

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 165

THE THREE ANGELS' MESSAGES (continued)

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the *everlasting gospel* (*good news of the ages*) to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Rev. 14:6).

Having considered in our previous study the wonderful theme of the *everlasting gospel*, or the *gospel of the ages*, we now direct the reader's attention to *the people to whom* that gospel is first proclaimed by the "flying angel" ministry. A casual perusal might lead one to believe that this good news of the ages is simply preached to all the "earth dwellers" or "carnal Christians" as one group, and then afterwards to all the peoples of every nation, tribe, and language unto the ends of the world, as another group. Our endeavor, however, must always be first to realize what God says, and then to seek to understand the meaning of His words.

The expression "them that dwell upon the earth" is frequent in the Revelation and we have spoken of it many times throughout this series. It has become very clear that this expression refers to those of the Lord's people who are carnal minded, who mind earthly things, who interpret the scriptures by human reasoning and natural understanding, and seek primarily those blessings which minister to the natural man and the flesh life. The ordinary reader would most probably take it for granted that this expression as found in Revelation 14:6 was but another occurrence of the familiar phrase. This is not so however! Those who read the scripture with thought and purpose will surely notice that there is one significant difference between the way the phrase is stated in our text and the way it appears in every other passage in the Revelation. The usual expression in the Greek text is this: *hoi katoikountes epi tes ges*. *Katoikeo* means "to dwell," and is related to the Greek word *oikos*, meaning "a house." Those who "dwell" upon the earth are those who make the earth their "home," — the carnal, natural, fleshly life, even in spiritual things, as they seek blessings of health and wealth and position, is where they are comfortable — at home! They are spiritually contented with programs, rituals, ceremonies, works, sacraments, pageantry, Christian entertainment, fellowship dinners, social and political activism, and temporal blessings — these are the earth-dwellers!

This word *katoikeo* meaning "to dwell," used in every other reference to the "earth dwellers," is *not*, however, the word used here in our text! The very best Greek manuscripts unanimously use an altogether different word — *kathemai* — meaning "to sit." This word also is of frequent occurrence in the Revelation, and in many cases has a special connection with the idea of *authority*. The word is used at least eleven times in reference to "**sitting upon** a throne." Nine times the references are to "**sitting upon** a horse." Three times it refers to "One **sitting upon** a cloud." None of these passages convey the idea of merely resting, but of sitting in authority as a king upon a throne, of riding forth into conquest as a warrior upon a horse, and of exaltation in a position of eminence and glory upon a cloud. There are but five more occurrences of the word in the Revelation, and they will identify the people to whom the *aionian* gospel is preached, and illuminate the true meaning of the clause that follows their mention:

"The great whore that SITTETH upon many waters" (Rev. 17:1).

“A woman SITTING upon a scarlet colored beast” (Rev. 17:3).

“The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman SITTETH, and they are seven kings” (Rev. 17:9).

“The waters...where the whore SITTETH, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues” (Rev. 17:15).

“I SIT a queen” (Rev. 18:7).

There is no passage where the verb “to sit” is used in any other way in the whole book of Revelation! Check through Strong’s Concordance and you will see that in every instance the “sitting” is connected with power, authority, and dominion! Every occurrence has to do with rule! Those who “sit” upon the throne rule! Those who “sit” upon the horses are going forth conquering and to conquer! He who “sits” upon the cloud is high and lifted up in glory and might! The woman that “sitteth” upon many waters rules over and controls those “waters”! The woman “sitting” upon the beast has the reins in her hands and is directing and controlling the beast! The woman “sitting” upon the seven mountains, which are seven kings or kingdoms, is obviously the authority over those kingdoms! We can now view our text in a clearer light. “They that SIT upon the earth” are not the earth-dwellers themselves, but the *leaders*, the *ecclesiastics*, the *pastors*, the *priests*, the *bishops*, the *overseers*, the *superintendents*, the *presidents*, yea, the *rulers* over the earth-dwellers!

The next consideration must be the relation which this great religious system, the carnal church system of man, has to those who are spoken of as “every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.” Those that “sit upon” the earth are also those who “sit upon” every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. The Greek word *epi*, meaning *upon*, is repeated in this second part of the verse, so that it reads, “...them that SIT UPON the earth, AND UPON every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.” Do you doubt for one moment, my friend, that the religious systems of earth not only exert an influence, control, and domination over their members but also over the governments of this world? Oh, yes! Religion in one way or another controls nearly all the governments of earth! We can positively say that according to our text the meaning is that those same ones who are said to SIT upon the earth-realm, the carnal church, are also said to SIT upon all the nations and tribes of mankind!

