

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 158

THE BEAST OUT OF THE EARTH (continued)

"And he causeth all...to receive a *mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads*...Here is *wisdom*. Let him that *hath understanding count the number of the beast*: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred three score and six" (Rev. 13:18).

The first key to unlocking the "mark of the beast" is this beautiful expression: "*Here is wisdom*." If it's wisdom we're talking about, then it's not philosophy, it's not intellect, it's not seminary training, it's not mathematics. Notice that our text does not say, "Here is a riddle; let him that is bright solve it," but plainly states, "Here is wisdom." Clearly, we must have something different!

The second key to unlocking this great mystery is this admonition: "Let him that *hath understanding count* the number of the beast." The person who has understanding does something — he COUNTS! The mystery yields only to the understanding, that is *spiritual understanding*, for Paul prays that our understanding be *enlightened* by the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, and thus the enlightened understanding equals *divine revelation*! HERE IS WISDOM: Let him that *hath revelation count* (calculate) the number of the beast. It should be evident to all who read these lines that this, too, is wisdom: Let *not* him who *has no revelation* attempt to *count* (decipher the meaning of) the number of the beast! It is clear, the mystery has a spiritual meaning. If we have spiritual understanding we will be able to count or calculate the meaning of the number of the beast. Let us trust the Holy Spirit to make it real to our hearts!

Here is wisdom — Count the number of the beast. Why would that be *wisdom*? The word "number" means a fixed or definite amount. It is also a limited amount, not more and not less than what is given. What is the significance of that? God has not placed upon His people a *number*! The scriptures reveal that God has placed a token, a sign, a seal, a mark, and a name upon His elect people — but *never* a *number*! A mark, yes, but not a number. A name, yes, but not a number. "*To him that overcometh...will I give a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it*" (Rev. 2:17). "*Him that overcometh...I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God...and I will write upon him my new name*" (Rev. 3:12). "*And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads*" (Rev. 14:1). But the beast has a number, and we are admonished to *count* the number of the beast! And what is his number? We all know that the number is six hundred sixty six — 666!

No one who reads the book of Revelation with a spiritual mind can have failed to notice that the word "name" is far more than an appellation. It expresses the *inner nature* and *state of being* of the person to whom it is applied. Thus, the "beast" represents something wild and ravenous in nature, the "whore" denotes something unfaithful and impure, and the "Lamb" is one who is meek, pure, and self-sacrificing. The "name" of the Father expresses the character of Fatherhood, the "name" of the Son reveals the character of sonship, the "name" of the city of God which comes down from God out of heaven bespeaks the implantation of the divine nature and character into the life of the man or woman who is *born from above*.

Let me say again, as I have said so often in this series, one can never understand correctly the book of Revelation so long as his eyes are fastened on events in the outer world. The understanding of “the beast” and “his image” and “his mark” comes only by the inner illumination that the Spirit brings. That is, they are revealed by the flooding light radiating forth from the indwelling Christ! In that true light of God all that is not born of God appears *as it truly is*, that it may be duly brought to judgment, dealt with and eradicated from our lives. The fiercest beast I have encountered in my years upon this earth is the beast of old Adam’s nature, the carnal mind, the human consciousness, the seed of the serpent slithering about within my very own bosom. Yes, there is a *beastly system* which arises right out of this earthiness, yet the heart of our natural life is *still* deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? How I praise God with joy unspeakable and full of glory for the penetrating light of God’s Christ which uncovers the subtleness and deceitfulness of this wild beast, the bestial nature lumbering about in, and rising up out of, OUR EARTH!

Thousands of God’s elect who read these lines today have been illuminated by the Holy Spirit to see the carnal church system of man for what it is — the beast out of the earth having two horns like a lamb, but speaking as a dragon. They see it also as the harlot, Mystery Babylon the Great. In truth it is an unholy trinity — a wild beast, an unclean harlot, and a corrupt city. Truly we have come to loathe the carnality, shame, self-righteousness, spiritual fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, deception, and tyranny of this corrupt system! Was it not the *light of the mind of Christ* arising within our lives that caused us to *see it as it is*? And oh, what struggles and dealings and strippings we passed through as God purged our hearts from the love of Babylon and our lives from its fleshly ways!

Now let us return to the number, 666. A lot of weird and varied explanations have been given for the number 666. It is because the numbers of the Greek alphabet have each a numerical value, that endless attempts have been made to find some man’s name the total value of whose letters make up 666, under the erroneous idea that the beast is “*a man*,” and 666 the numerical value of that man’s name. Scarcely has anyone noticed that the apostle John does not say, “*interpret* the number of the beast,” as he surely would have done had it concealed a man’s name, but “*count* the number of the beast,” thus signifying that it is in the correct understanding of the *nature* of the number itself that wisdom will be displayed! One brother has pointed out that the least probable of all interpretations are the attempts of many interpreters to find in the cipher 666 the name of one or another of the conspicuous characters of modern history. All such are merely guesses and speculations, and somewhat *wild* ones at that!

