

# KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

## FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

### Part 179

#### THE SEVEN ANGELS WITH THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES (continued)

Man has been trying to understand the book of Revelation for two thousand years and the reason so few understood is because they applied the natural, carnal mind to it. They tried by human reasoning to analyze it, work it out, and make it fit some events in the outer world, past, present, or imagined future. Throughout the centuries of history since John penned his words on Patmos men have made the visions of the book "fit" with just about everything there is in the world. Some supposed that it applied to events in Israel and the Roman Empire in the days of the early church, climaxing with the destruction of Jerusalem, the Jewish temple, and the priesthood in A.D. 70, followed by the gospel spreading throughout the earth. Martin Luther made the book fit the events of his day. Emanuel Swedenborg applied the book to events of his day. The Seventh Day Adventists interpreted the book in the light of events of their early days. Charles T. Russell found the great world-shaking events leading up to and including the First World War in the Revelation. When I was a child, Adolph Hitler, Benito Mussolini, the Pope, and Emperor Hirohito of Japan were believed to be, in differing interpretations, the beast, the false prophet, or the image of the beast. In this view the book of Revelation was *being fulfilled* by these world leaders and the events they precipitated, they were going to take over the world, and if you did not take the mark of the beast which they would impose, you would be killed. And in our day people are literally sitting on the edge of their seats, listening to prophecy teachers, reading news magazines, watching CNN and Fox News, expecting the book of Revelation to fit the dramatic events unfolding before our very own eyes. I am confident in saying, however, that all these prognosticators, prophecy mongers, and eschatological soothsayers will be just as disappointed and disillusioned, when proven wrong, as were all the other commentators throughout the centuries!

The book of *Revelation* is just that — it is the *Revelation of Jesus Christ!* Christ is the *spiritual man*. Therefore, the book of Revelation is a *spiritual revelation*, a *spiritual book!* When the text speaks of the *earth* it has a different significance than the literal, physical land masses, mountains, valleys, and seas of our planet. It symbolizes the earth in a spiritual dimension. When it speaks of *sore boils* (Rev. 16:2) it indicates a spiritual condition. When it speaks of the *sea* it refers to the state of being of the masses of sinning, restless, surging, tormented humanity. The *rivers* and *fountains of waters* are spiritual rivers and fountains of waters. On and on we could go, but I am sure my reader gets the point!

I beseech you, look not to the outer world to discover where this *unveiling of Jesus Christ* is fulfilled, but look altogether within yourself, and it may be the Lord will show you these things, and a thousand times more than my feeble pen can write. My earnest prayer for all who read these lines is that the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God will open your eyes and give you understanding; for this day I seek to put such a key into your hands, that unlocks all the deep mysteries of this book; even as a fine jewelry box, which we know not which way to open, yet having found the secret lock of the drawers, they all respond to the turning of your key, and all the precious jewels come to your hand. These, my beloved, are mighty, sublime, inexpressible things we have now in hand, and if God be but pleased to give us this key of which I speak, these things will be easy to us! This I pray — that the Father of glory may give us the grace to do — to deliver into the hands of God's called and chosen elect such a secret key, that will take all the blessed visions of John and so unlock them, that you may come to see what are the great purposes and workings of

God in His people, which before were dark and hidden, and you could not discern what they meant; now they will unfold as a rose and fall easily into the comprehension of your spiritual mind. But, yet, it is not I, nor anything I can do, that will accomplish this, though I should preach for weeks on end, or write volumes that would fill the whole earth; nothing will avail until Christ Himself be pleased to rise up within your soul and work these things in you, by His own power. The hearing of the ear, and the seeing of the eye will not do it, it must be the *experiential quickening* of these things within your heart, that must teach you these things: it must be the *seeing of the spiritual eye* and the *hearing of the spiritual ear* that will make us with Job *see the Lord* and *abhor ourselves in dust and ashes* (Job 42:5).