Oh, my Father, what a word is this! Have you seen this before? Dare we believe it? I do not hesitate to tell you that this is the word of the Lord! This “gospel of the ages” will at this time be preached to a particular, select, exclusive group — the *religious leaders*, the *kings of the earth-ream* — those who *sit upon* and *rule over* the universal realm of Mystery Babylon! If it doesn’t indicate that, then I understand nothing of the Greek text. Can you, in your wildest imagination, conceive of such a thing! We would want to preach to the earth-dwellers first, in hope that they would flee the system, causing it to implode upon its leaders. But our God and Father is indeed a genius, a superb tactician and a distinguished strategist. If you planned to turn the whole church world to God and truth, would not the most ingenious scheme of all be to first convert the *leaders*, those with the *influence* and *power*, those in *control*? In other words, *capture*, *conquer the king* and the door is open to march in and possess his kingdom!

“Having the gospel of the ages to *preach* to them that *sit upon* the earth...” The word used in Greek for “preach” is not the usual verb *kerusso*, meaning to “herald, or proclaim,” but *euangelizo*, meaning to “evangelize.” So the literal meaning is: “...with a gospel of the ages to *gospelize*, or an evangel of the ages to *evangelize*, those who rule over the earth-realm!” How could even the Holy Spirit, through John, have better expressed the purpose of God toward His people? When we think of “evangelizing” we associate it with carrying the gospel to the lost, to the heathen, to the unchurched. But that is not who God is after at this time. He is sending His sons to EVANGELIZE THE HEIRARCHY OF THE CHURCH SYSTEMS, FROM THE POPE AND PATRIARCHS ALL THE WAY DOWN TO THE PARISH PRIEST AND THE LOCAL PASTOR AND ELDERS! And when you think about all the error and folly and false concepts of God and perversions of truth of the religious systems — that is certainly what must be done — they must be

evangelized and gospelized! The world can never be reached nor can creation be restored until the ministers of Babylon have an attitude adjustment, embracing the *true gospel* of Jesus Christ!

The gospel preached by the nominal church will never get the job done, it will never bring the kingdom of God in power to deliver mankind from sin and death and restore all men and all things to God. The church world is using worldly means and soulish methods to promote its programs and its false gospel today. It is conformed unto the world's way of doing things. We have heard many so-called gospels. The world is full of poor deluded souls who are trying to establish their own particular creed of imaginings and mistakes. We try to go to the world, we try to tell them the message, by using all the world's own methods, to advertise, to appeal to men's emotions, to entertain them with music, to put on a good show. It only proves our impotence, that we have not left the world very far behind if we can return and employ the world's ways so easily. Today, everyone with a little bit of preacher's "itch" is attempting to get themselves a little congregation, a little following, to build a little kingdom. These all imagine that somehow they are going to go out and storm the world and "take the world" for Christ. But a new day has dawned, a day when the pure, unadulterated, living, and powerful *gospel of the kingdom* shall go forth to the whole world. Religionists have tried in vain to lift the world out of its shame by their ambitious programs and preaching their own ideas, fear mongering, and the doctrines of the antichrist. It simply would not work. The world has grown steadily worse. The lofty phrases, text-book prayers, apologetic platitudes, time-honored traditions, and soulish manipulations have utterly failed. Now a new company is to go forth with a burning message of truth direct from the throne, and with a *loud voice* — in the *fullness of power* reserved for this day!

The anointing of the sons of God shall be an anointing WITHOUT MEASURE, and the message of these sons shall be a message stripped of all the intellectual absurdities that have been preached through the years. Religionists have side-stepped, and mollicoddled, and back-slapped too long. Their day is done. The sun is sinking in the western sky of this age of the "in part" realm. A new day is dawning for those who are being quickened from above. A new army is being prepared for this new day, an army of the sons of God perfected in His image, filled with the precious mind that was in Christ Jesus, radiating the effulgence of His glory, demonstrating the omnipotence of His power and the invincibility of His life. And there shall be an exultant victory! For now the day is dawning when "**ALL** nations shall come and **worship** before Thee" (Rev. 15:4). Notice — those blessed words are only one chapter further on in the book of Revelation, the glorious result of the "flying angel's message" — "...saying with a loud voice, **Fear God, and give glory to Him...and worship Him!**" It cannot be denied by any that throughout this age **all nations** have never come to **worship the Lord**. But there is a day, glorious day! when all the nations shall know the Lord and the Lord alone shall be glorified.