The truth is, we can never fully comprehend the reality to which the spirit of inspiration points until we compare this mark, this number in the forehead, with the very next verse — Revelation 14:1. Remember, in the original there are no chapter or verse divisions. It is a continuous flow, and no sooner does John finish with this mark, this number in the forehead of those who worship the beast and his image, than he says, “*And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with Him an hundred and forty-four thousand, having **His father’s name written in their foreheads.***” The contrast is between 666 and 144,000. That is the mystery! Yet, the number 144,000 is *not* written in their foreheads, only the Father’s name is written in the forehead! Six is the number of the natural man, and we will speak more of this later. 144,000 is the number of divine government. In reality, *twelve* is the number of divine government, and twelve squared by itself and multiplied by one thousand is ***divine government brought to its absolute fullest, totality, and perfection!***

As I have mentioned, six is the number of the natural man. The natural man is a beastly man, his power is the power of the flesh, his intelligence is that of the dust realm, his thinking is earthly, his nature is beastly, his ability and authority are limited, and all this describes not only the natural man but also the character of that *religious system* which rises up out of the soulical nature of this man. Six is the number of toil, works, self-effort, sweat, and fatigue. In that long-ago covenant of God with His earthly people He commanded them, “*Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work.*” Even earlier the Lord had told the sinful Adam, “*Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee...in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the ground*” (Gen. 3:17-19). The full week is not expressed in the six, but in the number seven. The seventh day is the day of man’s rest, when he rests as God rested, when he *enters into God’s rest* and rests with Him, thus experiencing ultimate unity, union, and oneness with God in the fullness of HIS LIFE. The seventh day was

hallowed, made sacred. In it man realizes his divinity, his divine nature, the new creation man — Christ. But the seven is lacking in the six! Therefore six speaks of the fullness of man, man in all his powers, but ***without God, apart from God!*** Have you ever wondered who it was that taught the world that every grave should be dug ***six feet deep?*** A common expression for stating that a man is dead is to say that “he is six feet under.” It is impossible to over-emphasize the importance of this fundamental truth: The natural man is a *dead man* — dead to God, dead to truth, dead to reality, dead to spiritual and heavenly life. In Adam he has descended into the classification of the lower creatures — the beasts. And natural men, educated natural men, natural men with high degrees from prestigious universities behind their names — anthropologists, biologists, and scientists of various disciplines — are often only able to see the animalistic life of the natural man, and therefore espouse the unenlightened theory of evolution! From the day of Adam’s fall until now his thoughts, his works, his inventions have only been beastly.

Six being the number of the natural man, and also the number denoting the toil, work, effort, sweat, and fatigue of that man, can we not see that 666 is the more than one-hundredfold accumulation of the number six, representing nothing other than the never-ending, never rest-attaining labor and toil of man’s own working, those self-consuming, self-destroying but non-attaining **WORKS OF SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS** which are the hallmark of all of man’s religion! The number 666 is therefore the symbolical number of all the false churches, all the self-driving, all the flesh-oriented programs, running, working, organizing, doing, doing, doing, but never coming under the leadership of the Spirit or the divine government of the mind of Christ!

We are marking out the character of wisdom, because wisdom is what directs one to spiritual understanding, which in turn gives the ability to calculate, discern, understand — *count* the number of the beast! To count the number means to know the quality or nature of that which the number stands for. The man who is unable to count, discover, or understand the *nature* of the beast as revealed by his *number* is not a wise man! He is devoid of understanding, and is, therefore, a foolish man. Wisdom sees all things as they really are! There are no illusions and no delusions with wisdom!

As I stated previously, for many decades and centuries God’s people have been speculating about this strange phenomenon John describes as the “mark of the beast.” Yet there is a depth in this that goes far beyond what many of us have imagined! Revelation 13:17 lists three alternatives, two in addition to what most Christians have heard of. Let us see! “...that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the **mark**, or the **name** of the beast, or the **number** of his name.” Notice the three alternatives. (1) the *mark* of the beast (2) the *name* of the beast (3) the *number* of his name. It is indeed remarkable that the Holy Spirit speaks of “the number” of the name of the beast; that is, the number representing and standing for the name. Why not be content with the name itself? John might have been satisfied with the knowledge that the “name” of the beast, whatever it be, must be a name which expresses the inner nature of the beast; and he may have said no more. But the Holy Spirit revealed a further detail — not the name alone, but the *number* of the name — a most profound depth of insight into the nature of the beast!