The first prerequisite to being taught by the Spirit of Truth is a readiness to lay down any, and all, preconceived ideas of what the scriptures teach, with a holy disposition to sit in brokenness before the feet of Jesus and accept what the Spirit teaches. It is an obvious fact that all Christians believe many doctrines simply because they have been handed down from generation to generation. Our forefathers, our church, and our brethren believed them for generations, and we believe them because they did. Much of what we believe, we believe because people for many years and long centuries have believed thus, but not one precious child of God in a thousand ever takes the time or expends the energy or spiritual initiative to discover the origin of his beliefs, and whether they are truly scriptural or express the heart of God. We just blindly follow on in the traditional path because father and mother and friends and brethren believe that way. But because our fathers, or the majority of Christians, have believed a thing is no guarantee that it pertains to the realm of truth! We made this startling discovery when in the great moving of God the streams of light began to flow from the realms above and the blessed Spirit of Truth began to dig down deep beneath the surface of the scriptures, beyond the letter of the word, beyond the sacred page, opening to our astonished understanding the *deeper things of God*. We soon found out, however, that when the Spirit begins to bring to light, and uncover the hidden mysteries of the kingdom of God, many immediately commence to fight against it.

The things the Spirit reveals are always different from what men have previously believed, and how often they are surprised and astonished! The truth is *light*, and the light reveals the great darkness in the carnal and childish concepts conceived by the natural mind which interprets through the intellect the dead letter of the word; and because the truth is so contrary to the ideas treasured and nourished for so long, many are incited to fight against it. Because they are not seeking truth, and not contending for truth, they set themselves to defend to the death their old established doctrines, never taking the time to search out whether they are right or wrong. Oh, how subtle, how deceitful and foolish the heart of man! Only the Lord knows what is in the heart of man, and He says, "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins." We can be fully convinced in our heart that we are standing for the truth, when the opposite is the case. How we need to have our hearts circumcised and broken before God, and our eyes opened, and our ears unstopped, so we can understand and see and hear what the Spirit has to say to the churches!

Most of what is taught by the church systems of earth contains some element of truth. Most Christian church doctrine has some truth in it, enough to make it acceptable to the people, but I do not hesitate to tell you that there is much mixed with it that is not truth at all, and this is what has created all the divisions between the children of God. It isn't the truth that divides, it is all that is false that is mixed in with the truth that separates. Truth mixed with falsehood ceases to *be* truth. Since the book of Revelation is one of the most supernatural books in the New Testament, and linked to man's complete redemption, why is it so variously taught and conceived? Who is responsible for distorting the truth, and what gain is made by doing so? Perhaps Paul furnishes an answer in these words, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:14).

## THE PURPOSE OF THE PLAGUES

“And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and *pour out the vials of the wrath (passion) of God upon the earth*” (Rev. 16:1).

Chapter sixteen of the Revelation describes the outpouring of the seven last plagues John saw in his vision. The seven angels waited until a loud voice out of the most holy place of the temple commanded them to go and pour out the seven bowls of the passion of God upon the earth-realm. The voice John heard seems to be the voice of God, or of Christ, or of God’s elect, since no other person is allowed to enter the temple until the work of the seven last plagues is over. The Greek construction of the sentence emphasizes the power and authority of the voice that commissions the messengers!

It should now be plain that chapters fifteen and sixteen belong together, and that chapter fifteen constitutes a mighty prelude to the events pictured in the sixteenth chapter of the Revelation. There we saw the overcoming company standing victorious upon the crystal sea of glass, having the harps of God, and singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. We found that song was sung at the occasion of the eve of the pouring out of the seven last plagues. Seven angels stood in priestly attire, ready to receive the command out of the temple of God to go and pour out the last of the plagues, or chastisements and corrections, of God. This is not an ominous or frightening scene at all, for the seven messengers are not only in priestly attire, they are also beautifully arrayed with costly, precious stones; and there is a reflection of both the mercy and reconciliation of God and of His holiness in their very appearance.

The seven messengers have come forth out of the temple of God, which is filled with the smoke of His manifest presence, ready to fill all the earth and reveal God’s determined passion to correct once and for all everything that is wrong in the lives of the Lord’s people who dwell in the carnality of the soulful religion of the earth-realm. And in their hands they hold seven bowls, filled with the passion of God! When these shall have been poured out, God’s passion shall have come powerfully upon all His people, and His work of purification and purging is finished. This is indicated by the number seven, symbolic of completeness — a completed work. But this was also directly stated by John when he says that in these is *finished* the passion of God. And this does not mean that God has no more passion and no further perfecting work to be wrought, but that in the context of bringing all His blood-bought people out of the carnality and immaturity of the systems of Babylon, this will be a completely successful administration. As you can see in the chapters that immediately follow, the great city, Babylon, shall be completely destroyed, the bride of Christ shall make herself ready, and the way is opened for the holy city, New Jerusalem, to descend into the midst of mankind!

