" (Jn. 17:2). Other men spoke and their words died with their echo: Jesus spoke and His words shook the world. Other men died martyr deaths and were not long remembered; He died, and His cross now stands against every skyline. He is the true King, THE MAN WHO CAN. He has power, the *power of God's Christ!* Because all the earth is His, and because Jesus is King of kings, God is raising up the body of the Christ, a Royal, Kingly Priesthood, sons of the God of heaven to reign in mighty spirit power and authority over the earth, not to be little human dictators, but with an outflow of life, and light, and love, that God may indwell men by His Spirit and live and rule in them in power and great glory. The kingly nature in us is not to dominate other men's lives, but to deal with and break the power of self-hood and rebellion and sin and death and the devil that men may be restored into God again. Kings have power and authority, priests reconcile in mercy and love. Kings and priests — these are *God's Christ!* God's Royal Priesthood shall reveal to all realms the awesome POWER OF GOD'S LOVE AND GOODNESS until all are made one in Him. When the dragon is cast out of our heavens, then *is come THE POWER OF GOD'S CHRIST!* Ah, we are ready, as Jesus was when He came up out of the wilderness of temptation, to come in *the power of the Spirit!* We are prepared to begin our sonship ministry, to go forth and do exploits, to do the greater works, and deliver creation from the bondage of corruption! NOW all of this and much more *is come!*

Let us return to our thought. The church systems tell us this scene is about Lucifer being cast out of heaven before the foundation of the world. But listen, my friend, at that time there was as yet no manifest

salvation! There was as yet no manifestation of the authority of God's Christ! But there is more. The devil is here called "accuser of our brethren," and there were no "many sons brought to glory" to be "accused" in that supposed long-ago day! It is in that connection that this battle is fought! It is also as "accuser of our brethren" that the great dragon is cast out and his place is found *no more* in heaven! Yet, all through the Bible, after Lucifer was supposedly cast out of heaven, Satan is seen again and again *in heaven*! So it could not be this battle in chapter twelve of the revelation. The same great voice announces the wonderful truth that these "messengers of Michael" who fight against the dragon, who are also "our brethren," overcame the great red dragon "*by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony: and they loved not their lives unto the death*" (Rev. 12:11). Surely any thinking mind can see that none of this has anything whatever to do with some supposed "battle in heaven" before men walked this earth! Think about it!

THE DRAGON, THE ANCIENT SERPENT, THE DEVIL, AND SATAN

"And the *great dragon* was cast out, that *ancient serpent*, called the *Devil and Satan*..." (Rev. 12:9).

The great accuser is given a fourfold name revealing the fourfold characteristics of his nature, working, and power. He is called in this verse "the dragon," "the serpent," "the devil," and "Satan." "The great red dragon" carries with it the thought of monstrosity and by the description of his activity indicates a *devourer, fierceness, and wrath*. In the word "serpent" there is the idea of *cunning, slyness, seducer, deceiver, and traducer*. It is not the thought of monstrosity and fierceness showing itself in a public way, but diplomacy working undercover and accomplishing his objectives underhandedly, "the wiles of the devil" by which he "deceiveth the whole world." The word "devil" means an adversary who seeks to destroy through *slander and accusation*.

In the word "Satan" we have the thought of an *adversary*, an *opponent*, or a *resister*. There is no thought of monstrosity, cunning, or slander — but simply *opposition*. One of the fundamental laws of creation is that an OPPOSING FORCE is necessary for growth, and to produce strength, stamina, and endurance. Any living thing that grows up without any opposition is weak and powerless. A plant that grows in a greenhouse sheltered from the winds and rains, pampered day after day, may grow large and beautiful, but it is inherently weak, and if suddenly exposed to the elements will wither and die. But a plant that is constantly exposed to the fierce winds and pounding rains, burning heat and chilling cold, is strong and not easily destroyed. God's MANIFEST SONS must be strong and powerful, and anything that desires to be strong, or anyone, must wrestle with a force that is contrary to them. Any man who wants to develop muscular power to be strong, must spend weeks and months and years in vigorous training doing heavy exercises, lifting heavy weights, using the OPPOSING FORCE of gravity to DEVELOP HIS STRENGTH.

