

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 182

THE SEVEN ANGELS WITH THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES (continued)

“And the *third angel* poured out his bowl upon *the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood*. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because Thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast *given them blood to drink*; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgments” (Rev. 16:4-7).

When the third angel pours out the third golden bowl of God’s passion, the third plague causes the rivers, streams, and springs to become blood also. No one drinks sea water, so the sea is turned to blood that men might understand that everything of the flesh realm is full of death and corruption. But here it is the *fresh water*, all the sources of water for *drinking* and for *washing* are turned to blood. And God gives it to religious people to drink!

This is reminiscent of the first plague that God miraculously brought upon the Egyptians through the hand of Moses — the turning of the Nile River to blood. One historian gives us the following background. God had expressly told Moses that he was to meet Pharaoh in the morning when Pharaoh went to the river. We don’t know the precise reason that motivated the Pharaoh to visit the Nile each morning, but based on other evidence it could have been to bathe, to offer his devotions to the Nile which he esteemed as a god, or to see if the river was beginning to rise to signal the beginning of the flood season. The Nile has been described as the “bloodstream of the god Osiris” and was certainly esteemed as the source of life for all Egypt. Therefore, for Yahweh to contaminate the very water which was so precious to all life in Egypt was certainly an embarrassment to the gods of the Nile and the gods of life in general. There can be no doubt that this plague gained the special, undivided attention of Pharaoh! Not only was the lifeblood of his people polluted, but also he and his servants were forced to see the contamination occur firsthand right while he was actually worshipping and giving devotion to the river!

The results of the plague were devastating, for all the water that was in the river was turned to blood. Because of this, the fish died, the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink the water, and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt (Ex. 7:31). Even the water that was in their stone and wood pots had turned to blood! The plague lasted for seven days. This plague was an affront to the Egyptian gods Osiris, Sothis, Isis, Khnum, and Hapi. Osiris was one of the most prominent and important gods in Egypt. He was not only the god of the dead (represented as a mummified king) but also the god of the Nile, whose death and resurrection explained the annual rise and fall of the river. We won’t take time to go into it here, but the various roles of the Nile gods clearly reveal that the Egyptians deified the Nile River and magnified its waters as the source of all life. Yet, with the simple extension of Aaron’s rod over the Nile, the life source of all Egypt was supernaturally contaminated! The Egyptian gods could do nothing to bring pure water to the people, and certainly Khnum, the guardian of the Nile, failed the people by allowing the water to become blood!

Here in the spiritual visions of John on Patmos it is not the literal springs and rivers that flow through earth's mountains, plains, and valleys, of course, but the symbolical rivers of *man's human life* and *man's fallible word* rather than *God's divine life* and *heaven's living word*! How many times throughout the scriptures the life of God is spoken of as a flowing stream of water! "*How excellent is Thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men...shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the **river** of Thy pleasures. For with Thee is the **fountain of life***" (Ps. 36:7-9). The Lord Jesus tells us that the **water** that He gives will become within us a **fountain of living water, springing up** unto eternal life (Jn. 4:14). He says again that whosoever is thirsty may come to Him and drink, and whoever believes into Him will have **rivers of living water** flowing from within him (Jn. 7:37-38). All these words relate to one thing — that God Himself has **flowed out** and is still **flowing out** on this earth into humanity AS LIFE! Just as the Spirit of God and the Word of God make up the wonderful "River of Life" in the closing chapters of the Revelation, and flow out from the throne of God bringing life to all, so the "spirit of the world" and the "word of man" comprise the carnal "rivers" and "waters" of the earth-realm which flow out of the carnal minds and hearts of natural men. This plague falls upon the soulical rivers and the human well-springs of imaginations, carnal knowledge, and worldly wisdom that flow within our earthly, natural, human life and experience.