As dew distilling from the heavens comes the revelation of Jesus Christ from every scene of John’s visions. It is the drama of God’s great plan of the ages wrought out first in His called and chosen elect, then in all His people everywhere who call upon His name, afterward in all the nations of earth, and finally in all the vast creation of God. Everything is viewed from the divine and heavenly perspective. It is not the history of Satan’s activity in men and upon the earth, but the all-conquering power of God’s Christ! It is the *spiritual drama* of Father’s dealing in the lives of His people. It is preeminently the *revelation of Jesus Christ*. The word “revelation” means to *unveil, uncover, or take the cover off*. The *unveiling* of Jesus Christ — that’s what is happening in the midst of the saints! That is what is taking place in the earth today! That’s what the book of Revelation is all about! And that’s what the ministry of the seven angels with the seven last plagues of God’s passion is about! As that which has been hidden in Jesus Christ is revealed, uncovered, brought out into the open and exhibited, the glory of Jesus Christ shall come upon all His people and shine forth from the temple of His body in all the earth. Christ *in us*! Ah, *that*, my friend, *not* the rapture, IS THE HOPE OF GLORY! The Revelation of Jesus Christ must be *upon, within, and out from His people*!

As the seven angels are prepared to pour out the seven bowls of God’s passion, they are operating in the power of the Holy Spirit. This pouring is called the *plague*, for the outpouring of God’s passion or zeal is indeed a plague to the carnal mind, the soulful disposition, and the flesh life! As you follow these seven angels all the way through the book of Revelation, you find that their relationship is to everything that happens in the three realms men live in upon earth. They sound the *trumpets* that affect the realms of heaven, earth, and sea. These same angels later pour out their *vials* upon the heavenly realm, the earth realm,

and the sea. No individual part of man, and no man among the Lord's people, can escape God's passionate purpose! The seven angels having the seven trumpets come out of the temple of God in heaven, and the seven angels with the seven plagues also come out of the most holy place of the temple! The seven angels blowing the seven trumpets were heralds of God's great perfecting work in His firstfruits company. The seven angels pouring out the seven vials are God's moving in a ministry out of His temple of sons in a seven-fold dealing to effect the purification of all the people of God yet dwelling in the low realms of the flesh and the carnal mind. All the soulical operations in the lives of God's dear people, all the self-hood, every vestige of the believers' own mind, will, emotion, desire, and inclination to religiosity shall completely and forever be brought to an end! Out of this qualified, holy temple of His presence proceeds this mighty ministry! Oh, the wonder of it!

Let us consider with care the significance of the word "plague." It is translated from the Greek word *plege* meaning "a wound caused by a stripe or blow." *Plege* is translated in the King James Bible as "wound" or "wounded" four times; it is rendered "stripes" five times; and is rendered "plagues" only in the book of Revelation, and that twelve times. The Greek word is derived from *plessō*, and *plessō* in turn comes from *plasso*, through the idea of flattening and it means to mold or form. Can we not see by this that these plagues are not for the purpose of destroying but for the purpose of molding and forming! It is a wound, but a wound with the idea of fashioning us into HIS IMAGE. It is like when a surgeon operates on a person — he takes his scalpel and makes an incision in their body; that is a wound, but it is a necessary wound in order to remove or repair something in their body. It is not an activity of violence, but a ministration of love, concern, and wise purpose. When a person has a tumor the surgeon has to wound them in order to remove the tumor or that person will die. Thus, the "seven last plagues" may be characterized as the "seven last stripes" or the "seven last scourgings" or the "seven last chastenings" in which is filled up the passion of God to correct His children. 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! "Last" plagues in which the passion of God is "filled up" or "complete" signifies that these are the *last* or *final* purifying dealings of God with a people. There is the same truth as it pertains to the individual — that is, each one of us in our journey into God. The unproductive natural life and human consciousness, the flesh with its lustful, sinful disposition, the soul with its emotional tendencies and its religious inclination, the carnal mind with its humanistic reasoning, planning, and scheming — ***all must suffer the seven plagues!*** Make no mistake about it — God will touch *everything* in the lives of His people! That is the final outcome of redemption, for He has redeemed us unto Himself and for His pleasure and purpose!

