

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 178

THE SEVEN ANGELS WITH THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES (continued)

“And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, *seven angels having the seven last plagues*; for in them is filled up the wrath of God...and the *seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues*, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. And one of the four beasts *gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God*, who liveth for ever and ever” (Rev. 15:1,6-7).

When our spiritual mind comprehends that God has entered into a living covenant with all His people, then we are able to understand clearly *why* God would send His seven-angels-ministry to pour out the vials of plagues upon His people. We are living in the hour when God has a controversy with His people because *they are not keeping the covenant!* He is leading, but *they are not following!* He is speaking, but *they are not listening!* He is calling, but *they are not responding!* He has redeemed them for a high and holy purpose, but they have other plans. They expect to be blessed, but they are not obedient. They are living far beneath their privileges as the people of God, they have polluted the sanctuary, they have walked after the flesh instead of the spirit, they have mistaken the soulical for the spiritual, and have preferred religion over reality.

Therefore the Lord will come to His people as a refiner's fire and as fuller's soap; He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purge the sons of Levi, and purify them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness (Mal. 3:1-3). **THIS IS ALSO THE MINISTRY OF THE SEVEN ANGELS AND THE SEVEN PLAGUES!** The Lord comes out of His holy place in a ministry to *purge* and *purify* His people! This is the Lord's ministry coming out of the midst of God's called and chosen elect! The “seven messengers” bespeak a mighty move of the Lord as a people goes forth under the seven-fold anointing of the Spirit! For this ministry they are anointed to bring God's righteous judgments upon the Lord's carnal people, to bring chastening and purification, to correct what is wrong in the congregation of the Lord!

In this wonderful process of purging the miner mines the ore out of the darkest depth. The miner has it in his mind that he will go after the ore. Now, it's not easy to obtain the ore. The ore is in inaccessible places, and it requires great effort and endeavor for the miner to obtain the precious ore. The refiner then goes after the ore. The ore doesn't go after the refiner. I have never heard of an ore searching for a refiner! You never will. I'm sure if the ore had feelings it would have absolutely no desire to *be* refined! It's the refiner who goes after the ore. Somebody says, “I sought the Lord.” Well, that's how it appeared to you, my friend, but the truth of the matter is the Lord sought you. He sought you in the darkest depths of the flesh and the bestial system of this world, and He brought you forth and made you His. You are ore brought up from the depths of sin and death, yet polluted with impurities and distracting, incompatible substances. While we praise God for His mercy and grace so lavishly bestowed, the fact remains that the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked — who can know it? But now, praise His name! the ore belongs to Him. That is what happened in redemption, we became His property, purchased by His blood.

But my, what a mixture, even of religion and carnal, fleshly, self-efforts to serve God, we have had! So little of the gold of *His nature and power* has been seen embedded there among all the earthly impurities.

The ore is now the property of the miner who mined it, but the mixture is there. Both gold and silver are found in nature, but not in their pure form. They come mixed with, or imbedded in, various other kinds of rocks, minerals, and metals. No jeweler would want to work with natural gold with bits of rock or sand in it. Nor could such impure stuff be beaten into thin sheets, nor fashioned into fine rings, bracelets, or necklaces. And no one likes a ring that turns their finger green! No, gold and silver as they are found in nature do not have, in themselves, much usefulness. In that state they can serve no high purpose. They must first be separated from all the impurities that naturally accompany them. And the process for doing this is called *refining*.

Our lives as sons and daughters of God are like that! There is so much that is worthwhile in us, such a precious treasure of God's own life within our spirit, but so much also that is worthless. There is so much that is of God, and so much that is of self. So much that is of the spirit, and much that is of the flesh, the carnal mind, and the soulical religious nature. So what does the great and eternal Miner have on His hands? He has a mixture! And that is why there has to be the furnace of fire. That is why there must come from the fiery presence of the divine glory the seven angels having the seven last plagues filled with the passion of God! The ore which God's own people are, in that mixed, raw, unrefined state, brings no pleasure at all to the Refiner, nor does it fulfill any useful or high and holy purpose in His plans. Of these He says, as He said to the seven churches of Asia, "With you I am not well pleased...I have somewhat against you!"