No man could “know” the name written upon the white stone given to him that overcometh “save he that receiveth it.” In other words, no one but an overcomer can have that experience which enables him to truly comprehend the “new name” — the nature of God wrought within. The world can never understand the man who has received the call to sonship. Much less the new nature itself! What strange mysterious element is there in the nature of the new creation man that keeps him pressing relentlessly onward toward an invisible goal when friend and foe alike tell him that he is a fool to continue pursuing a vision which brings him nothing but misunderstanding, separation, persecution, tribulation, loneliness, and friendlessness? The inner command to completely and forever forsake the corrupted courts of Mystery Babylon to put on the mind of Christ, to be conformed to the image of the Son, and to know the wonder and glory of sonship to God, makes him endure the cross, despise the shame, incur the scorn of fellow Christians and the wrath of the church systems, scoff at tribulation, and count every loss to himself as a gain for Christ. Ah, such a walk can never be understood by any save “he that receiveth it!” Oh, yes! The glory of sonship to God is worthy to be written on pages of gold with the ink of silver, but none of earth’s vaunting philosophers and theologians can ever comprehend such truth and character and divine purpose as lies within the Christ-nature!

In contrast to this, those who are partakers of the nature of the beast *do not* “know the name” stamped upon them, do not discern the character they bear, and have no idea of the carnality and deceitfulness of the nature and system in which they walk, for they are *deceived*. “And he doeth great wonders...and *deceiveth them that dwell on the earth...*” So many people today are worrying about what the mark of the beast is going to be. They themselves have taken that mark! The very fact of their not knowing what that mark is proves they have taken it, for only *deceived* people receive it! History reveals how that during the inquisitions and persecutions by the Roman Church in past centuries, many believers who would recant to escape torture or death were branded on either the hand or forehead, or both, with a cross, even as cattle are branded to denote ownership. But that visible mark, which allowed those who took it to live and carry on ordinary business pursuits, was merely an outward mark to denote that they now subscribed to and upheld the doctrines of Rome and the deceptions of the wild, ravenous beast. Bearing a more subtle form of the mark, the whole realm of organized Christianity today subscribes to those same kinds of doctrines, traditions, rituals, and deceptions in varying degrees.

Those who walk in carnal minds and dead-letter-of-the-word understanding of the things of God can never understand what the mark is! Those imbued with the spirit and nature of the bestial religious system of man bear the mark of the beast but are completely devoid of understanding of what it is! But HERE IS WISDOM: Let him that *hath understanding COUNT* the number of the beast! Such understanding comes alone by revelation! There are two marks — the mark of the Father’s name and the mark of the beast — and it takes a revelation to know either! As it takes revelation from on high to know the “new name” of the Christ, so it takes revelation from God to *count* the “number of the name of the beast!”

One of the earliest occurrences of the symbolic use of this mysterious number — 666 — is in the primitive case of the giant who defied the armies of the Lord in the days of David — Goliath of Gath. This man symbolized the bestial system of the world. Goliath was *six cubits* (and a span) tall (more than nine feet). His spearhead weighed 600 shekels of iron. “Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?” asked David (I Sam. 17:26). David’s glorious victory over Goliath beautifully typifies the victory of Christ and His body over the bestial system. The persistence of the number *six* in the family as well as the stature and equipment of Goliath is one of the keys to the understanding of the “number” of the beast. Goliath had a brother of great stature who significantly had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot! (II Sam. 21:20-22). Such information is by no means coincidental, but the events were planned and orchestrated by the Spirit of God and are written for our instruction, learning, and admonition upon whom are come the ends of the ages!

The full significance of the number 666 however, is disclosed in the book of Daniel in the account of King Nebuchadnezzar’s great image set up in the plain of Dura, of dimensions *sixty* by *six* cubits. “Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold whose height was *three-score* cubits and the breadth thereof *six* cubits” (Dan. 3:1) Goliath grows in dimensions and in importance the nearer we get to New Testament times. The image on the plain of Dura is ten times the dimensions of Goliath, and the number of the beast in Revelation, chapter thirteen, is ten times that of the image of Nebuchadnezzar! The connection in history and prophecy is clear and certain.

Prior to the erection of this golden image King Nebuchadnezzar dreamed of a great image and was told by Daniel that the dream was a revelation from God of the course of human history from that time all the way down to the day when the kingdom of God should be established in the earth. The image Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream had a head of gold, and according to Daniel’s interpretation that head of gold was the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar himself! “*Thou art this head of gold*” (Dan. 2:38). The dream-image traced the rise and fall of the four great empires of Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome, which dominated the civilized world, in succession, right down to the day when Christ came into the world and forever changed the course of history, establishing a kingdom among men which is eternal and heavenly and which therefore could not pass away, but must grow, develop, increase, and ultimately conquer and destroy all worldly power in the course of its redemptive, reconstructive, and transformative purpose.