Now — the *key* to it all will be the gospel of the ages sent in power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost to that vast network of men who rule over and control the whole world of nominal religionists and carnal Christians. As we shall see later in our studies of the Revelation, the most severe dealings of God shall come upon this entire class of men of every denomination and group to break them, purge them, refine them, purify them, change and transform them into living epistles of Christ. Don't think for one moment that it can't happen — when the manifest sons of God are revealed upon mount Zion, that is the very next issue on God's agenda! Most of these clerical men are honest and sincere, with all their heart and soul they desire to serve God, and they do so in the manner in which the system has instructed them. They have a zeal to do God's work, but without knowledge. But manifest the sons and you can transform the church leaders! Transform the leaders and you bless, liberate, and make spiritually alive untold millions of the Lord's people everywhere — in fact, all one billion of them! Set one billion Christians on fire for God, ablaze with truth, grace, glory, and power, and you can sweep the nations into the kingdom of God! Oh, yes! Our God *has a plan!*

The very first action of the sons of God will be to deliver all of God's people from the bondage of religious Babylon! You see, my beloved, the precise order of God's great restorative work is clearly delineated in the visions of the book of Revelation! In chapters one through fourteen we see the internal work of God in His called and chosen elect, the processing, maturing, and transformation which results in the birthing of the manchild and his catching up unto God and to His throne. This manchild is viewed again as the 144,000 with the Lamb upon mount Zion. Then at once we see the beginning of his ministry and his

rule, as the “angel flying in the midst of heaven” is given the gospel of the ages to proclaim with a **loud voice** — that is, in great authority and power — and this word issues from the sons of God unto the leaders of the carnal church systems of man!

In chapter sixteen of the Revelation we view the internal purging and purification of God’s people — not the elect, but of the vast multitudes of Christians in the denominational systems of every nation under heaven. It will be a most wonderful and thrilling story when we get to it! In chapters seventeen and eighteen we are shown the final destruction and annihilation of the entire world-wide system of Babylon, not the *people*, but the *system*. Then in chapters nineteen and twenty in transfixed wonder John beholds the ultimate perfection of the bride of Christ, the transcendent glory of the city of God, and the illuminating rule of the Lamb and His wife, restoring the nations and all people and all things back into God again. Isn’t it wonderful!

It is my deep conviction that the hour of the deliverance of God’s people and the manifestation of His glory, majesty, wisdom, and power upon them is nigh at hand. The King is coming! Hallelujah! He is coming in mighty spirit-power to set His people free, to burst asunder the chains of their captivity, that they in turn may deliver creation. Once the church is cleansed from her idols and defilement, she will be in a position to bring deliverance to a sin-sick and judgment-weary world, when “the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea” (Isa. 11:9). Only when Christ’s church is cleansed from her idols can she ever hope to be a light unto all nations.

Don’t write the “church world” off, my friend, for they, too, are the Lord’s people and will one day move out of the darkness of tradition, bondage, carnality, immaturity, and limitation and move into the bright light of the fullness of the glory of God. Oh yes, they will! God will bring forth a light that is sevenfold in its intensification, so that there will be nothing hidden from it, and its heat and brightness will consume and destroy everything that opposes. And that deliverance has to come. It will come through those who have given up their all, those who have lost everything to be joined to their Lord, and who henceforth live only unto Him. Sons shall reign from mount Zion, but the water of life must also flow from the city and the leaves of the trees must be distributed to bring healing to the nations. But before we can have any part or lot in this great work, we must forsake all and follow the Lamb alone. No one can deliver men from the lies of the antichrist while continuing to preach those lies. “And in their mouth was found no guile — no lie.” No one can deliver the world from the bondages of sin, fear, ignorance, carnality, limitation, and death while himself remaining a captive of those things. And before God’s true church can persuade men to give up their idols, and loose their bands, she must first get rid of all her own golden calves and march in victory out of Babylon’s domain.

Let us quote from Isaiah 25:6-7, and we read from the New English Bible. ***“On this mountain (mount Zion, the mount of sonship) the Lord of hosts will prepare a banquet of rich fare for ALL THE PEOPLES, a banquet of wines well matured and richest fare, well-matured vines strained clear. On this mountain the Lord will swallow up that veil that shrouds ALL peoples, the pall thrown over the nations: He will swallow up death forever. Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears FROM EVERY FACE and remove the reproach of His people from THE WHOLE EARTH. The Lord has spoken.”***

In the preceding chapters the prophet tells us how that God will destroy all that has ever oppressed the people of the earth. His power will be used to take away every degrading thing and everything that binds and this power is spoken of as THIS MOUNTAIN in the passage above. Having destroyed the oppression, ***this mountain*** (the government of God) will then turn to be the place where God will prepare a very wonderful feast for ALL THE PEOPLES. Everyone is included in this for when this morning comes, none will be left out. The work of restoration will be completed and now will come the time of rejoicing. After the preparation of this feast (of Tabernacles), ***this mountain***, or this power of God, will do another wonderful thing. The veil that shrouds ALL THE PEOPLE will be swallowed up by God. All spiritual blinders will be removed! The pall that hangs over ALL THE NATIONS will be taken away by the power of God. Nations and their officials today are seeking how to do away with all that plagues humanity from sickness to crime. But they cannot find the way! Just when the nations feel they are making some progress, things suddenly turn and the trouble starts all over again.

