

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 183

THE SEVEN ANGELS WITH THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES (continued)

"And the *fifth angel* poured out his bowl *upon the seat of the beast*; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds" (Rev. 16:10-11).

The word "seat" here signifies *authority*, or the *rule* of one in authority. It might be translated "throne," and has been so translated in other places. A throne in the book of Revelation occurs frequently as a symbol of dominion, as the center whence the authority of the king or ruler emanates throughout the entire kingdom or nation. Jesus said of the scribes and Pharisees, "Ye sit in Moses' *seat*." They administered the law of Moses as *rulers* of the Jews. Jesus said to the church at Pergamos, "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's *seat* is." The typical and symbolic church at Pergamos was dwelling where Satan's throne was located. The Greek word here is clearly "throne," but the translators of the King James Bible softened it down to "seat." Let us not be afraid of the phrase. In the place where the church at Pergamos dwelt was Satan's **throne**! Let us understand the mystery! First, let me give you the location of Pergamos. The modern city of Izmir, in Turkey, which was ancient Smyrna, is the great city where tourists go because the airport and the hotels are there. It is a fascinatingly beautiful city. You go about sixty-five miles south to reach Ephesus and about seventy miles north to reach Pergamos. These three were, in New Testament times, the *royal cities*, and they vied with one another. Smyrna (Izmir) was the great *commercial* center, Ephesus was the great *political* center, and Pergamos was the great *religious* center.

Satan's throne, Jesus said, was established in Pergamos, that is, the center of cultic worship. This religious system had started in Babylon, but eventually its priesthood moved out of Babylon, making their way to Pergamos, and the Babylonian religion found a new home in Pergamos. Can we not see by this that in the book of Revelation Pergamos *equals* Babylon! Babylon and Pergamos are both symbols of the same thing — RELIGION! In the New Testament times Pergamos became the *center* or the *headquarters* of all pagan religion. Satan was the authority and power behind this religion, and he set up his operation in the center of learning and the healing arts, along with idolatry, controlling peoples' souls, bodies, and spirits. This was Satan's **throne** in the *typical* city of Pergamos, which is also Mystery Babylon the Great! Religion in Pergamos was big business, it was a false system, it deceived the people and dominated their lives, and it was idolatrous. It was there, in *false religious systems*, that Satan's headquarters were located! Not that Satan's headquarters were actually in Pergamos, *per se*; there was no building into which you could walk and find Satan's office with him sitting behind the desk running things. Oh, no! These are pictures of *spiritual realities* and they signify that THE POWER AND AUTHORITY OF SATAN LIES IN RELIGION!

This ought to settle the question for those who think that Satan is in hell at the present time! He has never yet been in the hell that men talk about. But he *does* have headquarters, and we may think his headquarters are in the drug world, in the sex and pornography industry, in the military establishment, in the harlot's house, in terrorist organizations, in the bar-room, in Hollywood, in the abortion clinics, in gangs, murderers, child molesters, or even in political machines. Not so! These all represent the *works of the flesh*,

not the **power of Satan!** In John's day the Holy Spirit used the symbol of Pergamos, the center of **religion**, to identify the location of Satan's activity and throne! The great fact is just this: wherever the centers of carnal, man-made **religious systems** are, there you will find Satan's throne!

Earlier in his visions John described this scene: "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea...and the dragon gave him his power, and his *seat*, and great authority." Thus we learn where this beast obtained his "seat," or his "throne," that is, his rulership, dominion, and authority. He received it from the dragon, that is, from Satan. Another beast came up out of the earth, and the first beast gave his authority to this second beast, so that the authority of the second beast is also the authority of the throne of the dragon. This second beast out of the earth, or out of the soulical religious powers of man, signifies the apostate church systems of man, and for long centuries this religious beast, known as Christendom, exercised her *assumed* authority over the peoples, nations, and kings of the earth. She became extremely idolatrous, her doctrines were corrupted with hideous errors, her rituals empty, her sacraments powerless, her power carnal, her spiritual life stagnated and dead. Thousands were tried for so-called heresy, pronounced guilty by the beast or false church, and executed by the civil governments which were subject to the authority of the bestial religious system.

The "seat" of the beast — where is that? Let us understand! Satan's throne, ever since the serpent started his religion with Eve when he hissed, "Hath God said? God doth know!" is still in all the false forms of carnal, man-made religion, even so-called Christian religion! Adam and Eve died because the religious realm to which they subscribed through the tree of the knowledge of good and evil *sounds like a deeper revelation* but in reality HAS NO LIFE! It is mere "knowledge," the "letter" of the word, the commandments of men and traditions of the elders substituting for the living word of God, form without essence, law without life, ritual without reality, words without power.