Therefore the Lord will come to His people as a refiner's fire and as fuller's soap; and 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! Purging is getting rid of unwanted and unnecessary material. The Lord comes forth from His holy place in a ministry to *purge* and to *purify* His people! He is not getting rid of some of His people, but He is getting rid of the ***one man*** who is deceiving and polluting His people — old Adam. Oh, yes! It is the old Adamic man with his carnal mind, his earthly desires, his fleshly ways, his distorted vision, his vain philosophies, his soulish religion, his demonic lies and deceptions — this is ***the man*** He comes to purge away! Purging and purification are in reality just the PROCESS OF ELIMINATION. If you want to purify water, you simply filter out the impurities, leaving the water pure or unpolluted. The quickened spirit of the regenerated man is *pure spirit* in the image of Him who created him. But our spirits have been so mixed, so polluted by the uncleanness of body and soul! Purification does not make water something different or greater or more than it is. It merely removes the impurities so that the water is *pure* — *unmixed* with the contaminants. Now it can ***be*** and ***do*** what it was created to ***be*** and ***do***! That is the calling of every child of God!

The message is just this: If you are a carnal Christian living beneath God's high plan and holy purpose for you — breaking His living covenant of righteousness, glory, wisdom, and power — THE SEVEN ANGELS HAVING THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES ARE COMING AFTER YOU! You can't escape, because IN THEM IS FILLED UP THE PASSION OF GOD!

When the temple is filled with God's glory a great voice speaks out of the glorious temple introducing the seven "plagues." This immediately draws our attention to the Old Testament ministry of Moses. His ministry was on behalf of the children of Israel bound in servitude in the land of Egypt and Moses says, in effect, "Now, we're going to draw a line and begin the process of deliverance from Egypt." How does he begin this? The Lord instructs Moses to ask Pharaoh to let the children of Israel go out into the desert in order to celebrate their festival of worship. Can you not see the mystery? **WORSHIP IS WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT!** The entire scene of chapter fifteen of the Revelation is *worship!* When Moses goes in before Pharaoh he says, "Let my people go — let them go and **worship!**" Pharaoh, the representative of the world system, responded, "No — who is Yahweh that I should obey His voice and let Israel go? I know not Yahweh, neither will I let Israel go." It was following that initial confrontation that the plagues began!

So the concept of plagues carries us back to the plagues poured out upon Egypt at the hand of Moses. It's important to remember that the plagues were sent upon the *Egyptians*, not upon Israel, not upon the Lord's people, but they were the judgment upon *Egypt*. What was the purpose of the ten plagues? If God's intention was simply to free His people Israel, couldn't there have been a more efficient way? If we're already suspending the laws of nature by the miraculous, the entire Israelite populace could have been released with one great swoop of God's hand, and then the Egyptians could have been destroyed in an explosion of fire and brimstone. But God's purpose was to execute *judgment* upon the Egyptians. God said to Moses, "Observe! I will be making you *like a god* to Pharaoh" (Ex. 7:1). God was in the process of breaking and diminishing Pharaoh, and exalting and glorifying Moses! Hence the Nile river, recipient of the Hebrew male babies who were drowned at birth, turns to blood as the first plague falls upon the Egyptians!

Scripture reveals that the primary purpose of the plagues that were inflicted upon the Egyptians was not to force the Pharaoh to give the Israelites the freedom they desired. Rather, the primary purpose of the plagues was to reveal that all the gods of Egypt were in fact *false gods* — *no gods at all* — and that Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, was the one, true God. "Against *all the gods* of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am Yahweh" (Ex. 12:12). Beyond this, however, lay the goal of liberating the Lord's people from the dominion of Egypt, its Pharaoh, and its gods. The plagues served to weaken the enemy in order to provide the people of Israel with a military victory. Therefore, just as those who lay siege to a city first cut off the water supply, then prevent food from being acquired, then frighten the citizens with all sorts of noises, then weaken their bodies and finally kill them off, so Yahweh initially turns the nurturing Nile into blood, then destroys the food supply, then harms the Egyptians with boils, then terrorizes them by arraying the forces of nature against them, and finally kills off their first-born.