Our Father in His sovereign purpose sees each of His children, but He cannot use all that He sees. The ore is wonderful relative to its pure precious metal content, but it is ugly and disgusting relative to the impurities that are mingled therein. He is unable to use His people in that condition of mixture, so He comes to them as a refiner's fire. And immediately they wonder what is happening! What is happening is that HE is appearing, and I might add, He is showing up in a *form* that they did not expect. Yes, it's the same Jesus, the lovely Saviour who so graciously saved us by His grace, but He comes now, not to forgive, and bless, and thrill, and coddle, and wink at all our childish ignorance and carnality, but He comes as a refining fire to purify the sons of Levi! He comes now to lay the axe to the root of every tree that bears no good fruit! It is necessary that testings come. It is necessary that God's people be tried in the fire. It is the fierce heat of *this oven of God's dealings* that separates the gold from the dross. It is the seven-fold heat that purifies the gold, and we must not be amazed or troubled by it. The fire of God brings the separation and purity without destroying. Isn't it wonderful!

"He shall *sit* as a refiner and purifier of silver..." He sits — this is a process that requires time, this is something that is important to Him, something He must patiently sit and preoccupy Himself with, not a work to be rushed nor accomplished with one grand sweep of His hand. To the one being refined it becomes very monotonous, for it seems the process will never end. He SITS! From the moment the Lord's people were redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, the Lord has been planning and preparing to move in sovereign power to accomplish His great work of purifying and refining what each and every one is as His instrument in the earth. He examines the ore, ugly, shapeless, not representative at all of that beautiful vessel He has in mind; but there it is, just a hunk of jagged, dirty ore, with too much alloy. He moves to change that, and under the crucible they go!

"The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, PURIFIED SEVEN TIMES" (Ps. 12:6). There are the seven angels, the seven messengers — the seven-fold word of the Lord! This word of the Lord is not only purified by the refining fire of God, it is also a burning word which *purifies* all unto whom it is sent! Seven is the number of perfection. It reveals the great truth that God's own nature will be produced in the fire. He will heat up the furnace until His people have been perfectly cleansed, refined, and purified, nothing remaining but HIMSELF. That which the Lord is receiving unto Himself cannot be of an inferior quality to Himself. The gold — ah, it is HIM. The silver — it is of HIM. How marvelous is the grace by which He has birthed us out of His own Spirit — making us "partakers of the divine nature" (II Pet. 1:4). Yet we must be "purified seven times." It is like the grades in school, the farther along you go the harder the lessons become!

How long, think you, would it take a workman with a hammer and chisel to crush the ore and extract the gold from the rocks in which it lies so closely embedded? But if they are flung into the great furnace, and fires fanned to torrid heat and the draught roars through the burning mass, eventually a great glowing stream of pure and fluid metal, from which all dross and rubbish are parted, flows into the waiting mold. This is a parable of what God will do for His people whom He has purchased with His own blood! At first the surface of the melting metal may be dark and lurid — deep orange red, over which a flickering flame shall pass; but, as the process is pursued, the color will become lighter, the dark fumes will pass off, and the metal shall bear the appearance of a highly polished mirror, reflecting the beholder's face. The process may be long and hot; **BUT THE RESULT IS SURE!** Ah, no one looks forward to this refining process, but come it must! No one will *enjoy* the ministry of the seven messengers out of the temple having the seven last plagues, but meet them they must! “Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might *sanctify* and *cleanse it* with the washing of water by the word, that He might *present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish*” (Eph. 5:25-27).