The firstborn Son of God understood this very clearly by the mind of the Father! He never condemned the prostitute, the fornicator, the tax-gatherer, the thieves or murderers. He never demonstrated holy anger against the Romans, nor even against the Roman gods, the world, or the wicked. It was the **religious leaders** that He denounced with scathing invective! His anger was focused on the hypocrisy of the so-called carriers of His Father's word! He condemned those who appeared clean on the outside, but inside were full of greed and spiritual wickedness! Those who gave tithes and fasted and prayed and loved the best seats in the synagogue to be seen and esteemed of men, He rebuked! Those who distorted the word of God, who turned the truth of God into a lie, who misrepresented and maligned the nature of His Father, and loaded people down with religious burdens and obligations, creating a façade of self-righteousness, He called a generation of *vipers* — a brood of *snakes*!

Ah, we blame war, drunkenness, greed, crime, immorality, drugs, and a thousand other evils on Satan — yet the clear testimony of scripture is that these are all the "lusts of the flesh" and the "works of the flesh." They are — **flesh!** On the other hand, Satan's activity throughout the whole of scripture is in a **religious realm**, in a **spiritual dimension!** What a cunning deception has been foisted upon mankind as Satan has concealed his true identity in the dark shroud of **religion!** Oh, yes, Satan is religious! In the book of Job, the oldest book in the Bible, there was a day when the sons of God came and presented themselves before the Lord, and the record states that "Satan came also among them." If we can lay aside the tradition of the preachers, theologians, and church creeds and listen instead to the word of God, we will clearly see that Satan didn't come before God in company with drug lords, pornography peddlers, cruel dictators, psychopaths, atheists, prostitutes, or mafia leaders — instead he came with **the sons of God!** And he was *very religious!*

The ultimate test for God's sons will be right there! There is a realm, a realm high in the spirit, a realm reserved for the sons of God — and before any of us step from our wilderness of testing to appear as a manifest son of God in the earth, we will meet Satan there **in that high realm of the spirit.** It is in the heavens of God's Spirit that the manchild encounters the great red dragon! That is what the temptation of Jesus, the firstborn Son of God, was all about in His wilderness experience. He wasn't being tempted to lie, cheat, steal, cuss, or commit adultery. Oh, no! "*If Thou be the Son of God*" do thus and thus. The temptations involved mis-using His sonship authority or taking a short-cut to power. To Mother Eve Satan

said, "*Hath God said? Why, God doth know...your eyes will be opened, and you will be as God!*" A **high revelation in a high realm of the spirit**. That is what Adam's fall was all about! Adam did not fall from grace, nor did he fall into some gross sin of the flesh — he fell from SONSHIP! And it was a **supposed HIGHER REVELATION IN A HIGH REALM OF THE SPIRIT** that caused the fall. It wasn't another woman or pornographic pictures that Satan was showing Adam; Satan was **preaching!** He was explaining "higher" ways of God that Adam did not understand! He was peddling **religion!** And Eve was **deceived!** Deception has to do with truth versus error — religion. There is a very *fine line* between the highest truth and the darkest error, between divine sonship to God and our own self-godhood as taught by all the streams of what is today called "New Age," and between the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and the "God" who is preached from almost all the pulpits of the world today!

In the *typical* and *symbolic* church of Pergamos, Satan's "throne" was situated in the city of Pergamos which means "strongly united, elevated, height, citadel." Spiritually, Satan's throne, which is also the seat or throne of the beast, is in the **high places of the carnal mind** — even the **religious mind!** "I know where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is." I know where you dwell, where you are comfortable in your religious system, where you are satisfied to settle down and comfortably remain. I know that you love the pageantry, the beauty, the forms, the sacraments, the rituals, the programs, the history, the traditions, the excitement, the entertainment, the activities. But that place where you dwell is **the throne of the beast!**

This *authority* or *seat* or *throne* of the beast is to suffer the wrath of God! This wrath is called a "bowl of passion," or plague, and is poured out upon the *assumed authority* of the apostate church, for, by the assumption of carnal "church authority" the beast has usurped the authority of the Spirit of God and the dominion of the Son of God in the lives of God's people! When the true gospel, in the power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost, is poured out through the ministry of the manifest sons of God, it will indeed be as a "plague" upon the carnal church systems and in contrast to the glorious light revealed in the face of Jesus Christ, the little light in the systems of man, which is actually darkness, will be perceived as "great darkness," for "if the light that is in thee be darkness, how *great is that darkness!*" The beast will feel the sting of the plague, and men, that is, the carnal-minded rulers of the church systems, will "gnaw their tongues" in pain, or find it exceedingly painful to even speak the old carnal creeds, rituals, and commandments of the old church order now being judged. Accordingly, the judgment which they are made to suffer is advisedly to "eat their own words" — or, to use the seer's expressive phrase, to *gnaw their tongues in distress!*