"Rivers," on the one hand, suggest the **flow** of these ideas and beliefs as they are taught, published, propagated, and assimilated into the minds, hearts, and behavior of mankind. The "fountains of waters," on the other hand, represent the **sources** of the ideas, concepts, philosophies, teachings, precepts, creeds, doctrines, traditions, ideologies, customs, laws — all the intellectual, moral, political, cultural, scientific, educational, and religious influences of *this world* which are the sources from which men draw their life, their natural joy and refreshment, their mind-sets, their image of themselves, their understanding of the world, their vocations, lifestyles, hopes, dreams, ambitions, and relationships. Collectively, these waters flow through school and college classrooms, seminars, television programs, books, court rooms, political propaganda, church pulpits, cultural traditions, and a hundred other places. Different belief systems moving in intellectual, moral, legal, business, and religious channels constitute the outflowing of these "waters" as "rivers." Individually, these rivers and springs are the very thought patterns that run through the minds of men that have become polluted through worldly and false teachings. If ever a dealing of God was needed, it is here!

The earthly-minded people of the bestial world system prefer to look to the "waters" that flow from worldly political, commercial, educational, and religious institutions. They look to these sources for life, contentment, and fulfillment, particularly to the religious systems with their impressive ceremonies, elegant pageantry, time-honored traditions, and static creeds and doctrines. They are like the apostate Israelites who preferred to drink from the Nile River along which Egypt flourished and the Euphrates River along which Babylon flourished. They "rejected the waters of Shiloah which flow gently," which waters correspond with the "river... the streams whereof make glad the city of our God, the tabernacle of the Most High."

Where there are rivers there is a flow of life with vegetation, crops, food, birds, and animals of many kinds. Religion is a flow of life in the soulish dimension of man. There was a time in our life when it was a blessing to us to live in that realm, it was a lamp unto our feet, and important to us in our progress from the Egypt of the world to our promised land of the fullness of Christ. We received a certain level of life from that realm! We were encouraged, strengthened, and edified through the preaching, teaching, singing, clapping, worship, sacraments, activities, ceremonies, traditions, programs, etc. But as we follow on to know the Lord there comes a time when the Father shines a **greater light** upon our pathway and soon we find that all the streams and fountains which once gave us life, are turned to death for us! Once they were water to us, but now they are — **blood**!

Even a child can understand that the River of Life is not a literal river of natural water which, if a man steps into it, or drinks of it, will magically confer upon him physical immortality. Just as the river of God is *spiritual*, so in the Revelation the rivers of earth are *soulical*. The river of God is the *spirit* of the word, the rivers of earth are the *letter* of the word. The river of God is *essence*, the rivers of earth are *form*. The river of God is *living reality*, the rivers of earth are *lifeless shadows* and *deceptive illusions*. The river of God is *truth and life*, the rivers of earth are *cold, dead facts*, containing no *quickenings life* or *power*! And

now may I exhort you to flee from those things which are true but not Truth, as surely and swiftly as you would flee your home if you discovered it to be a den of rattlesnakes!

We have a whole crop of doom-casters in the land today who spend their time and energy in nothing else but informing the Lord's people of all the negative situations which are going to overtake our nation and the world! Many of the Lord's precious people are being fed a steady diet of messages, articles, books, and CDs about world conditions, politics, the situation in the Middle East, oil crisis, economic collapse, one world government, conspiracies of the Illuminati, Counsel on Foreign Relations, World Trade Organization, World Bank, European Union, Beast Government, the Antichrist, mark of the beast, cashless society, strikes, riots, war, terrorism, great tribulation, "safe areas," food storage, living off the land, planetary conjunctions, tsunamis, erratic weather conditions, global warming, wickedness, catastrophes, end of the world, and a whole catalog of other fearful and frightening events which they imagine fulfill the prophecies of the book of Revelation, some of which will undoubtedly happen, just as they have happened historically through the ages, but most of which I tell you now are nothing more than wild and sensational speculations conceived in the darkness of the carnal minds of men who masquerade as end-time teachers and prophets of God, bewitching the saints. The natural mind, my beloved, is certainly one of the well-springs and sources of the earthly "fountains of waters" from whence flow the "rivers" of carnal ideas, concepts, teachings, prognostications, and imaginations of which the "inhabitants of the earth" drink and find a certain level of excitement, exhilaration, refreshment, and fulfillment!

Let every child of God who has had birthed within his bosom the beautiful hope of sonship turn the searchlight of sincerity and truth upon his pure heart and answer these very important questions:

Do any of the afore-mentioned things minister LIFE?

Does the study of them cause you to be more FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT?