History reveals the accuracy of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream and Daniel’s interpretation. The image of world empire with all its power and pride was brought down to nothing by the power of the WORD OF GOD! All this was clearly made known to Nebuchadnezzar, but rather than bowing before the majesty of

the God of heaven who gave even him his authority and kingdom, his importance as the “head of gold” went to his head and he was blinded by his own importance and glory. Deceived by the falseness of his own heart he sought to grasp after the worldly glory that was his, and filled with delusions of grandeur he began construction of an immense image of gold which he set up in the plain of Dura. Its precise measurements — *sixty by six* cubits — showed the impressive dimensions of his pride, as he modeled the image after the one in his dream, but instead of making the head alone of gold, he made the whole image of gold, usurping all the power and pride of all kingdoms UNTO HIMSELF! He forgot the prophet’s warning — “Thou art this head of gold...the **God of heaven HATH GIVEN THEE** a kingdom, power, strength, and glory...” and lifted up his heart in self-pride, usurping the glory of God, taking that which was given by God and using it to his own ends and for the glorification of HIMSELF, requiring that all mankind should worship HIS IMAGE whenever they heard the music of his pretentious orchestra. The worship of the image meant in fact the worship of himself, who designed and built the image.

It is a horrible blasphemy against God to exalt the flesh and the world of man, in the place of God, and to take the high and holy things of God and use them for the promotion of SELF. And do not think for one moment, precious friend of mine, that the error of Nebuchadnezzar has not been repeated again and again throughout church history, and especially in this our day! Hear now these sobering and anointed words which some years ago came across my desk and are just as true today (if not more) as they were then:

“There is a great and damning fault among Christians which seems to be past explanation. It is a fault that has developed and grown more grotesque as the years have come and gone. Men and women have come to desire and covet spiritual things, not for the glory of God and the honor of His eternal purpose, but that they themselves might become great men in the earth. Many a man has spent long periods in fasting that he might attain a great spiritual gift, yet all the time he is supposedly seeking the gift, his talk shows that his mind is full of hope that he will become a great and powerful minister to whom people will look with awe and pride. This is wrong seeking and a very great evil. Many a man has sought after the gift of healing — not because he was burdened for the sick, but because the gift would bring him honor among the people. He expected that it would bring him crowds and fame and money. Oh, let men search their hearts before they ask God lest they ask amiss to consume it upon their own lusts (James 4:3).

“Man is not satisfied by possessing earthly things. He secretly wants to possess the things of God as well and that for himself apart from God. Why did Nadab and Abihu wickedly offer strange fire before the Lord? Did they not want to possess for themselves what only God possessed? Why did Simon, the sorcerer, offer money for the gift that Peter had? He cared nothing for God, but in the gall of his bitterness and the bond of his rebellion he wanted to possess for himself something that belonged only to God and must not be had apart from Him. Do you not think that this strange desire exists today? Do men desire the gifts of God to bring all glory to God, or do they covet them as a means of self-promotion and self-exaltation? How is it that so many men who seem to have gifts from God soon become the center of a little universe of their own where all roads lead to them and all fingers point in their direction? Let us face it. Men not only want to gather temporal things about themselves, but they also crave to have eternal things for themselves and to possess them in themselves and for the benefit and glory of themselves. The carnal mind is an eternal enemy of God! It is a beastly mind! It refuses to become subject to the law of God, and indeed it is powerless to do so. But it secretly desires the things of God, wisdom, righteousness, and power, so that it may be AS GOD.

“The whole church system itself is not one whit different. At the present time the existing church system appears to be making significant gains all over the world. Probably more people go to church than ever before in history, but, while numbers increase and costly buildings are erected in ever increasing and lavish profusion, while world-wide efforts costing billions are the thing of the day, the people for the most part have lost their sense of the majesty of God. Gaudily clad worldlings talk glibly about being *born again*; they speak with tongues, honor the pope, and even join their voices with those who hail Mary as the mother of God. Full well do they fulfill the words of Jesus spoken to the church of Laodicea, ‘Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing: and *knowest not* that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked’ (Rev. 3:17). God’s counsel to all who are joy-riding with the system is: ‘Buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou

mayest see' (Rev. 3:18). The gains of the church system have practically all been external gains and the fearful loss has been internal. The beauty of the life in the Spirit has been exchanged for the luxury of fine temples with comfortable pews. The songs which once swelled from hearts filled with God's Spirit and holiness are now on the hit parade, being popularized by unsanctified professionals from Hollywood or Las Vegas. It is an enormous, degenerating calamity! It is an abomination that maketh desolate!" — The Page.

To Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, Daniel said, "Thou art this head of gold." But Nebuchadnezzar took the glory conferred by God and used it to deify himself! He built his *own image* and commanded men to worship *it*. His image was all of gold, the gold of the great city of Babylon. All its wealth was the wealth of the world, mined and fashioned by the hands of men. And was this not what the devil offered Jesus when he showed Him *all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them*, saying, "All *these things* will I give Thee, if Thou wilt *fall down and worship me*" (Mat. 4:8-9). Ah — the same voice heard centuries before on the plain of Dura! And it is heard still. It is reckoned with today BY ALL WHO WOULD FOLLOW ON TO KNOW THE LORD. Oh, yes!