The contents of the seven bowls are called *plagues*. The plagues in the Revelation are a striking spiritualization of the plagues the Lord sent upon Egypt! As we look at these plagues we see that they are likened unto the literal plagues upon Egypt, but we know that the book of Revelation is a *spiritual book of spiritual truths* and *spiritual experiences* addressed to a *spiritual people* and which can be perceived and appropriated only *in the spirit and by the spirit!* Can we not see by this that the **spiritual plagues** come upon the **spirit of Egypt** (also designated as Babylon) within each of us to bring the release of our spiritual man from the dominance of the carnal mind that we may march out of the bondage of the flesh, the Adamic nature, the human identity and consciousness, the falsities of religion, the spirit of the world, and enter into the full realization of our inheritance in our promised land — *the fullness of Christ!* Is that truth not infinitely more blessed and meaningful than literal plagues falling upon the nations of earth! Truly *these plagues* bring THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST!

The plagues of Egypt were sent upon the people, spirits, and kingdom that held God's people, Israel, in servitude. The plagues in the book of Revelation are, therefore, related to God's *spiritual people*— for the message is sent to the *church!* It is the Lord Jesus talking to His *body!* The Egyptian typology is an emphatic way of saying that these "judgments" or "dealings" of our Father are but a prelude to His great deliverance of His redeemed people from all their enemies! In the book of Exodus the plagues came upon Egypt to get Israel out of Egypt. In the book of Revelation the plagues come upon the Lord's people, the church, to get Egypt out of the people! The plagues in the Revelation represent those dealings God sends into the midst of His people to break the religious bondage of spiritual Egypt, the spirit of *this world*, the controlling of the *flesh*, the dominance of the *soul*, the ruling of the *carnal mind*, the tyranny of the *religious*

*systems* of man, and the whole realm of *sin, limitation, and mortality!* The plagues are not against God's people *as* His people, but by them the Lord is breaking the power of every kingdom within that rules them, usurping the life of the *spirit*. As each of the plagues is poured out God is saying to the "Pharaoh" of every believer's own personal "Egypt" of bondage, "LET MY PEOPLE GO!" Referring to the plagues of Egypt the Psalmist said, "*He gave also their cattle over to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunderbolts*" (Ps. 78:48). The "cattle" is the symbolic figure for the whole bestial nature of man and the "flocks" signify the whole bestial system of man! Our Father will bring His people out of their Egyptian bondage by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm! And what mighty shakings, boils, bloody waters, scorching heat, darkness, frogs, thunders, lightnings, earthquakes, and great hail shall take place in the lives of God's people as He effects this glorious deliverance! He judges, discredits, humiliates, weakens, and destroys everything that is contrary to the pure life of Christ. He is leading His people "out" of Egypt in order to bring them "in" to the fullness of their inheritance in Christ! Many of God's elect have already experienced these things, and we know experientially by what a ***mighty hand and outstretched arm*** our Father has delivered us into His kingdom! Therefore we also know that God has an appointed time for all the rest of His people, and He will surely bring it to pass by HIS MIGHTY POWER!

This is how the woman-bride of chapter nineteen makes herself ready! The bride is so purified and made glorious within until in chapter twenty-two John beholds a *pure river* of the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the midst of the bride-city. Jesus spoke of this river when He said, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be *in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life*...he that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, *out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water*" (Jn. 4:14; 7:38). The stream of teaching, preaching, and ministry flowing out from the church systems of man has been so polluted with error, falsity, deception, carnality, and foolishness — something must ***purify*** the stream!

You see, beloved reader of these lines, God is not against *you*, God is not out to get *you*, God is against your enemies, the Egypt within you, the spirit of this world and the spirit of man's carnal religious orders which control and deceive God's people — God is judging the very Egypt within His people in order to deliver and lead them out into His great purpose and inheritance — the fullness of Himself. The Lord said to Moses, "Take a look at your enemies because after today you're going to see them ***no more for ever.***" What a word that is! That is what the plagues are all about — to deliver God's people out of their *spiritual Egyptian bondage*. Many have made "bricks" under the whips of their "taskmasters" for so long that they are not even aware there is a free and glorious life beyond the river of Egypt! What a wonder it will be when all the dust settles and they discover the TRUE RICHES AND THE GLORIOUS AND ETERNAL REALITY!