Do they enable you to put on the MIND OF CHRIST?

Do they work DELIVERANCE and OVERCOMING POWER in your life?

Do they inspire you with ever-increasing FAITH by which you shall conquer every enemy and lay hold upon life and immortality?

Do they flood your life with PEACE and JOYFUL EXPECTATION in Christ?

Do they TRANSFORM YOU INTO THE IMAGE OF THE FIRSTBORN SON OF GOD?

Do they imbue you with SPIRITUAL WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING, and with righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost?

Are they QUICKENING, LIFE-GIVING **TRUTH**, or are they, one and all, merely things that are *true*, or, perhaps, *may* be true, or *may not even be true at all*!

I have no hesitation in telling you that all these *streams* of teaching are naught but *carnal rivers flowing through the earth-realm*! Some will be dismayed by the statement I am about to make, but quite frankly, I care not one whit who anyone thinks the Antichrist is, or when the Great Tribulation will begin, or how long it will last, or what technological or economic development may bring the mark of the beast, or what the Illuminati or the New World Order conspire to do, or what significance the latest recession, assassination, governmental collapse, earthquake, tsunami, or terrorist attack has in the light of Bible prophecy, or any other event that men's hearts are failing them for fear in looking after. That may all be interesting information, but it is for the "earth-dwellers" to concern themselves with. I have no time for such trivialities and even less interest. None of this is of any significance in the kingdom in which I now live, none of it flows in the waters from which I now drink, and holds nothing for me anymore. It all seems quite childish, speculative, and boring. I have higher matters to attend to and greater and more enduring things to

pursue in the kingdom of my Father! I am no longer a citizen of this world, for I have been *translated* out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son, and am seated with Him in the higher than all heavens, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, praise His wonderful name! I've been "raptured," and it had nothing to do with pre-trib, mid-trib, or post-trib, as man's river disseminates it. And to one and all I say, "COME UP HITHER!" There is a river flowing here that *makes glad the city of our God!*

Now, while it is abundantly clear that there is *no spiritual life* in any of the springs, streams, and rivers of man, they seem to be life to those who drink from them, for they are refreshed and strengthened in their carnal life by this "water." By the symbolical changing of all this "water" into "blood," men are brought face to face with the fact that there is no *true* life in it and that, in very fact, it is naught but death. It is *made death* unto them! It bespeaks the revelation of the complete corruption of all the sources of natural human wisdom, knowledge, and understanding from which men draw in all the various departments of life.

"And I heard the angel of the waters say, *Thou art righteous, O Lord...because Thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgments*" (Rev. 16:5-7).

This is the only place in the Revelation where the *altar* is said to speak, though we have heard before of a voice from the horns of the altar (Rev. 9:13). In Revelation 8:5 we find the altar connected with the prayers of the saints, and as a result of their prayers fire is taken from off the altar and cast into the earth. The fire is a symbol of purging and purification, and the voice from the horns of the altar comes also as a result of the prayers of God's elect and releases a mighty deliverance in the lives of God's called and chosen remnant. Here in our text the altar is emphasizing that God's judgments in the midst of His people are *true* and *righteous*, that is, they are just and purposeful. The message is just this — God is doing what He has to do in order to correct what is wrong in His people, and what He does is just and redemptive, bringing deliverance and restoration.

Another strange statement is that because they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, God is giving them blood to drink: *for they are worthy*. That last phrase simply means "*for they deserve it!*" We don't like to think of God giving people what they deserve, but in this case that is exactly what He is doing. Shed blood signifies death. That is what they deserve to drink, death to themselves. The reference is to the fact that the church systems have slain, both figuratively and literally, the righteous men and prophets sent to speak the words of God to them through the ages. Thousands have been the martyrs slain by the church systems in ages past and even in recent times! They chose to drink from the human sources of this old world. Thus they wickedly *rejected* the living streams of water flowing out from God's chosen vessels! So now He is causing them to drink a full dose of the death they have chosen! Let them drink blood! Oh, yes! They deserve it! It is not vindictiveness — it is *correction!* The Spirit is revealing to them the awful depths of the death that flows in the streams of man! And it is for their good, for their deliverance, and ultimate perfection!