So it is with us as human beings. One who grows up in a sheltered environment, who is coddled and pampered all his life, grows up a weak, spineless individual. *Adversity* builds strength of character. If we were never exposed to trials and tribulations, we would grow up weak indeed! The more we are exposed to *adverse* circumstances, the more we have to wrestle with our environment, the more we are *challenged* by the world around us, the stronger we become. Saints, IF WE WOULD BE THE SONS OF THE MOST HIGH we must be STRONG in the Lord and in the power of HIS might! Our Father wants us to be strong, so He has wisely given us wrestling partners to wrestle with, so we will become strong. There are opposing forces (thank God for them!) that we must constantly battle against. Some of these adverse things are described by Paul as principalities and powers *in the heavenlies*. "For we *wrestle* not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits *in heavenly places*" (Eph. 6:12). There is a great and magnificent future ahead for the sons of God, and a great work our Father has for us to do in this new kingdom day and in the age and ages to come, and He is preparing us and making us ready for the high and holy place He has for us. Can we not see that ALL THE OPPOSING FORCES WE NOW ENCOUNTER IN THE HIGH PLACES OF OUR SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE are working together for our good — to develop the strength, character, wisdom, and power we must acquire? Why Satan? After every battle I may say, "Thank you, Mr. Satan! for helping to make me a son of God!"

Whether it be as the fire-breathing monstrosity, or as the cunning, deceiving "wisdom" of the serpent, or as the vile, intimidating, debilitating accuser, or just as the sparring adversary, each of his

characteristics is a significant negative force which the sons of God are called to encounter, overcome, and conquer on every plane and in every realm, from the lowest sea to the highest heaven. He works as a monstrosity, he works as a serpent, he works as an accuser, and he works as an opponent. These are the fourfold negative force we have to meet and conquer within ourselves. ALL four areas *must be overcome!*

WOE TO THE INHABITERS OF THE EARTH!

“And the great dragon was *cast out*...he was *cast out into the earth*...*woe to the inhabitants of the earth...for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath...*” (Rev. 12:9,11).

In the heavens we meet the accuser in the high realms of the spirit of sonship. Once cast into the earth, we only meet him in our soul, especially in the religious, soulical realm. We see the work of the accuser in the carnal-minded Christians who have earthly concepts of God and spiritual things. This cannot be a pure realm, for *woe* is pronounced upon all who dwell in the earth-realm! The woe is that the devil is come down unto them, having great wrath, bringing to and through them a false message of wrath, which is truly the message of the devil by which he distorts and perverts the image of God in the minds and hearts of men.

In their earthly concepts of God they see God sitting physically on a great white throne, having a long white beard, stern countenance, and fiery eyes, whence He will summon every man, woman, boy, and girl, both sinner and saint, in rank and file before Him to be judged, amidst great convulsions of nature — earthquakes, bursting graves, rending rocks, and falling mountains; that the trembling multitude will be brought from the depths of everlasting woe and from all their dwelling places in the realms of spirit to hear their many sins rehearsed and to learn their eternal fate in the hands of an angry God. Should you have even one secret sin unconfessed and not covered by the blood of Christ you will surely be consigned to an eternal and merciless doom of fiery indignation and torment! I do not hesitate to say that this is a very crude conception, which is entirely out of harmony with the whole picture of judgment as revealed in the scriptures. Yet this is the kind of “doctrines of devils” the adversary promotes in the carnal “earth-realm” of religion to cause men to have a DREADFUL FEAR of God rather than *falling in love with Him!*