Of course they know nothing of this veil of flesh that is upon all nations and peoples. They are unaware of the covering that God has placed over all nations, therefore they cannot know how in any way to look in the right place for a solution. There is no solution outside of God Himself and He will reveal that when His hour arrives. But even now the feast that the Lord is to prepare for ALL PEOPLES is in the time of preparation, it is being prepared *within a people in the heights of this mountain of Zion*, and when it is completed, God will lift the veil and the covering from all people and nations and reveal the wonders that He has formed for everyone who has ever lived or ever shall live. And as we have seen in our text, the veil and the covering will *first* be removed from the ministry that ministers to the Lord's people in Babylon!

Instead of preparing a terrifying hell to bring to a close this age, as we have been told by the churches, we find that God is preparing a wonderful feast for the opening of the coming age! But the carnal mind or the human nature always looks upon the negative side of anything and it actually forgets that there is a positive side. For instead of preparing for destruction, God is preparing for the morning, the dawning of a new day in which there will be no more weeping or crying. God also tells us that the reproach of His people will be removed from all of the earth. That can only happen when the Babylon religious system is fully taken away, with all its false teachings, carnality, and foolishness. Then the Lord will swallow up death in victory! All death! "To be carnally minded *is death*." The death of carnality, dead religion, spiritual death, physical death, *all* death will be swallowed up! Please notice that the Lord will do the swallowing up of death, and it will be by the ministration of HIS LIFE. The only solution for death *is Life*!

We have come to a period of the world, and to a condition, for which there are no precedents. There are no instructions left for guidance in the details of the restoration of all things, beginning with the deliverance of all the Lord's precious people from the tyranny and folly of religious Babylon, followed by the deliverance of the nations and their entrance into the kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit has given no exact direction concerning the manner in which the priesthood for the nations is to minister or its work to be effected. We have, in the scriptures, abundant instructions for the "in part" realm of church age ministry. It is not difficult to learn how to function in the body of Christ as an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, bishop, elder, teacher, deacon, or to move in the gifts of the Spirit unto the edification and building up of the body of Christ. But I challenge any theologian to find anything that will give direct help, even in the words of Jesus Himself, concerning how to reign as king-priests, or how to minister as manifest sons of God unto creation! He left that for the Holy Spirit to teach to the elect company of overcomers who should be the heirs of the kingdom of God. We have come to that hour. Ah, we can only learn these sacred and secret things by being TAUGHT OF HIM!

In our text we come as close as one can get to a statement about the actual ministry of the sons of God. It is portrayed as a messenger flying in the mid-heaven, having the gospel of the ages to preach unto those who rule over and control the church systems of man. They make this proclamation with a LOUD VOICE, or a ministry of EARTH-SHAKING SOUND, as the Greek also implies, a trumpet blowing through the lower heavens and the earth, coming forth with a CERTAIN SOUND, whose pitch and frequency will be tuned to the inner ear of the leaders of God's people, to that deep hidden inner desire to please God and do His work, even though they know not how; deep crying to deep, spirit crying to spirit, the word of God *living* and *powerful*, dividing asunder between soul and spirit, breaking, smashing, shattering, rending, opening a fountain of tears and a wail of repentance, leading to regeneration and transformation by the spirit of grace and glory. That, as I have said, is about as close as we come to a divine revelation of this beginning of the ministry of the sons of God! Beyond this we must lean hard upon the word of our elder brother who has taught us, "*I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth...and He will SHOW YOU THINGS TO COME*" (Jn. 16:12-13).

We think we have seen some wonderful moves of God, and we have, but we haven't even scratched the surface, we haven't seen anything yet that faintly resembles the glorious things God will do in the days that lie before us. With all its multiplied missionary programs and evangelistic efforts the church has not yet even started on world evangelism. God is laying a groundwork and teaching, processing, qualifying, equipping, and empowering His people for the coming invasion of all the church systems and of the whole world. He must do something unprecedented for us first, so that we will be ready. Let us not deceive ourselves, we don't have all that we need for this great work, but God is quickening us for it. He is stripping

away our dependence upon money, education, status, recognition, methods, promotions, and materials, drawing us to move out of that and into HIS REALM. The realm of God is the realm of *Spirit*. It is the realm of *Being*. God is teaching us the ways of His Spirit, and we must be endowed with the absolute fullness of His Spirit, which is the sevenfold *spirit of sonship*.

We are entering a wonderful day in the world's history — when the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom unto the age of the ages, and *all dominions* shall serve Him! Prophecies which have been spoken by holy men of God since the world began are being fulfilled in these days. Mysteries which have been sealed up in the Book of God for millenniums are now being opened. Streams of events which had their source in the dim, remote past are now converging in a mighty river of divine destiny, which is rushing on with irresistible swiftness to the dispensation of the fullness of times.