An image has been erected on the modern plain of Dura, by the modern king of Babylon, the *image of the beast*, and just as in Daniel's day, the beast causes all who will not bow the knee and pay homage to this image of the beast should be killed — cut off. Thank God! There is in our day a remnant, a Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego company who ***refuse to bend the knee or to pay any homage to the beast or his image!*** The ultimate test for every son of God is just this: What will he do with what he receives from the Lord? Will he use it to his own ends, for his own profit and exaltation, or will he, like Abraham of old, offer it as a sacrifice upon the altar of full obedience to God? Every man and woman who has received the call to sonship will sooner or later face this test, and how he or she deals with it will determine whether he or she stands in his or her place among the *manifest sons of God* or whether he or she becomes just another one of the *many antichrists*.

The self-exalting spirit is not the Spirit of God — it is the spirit of the golden-gilded monstrosity of Babylon. By it millions are deceived to flock to the charisma of covetous men. If you will listen to these modern-day Nebuchadnezzars, these self-appointed kings of Babylon, you will seldom see the humility of God's Christ, but the showmanship and arrogance of one who purports to be the very power of God. It is given them to give life unto the image of the beast and cause the image of the beast to *speak*. This image *speaks great swelling words*, professing to be some specially chosen vessel, commissioned to bring the gospel to the whole world in these last days. To listen to their glowing reports and exaggerated testimonies one would be led to believe that just about the whole world is turning to God and marching to Zion. Yet, I do not hesitate to tell you that if their human effort, their public relations companies, their monthly fund-raising letters, their begging for money, their lavish fund-raising seminars in the world's plushiest resort hotels, and their abominable gimmicks were taken away, their programs would collapse before year's end!

Now let us return to our previous thought of the "*number of his name*" — 666. On that distant day upon the plain of Dura Nebuchadnezzar's image of gold was *sixty cubits* high and *six cubits* wide. Throughout the book of Revelation the number *seven* is prominent as the sacred number of completeness and perfection. The contents of the book opened by the Lamb is contained under seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials — a *trinity of sevens*. It is in this book that the "number" of the beast is also represented as a *trinity of sixes*, and the contrast, as well as the intrinsic meaning of the number, intimates, that whatever else it may be, it is a perfect number of imperfection, or rather a number denoting *perfect* or *absolute imperfection*. In the Bible the number six refers to man — is uniquely a human number. Man was created on the sixth day, man's appointed days of labor and toil are six, the Hebrew slave was to serve for six years, and for six years the land was to be sown. Six is the number of man's unredeemed nature, old Adam — THE FLESH! The 666 is then, as it were, the number *six* swollen, blown up — in its greatest potency — and yet, when increased to the uttermost, it is still no more than *six* — FLESH! Human nature, that is, the natural man, old Adam, always falls short of the sacred number *seven*, the fullness of divine power, glory, and perfection. And try as it may, it can never be more than the lesser *six* — which is also the broken *twelve* — the broken government of God! It is therefore the *rule of the flesh!*

The *number* then is important, not the name. We are never actually given the "name" of the beast, but we understand the name by the number of the name. We listen to the words, "His number is six hundred

sixty six,” and we have enough to make us tremble. It is *flesh* raised to an exceedingly high level of manifestation! In this number there is a depth of perverseness, pride, presumption, self-righteousness, religiosity, deceit, carnality, and shame which no one can “know” except him to whom it is revealed by the blazing light and deep searching of the Spirit of God. David, understanding something of the awful depth of the wickedness of the human heart cried out, “*Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting*” (Ps. 139:23-24).

Perhaps now the enlightened mind can understand how it is that from the very beginning, when Adam was banished from the blessed garden of God, six has been the number of man’s labor *apart from* God’s rest! And oh! how man labors! The carnal mind is always contriving new ways to *work “for” God*. In this hour we are continually being admonished to “get involved,” get involved in politics, get involved in the church programs, get involved in community activities, or in a hundred different things. “Christians should be involved!” they say. The church system is crying for people to become involved in her activities, and her programs are legion, but in all this cry for involvement I hear very little being said about **GETTING INVOLVED WITH GOD!** The Lord’s command to the apostles was, “*Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.*” In simple language this means to **do nothing** until you are so yielded to God that **He can work THROUGH YOU!** The firstborn Son of God said that He did only those things He saw His Father do, and spoke only those words He heard from His Father. Does that not explain why He spent thirty years in Nazareth, the place of no good thing, **doing nothing** so far as His sonship ministry was concerned? Ah, He was not really doing nothing, for He was growing in stature, and in wisdom, and in favor with God and man. He was *becoming!* The Father was not showing Him any great works or speaking to Him words to be uttered in the hearing of men. He waited for the “time” of His showing to Israel, and until that day His only “involvement” was with His Father!