I would like to tell you that the fire will get cooler, I would like to assure you that God is going to reduce the temperature, I would like to promise you that God will not add to the fire another reagent, I would like to give you my word that the “plagues” poured out upon you by the seven messengers will not really be that difficult and painful, but as God's minister I cannot tell you that. Everybody wants to hear about the good, the gifts, the blessings, and glory all around. And while we praise God for His goodness and blessings day by day, I can assure you that *none of that will bring you to perfection and full stature in Christ!* Only the consuming Holy Ghost fire of God can bring the scum to the surface of our lives, where He scoops it off. More fire and more heat and more and more impurities rise to the surface to be removed by His dealing hand. The process continues hour after hour, day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year until He can look into the molten silver and see His own image, His own reflection, His own face perfectly and clearly, and *nothing else!* So long as He can look into that furnace and not behold His own face clearly and purely and precisely and perfectly — the heat stays on. In the same way, as soon as one of the angels' plagues has finished its purifying work, another plague is poured out. There is an intensifying scale until the word of the Lord in us has been *purified seven times!* “TAKE AWAY the dross from the silver, and there shall come forth a vessel for the silversmith” (Prov. 25:4).

This is not a moment for fine words or eloquent speech. This is an hour for very plain speaking. The prophet Malachi asked the burning question, “Who may *abide* the day of His coming? and who shall *stand* when He appeareth? for HE IS LIKE A REFINER'S FIRE, AND LIKE FULLER'S SOAP: AND HE SHALL SIT AS A REFINER AND PURIFIER OF SILVER...” Indeed, who may abide — endure — wait for — the day of *His coming?* The vast majority of the Lord's precious people are content in that spiritual place where they are. So many are satisfied with the forgiveness realm, the blessing realm, the gift realm where all is received by free grace through faith. Everything in these elementary realms is free! There are no conditions, no qualifications, no price — neither is there any great attainment in God. It is the realm of children, of babes in Christ. “Ask, and you shall receive.” To the spiritual children Jesus promised, “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask Him?” (Mat. 7:11). The world of little children receiving gifts from their parents is a blessed world indeed! But spiritually it is just that — the world of *little spiritual children.* It pains me to say it, but the truth is that even most of the ministers in that realm are themselves just *babes in Christ.*

The question follows — Who will wait for the day of HIS COMING, for His coming as a REFINER'S FIRE? Ah, beloved, this is not the blessing realm! It is something beyond the gifts, blessings, and benefits obtained by grace through faith. In that realm you truly have been purchased by the Lord and are His possession — but you are but ore, mixed with many impurities, unworked, undealt with, and of small value in the courts of His kingdom. So now God will bring His people to the REFINING, PURGING, CLEANSING, AND PURIFYING REALM! It is the realm of the making ready of the bride, of qualifying for sonship, of preparation for the kingdom, of readiness to rule and reign with Christ as kings and priests unto God. And who shall stand — or who can withstand — who can stand against it, who can escape it, who can stop or prevent His appearing as the refining fire? No one, may I answer, shall be able to withstand or stand against His coming when He appeareth! The seven angels with the seven plagues are coming! And

yet, there is blessed consolation even in that, for the plagues are the *last plagues* — finishing, completing, and perfecting the work of God in His people! The *last!* Aren't you glad!

THE SEVEN VIALS GIVEN TO THE SEVEN ANGELS

“And one of the four beasts *gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials* full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever” (Rev. 15:7).

There is nothing in prophetic imagery more striking than this picture of the seven angels issuing in solemn procession, from the sanctuary of God's manifest presence and glory. One of the four living creatures, in the midst of the throne, signifying the spirit of sonship authority from the throne, delivers to the seven messengers the vials from which the *passionate correction* of God is to be poured out upon the inhabitants of the earth-realm, the world of the carnal Christians.