Commenting on this passage Ray Prinzing wrote: "Truly we can bear witness, '*He is the Rock, His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He*' (Deut. 32:4). Moffat's translation reads: '*Steadfast — He rules aright, HIS METHODS ARE IN DUE ORDER, a God trusty and wholly true, upright and honest.*' While Ferrar Fenton adds the thought, '*ALL HIS LINES ARE STRAIGHT.*'

"What a declaration! His work is perfect, all His lines are straight. His methods are in due order, all that He does is RIGHT! Therefore it rightly follows, '*All His ways are judgment.*' Everything He does is to bring about a restoration and setting right that which has been perverted, distorted, defiled, etc. HE IS OUR GOD OF SALVATION! Were He to draw a line in your life, it would be a straight line — and that means you would be brought into alignment with that uprightness. '*I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a Father to Israel*' (Jer. 31:9). All of His

methods, His workings, are in proper order, proper time, perfect sequence, as He steadily draws you to Himself.

“So long has Christendom programmed their doctrines with a negative view, that to read of the pouring out of the plagues brings a shudder, a fear, for all they see is calamity and distress, while actually God has promised the opposite. Full well He knows the propensity of humanity to do evil. He knows of the self-will and rebellion, that we have *‘turned every one to his own way.’* But He also has promised, *‘I will bring the blind by a way that they know not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them’*” — end quote.

THE FOURTH BOWL

“And the *fourth angel* poured out his bowl upon the *sun*; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with the great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues...” (Rev. 16:8-9).

Under the fourth trumpet, one-third of the sun, moon, and stars were stricken with darkness, so that one-third part was dark. But here, under the fourth bowl, or plague, the thing John saw was an angel pouring the contents of his bowl on the sun, as a result of which the heat of the sun is increased to such an extent that men are actually scorched by it, burned, suffocated with solar heat, and in misery and torment are provoked to blaspheme. Yet in their cursing they are forced to acknowledge that the Almighty is in control! He has “power of these plagues.” Truly, this is all the work of God by His Spirit! They know in their hearts that it is God, but the flesh doesn’t like it and grows angry!

The plague is called “great heat.” Men fret and groan under heat from the sun when it is 90 to 115 degrees, but the picture painted here is of heat much more severe than anything we have experienced! In the symbols of the vision the words “sun,” “heat,” and “scorched,” are used literally; but in applying the symbols to the work of God they must be used figuratively and spiritually. The fourth plague compounds the severity of judgment upon the natural man. Sick with ulcers, the stench of death in their nostrils, parched with thirst, the “earth-dwellers” find to their dismay that they are not yet at the end of God’s dealings!

This is the fourth angel to pour out his bowl, and it is significant to note what happened on the **FOURTH CREATIVE DAY** as God arranged the cosmos in that long-ago beginning. “*And God said, Let there be **lights in the firmament of the heaven** to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years. And let them be for **lights in the firmament of the heaven** to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to **rule the day**, and the lesser light to **rule the night**: He made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give **light upon the earth**, and to **rule over the day and the night**”* (Gen. 1:14-18).

The truth of the great lights in the heavens includes many wonderful examples of that which is taking place in the realm of the spirit. The sun, moon, and stars of the heavens exist in a realm where God is absolute Sovereign and Lord, far above the sin, confusion, sorrow, strife, pain, and death of earth. Therefore, in their highest meaning, in their spiritual meaning, the sun, moon, and stars are used to represent **HEAVENLY, SPIRITUAL RULE AND DOMINION**. The prophet said, “The heavens do **rule**.” That is the great truth revealed when at the moment of creation the almighty Creator proclaimed of the lights of the heavenly realm, “*Let them be for **light upon the earth**...the greater light to **rule the day**, and the lesser light to **rule the night**.*” The primary thought is that of rulership and dominion!

The God of heaven rules over all, and can we now open the eyes of our understanding to behold the wondrous truth that God’s elect *sons* are destined, with their sovereign and glorious Father, to become the **CONSTELLATIONS OF THE SPIRITUAL HEAVENS, THE LUMINARIES AND RULERS IN GOD’S SKY!** As the glory of the Lord arises upon His chosen ones they pierce the gloom of earth’s dark night of sin and sorrow and bring deliverance, life, and order out of the chaos of man’s failure and despair. “*And they that be wise shall **shine as the brightness of the firmament**; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever*” (Dan. 12:3). Can we not see by this that those who rule and reign with Christ

in His kingdom are indeed THE SUN, MOON, AND STARS IN THE HEAVENS OF THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD!