As one has written, “Come near to the holy men and women of the past and you will soon feel the heat of their desire after God. They mourned for Him, they prayed and wrestled and sought for Him day and night, in season and out, and when they had found Him the finding was all the sweeter for the long seeking.” But the beast will have none of this! He is busily engaged in his own human effort and grandiose program and has no time to *seek God*, no time to *wait upon God*, and no time to *become* that son that the Father’s heart is yearning for. Even if he holds a Wednesday night “prayer meeting” it never seems to be a *prayer* meeting, but becomes a teaching session, testimony service, planning discussion, or something else. Other than a formal opening and dismissing prayer, there is nothing there that will transform men or move the heart of God.

Let anyone reading this who has had experience on a church board in the organized church systems try to recall the times when the board waited upon God and truly consulted the Lord until He revealed His will in the matters under discussion! Or try to remember the times when any chairman suggested that the brethren should fast and pray and wait in holy brokenness before God to see what instructions the Holy Ghost had for them on a particular question. Board meetings are habitually opened with a formal prayer or a brief “season of prayer,” after which the Head of the church is respectfully silent while the **real rulers take over!**

What church committee goes to the Holy Spirit for direction? Do not the members invariably assume that they already know what they are supposed to do and that their only problem is to find effective means to get it done? Plans, rules, literature, visitation, fund-raising dinners and projects, guest speakers, entertainment, concerts, dramas, advertising, music, and all kinds of inventive methodological techniques to promote the “work” of God absorb all their time and attention. The prayer at the beginning of the meeting is for divine help to carry out **their plans!** Apparently the idea that the Lord might have some instructions for *them* never so much as enters their heads. After all — who ever heard of “waiting on the Lord” or expecting to “hear from God” in a committee meeting!

What foreign mission board actually seeks to obtain and follow the guidance of the Lord? They all *think* they do, certainly, but what they do in fact is to assume the scripturalness of their ends and then ask the Lord for help to find ways to achieve them. They may pray all night (not likely!) for God to give success to **their enterprises**, but Christ is desired as their **helper**, not their **Lord**. Human means are devised to achieve

ends assumed to be divine. These then crystallize into “policy,” and thereafter the Lord doesn’t even have a vote!

In the conduct of meetings where is the Lordship of Christ to be found? The truth is that today the Lord rarely controls a service, and the influence He exerts is very small. We sing of Him, clap to Him, and preach about Him, but He must not interfere; we will worship our way, and go through our time-honored forms, rituals, and ceremonies, and it must be right because we have always done it that way, as have the other churches in our sect. And those in the so-called “move of the Spirit” and “sonship” and “kingdom” walk are generally not much further advanced. Doesn’t everyone know that a meeting must begin with a few choruses, followed by singing in the spirit and a brief season of worship, and *then* is the time for a prophecy or two? A few more choruses, a little more worship, prayer, announcements, offering, and the sermon, following which the pastor or guest minister gives an “altar call” and/or operates in his “gift.” Don’t be deceived, brethren, we have created our very own little *pattern*, our unique little *form*, our “Spirit-led” SYSTEM! Surely, beloved, you cannot miss the obvious “*number* of his name” in all of this — 666 — flesh, FLESH, F-L-E-S-H! Oh, yes, even in the high places of God the flesh grasps after the things of the Spirit for the promotion of SELF. The carnal mind is always desirous of spiritual gifts. It likes to appear honored of God and accepted. That is why there are so many false prophets, false teachers, false healers, and false miracle workers in the world. Men who love people to think they are the great power of God will, in spite of all their apparent wonders, hear God tell them on that day, “I never *knew* you!” “I was never *intimately acquainted* with you!”

The beast out of the earth is the religious system that arises out of the soulical nature of man. While we once looked about for a laser-tattooed identification number, or a microchip in the forehead to be the “mark of the beast” — was it not truly there for us to see all along, for John plainly told us, “HERE IS WISDOM. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast; for it is the NUMBER OF MAN and HIS NUMBER IS SIX HUNDRED, THREE SCORE AND SIX.” Now, I am aware that the King James Bible says that “it is the number of *a* man,” but the indefinite article “a” is supplied by the translators and is not necessarily included in the Greek, since that language has no indefinite article. It can quite well be translated without an article at all, as in Psalm 8:4, “What is man (not *a man*), that thou art mindful of him?” In our text the word for “man” is not Adam, but *anthropos*, meaning “a human being; humanity; human-kind.” It denotes the human race as against any other species of being. The Concordant New Testament correctly translates it, “for it is the number of mankind.” *Anthropos* is the word used in II Timothy 3:17 wherein we read, “*That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*” “Man of God” is not referring to a particular man, or one single man, but rather to every man of God. It is a corporate expression denoting a company of men. Likewise, the number of the beast is not referring to one man; it’s every man who possesses a soulical nature capable of spawning *religious attitudes, actions, traditions, and systems!* Thus we see that the number of the beast that is called the number of a “man” is the number or nature of a “corporate man” or set of men and not one man we are to look for. This “man” is already here and has been here from the dawn of history! He has found a unique expression since Christ birthed His church in the earth, bringing forth in the midst of the Lord’s people another system, a *bestly religious system* calling itself “the church” and which bears a striking resemblance to the Lamb of God but speaks words which sound like the voice of the dragon!