Our translation “vials” is completely misleading to the English reader. The word is better rendered “bowls.” The present day use of the word vial usually relates to a small, slender bottle. The word in the Greek text is *phialas* and refers to a flattish and rather shallow bowl or basin, to which a handle was attached, able to contain liquids, and designed to either drink them from it or pour them out. It was in these also that the incense in the tabernacle of Moses and the temple in Jerusalem was carried, which was the type of the scene John beheld in spirit when he wrote, “*And when He had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials (bowls) full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints*” (Rev. 5:8). It seems very evident to me that this very fact is teaching us the great truth that when the work of God's wrath or passion is complete, *all the people of the Lord will be sending up their prayers, thanksgiving, and praises* as a sweet savour, as the fragrance of incense, into the presence of the Lord. Oh, yes!

The “plagues” poured out of the bowls bring the spirit of purification and transformation into the lives of men. This is not an act of judgment, that is, of *punishment*, as we think of it, but rather an activity of purification! It recalls the action of the angel in Isaiah's inaugural vision, taking a burning coal from off the altar and touching Isaiah's lips (Isa. 6:6-7). Beholding the manifest glory of the Lord Isaiah had 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.” But the coal placed on Isaiah's lips does not mean Isaiah's judgment, punishment, or destruction; instead it is good news, for the angel says, “Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is *taken away*, and thy sin *purged*.” Purification does not come easy! Hot coal *burns*, as does the cauterization of an infected wound. Surgery might take away a part of us in order to make us well; we may not want to lose anything, but pain and loss may be necessary in order for us to experience actual healing.

Most commentators, when viewing the plagues poured out into the earth, interpret them as *divine judgment* or *punishment*. They tell us that “plagues” bespeak wrath, torment, and destruction of the wicked. Those who tell us this say that the seven last plagues are the common figure of divine terribleness toward the guilty, the final retribution upon rebellious mankind on earth. But if this be so, why, I ask, yea, *why* are there such crescendos of celestial music, such scenes of heavenly rejoicing, such positive declarations affirming that because God's judgments are now made manifest ALL NATIONS SHALL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE THE LORD! And why is the sign of the seven angels with the seven last plagues declared to be GREAT and MARVELOUS — WONDERFUL and AWE-INSPIRING! Why not say that the sign of the seven angels with the seven last plagues is *terrible* and *frightening*, or *grim*, *dreadful*, *grievous*, *appalling*, *distressing*, *fearsome*, *horrendous*, *monstrous*, and *terrifying*? But no — the sign is *great* and *marvelous* — *mighty* and *wonderful*! Furthermore, if their work is that of vengeance and destruction why do they step forth from *before the ark of the covenant* — *from the very presence of God upon the mercy-seat*? And why do they come forth in the garb of *priests*? And why do they come bearing the very bowls which carry the incense *which is the prayers of the saints*? My, what a shallow, confused, misguided mind-set the teachers have who teach the book of Revelation!

With these truths fresh upon our minds let us remember that the seven angels are commissioned to “pour out the bowls of the passion of God *upon the earth*” (Rev. 16:1); and they are also the seven spirits of God “sent forth *into all the earth*.” Is it not clear that the seven spirits of God sent forth into “all the earth”

is but another picture of the seven angels pouring out their vials “upon the earth”? It is the same seven-fold administration of God affecting the earth-realm! It is the mighty word and working of God by His Spirit! Oh, yes, there is vengeance, wrath, passion — but it is directed at the carnality and error in men, not to destroy them, but to consume the carnal mind-sets, manifestations, and works that grow out of the fleshly and soulical nature. It destroys the religious sham of Mystery Babylon, not consuming the people, but bringing down the apostate system that enslaves them!

Do you long to truly affect and impact the earth-realm, my friend? Do you want to see a mighty shaking and change in the earth? Does your heart yearn for God to move in mighty spirit-power to bring forth the word of God in such authority and with such illumination that it will overwhelm all the kingdoms of the flesh and all the soulical powers of man, bringing a glorious change and transformation? How our heart cries out for this!