The sun in prophecy is the most exalted ruler in any order. We find that God, the supreme Ruler, is called in the scripture a “sun.” *“For the Lord thy God is a **sun** and a shield”* (Ps. 84:11). Also, our elder brother, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is King of kings, and Lord of lords, is called *“the **sun** of righteousness”* (Mal. 4:2). Furthermore, we find in reference to men, *“He that **ruleth** over men...shall be as the light of the morning, when the **sun** ariseth”* (II Sam. 23:3-4). David the king was called *“the **light** of Israel”* (II Sam. 21:17). This same meaning is found in II Kings 8:19 where we read, *“Yet the Lord would not destroy Judah for David His servant’s sake, as He promised him to give him always a **light**.”* This is exactly the same promise we find in Jeremiah 33:17 where the Lord says, *“David shall never want a man to **sit upon the throne** of the house of Israel.”* Our Father has told us, *“heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool”* (Isa. 66:1). Heaven is His throne, or may we say, His throne is heaven! “Heaven” bespeaks rulership and dominion, the “lights” of the heavens are the individual rulers who occupy the heavenly thrones of authority and power! The “earth” is that which is “ruled” by the heavens — that which looks to the sun, moon, and stars for its direction.

The divine pattern in all these things becomes clear once we understand the great truth that there are revealed in the wonderful book of Revelation **two heavens** and **two earths**! The blessed Seer of Patmos beheld these in rapt vision and recorded what he saw in these inspired words, *“And I saw a **new heaven** and a **new earth**: for the **first heaven** and the **first earth** were passed away; and there was no more sea”* (Rev. 21:1). There is an old heaven and there is a new heaven! There is an old earth and there is a new earth! The old heaven and earth pass away, but we look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness (II Pet. 3:13). It should be clear to any thinking mind that the old heaven with its sun, moon, and stars, is not our natural solar system or the star-studded universe we behold in the night sky. That is not the old heaven John is writing about! Rather, it is the *old order* that men have lived under, the old world of human consciousness, worldly society, and man-made religion with all its luminaries — the “lights” or personalities and institutions that govern, control, dictate, constrain, inspire, and direct men’s thinking, understanding, ways, will, desires, ambitions, and conduct in the world of humanity.

These two heavens — the old heavens of man’s order, and the new heavens of God’s rule by the Spirit, are both presented throughout the book of Revelation and we must be keen in discernment to understand which is in view in any scene. Let me put it this way. One way to recognize whether it is the old heaven or the new heaven is to observe the action taking place. The heavens that are being darkened, smitten, falling, rolled together as a scroll, and passing away with a great noise certainly are **not** the **new heavens**, for only the old heavens pass away and the new are established in righteousness and glory and power forevermore! It is the heavens of God’s kingdom where sons reign upon the throne and from whence the seven spirits of God are sent forth into all the earth! It is the new heavens of the Spirit of the Lord from which the holy city, New Jerusalem, descends (Rev. 21:2). It only stands to reason the **new** Jerusalem would descend from the **new** heavens! So those who are looking up into the sky to see the New Jerusalem coming down are certainly wasting their time and energy! It is out of the new heavens of God that a great voice is heard saying, *“Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God”* (Rev. 21:3). And these men are not the old men of the old earth, but the new creation men of the new earth! All through the book of Revelation grand and glorious things take place in, and out from, the heavens of God’s Spirit! The seven angels that blow the seven trumpets sound forth their messages out of the heavens of God! And the seven angels having the seven last plagues likewise come out of the temple of God in the heavens of the Lord. Can we not see by this that the “sun” upon which is poured out the “plague” cannot be the sun of the heavens where *we dwell* — it can only be the sun of that old heaven that is destined to *pass away*!