There is coming a new and fresh and full revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. The night is falling on the present order. But the trumpet blast from God's flying angel company will pierce the darkness and awaken the night. Already we are seeing evidence of the dawning of a new day breaking forth upon us as thousands of the Lord's elect are arising to behold the first rays of the dawn and to drink in the intoxicating freshness of the morn. There is a mighty cry in our hearts for the Lord to move in an altogether new way in our lives, in the church world, and in all the earth. Many things are happening in the Pentecostal and Charismatic realms today, but I do not hesitate to tell you that all of those things are but stale "left overs" from previous visitations. Yet, beneath it all, there *is* a deep hunger and an honest cry for God to do a new and greater thing! And God will answer that cry. We are due for a fresh move and a new work of God in the earth in this hour! So the night is coming upon the religious realms, bringing an end to particular forms of the movings and operations of the Spirit of God. Though all the manifestations of the past have been precious and needful, yet our God in this hour is moving on. A new manifestation and revelation of the Christ is coming in the midst of us, and I hear and see the signs that He is beginning to come. We are living in the early dawn of the fullness of the APPEARING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. This appearing is His *bodily appearing*, His appearing in the fullness of His glory and power *in His body*, bringing the long-awaited manifestation of the sons of God. It will not just save and heal and bless people, it will deliver creation from the *bondage of corruption* in all realms of man's corruption.

The very first ministry of the sons of God will not be to empty the hospitals and bars and prisons and hell-holes of this world — their first ministry is that of the *three angels* sent forth to deliver the **Lord's people** from the spirit and bondage of Mystery Babylon the Great! Do you suppose, my beloved, that God would empty out the hospitals and bars and prisons and hell-holes *before* He empties out the church houses of the apostate religious systems? No way! Judgment *begins* at the house of God! The bride must *make herself ready*. Jerusalem must be *made a praise* in the earth *before* the nations can walk in the light of the city. Oh, the wonder of it!

I must speak very frankly, my friends. The next move of God, the manifestation of the sons of God, will not come through those who are waiting for a rapture to whisk them away to the skies. Nor will it come through those who suppose that the next thing on God's agenda is the world-wide rule of the antichrist. It will come through people who are crying out from the depths of their spirits, "Oh God, visit us afresh. Do a new thing! We need YOU! Creation groans for a mighty deliverance! Come, Lord Jesus, move through us on a higher order, a higher dimension of your power and glory! Come to your temple in fullness. Come in the manifestation of your sonship. Come! that we might behold you as you are and be changed into your image, clothed with your life and immortality. The whole earth is waiting with bated breath for the glory of the Lord to be revealed. Come! and cause righteousness and praise and incorruption to spring forth before all nations!"

FEAR GOD

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the gospel of the ages to preach unto them that rule over the earth-realm, and over every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a *loud voice*, **Fear God**, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (Rev. 14:6-7).

In our present chapter the beloved apostle John describes three angels that he sees flying in the mid-heaven. He doesn't say what they looked like, because the important thing was not their appearance, but what they represent and the messages they bore. So John is very careful to record what he heard the angels proclaim as they flew across the sky. These three angels' messages come at a very crucial point in the unfolding revelation being communicated to John. Let's take a moment to examine their context so that we can better understand them. If we know what John talks about before and after these angel messages, we can see how they fit the overall picture God gave him.

The scene immediately preceding the angel messages is that of the Lamb upon mount Zion and the one hundred and forty-four thousand with Him. Just prior to John beholding the first angel, he is told that the 144,000 upon mount Zion are those who follow the Lamb, who have the Father's name written in their foreheads, and they are redeemed from among men, being the FIRSTFRUITS unto God and to the Lamb. The term "firstfruits" is drawn from the well-known offering of "firstfruits" under the Old Testament law of Israel, in which the first portion of any harvest was dedicated to God, in token that the whole belonged to Him, and was recognized as His. Hence it always implies that something of the same kind will follow it. If there was a field of wheat, the firstfruits, the very first of the ripened grain, would be offered up to God, following which the entire field of wheat would eventually come to the same condition of maturity, though not offered up to God in the same special way for His unique purpose. Thus, the 144,000 are the *firstfruits* of God's redemption, the very first of all creation to come into full redemption and into the full stature of Jesus Christ as sons of the Father!

They are firstfruits — that means that after this the full harvest will be brought before God, for the full harvest must come as well as the firstfruits. It is significant to note that here, *just before the ministry of the first angel*, we are shown a wonderful picture of the firstfruits. So what follows the messages of the three angels? Ah, immediately we see a dramatic picture of the gathering of the full harvest! "And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time has come for thee to reap; for the *harvest of the earth is ripe*. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the *earth was reaped*" (Rev. 14:15-16). And then only a few verses later, in the fifteenth chapter, we see the fruit of this: "Who shall not *fear, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? For all nations shall come and worship before Thee*; for Thy righteous acts have been made manifest" (Rev. 15:4). Is that not exactly what the first angel commanded: "...unto *every nation...saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him...and worship Him!*" Between the firstfruits and the harvest we have the three angels' messages. The Holy Spirit bears witness within my spirit to the truth that the great purpose of the three angels' messages is to PREPARE THE HARVEST FOR REAPING! It is a word sent to the Lord's people and to all the ends of the earth, breaking up the fallow ground, and preparing all to experience the fullness of redemption already revealed within the firstfruits! It is, in very fact, the firstfruits themselves, under the symbolism of the three angels, delivering this message to the world! That is the mystery.