Our Lord Jesus has taught us to pray that great *sonship prayer* in which are included these magnificent words, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done *in earth as it is in heaven.*” Is it possible — faintly, vaguely possible for God’s will to be done in earth in the same totality and completeness *as it is done in the heavens of God’s Spirit?* In heaven the will of God is done absolutely, totally, completely! But on earth — you know about Osama bin Laden, you know about Fidel Castro, the Islamic Fundamentalists, the Chinese Communists, the gangs, pedophiles, drug lords, and godless humanists. If you take the terrorists into account, and all the vulgar movies, the divorce rate, the crime rate, the sexual immorality, the crooked politicians, and the apostate religious systems — do you still think the will of God can be done in earth as it is in heaven? I’m going to tell you something. You’re dreaming, it’s wishful thinking, it’s a pipe-dream; you’re whistling in the dark; you’ve got your fingers crossed hoping for the best — *unless* you know *which earth* the Father’s will has to be done in first, completely! It is significant to note that neither Luke nor Matthew records Jesus as asking for the Father’s will to be done ON earth, but rather, IN earth. “In earth” does not mean the outer world of mountains, hills, valleys, rivers, and oceans; nor yet the outer world of governments, organizations, institutions, churches, agencies, cities, farms, and buildings. Man himself *is the earth!* “The first man is of the earth, earthy...as is the earthy, such are they also that *are earthy*...and as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly” (I Cor. 15:47-49). “But we have this treasure in *earthen vessels*...” (II Cor. 4:7). “Dust *thou art*, and to dust thou shalt return.”

My interest is not “Thy will be done in earth...” and earth is that which is outside of me, farthest away from me, over which I have no control. The cry of my heart is, “Thy will be done in *this earth that I am*” with the same totality and completeness and absoluteness as it is done in heaven. And when God’s will is done in this earth that *I am*, and that earth which *you are*, and the other earth that your family, friends, and neighbors *are*, soon it will take care of the whole earth, within *and* without!

THE TEMPLE FILLED WITH SMOKE

“And *the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from His power*; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled” (Rev. 15:8).

From the glory and power of God came a smoke, filling the inner temple. Smoke is frequently a symbol of the presence of the Lord in His burning holiness. Smoke is from fire, and our God *is* a consuming fire! When He came down to give the law, “Mount Sinai was altogether *on a smoke*, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly” (Ex. 19:18). Before Isaiah was cleansed from his sin, he saw the vision of the Lord, high and lifted up, His train filling the temple, with the attendant seraphim veiling their faces and their feet, crying to one another of the holiness of the Lord of hosts (Isa. 6:1-4). Then “the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was *filled with smoke.*” When Aaron and his successors offered the sacrifice on the great day of atonement, the Lord ordered that “he shall take a censer full of *burning coals of fire* from off the altar before the Lord...that the *cloud of the incense* may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not.” (Lev. 16:12-13). When the tabernacle of Moses was raised up and dedicated, a smoky cloud of glory filled it, and Moses was not able to enter into it because of the cloud of the glory of the Lord (Ex. 40:34-35). When Solomon built his wonderful temple it was large, everything was built to order, and when they had finished it the whole nation assembled, lifted their hands, and dedicated it to the

Lord. God honored their work by filling it with the *glory cloud* and it was so filled with the smoke of His presence that no man could enter in and the priests could not stand to minister because of it (I Kings 8:11-12).

Let us further consider the import of the cloud of God's glory which filled the temple that Solomon built in Jerusalem. That temple was without doubt one of the most magnificent structures ever designed and raised up by the hands of men from the dawn of history even unto this day. You will remember that when the building was finished they brought the ark of the covenant and all the holy vessels from the tabernacle of David upon mount Zion and the priests deposited them in their proper places in the temple. Solomon then assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, and all the people of Israel gathered themselves unto king Solomon at the feast of tabernacles. When every priest was in his place, and all Israel assembled before the temple, the great choir of Levites, arrayed in fine linen, having cymbals, harps, and lyres — stood in the outer court at the east end of the brazen altar, and with them 120 priests blowing trumpets; and when the trumpeters and singers were joined in unison, making one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and other instruments for song and praised the Lord — *then the house of the Lord was filled with the glory cloud so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God!*