There is an application of this reality both corporately and individually, for what happens in a collective way with all the people of God also takes place in an individual way in each of our lives. If you would understand the scope and magnificence of the mighty working of God in your life, my beloved, consider the message of the radiant constellations of the illimitable heavens above and know that all the power and glory and wisdom and working so marvelously illustrated in their shining configurations is in fact

and in truth wrought out in the deepest recesses of your own being. If you will give prayerful consideration to the statement of our Lord that the kingdom of the heavens is within you, you cannot avoid the conclusion that man is a copy in miniature of the universe, and every thing that exists or takes place in the vast expanses of the cosmos, also exists and takes place in the inner constitution of man. The powers and forces and laws that make up the nature and constitution of man are the same as the powers and forces and laws that on an infinitely larger scale are called the universe, and every reality in the outer heavens expresses itself in the consciousness of man, and reflects itself in the experience of man, enabling man to know the universe by himself, and himself by the universe.

Scientists are probing two unseen worlds. One is a world too vast and far away to be seen by the eye, and the other is a world too small to be observed by the eye. I want to give you three words in this connection, together with their meanings. First, we find the word MICROCOSM. This word means a little world; anything regarded as a world in miniature; man, viewed as an epitome of the universe. This word comes from two words in the Greek language. One is MIKROS which means little or miniature. The other is KOSMOS meaning world, in the sense of an orderly arrangement. Thus we have the meaning of LITTLE WORLD. The word MACROCOSM, on the other hand, means the great world, or the universe. It also comes from two words. One is MACROS meaning great, and the other is KOSMOS meaning world. We noted above that the word MIKROS carried the meaning of “man viewed as an epitome of the universe.” The word EPITOME means, among other things, *a condensed representation* of something. The word MICROCOSM, then, gives us the meaning that man is a CONDENSED REPRESENTATION OF THE UNIVERSE, or man is ALL THE UNIVERSE IN MINIATURE! What it really means is that the two heavens and the two earths in the book of Revelation are both *realities within man* — and the outward physical universe of sun, moon, and stars is just the picture or the type of how these function on the spiritual plane.

Now let us return to the fourth plague poured out upon the “sun.” There is an interesting connection between the plague poured out from the fourth bowl and the one that follows from the fifth bowl. The fourth bowl is poured out upon the sun — the source of *light* and *heat*. But then the fifth bowl brings absolute *darkness* — suggesting the *absence* of the sun! Let us understand! God has ordained that all spiritual truth and reality in the heavenly world be typified and pre-figured by the physical creation in the natural world. The apostle Paul made mention of this when he wrote, “Because that which can be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath *showed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made*, even His eternal power and Godhead...” (Rom. 1:19-20). Thus, natural things and events of the physical creation symbolically portray and typically point to *spiritual realities*. Natural law is both a reflection and a portrait of spiritual law in the spiritual world. And nowhere is this truth employed more effectually by the Holy Spirit than in the vision John is given of the fourth and fifth plagues!

The figures speak of the sun first becoming *hotter* and actually scorching men with fire. This is not the picture of an excessive heat drought as is now sometimes experienced. The sun itself is first smitten, then it emits rays that scorch and burn men. The next scene is one of such *total darkness* that men are gnawing their tongues in pain as a result of the darkness. How utterly graphic these scenes are! These two visions have embodied within them knowledge of modern science which was still unknown to men at the time of John’s vision! This is indeed one of the many “internal evidences” of the book’s DIVINE INSPIRATION!

Our solar system, just one of millions in the Milky Way galaxy, is approximately seven billion miles across. It consists of our sun (a medium-size star) with nine planets, the largest of which is Jupiter. Our sun, by the process of atomic fusion, is an energy-producing instrument. It was made by the Creator for a specific job, which it has been performing since the fourth day of creation. When producers of energy can no longer export the same amount they generate, then “something must give.” In the case of stars, they either blow up (supernova) or they suffer an atomic collapse (nova). Novas and supernovas are occurring all the time, with approximately thirty observed each year in our galaxy alone.

These calamities are brought to pass by entropy, which is the degradation of the matter and energy in the universe to an ultimate state of inert uniformity. The law of entropy dictates that everything in the universe is running down. According to this law, stars like our sun were composed of solid hydrogen in the beginning. In the fusion process, which changes hydrogen to extreme heat and sunlight, hydrogen is converted into iron and other metals. When the inner core of the metal builds to the point where the energy produced cannot escape in an even flow, huge atomic explosions covering millions of square miles occur, hurling atomic matter and gases millions of miles outward. *Such activity precedes the death of a star.* It is thought by some scientists that the critical stage is reached when 50% of a star's hydrogen is consumed.