A spoiled child throws a tantrum in a toy store, wanting every toy in sight. His parents try to hold and comfort him, but since he knows his parents won't correct or punish him, he spits on them. Onlookers watch in amazement, and the parents pretend to laugh it off. Similarly, when believers think God won't do anything about the carnality in His people and the pollution in His church, they spit in His face. But God is not an indulgent parent! That is why we have the graphic picture of the "seven *last plagues*" in chapter sixteen of the Revelation! The seven *last* plagues, the seven *last* stripes, the seven *last* scourgings are the seven *last* dealings of God His people must pass through in order to be delivered from Babylon and perfected in Christ. They are both the severity and the goodness of God revealed! The judgment against the carnal nature and systems of man will be so severe that God's people ultimately will cry "enough!" The dregs of the cup will prove so bitter that the "prodigal son" will be glad to leave the swine pens and the swill troughs and return to Father's house of goodness, provision, glory, and honor. The seven plagues will have served their purpose! They are nothing to be fearful of, rather something to rejoice in! The ***passion*** of God toward His people is filled up, fulfilled, completed, and consummated in these seven *last* plagues! When this seven-fold work is accomplished the delivering and transforming work of God in His people is FINISHED! Ah, great is the mystery!

A Captain, years ago in the days of the sailing vessels, was leaving England. His fourteen year old boy was begging to go with him but the mother was reluctant to let him go. Finally the father prevailed upon the mother and the fourteen year old boy went with the father's promise to the mother that he would watch

after this boy. He said to the boy, "You will have to be a sailor." So after they were out in the sea the boy was aloft in the riggings. Suddenly, unexpectedly, a fierce wind came up and it whipped the arm around and the boy was left dangling there precariously. The next moment, if that arm continued to turn, he would fall upon the deck and be brutally killed. The boy, in shock, was afraid to jump toward the water. The father quietly, slowly, pulled out his revolver and pointed it at the boy. He said authoritatively, "Son, if you don't jump, I'll shoot!" The boy knew his dad, and knew he meant business. More afraid of the gun, he made a leap for the water. He had no sooner hit the water than great big strong arms brought him back on deck.

May I say to you today — the wrath, the passion of God is a gun pointing at you! It's loaded with the power of God which is able to both kill and make alive (Deut. 32:39). God says, "I'll have to shoot if you don't jump." Oh, yes! God will judge you, my friend, and he will judge that Babylonian religious system you cling to, until you come His way, until you jump into His great ocean of love and divine purpose where you will find underneath the everlasting arms of His deliverance. Because He loves you, because He is committed to you, because He has a high purpose beyond your wildest dreams for you, He will save you, and in His omniscient wisdom He will do *whatever it takes* to cause you to abandon yourself to the ocean of His loving purpose. That is the wonder of it!

You may have read the following story. It's the story of an American couple who go to England, celebrating their 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Both the man and his wife are fanciers of antiques, pottery, and china. When they come to Sussex they pass a little china shop. They instantaneously stop, back up, and go in. Their eyes single out a little tea cup on the top shelf. "May I see that?" he asked. "I've never seen a tea cup like it. It's beautiful!" But suddenly the tea cup *spoke!* "You don't understand, I haven't always been a tea cup. There was a time when I was red...and that I was clay. My master took me and rolled me, and patted me over, and over, and over. I yelled out: '*Leave me alone!*' But he only smiled and said, '*Not yet.*'

"Then I was placed on a spinning wheel," the tea cup said. "Suddenly I was spun around, and around, and around. 'Stop it...I'm getting dizzy and this scares me!' I screamed. The master only nodded and said, '*Not yet!*' Then he put me in an oven...I've never felt such heat. I wondered why he wanted to burn me, and I yelled, and I knocked at the door. I could see him through the opening, and I could read his lips as he shook his head — '*Not yet.*' Finally the door did open...whew! He put me up on the shelf and I began to cool. 'There, that's better,' I said. Then at once he brushed me, and painted me all over. The fumes were horrible, and I gagged and thought I would die. 'Stop it! Stop it!' I cried. He only nodded — '*Not yet.*' Then suddenly he put me back into an oven, not the first one, but one *twice* as hot. I knew I would either suffocate or explode. This time I begged, I pleaded, I bargained, I screamed, I cried. All the time I could see him through the opening, nodding his head and saying, '*Not yet.*'

"Then I knew there was no hope, and I would never make it. I was ready to give up. But the door opened and he took me out and he placed me on a shelf. One hour later he handed me a *mirror* and said, 'Look at yourself.' And I did, and I said, 'That's not me...it couldn't be me! I'm *beautiful!*' 'I want you to remember,' he then said, 'I know it hurt to be rolled and patted, but if I had left you, you would have dried up. I know it made you dizzy and scared you to spin you around on the wheel, but if I had stopped, you would have crumbled. I know it was painful and hot and disagreeable in the oven, but if I hadn't put you there, you would have cracked. I know the fumes were horrible and suffocating when I brushed you and painted you all over, but you see, if I had not done that you would never have hardened. There would have been no color, no value, and no beauty to your life! And if I had not put you back into that second oven, you would not have survived for very long, the hardness, the quality, and the beauty would not have held. Now...you're a ***finished product...you're what I had in mind when I first began with you!***"