Now, we are prone to think that when the temple was finally completed and dedicated to God, the Lord sent His glory down from heaven. We conceive that the Lord rained down His Spirit upon that temple, or that the cloud of His presence descended from heaven and funneled its way into the house and filled it with glory. The simple truth of the matter is this: The glory of Solomon's temple was *not* a descending glory! It was not a glory that came down, not a glory that was somehow injected into the house, but rather, the glory that filled the house was simply the *breaking forth* of all the glory of God that had been *built into the house!* There were the wonderful cedars of Lebanon transported from the mountains of that land. There were the beautiful marble stones mined from King Solomon's own mines, hewn with exactitude and fitted together before ever they were brought to mount Moriah. All the beams for the roof and the pillars of cedar were carved to precision and polished, made to join each other; so that as the walls arose, no sound of hammer or chisel was heard. The gold was the finest pure gold, all of the ornate work was of the greatest and grandest craftsmanship. Every board characterized within itself something of God's own glory. Each stone embodied within itself the beauty of the glory of the Lord. All the fine linen, the brightly colored tapestries, the coverings of gold, the furnishings of silver, and all that went into the building portrayed God's attributes, bespeaking the majesty of the God of Israel. As each item was fitted into the structure something of God's own glory was set into the very fabric of the building. The greatness of God, His nature, character, wisdom, righteousness, goodness, might, and power — all was represented in what the building was!

Thus it was that when the priests, the elders, the king, the musicians and singers, and all the congregation of Israel lifted up their voice in praise, magnifying the Lord, God didn't have to bring any glory down. Oh, no! The glory that was *built into the house* — *ERUPTED OUT FROM THE MIDST OF THE HOUSE!* The breaking forth of the glory out of the house was the natural and unavoidable result of the glory that had been set into the house. It simply broke out and burst forth! I think it is time for God's people to wake up to the real and true purpose of God within us as His temple in the earth! I find in these days that many of the Lord's elect are just flowing along with the move of God, filling their heads with knowledge, gaining a lot of revelation, learning the terminology, singing the songs, mouthing all the right things, but without that deep and vital working of God within which transforms the life and nature. We cherish the hope set before us, while continuing on in our natural pursuits, struggling with our daily issues, awaiting God's appointed hour when all of a sudden, boom, bang, the Lord will descend from heaven, pour out His glory, infuse us with divine life, wisdom, and power, and in an instant we will be transformed and step forth as the manifest sons of God, walking the earth glowing in the dark with lightning bolts flashing from our finger tips.

You can't deny it — some of us have been waiting for that! God's got an hour, God has ordained a day, and when that time comes glory is going to fall down out of the heavens, great things are going to transpire, and we will be changed and filled with His glory. Let me assure you, my beloved, that's *not* how it's going to happen! You see, God is not *pouring out* His glory in this day. Oh, no! God poured out His Spirit, He shed forth His glory two thousand years ago and the mighty working of that poured out Spirit has

been in the earth since that blessed day. So God's work today, or tomorrow, is not pouring out His glory — His work today is *in-working* that glory! Is not this what Paul had in mind when he wrote, "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; ***in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: IN WHOM YE ALSO ARE BUILDED TOGETHER FOR AN HABITATION OF GOD THROUGH THE SPIRIT***" (Eph. 2:20-22). Ah, God is building His holiness *into that temple which we are*. He is building the glory in! He is inworking within each stone, each board, each tapestry, each *son* in this glorious house the very life, nature, wisdom, and power that HE IS. All this marvelous work of God in our lives is triumphantly carried out by the Holy Spirit within the temple of our body. The glory that shall be revealed in us will not be a descending glory, it will be an ERUPTING GLORY! It will be the "built in" glory BREAKING OUT! The simple truth is just this: If there is no divine glory worked into the inner fabric of our lives, there will be no glory to break forth in the great day of His unveiling. If the power of God, the nature of God, the love of God, the wisdom of God, the incorruptible life of God has not been established and raised up within us in our daily experience and walk on this earth, then we might as well forget about any such thing breaking out of us to deliver creation and set men free, for such a thing will not happen.