Little wonder, then, that the voice from heaven cries out, “*Woe to the inhabitants of the earth...for the devil is come down unto you having great wrath!*” The devil in the soulical earth-realm of religion loves to have Christians believe that these literalistic, legalistic, judgmental, naturalistic and earthly concepts are *biblical truth!* It is there he preaches his devilish doctrines of an angry, vindictive God — the theology of FEAR. Yet, the wrath so loudly proclaimed by the people in the earth-realm of carnal-minded religion is, in reality, *not* GOD’S WRATH at all — it is the DEVIL’S VERY OWN WRATH projected upon God, attributed to God, to make our heavenly Father appear as one of the same nature as Satan himself. Truly the devil IS a liar and a deceiver! People’s fears play a very important role in most of the world’s religions. Fear is one of the most prominent tools of nearly all religious systems used to keep their people in bondage to the system. You must admit that fears of malicious spirits, fear of pain, fear of suffering, fear of death, fear of coming judgment, fear of spiritual punishment, fear of hell, fear of Satan, fear of excommunication, fear of tribulation, fear of the antichrist, fear of the end-times, fear of missing the “rapture,” and a thousand other fears plague and torment the religious “earth-dwellers” unto to whom the devil has come down in great wrath and accusation!

You would be amazed to know just how much plain old *superstition* many of God’s precious saints have in regard to so-called “end-time” events! Some people become fearful around every election time. I heard a brother in Florida in 1960 predict that if Kennedy won the election the Pope would rule the United States and every Bible-believing church would be closed by the time his term expired. I heard of another preacher who predicted essentially the same thing and when Kennedy won the election this man had a heart attack and almost died! I knew some lovely people who campaigned for “God and Goldwater.” They believed that if Goldwater lost the election the tribulation would be upon us! I know others that *fear* of the Beast Government, Y2K, or some prophesied destruction caused to sell their homes and property and move to some remote “safe” area. All through the years I have seen this same scenario played out in the lives of believers as we have moved from one political scene or from one catastrophic event to another. Their lives

would be better, happier, and more productive for the kingdom of God if they had stayed right where they were!

Too often people become alarmed about what this world leader or that world leader is going to do. And now it is the terrorists that people fear! But I call to your remembrance the night when Pilate said to Jesus, "Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?" Jesus answered, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were *given thee from above*" (Jn. 19:10-11). I have come to see that there is really no point in becoming involved in the politics of "this present evil world," as though my vote for one man whom I may imagine to be better than another is going to preserve the world from economic collapse, socialism, terrorism, the beast government, the tribulation, nuclear holocaust, or some other evil. I still believe the word of the Lord is true and sure: "*Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are HIS: and HE changeth the times and the seasons: HE removeth kings, and setteth up kings: HE knoweth what is in the darkness, and THE LIGHT DWELLETH WITH HIM*" (Dan. 2:20-22). The message is just this: OUR FATHER IS THE ONE IN CONTROL!

There are many preachers, even in this message of sonship and the kingdom, sad to say, who specialize in preaching FEAR instead of the glory of God. These suppose they must always tell the bad side of things. They wildly speculate about world events, presidents and prime ministers, economic collapse, world war, one world government, conspiracy theories, the antichrist, and a hundred more negative things, supposing that every national or world crisis that comes somehow portends the *end*. With each new election, treaty, crisis, or change they suspect a vast conspiracy. If they don't like the Jews, all the trouble in the world is blamed on the Jews. Or it is the Communists — everyone they don't especially agree with politically is branded a Communist. Or they blame the United Nations, the Moslem radicals, some minority group, the Illuminati, the world bankers, computer systems, or the Catholics! They constantly live on the brink of Armageddon — and apparently feel they should preach fear all the time so they will have plenty of company.