Ah, my beloved, that little story beautifully illustrates the purifying and transforming work of God in His called and chosen elect. It also points out the purpose, the power, and the process of the *seven last plagues*. How ominous they seem! But the end is beauty, quality, and value inwrought in the lives of those who become the bride *made ready* for the marriage of the Lamb! Personally, I am very glad that I did not know all the processings that lay ahead when I began this journey years ago. God in His great mercy and grace hid from my eyes the trials, difficulties, disappointments, traumatic experiences, temptations, failures, and burning furnaces of testings that were to bedevil the path that He had prepared for my feet. I knew

practically nothing about my own inexperience, immaturity, weaknesses, and inbred carnality and sin. I set my face to be conformed to the image of God's Christ, but I did not know at that time that transformation does not come in waves of glory and ecstasy, but rather in horrible pits of darkness and in blasts of heat from the fiery furnace of affliction. That is the mystery.

### THE SEALS, THE TRUMPETS, AND THE VIALS

"And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was *silence in heaven*...and I saw the seven angels which *stood before God*; and to them were given seven trumpets. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was *before the throne*...and the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it *into the earth*: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound" (Rev. 8:1-6).

"And I saw another sign *in heaven*, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the passion of God. And I heard a great voice *out of the temple* saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the passion of God *upon the earth*" (Rev. 15:1; 16:1).

These visions reveal the great truth that in the outworking of God's kingdom purposes, *first* something happens *in the heavens*, and then as a *consequence*, certain *events* take place *in the earth-realm*. John sees seven angels standing before the throne of God in heaven, and they are given seven trumpets. As they prepare to sound their trumpets fire from the censer of the priesthood is cast into the earth. It is a heavenly, celestial scene! But as each angel sounds mighty things transpire in the earth, in the sea, upon the rivers and fountains of waters, and in the heavens that govern the earth man. In the next scene the seven angels are standing in the temple of God in heaven. The temple of God is filled with the manifest glory of God, and to the seven angels are given seven bowls containing seven plagues, in which is contained the fullness of the passion of God. A great voice out of the temple of the body of Christ in the heavenly places of the Spirit of the Lord commands the seven angels to go forth and begin to pour out the bowls of the passion of God upon the earth-dwellers. As each bowl is poured out there are solemn and marvelous events that transpire in the earth, in the sea, upon the rivers and fountains of waters, and in the heavens that govern the earth man. Every divine action that affects the earth-realm issues forth from the heavenly, celestial realm! The sounding of the trumpets and the pouring out of the bowls both originate out of the heavens of the Spirit and accomplish the will and purpose of God within a people who are walking in the earthlies!

We have mentioned previously that John actually saw throughout the visions of the book of Revelation *three* series of dramas, each with *seven* parts. There is the drama of the seven *seals*, then that of the seven *trumpets*, and finally the seven *bowls*. As we meditate upon these great truths, surely we can see that the opening of the seals is *the revelation of Jesus Christ!* A revelation is an *unveiling*, and it is Jesus Christ, the firstborn Son of God, who is unveiled unto us and within us as the seals are broken. Thus, our Lord Jesus Christ is the *first* of this trinity of dramas. The further truth is that all our glorious Father wrought out in the life of Jesus in order to reveal the fullness of God in Him — in sonship — must now be wrought out also in God's firstfruit company of "many sons" brought to His very own glory. God's called and chosen elect, purified, perfected, grown up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, is therefore the *second company* to be brought to full and complete redemption, restoration to the life, glory, wisdom, and power of God! The *third company* brought into perfection and the fullness of God is the rest of the Lord's people who are presently enslaved in the bondage of religious Babylon.