The first angel's message is a powerful, authoritative word through the manifest sons of God unto all the vaunted religious leaders of the world, commanding them to turn from all their man-made religious pomp and show, from their lifeless rituals, static creeds, empty ceremonies, impotent sacraments, flesh-oriented programs, and self-aggrandizement in order to FEAR GOD, AND GIVE GLORY TO HIM, FOR THE HOUR OF HIS JUDGMENT IS COME: AND WORSHIP HIM! "Fear God" is first, for the inspired Psalmist has told us that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

The very first principle we must understand in this connection is that the fear of the Lord has absolutely and positively nothing to do with being afraid. Our Lord does not have, nor does He give, the spirit of FRIGHT! Jesus was not, and is not, TERRIFIED of His Father, neither does He impart to men the spirit of TERROR. Allah is a God of terror, but not our heavenly Father! "God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (II Tim. 1:7). In the scriptures our English word "fear" is translated from the Hebrew word *yirah* and from the Greek word *phobos*. These words have two principal meanings: first, that apprehension of evil or danger which normally causes one to flee or fight; an expectation of harm or pain which evokes a feeling of alarm, dread, or disquiet; and second, that awe or reverence which a man of sense feels in the presence of that which is high or eminent, such as a king or authority. A child feels the first of these kinds of fear in the presence of a harsh, cruel, and abusive parent,

and the second before a parent who is good and loving, but who must also be just. The Greek word *phobos* is used in both of the above senses. In Matthew 14:26 we read that the disciples “cried out for fear,” being frightened and terrified because they *thought* they saw a ghost! But in Acts 9:31 we read, “Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the *fear of the Lord*, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.” Here, the second meaning of fear is implied, the awesome reverence of God.

We are not to fear God because He is mean, demanding, exacting, vindictive, implacable, or full of wrath and vengeance. We are to fear God because HE IS GOD — omnipotent, omniscient, immutable, eternal, all-wise, faithful, just, compassionate, full of loving kindness and tender mercies, our FATHER, and also THE CREATOR AND KING OF THE UNIVERSE! What this means is that we should feel the solemn majesty of our Creator and Father and *reverence Him with reverential fear*.

If you should receive a formal invitation to meet the Queen of England or the President of the United States of America, wouldn't you be a little *fearful* just before you entered into the presence of such an important person? You would know you really had nothing to fear, yet you would be very respectful and altogether reverent in the presence of such a famous and important individual. And how much more glorious, majestic, and worthy is the great God and our Father above all the earthly kings and emperors and queens and prime ministers and presidents who have ever lived! We live every moment of our lives under the purpose, watchfulness, and intervention of God; He knows everything about us and has planned for us from before the foundation of the world. How much we ought to reverence Him and stand in awe of His incomprehensible majesty, His divine power and wisdom, His matchless love and abounding grace! We need to give glory to Him not only with our voices but in our attitudes and actions. By gladly obeying Him and reproducing His character in our lives, we glorify the One who has given us His very own life! Such a holy and reverential fear of the Lord is the spirit of sonship in which Jesus walked and ministered throughout His earthly life. It is also the spirit in which every son of God walks! And it is this reverential fear of the Lord that shall in turn be ministered by God's elect unto all the leaders of the church world and unto all the Lord's people everywhere, so that they may learn to reverence the Lord Himself, and not man and the kingdoms of man. This is the first angel's message!

Perhaps this simple story will aid our understanding of what is meant by the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord, as represented in scripture, is a godly thing, a wonderful thing, a lovely thing. How many precious believers, influenced by the false doctrines of Babylon's church systems, have absolutely no conception of the difference between the pure and holy fear of the Lord and the terrible *fright* of the Lord. When I was a boy the church in which I was raised painted such a picture of God as One who is so exacting, demanding, harsh, and judgmental, that if you went to bed at night with even one little sin unconfessed and not put “under the blood,” should the “rapture” take place during the night you would surely be left behind to face the nightmare of the Great Tribulation and the Antichrist. But it got even worse! Should you have the misfortune of *dying* in your sleep that night, you would burst hell wide open! I tell you that in those days I could not truly love God, nor know the beauty and power of *His unconditional love for me, FOR BEING AFRAID OF HIM!* The coming of the Lord sent no thrill of glory through my soul; the very thought of His coming struck terror within my heart; for God was so holy, so righteously opposed to and intolerant of sin, and so absolutely and unalterably just, that I was certain, beyond a reasonable doubt, that I could never be quite worthy enough to stand before His fearsome presence!