It is the will of God that the eyes of our understanding should be enlightened, and that we might know what hope God had when He called us. Let us consider the Headstone of this wonderful temple of living stones. Jesus, when He trod the pathways of earth, was the temple of God in that day. Standing in the court of Herod's magnificent temple He declared, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again" This angered the Jews, and they retorted, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days!" But they did not understand that He spoke spiritually of the *temple which was His body*. Therefore, when He had risen from the dead His disciples remembered that He had said this and they believed upon the word Jesus had spoken. Oh, yes, Jesus was the temple — the indwelling and incarnation of God on earth!

It is of great importance that we see how Jesus became the temple of God. Do you know, my beloved, what made Him the temple of God? Was it just because the Holy Spirit without measure dwelt in Him? Was it because it was not Him, but the Father in Him, doing the works? How wonderful are the words of the firstborn Son of God, "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father." Can we say that? How many of us, sweating by the side of the freeway in the scorching afternoon sun, our car broke down, no phone to call for help, no water to drink, and the kids are screaming, would truthfully be able to say to the first person who stopped, "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father!" Let us consider with care the words the Father spoke from heaven at the river Jordan when He declared the sonship of Jesus. He said, "This is my beloved Son." But He didn't stop there! There is another significant phrase connected to that wonderful sonship declaration: "*...in whom I am well pleased!*"

THIS IS MY SON! What words are these! But what made Him a Son? It wasn't His preaching, surely, for Jesus had not yet preached His first sermon in the synagogue of Nazareth. It wasn't His miracles, certainly, for Jesus had not yet turned the water into wine at the wedding in Cana of Galilee. It wasn't His prophetic office, for He had never yet revealed the secrets of any man's heart. It wasn't his casting out of devils, for not one demon spirit had fled at His authoritative word. It wasn't the signs, wonders, miracles, or the raising of the dead to life again, for Jesus had not done even one of His mighty works when He came to the Jordan. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" was spoken of Jesus at the end of thirty years in the carpenter shop of his father, Joseph. This was not "my beloved Son in whom I am going to be well pleased just as soon as His miracle ministry gets under way and He has died and risen and ascended." Oh, no! The Father *was pleased* with the Jesus of the carpenter shop, the Jesus who had heard and learned to know His voice, the Jesus who had learned His ways, the Jesus who submitted to His dealings, the Jesus who obeyed all that the Father commanded Him. He was pleased with the Jesus who learned mercy, truth, discernment, love, forgiveness, purity, holiness, wisdom, righteous judgment, faith, and obedience in the nitty-gritty of everyday life in the dusty streets of the far-flung Roman outpost of Nazareth. The nature of God, the character of God, the word of God, the ways of God, and the will of God has been meticulously *inworked into His very state of being* — and *that* is what made Him a Son in whom the Father was *well pleased!* Surely now we can plainly see that the glory that was manifested through the next three and a half years of Jesus' sonship ministry was simply the *breaking out*, the *bursting forth* of that glory which had

been inwrought and established as the inward law of His life! It was not really a descending glory — it was an ERUPTING GLORY!

Many of us have been anticipating the Father's voice announcing *our sonship*. The day will surely come when again the Father will speak out of the heavens of the Spirit, proclaiming, "These are my beloved sons, in whom I am well pleased!" Today it is my deep conviction that we have not yet heard that voice — the reason we haven't heard it is because God will never make the first declaration until He can also make the second. God will never say, "These are my sons," until He can say, "*in whom I am well pleased!*" He is still working on us, the temple is still *growing unto* an holy temple in the Lord! Can you not feel the blow of His hammer upon you? Can you not discern the working of His chisel, the fine instruments of His divine craftsmanship? Can you not feel the blast of His furnace as He watches over you in the fire to see His image come forth?