The point we wish to make is just this: As the loosing of the *seals* brings the revelation of *Jesus Christ*, the first Son, so the blowing of the *trumpets* accomplishes the very same work of God in His called and chosen elect, the *many-membered body of Christ*, or the *manifest sons of God*. These are seen in chapter twelve as the manchild caught up into the throne; in chapter fourteen as the 144,000 with the Lamb upon mount Zion; and in chapter fifteen as the overcomers standing upon the glassy sea, singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. And just as the trumpets show the work of our Father in His chosen firstfruits company, so the pouring out of the seven *bowls* depicts the deep and awesome dealings of God with the *rest*



**of the Lord's redeemed people — the church!** Thus the seals represent the work of God in and through our Lord Jesus Christ, the trumpets show the work of God in His many-membered son company, and the bowls reveal the work of God in the rest of the Lord's saved people — the seven churches of chapters two and three of the Revelation. Three series of dramas, each with seven parts! Three is the number of completeness, seven the number of perfection. These three dramas with their seven parts reveal the great truth of God's COMPLETE REDEMPTION AND RESTORATION OF HIS PEOPLE, BRINGING PERFECTION, LIFE, AND GLORY!

There are three stages in the redemptive program (in relation to the church), and a full and complete redemption wrought in each stage. Jesus has already been perfected, resurrected, glorified, enthroned, and come to dwell in the midst of His people! Multitudes who read these lines are even now in the process of full perfection, redemption, and glorification as sons of God! And our Father has a wonderful plan and purpose to restore all His precious people back into the perfection and glory of God! He will, in fact, restore the **whole creation**, but the three series of dramas now under consideration speak of His dealings with His church prior to the restoration of the world and all things in all realms. God must first bring forth the perfection of glory within His manifest sons and within the beautiful and glorious bride of the Lamb, so that the **nations** can then come to their light and walk in their light, even the light of salvation! Isn't it wonderful!

It is my deep conviction that the "third part" (the third part of the trees, the third part of the sea, the third part of the ships, the third part of the rivers and fountains of waters, the third part of the sun, etc) mentioned so often in connection with the **second drama**, the sounding of the trumpets, bespeaks the work of God in His **firstfruits son company** in contrast to all the rest of the Lord's people who are dealt with later at the pouring out of the bowls. When this **"third part,"** or the **manifest sons of God**, has been thoroughly processed by the Lord, when the work of perfection and maturity has been fully accomplished in them, there remain yet multitudes, yea, untold *millions* of the Lord's people who are still just babes in Christ and slaves to the man-made (erroneous) creeds and carnal religious systems of Babylon. But their day will come, too! And it is significant to note that just as soon as the seven bowls are emptied out upon this last portion of the church — BABYLON BEGINS TO FALL AND THE BRIDE IS SEEN HAVING MADE HERSELF READY FOR THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB! What great and glorious things God has in store for His people!

Never lose sight of the beautiful progression in the succession of the seals, the trumpets, and the bowls. Each is greater and more far-reaching than the one before! In connection with the seals there is no mention of the *scope* of their effect — for the seals are the unveiling of ONE — the unveiling of Jesus Christ! Under the trumpets, however, we find that their work affects *one third* of everything! One third, but far short of *all*! Beyond doubt, this signifies a select company! But under the bowls **everything** is affected — the whole earth, the entire sea, all the rivers and fountains of waters, the full sun, the very seat of the beast, the full length of the river Euphrates, all the kings of the earth, the whole biosphere, the great city Babylon, all the cities, all the nations, every island and every mountain — absolute totality — all of EVERYTHING! This by no means indicates that all of those *literal* things will be transformed by the ministry of the seven plagues, for the literal things themselves represent **spiritual things in the lives and experience of God's people** — and it is **they** who are meant, it is **they** who are delivered, changed, and perfected!

The following words written by brother Paul Mueller are so meaningful here. "That which our Father intends to do with all mankind, He shall first accomplish in the lives of His chosen and set-apart remnant. If the remnant of the Lord cannot receive the new covenant and walk in the light of its principles and purposes, how can we expect the masses of the world to receive it? Beloved, it is impossible! As our Father's chosen remnant in the earth today, we must grow in the Spirit to know our Lord in greater fullness. Then we will gladly, and with renewed hope and expectancy, lay aside the old, dead works of the past age! Then every person among us will cease teaching and preaching, for all the elect will know Him in Spirit and in Truth, whom to know is Life eternal. And this is just the basic principle of the new covenant!

“Then we will blaze a new trail into the kingdom of God for the multitudes to follow. It will be a new and clear trail or highway into the fullness of the kingdom of God! *It shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those; the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there: but the redeemed shall walk there: and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away*’ (Isa. 35:8-10)” — end quote.

To be continued...

J. PRESTON EBY