In the case where a *number* is used to denote the characteristics or the nature of a thing, the article is unnecessary. With this understanding the statement, instead of being an insoluble puzzle, becomes perfectly clear. The *number* of the beast is the *nature* of the beast, and the number 666 is shown to be the NATURE OF MAN! Not “a” man, but MANKIND — ALL NATURAL MEN! It signifies the measure of man, that is, his inward state of being manifested by his outward actions, and how these are perceived by those about him. As the wise man wrote, “*I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, that they might see that they themselves are beasts*” (Eccl. 3:18). “Here is wisdom — let him that hath understanding count the number of the *beast*.” The one who is wise is the one who within himself has this living understanding that the nature of the beast is also the *nature of man!* Therefore, the nature or character of “religion” and the carnal church system is — FLESHLY!

The power that initiates this marking of all mankind with the bestial nature is the dragon — that ancient serpent who is the devil and Satan. Can we not see by this that it was in Eden that the mark was first

impressed upon mankind! The terrible truth is that a man with no God-consciousness, having never been quickened by the washing of regeneration, walking only in his own carnal understanding and perceptions, obeying the animal instincts that lurk in his members, that man, I say, in the quality of his life is no better than a beast! If you don't believe that, then you have not come to an understanding of the truth. Remember this — not all beasts are wild! Some beasts are domesticated. Some of these domesticated beasts have degrees behind their names and teach in our schools, universities, and seminaries. Others of these likeable, loveable, domesticated beasts run for political office and hold positions in our government! Others have attained to positions in the church systems of man and are called "Father" or "Reverend." There are good beasts, smart beasts, cute beasts, entertaining beasts, cunning beasts, wise beasts, hard working beasts, faithful beasts, but they are still beasts. I do not hesitate to say that we are living in a world of beasts! That's the mark of the natural man, of the human nature, of the Adamic consciousness. A man apart from union with God, for better or for worse, is no better than a beast.

The mark of the beast is not the myth fabricated by the church systems, it is not something imposed by government from some scientific world of computers and computer chips. In the 1960's computers were the new, nightmarish things, and when people talked about computers they would whisper, "Ah, have you heard about the *beast*?" There was supposedly a huge computer in Brussels that had everybody's name and number in the whole world! The wild speculations of religious deceivers went from there to the universal product code. "Why, that code is of the antichrist," they chortled. "You see these two black lines here, those two black lines there — that is 666, the mark of the beast!"

I can hardly wait for that new identity chip because, you see, the joke will be on them — it will represent a mistaken identity, for they don't know my true identity, because I have been born of God, God is my Father, and I am a son of God, a new creation species of Christ! A chip in old Adam's forehead can in no way affect my true identity of the Christ-life that I am! I've already had my identity change. For me to live *is Christ*, for *Christ is my life*. You can put all the chips you want to in my fleshly forehead, or tattoo, or laser any mark you choose and it will not change one iota who I really am. The mark of the beast is already in the forehead of the old natural human identity. The moment we fall back into the old carnal, earthly, natural, human, Adamic way of thinking about ourselves and the world, and act out of that mind-set, the nature (mark) of the beast is manifest. Does this not show that any literal mark applied by man has no power whatever to either add to, or take away from, that which is already there?

In dealing with issues so vast and extensive as those we have considered in these messages on THE BEAST OUT OF THE EARTH, I am well aware that I have passed over many wonderful truths of overwhelming importance. As the beastly spirit has been uncovered, and the beastly religious system unmasked, my great concern has been that beyond it all men might truly, as never before, SEE THE LORD! My deepest desire is to know Christ, not antichrist. I want to know not just about Him, I want to intimately and fully KNOW HIM! The deepest cry of my heart is that the Holy Spirit will take the things of Christ and make them real to me. Therefore I am more interested in CHRIST than I am in the beast, and I am more concerned about the MARK OF GOD than I am with anything that pertains to the mark of the beast!

We stand before God in truth as did the queen of Sheba before Solomon as we read in I Kings 10:4-5, "*And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord; there was no more spirit in her.*" There is no more of our own spirit within us as we are melted before the revelation of the glory of the Lord in this great day of the Lord! For those who have received the call to sonship, incomplete as the present revelation is, yet we find that God is beginning to cause us to realize something of the magnitude and wonder of the work He is doing within our own beings as He brings His many sons to glory.

No man who ever lived walked more faithfully with God than our Lord Jesus Christ, and none was ever endued with so great an anointing as He. Mighty were the signs and wonders that followed the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, yet even that bountiful outpouring was given by measure, the mere "earnest" of the Spirit; but of Jesus Christ, the *firstborn Son of God*, it is written, "*God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him*" (Jn. 3:34). Time and again I have marveled at the wisdom with which He spoke, the nature in which He walked, and the power with which He ministered!