One brother said in a meeting with us in 1971 that the "Beast Government" would rise up in the earth and take over the United States within three or four years. These brethren were raising up "farms" in remote jungle areas of the earth where the "woman" could flee to from the face of the dragon, where they could live in seclusion in the "wilderness" and live off of the land, until the manchild should be born. They offered to keep our children on one of the farms, care for them and educate them there, if we would travel with the ministries spreading this word. I must admit that I struggled with this. What if they were right? What if the beast did take over the world in the next few years? What if I didn't flow with them — we would be alone, have no safety, and be swallowed up! As I earnestly sought the mind of the Lord in this He spoke so clearly one day, and with such power: "**I HAVE NOT GIVEN YOU THE SPIRIT OF FEAR!**" In that one blessed moment my eyes were opened and I clearly saw the "wilderness message" for what it truly was — an earthly, soulical message that moved men through FEAR! People sold everything they possessed and laid the money at the feet of the apostles and flew off into the wilderness, not because the Spirit of God had truly spoken to them, but because they were seized with a terrible, gut-wrenching, *fear!* My earnest prayer to God is that He shall deliver all His people from all this carnal, soulish, sensationalism of the *earth-realm!* These are, one and all, "doctrines of devils" — of that devil who roams through the isles of the churches where the Lord's people dwell in the earthlies! Truly it is "woe" to all the inhabitants of the *earth!*

HE DECEIVETH THE WHOLE WORLD

"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, *which deceiveth the whole world...*" Rev. 12:9).

All who dwell not in the heavens of God's Spirit *are deceived*. "He deceiveth the *whole world*." Throughout the book of Revelation we have encountered various realms where people live in their spiritual experience — the abyss, the sea, earth, and heaven. Now we meet the word "world." It is the Greek word *kosmos* meaning "orderly arrangement" or "system of things." It refers to the present order or system of things upon earth — the world systems of man. It includes such things as culture, religion, politics,

economics, business, education, law enforcement, military, science, government, and various other institutions and orders that govern the lives of men and nations. The Holy Spirit testifies that “we know that we are of God, and *the whole world lieth in the wicked one,*” and “the great dragon was cast out...which *deceiveth the whole world*” (I Jn. 5:19; Rev. 12:9).

Can we not see by this that everyone who lives by the standards of this present world system and order is *deceived*? Does that mean they are all bad people? Not at all! There are millions of decent, honest, hard-working, law-abiding, good, loving, even God-fearing people who live by the norms of their culture, education, religion, ethics, and society. It means that they simply do not *understand* nor do they know the *truth* — the true nature of all things. Many of their opinions and conclusions about life, reality, and the purposes of God are flawed, mistaken, and erroneous. We have all been there! Even after being anointed by the Holy Spirit we have been there!

The religious systems are *deceived*. The educational systems are *deceived*. The medical profession is *deceived*. The political and governmental realms are *deceived*. Even the world of science and technology is *deceived*! How can we know this? If the educational systems were not deceived, why would the most educated, sincere, and brilliant minds on earth teach as fact the theory of evolution? Why would they oppose the Bible record of creation and scoff at one of the most self-evident of truths, the truth of *intelligent design*? If the medical establishment were not deceived, why would most doctors treat the patient's *symptoms*, rather than the *underlying cause* of their disease? Why would doctors prescribe the drugs that kill more than 106,000 U. S. citizens *every year* and do harm to nearly a million more? If there was an herbal supplement on the market that killed even 106 people annually, it would immediately be banned! And should there be several dietary supplements that killed just 106 people annually, every health food store in America would be closed! The military machines of the world are deceived, for they operate on the assumption that *war brings peace*. It doesn't! History, even recent history, reveals the immutable truth that every war sows within itself the seeds of the next conflict. On and on we could go, from example to example, but the absolute truth of John's observation that the great red dragon is he who *deceiveth the whole world* is clearly and unmistakably evidenced in all the institutions and systems of “this present evil world!” There is no question about it. The carnal mind, which is the seed of the serpent, with all it produces, *is deceived*!

To be continued...

J. PRESTON EBY