How my ransomed soul exults with joy unspeakable and full of glory that the work of the Holy Spirit in bearing witness to the truth has swallowed up the veil that shrouded my mind, and lifted the dark pall that hung like death over my spirit, revealing the heart of my Father, that at last I could SEE AND KNOW HIM AS HE REALLY IS! Do you think that we should be afraid of someone as glorious, gracious, merciful, and loving as our heavenly Father? Should we cringe in fear before Him like a dog that expects a kick? What has God done to us that we should be afraid of Him? Oh, how the church and the world need this revelation of the God who IS LOVE! Jesus has come and shown us the Father! The power of the *spirit of sonship* is to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim deliverance to the captives, the recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, and to declare the acceptable year of the Lord! It will be a real shock when the preachers are called upon to learn the true *reverential fear of the Lord*, to once and for all abandon their heresies of vindictive judgment and eternal damnation, and to forever

cast away all their hell-fire and brimstone sermons! The President of one Bible College claims that eighty to ninety percent of their students were saved by *fear*. Fear was the motive that brought them to the altar, not the fear of the Lord, but the fear of terrorists, or of one world government, or of missing the rapture, or of the Great Tribulation, or of the Antichrist, or of eternal hell-fire. We have had too many conversions based on this self-saving. The power of the spirit of sonship will preach a gospel to which people are not responding to *save themselves from the hands of an angry God*, but they will respond as a result of HIS SELF-GIVING, THE OUTPOURING OF HIS LIFE AND LOVE AND GRACE AND ABUNDANT SALVATION. At last the world will understand that truly “God *so loved the world* that He gave His only begotten Son” (Jn. 3:16).

“The *fear of the Lord* is the beginning of wisdom” (Ps. 111:10). How plain it is that God will never grant wisdom to the man whose soul is void of true reverence for God, for true reverence is true humility, and true humility places God’s will and God’s purposes and God’s glory above all else in the universe. The writer to the Hebrews admonishes: “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Heb. 12:28). The glory and power of the kingdom of God is only given in the power of the Holy Spirit to devout and humble souls who seek His face in truth. Our exalted heavenly Father, full of power and wisdom and grace and truth, will not consent to walk with the arrogant and the scornful; neither will He be found in the midst of careless, irreverent, profane, or hypocritical men. If deep within your heart you have a strong and fervent desire to truly KNOW GOD and to have part in the righteous government which He shall bring forth in the earth in this day, you must first above all else remove the shoes from off your feet when you walk upon His holy ground. If ever you would receive the fullness of the seven spirits of God; if ever you stand upon Zion’s holy hill and share the glory of sonship with the exalted Lamb of God; you must first pray earnestly for grace whereby you may serve God *acceptably* with **reverence and godly fear**. Walk softly and with the deepest love and respect when you enter the presence of Him before whom holy and powerful angels cover their faces. The God who is your Father is also the architect and creator of the universe! Only those who experientially know within themselves the spirit of the *fear of the Lord* can fly with the angel through the midst of heaven, with great power calling upon the church and the world to FEAR GOD, AND GIVE GLORY TO HIM...AND WORSHIP HIM! What a calling, as God’s “flying angel company” brings that wonderful *attitude adjustment* to the whole world of man’s self-centered religion!

The victorious congregation of Israel sang of His majesty by the Red Sea, proclaiming, “Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?” (Ex. 15:11). The prophet Isaiah, that holy man from whose lips had poured forth mighty utterance of prophetic truth, upon beholding the glory of the Lord, cried, “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” (Isa. 6:5). Every true revelation of God will mightily increase respect for our all-glorious Father. As one has pointed out, any revelation which produces lightness, frivolity, carelessness, or looseness of living within its recipients is not a revelation from above but from beneath. Even to consider the attributes of our Lord fills the saints with reverence and godly fear. To learn that God is omnipotent, omniscient, immutable, eternal, compassionate, full of loving kindness and tender mercies causes men to bow in awe before Him. Such characteristics do not abide by nature within us and they do not exist apart from HIM. When our spiritual eyes behold and our spiritual minds begin to grasp the sacred mysteries of God’s great purpose of the ages which in other ages were not revealed to men, but which are now unfolded to those who walk in humility before Him, then our love and reverence for our wonderful Father increases beyond words. Then even the slightest lightness or looseness before Him appalls our souls, causing us to cringe in spirit. Let wicked men who know Him not wag their idle tongues to curse and blaspheme that holy name which is above every name, but let no word of foolishness or disrespect soil our lips or bring dishonor to Him before whom all creation will one day bow to confess on bended knee that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father!