In the Gospel of John, chapter five, Jesus has come up to Jerusalem to attend the feast. As He reaches the city He comes to the Pool of Bethesda and looks into the pool. There are five porches around that pool. He passes through the porches, and at last comes to a poor man, sick for thirty-eight years, who has been pushed away from the sacred spring. The man is lying there miserable and weary and we can imagine the unutterable cry of his heart, "Oh, Yahweh Rophekha! Yahweh my healer! Hast Thou come to earth? Is it true that Thou hast come to save us? Oh, Yahweh Rophekha! Hast Thou come to open the eyes of the blind, to give hearing to the deaf, and to make the lame to walk? Oh, Christ of God! Hast Thou no hope for me?" He pauses as he hears the Voice. "Wilt thou be made whole?" And he looks up into the face of a Man who is looking down at him, asking that strange question, "Wilt thou be made whole?"

Now you can imagine a man in this condition, who has been carried there for over thirty years, turning around and saying, "What is the use of asking me such a question? My mother carried me here to this pool when I was a baby, my father brought me here when he could. The hands of those who loved me best are moldering in the grave, and I have only a few friends to carry me here now. But others push me back and when the water is moved I cannot get down to the pool. But I still hope. I have been thirty-eight years sick. Of course I am willing to be made whole! Why would you ask me such a question?" That's what a man today probably would have answered. "Why of course I am *willing!*" But he doesn't talk like that. The Man that is speaking to him has said, "Wilt thou be made whole?" and there goes right down into his heart a strange sensation, his whole being vibrates like a harp when every string is touched by a master hand. That Voice is unlike anything he ever heard. "Wilt thou be made whole?" Gently he explains that he has no man to help put him into the pool, but that others when he is coming, step down before him. Then he waits with his eyes fixed on the Man who has so strangely appealed to his will, for perhaps this Stranger is a good man who will tarry with him and help him into the water. He gets ready — but the very next moment he hears the Voice of Him who is the Resurrection and the Life, of Him who is the Lord of lords and King of kings say, "Rise, take up thy bed and walk!" And in a moment there comes into his body with that Word, power; and he rises, takes up that bedroll, rolls it up and walks home, set free from the bonds of Satan who has bound him for thirty-eight years.

Precious friend of mine, ponder if you will, this solemn inquiry: Have you truly *seen* and *met* Jesus the Christ? Has the Holy Spirit ever revealed to you that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God? Has He come to you, not as a man in the streets of ancient Jerusalem, but in mighty spirit-power to deal a death-blow to the works of the flesh and of the devil in your life, to renew your mind, transform your nature, and completely and forever *make you whole* in the image of God? If you have seen Him even through a glass darkly, you will be as Isaiah who wrote, "*In the year that king Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: and one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.*" If we see Him in this way, we will cry as Isaiah did, "*Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.*"

Thank God that is not the end of the story! I earnestly pray that God will give a spirit of true humility to all who read these lines, for we recognize the weakness and uncleanness of our outer man, the flesh. I know, as all honest hearts know, that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. But our Father has the remedy! Not only does He heal the lame by the Pool of Bethesda, causing him to stand tall and walk in the strength of manhood, but He heals every member of His body from all the impotency, blemishes, and corruption of the Adamic consciousness and raises up within us the image of God and the glory of Christ that we may walk tall and confident as God-men in the earth. Any man who sees the glory of God and longs to be rid of the filth of his flesh and the wretched defilement of the bestial system of the world will certainly cry with the Psalmist, "*Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting*" (Ps. 139:23-24). The same Isaiah who made the humble and honest confession quoted above went on to reveal God's goodness and greatness to usward. "*Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me!*" Thus has the Lord revealed that when His purging

process is complete in His apprehended sons, the hour of their *sending forth* will quickly follow. Even in the darkness of this dread day all creation is standing on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of God's sons coming into their own! And truly we ourselves do groan within ourselves, waiting for the hour of unveiling, the *manifestation of the sons of God!*

Years later Isaiah revealed the faithfulness of the Lord unto His called and chosen elect. *"He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have **no might** He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that **wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; thy shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.**"*

Do you see the Christ high and lifted up upon the throne in your temple? What part does He have in your life? "Oh," you say, "I am a member of the church. I attend its services, I take its communion, I participate in its outreaches, I sing psalms, I have had hands laid on me, I have gifts of the Spirit, I prophesy, and I believe in miracles!" You can have all these things and never *see Christ!* When we see Christ, my friend, neither heaven above nor earth beneath can find terms grand enough to express the wonder of His presence, or the miracle of His transforming power that comes into our lives with His Word, or the hope of His sonship revealed within us, for in seeing Him we are eternally changed into His very own image in ever increasing splendor and from one degree of glory to another! Oh, the wonder of it!

To be continued...

J. PRESTON EBY