Ah, sometimes we suppose that the work is almost accomplished, we imagine that the silver in us is approaching its absolute purity. But then the great Refiner adds a chemical reagent (as it were) which reacts with the impurities that remain in the silver and those impurities rise to the top. The beauty is obscured. He then rakes all those impurities out the door of the furnace. The silver returns to its former beauty, reflecting mirror-like the flames. Without doubt, now the process is complete! But no, the great Refiner adds another reagent and the same thing happens all over again. This process goes on day after day after day — the work of God in us! We look at one another and think we all reflect the beauty of Christ from within. Then God casts some circumstance into our life and suddenly the beauty of the Lord in us becomes clouded over as things come to the surface that we were not even aware were in our hearts. Yet — the process is sure, and the refining *will end*. In that blessed day Father will stand us up in our own Jordan and we and all creation will witness the voice that comes from heaven — "THESE ARE MY BELOVED SONS, IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED!" And then shall we go forth in the power of the *emerging, erupting, exploding glory of the Lord!*

NO MAN COULD ENTER THE TEMPLE

"And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from His power; *and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled*" (Rev. 15:8).

Let us return to Solomon's temple for a moment. It is stated that when the temple was complete, at the time of its dedication, the glory of the Lord so filled the temple that not one of the priests could enter into it to minister. There was not a man who could approach that dazzling glory or stand within the precincts of its awesome power. What a marvelous thing that is! Here in our text it says that no "man" could enter into the temple because of the glory of God and His power. That is, no man, no flesh, can minister. God is about to move in a new and transcendental way, bringing forth His sons in the power of His kingdom. *Nothing* of the flesh will enter in to this new realm in God! It means that only a refined, pure, perfected people will be able to stand in the fullness of His glory! God is calling upon us to lay down our lives, that His life might be raised up in us.

It's not just about *ministering* — it's about *entering in*. "No man was able to *enter into the temple*, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled." Men would be able to enter the temple, the *naos*, the most holy place — but only *after* the final plagues have accomplished their work! The temple, the *naos*, the most holy place was opened, there was no veil, no covering of skins, nothing to keep one out — except the intensity of the glory of God and His power! How utterly awesome! The most holy place is the symbol of the fullness of God, the fullness of His glory and power, incorruptible life, divine nature, thronship, kingship, priesthood, and manifest sonship. Will others be able to enter into this glorious place in God? Absolutely, for we are but the *firstfruits* of His redemption! God will bring many more sons to glory and more besides that — until HE IS ALL IN ALL! But no man can enter this realm until the seven angels with the seven last plagues, the seven last stripes, the seven last chastenings and corrections have finished their work in the earth-realm, burning out all the flesh, the carnality, the sin, and corruption, and the smoke of the burning has cleared away. Consider this! The crystal sea mingled with fire accomplishes this work in the firstfruits, the seven angels with the seven last plagues accomplish the same work in rest of the Lord's people. That is the mystery!

No man (of those upon whom the plagues were falling) could enter into the Holy of holies, into the fullness of His presence and majesty, until the perfecting and transforming work of the Spirit is finished in them! When the purification is finished they will *be* the *bride* made ready, the *holy city*, New Jerusalem, having the glory of God, whose light is like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. At the time God performs this upon His people at large, no one will be moving into a higher place in God *until the plagues have fully done their work!* Ah, yes, God is opening the door for all His people to come on up and come on in! But it is impossible to enter into the heights of God short of perfection! Our Father in His great mercy and wonderful purpose is preparing just the ministry to change all His people who today ignorantly sit in the pews of the religious systems of man — the ministry out of the most holy place, the ministry of the sons of the most High, the seven messengers having the seven last plagues. What a work that will be! That is the mystery.

To be continued...

J. PRESTON EBY