The spirit of the fear of the Lord (Isa. 11:1-2) will be one of the remarkable signs of the sonship of the apprehended ones in this day, and it shall be a most remarkable evidence of the sonship ministry. Along with the astounding manifestations of God’s almighty power there shall be the reverence that has been so sadly lacking up to this time. Men, even religious men, treat the holy things of God with such fickleness and impulsiveness, but the spirit of the Lord shall be so evidenced through the holy sons of God that men shall begin to tremble, knowing that they are dealing with a living God.

Jesus was the perfect embodiment of the wisdom of God, and because that is so, He also had a fear of God. When the firstborn Son of God was faced with the reality of His own upcoming crucifixion, the record tells us that “He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, *and was heard in that He feared*” (Heb. 5:7). Hear it! Jesus FEARED! The truth in this one small verse of scripture is most remarkable. It tells us not only that Jesus “offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death” but it also tells us that HE WAS HEARD! How can we say that He was heard when, in fact, He died? How was He then *saved from death*, if He died? Yes, He died. But the wonderful fact is that He did not remain dead! He was heard — He was saved from or out of death — by the *power of His resurrection*! Why was He raised from the dead? Was it because of His great faith? Was it because the Father purposed it? Ah, beyond all that it was because HE FEARED!

“He was heard, *in that He feared.*” Not that He feared the suffering, not that He feared what men could ever do unto Him, not that He feared the humiliation, not that He feared the cross, not that He feared death itself — but in that He feared GOD! Only He who knew by experience this principle could teach us, as He did, saying, “Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear HIM which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Mat. 10:28). FEAR HIM! Fear, reverence Him who is able to create conditions within the inner man, conditions in the mind, conditions in the emotions, conditions in the external world that will destroy both the inner and the outer man and reduce him to utter rubble. Not that he is annihilated, but he is so devastated that he is unable to gather his faculties together to function in any way. Oh, yes! God can bring a man down to the dust! Jesus loved God. Because He loved God, He came to know Him. And because He knew God, He feared, He revered Him. Because He feared, because He revered God in His heart, HE WAS HEARD. Because He was heard, He was raised from among the dead and exalted unto the fullness of the glory of the Father. Can this mean that the fear of the Lord *leads to LIFE*? Hear the wisdom of the wise man: “The fear of the Lord is A FOUNTAIN OF LIFE, to *depart from the snares of death*” (Prov. 14:27). Great is the mystery!

There are those who would tell us that we are not to fear God. Yet it was said of our Redeemer and our example that He was delivered from the jaws of death just because He *did* fear! And He not only feared, but He taught us to fear! The wise King Solomon, after he had run the whole gamut of human thought finally arrived at the end of his thought with this observation: “Let us hear the *conclusion* (end) of the whole matter: ***Fear God*** and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man” (Eccl. 12:13). And why? “For God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil” (vs. 14). Now notice, “Fear God and keep His commandments: for *this is the whole duty of man.*” It is significant to note that the words *is* and *duty* in this verse are in italics in the King James Version. When a word is in italics it means that that word does not appear in the original language and is merely supplied by the translators in an effort to make the meaning clearer. Many times, however, the translators go far afield in their choice of words, and I have discovered that in some cases it is best to read the passage *omitting the man-inserted words*. In this case, omitting the words supplied by the translators, the passage reads, “***Fear God*** and keep His commandments: *for this the whole of man.*” The meaning is that the *fear of God IS THE WHOLE MAN*, or, the man who truly fears God *IS A WHOLE MAN* — THE FULL IDEAL OF MAN, as God originally purposed him to be when He said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” The only such “whole man,” one who completely feared and revered God for His wisdom, power, and purpose, and kept all His commandments, His word and His will, was JESUS CHRIST! That is what made Him the unique SON of the Father! And now, He has paid the price, He has opened up the way, He has become our Forerunner and the Captain of our salvation, He has entered in that we may, like Him, BECOME WHOLE MEN — sons of God bearing the image of our Father!

To fear God and keep His commandments was the *end* or *conclusion* of Solomon’s thought — but that which was the *end* of the thought of man proved to be the *beginning* of the thought of God, for it is written, “The *fear of the Lord* is the *beginning* of wisdom.” The end of man, then, and the beginning of God in a man are one and the self-same thing: ***the fear of the Lord.*** Man’s *end* is God’s *beginning*! Hallelujah! “I must *decrease*, but He must *increase*” (Jn. 3:30). Jesus was faced with death, and yet He was saved out of that death in that He feared. His deep and sincere reverence of the Father and His will became the *fountain of life* that delivered Him from the snares of death. Noah was faced with the same prospects of judgment that all the others of his day were faced with — but “moved with fear,” he prepared an ark that *saved* himself

and his household from death. If he had not truly revered the Lord in his heart he would not have obeyed, to the saving of his house. Is not this then — the fear of the Lord — truly THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM! And does this not reveal the deep and eternal secret of why the ministry of the flying angel unto both the church and world begins right here with this immutable word: **FEAR GOD, and give glory to Him!**

To be continued...

J. PRESTON EBY