The question immediately arises as to where our sun stands in relation to these events. The "burning" questions are: "How much longer will the sun remain stable?" "When will it start on its way towards a higher surface temperature and more brilliance?" Scientists believe that approximately one-half of our sun's supply has now been consumed, and increasing sunspot activity is taken by some scientists as a sign that our sun could nova at any time. Should our sun nova at some future date earth would experience a period of increased brightness and heat, followed by incredible darkness. However such literal events are merely of academic interest, since no one on earth would be around to worry about them. About our only physical hope of escaping such a calamity would be to move to another planetary system!

A nova stage is reached when the heat factor builds to a point where atoms are stripped of their shells. Like a runaway atomic generator, the remaining heavy hydrogen is consumed within a period of seven to fourteen days. Subsequently, the entire mass, originally 900,000 miles across, would be compressed into a ball no more than fifteen miles in diameter. The gravity would be so intense that no light could escape. Whether my reader can understand all the science of this does not really matter. The point of importance here, as it relates to the fourth and fifth plagues, is just this. The literal picture in the two plagues is that of *the "nova" of our sun! DURING THE RUNAWAY PERIOD (SEVEN TO FIFTEEN DAYS) JUST DESCRIBED, OUR SUN COULD BECOME UP TO SEVEN TIMES HOTTER THAN NORMAL. THIS WOULD BE FOLLOWED BY TOTAL DARKNESS!*

John's vision, however, doesn't indicate that our literal, physical sun up in the heavens, ninety-three million miles from earth, is going to nova — getting brighter and hotter, scorching men with fire until they blaspheme the name of God, who has power over these plagues; and then dying, collapsing into a black hole, throwing our planet into such total darkness that men would literally gnaw their tongues for pain, and further blaspheme the God of heaven because of their pains. Oh, no! The vision is a *symbol*, a *type*, a *picture*, a *parable* of great spiritual dealings and workings of God!

In our next Study we will consider the great darkness to fall upon the seat of the beast's kingdom. In closing, let us look for a moment at the scorching of the sun. We have seen that throughout the scriptures the sun is used as a symbol for rulers, authorities, and lordships. What the sun is to this world, such are the ruling powers to a kingdom. In our text the kingdom is the beast's kingdom — the kingdoms of this world! Governments, church systems, institutions of various kinds, that exercise authority over men's lives. Power being given to them to "scorch with fire" denotes a cruel and tyrannical oppression over the lives of the people. As religious Babylon comes under the judging hand of God, its corruption exposed, the blessing and presence of God fleeing, so that every living soul, every moving of God within the system is *dead*, its streams and fountains of waters, that is, its message and ministry, turned to blood — full of *death* — the religious leaders of Mystery Babylon will strike out at the people in an effort to keep them in line and prevent their escape! This type also is drawn from the captivity of Israel in Egypt, for the "scorching sun" answers to the taskmasters of Egypt with the whips in their hands, who mercilessly beat the Israelite slaves to make them work harder and to keep them from escaping!

Ah, do not preachers do this today when they fear the people are going to leave them? I'm sure that many who now read these lines, when the Lord was calling you out of Babylon, before you actually left, did you not feel the whips on your back and scorching sun burning your flesh! The leaders in Babylon magnify their authority over the people, crack their whips, reminding them not to "touch God's anointed," threaten them, prophesy judgment upon them if they dare to question the anointing and authority of the leaders, lay more laws and commandments upon them, preaching at them and abusing them from the pulpit, scorching

them with heat from the sun-ministry over them! As the Lord moves mightily to deliver ALL His people out of religious Babylon, you can believe me now or believe me later, but the taskmasters will become much more harsh, the tyranny more severe, the burdens heavier, the restraints more binding, the church rules more demanding — until the flesh cries out in pain! Oh, even then the people won't be ready to leave yet, for there are three plagues yet to come to finish the work, but the judgment of God to release them will be right on target!

To be continued...

J. PRESTON EBY