Under the fourth and fifth bowls we find two very contrasting realms, and God uses them both in His processings. Under the fourth bowl, men are "scorched with great heat," as the desperate leaders of Babylon "turn up the heat," and then under the fifth bowl the meteoric blaze is passed. Poured on the throne of the beast, darkness spreads over his kingdom, and men suffer the pain of "absolute darkness." It is that "outer darkness" of which Jesus spoke, where there is "weeping and gnashing of teeth." It is not a place on some far-away planet somewhere, but the inner condition of awakening to discover that the realm you dwell in, which you thought was the very tabernacle of God and the light of truth, is in fact Satan's vast domain and is far, far away *outside* the kingdom of God!

The Old Testament type for this plague is found in Exodus 10:21-23. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be *darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt*. And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a *thick darkness* in all the land of Egypt three days. They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings." Someone has called this plague of darkness the most serious of all the plagues that came upon Egypt, since *Ra*, the Egyptian sun god, was the chief of all the gods. When the sun was blotted out for three days, it meant that Yahweh had conquered *Ra*! Certainly the darkening of the land for three days proved that Yahweh was more powerful than *Ra*. The Egyptians described *Ra* as the supreme judge and father of the gods, for it was from him that all the gods and goddesses were created. The Egyptians also worshipped many other sun gods and goddesses that were proven to be ineffective. The great emphasis that the Egyptians placed on the sun and on light in general reveals that this one plague of darkness must have devastated the entire Egyptian population since a major

portion of their gods were out of commission and unable to provide the light they needed. Surely the mighty power and omnipotence of Yahweh became a reality to all the Egyptians who had trusted in their gods!

Darkness is the absence of light, and this fifth plague reveals to all the inhabitants of spiritual Pergamos, spiritual Egypt, spiritual Babylon — the *beast's kingdom* — that there is no true “light” in any of their carnal doctrines and man-made observances. It is my deep conviction that through the ministry of God’s called and qualified elect there will shed forth such a mighty revelation of truth and reality until the power that the doctrines of men and traditions of the elders hold over the people will be drawn off, plunging the whole system into thick darkness. The beast’s kingdom is worldwide, and the darkness brought in by this bowl of God’s passion is co-extensive with his empire. From the throne to the uttermost limits of religious Babylon everything is shrouded in the mantle of deep, dark, starless night. Isaiah prophesied of this when he said, “Behold, the darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people” (Isa. 60:2). Joel prophesied of it when he said, “The day of the Lord cometh, a day of darkness, of gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness. The sun shall be turned into darkness...” (Joel 2:31). In this great day of the Lord a dreadful pall of doom is destined to settle over the entire kingdom of the beast, which has been built up by his throne in the heights of man’s carnal mind. This kingdom includes all the “earth-dwellers,” the carnal-minded, soulical-centered Christians — followers and worshippers of the beastly religious orders. The effect of the outpouring of this bowl of God’s dealing is the producing of such torment and anguish as can only be adequately described as the “gnawing of their tongues from pain.”

Ah, God knows exactly what DARK CAVERN to place men in, with no outside energy which they can draw from to help maintain their state and standing. It is the “outer darkness” of which Jesus spoke, outer darkness being the region of spiritual darkness that leads away from the true spiritual light *which Christ is*. Ray Prinzing pointed out, “It is significant that wherever you find reference to ‘*outer darkness*’ you also read of ‘*weeping and gnashing of teeth*,’ as if to indicate the shivering in the cold until the teeth chatter. All this brings more meaning to the word, ‘*If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness.*’ We weep for them, yet we thank God for this understanding of how He uses the COLD, THE DARKNESS to draw out this thermo energy of self-resistance, and the hour of final victory will come, with a full restoration into God. While the wrath of God is love’s severity, yet it remains purest love, seeking the ultimate good for creation, and so it continues to apply the strokes of chastisement. Repentance will come in due time, but how great is the need for the inworking of His judgments, until that submission comes.”

For long centuries men have loved the shades and shadows of the darkness of religion rather than the *light of Life*, supposing that the little light they possessed was all the light there is, and the true light. But when God leaves men in darkness long enough, they come to hate the darkness, for it draws out of them all the beauty, warmth, strength, and life of light, and they are brought to the end of themselves. Without light we all operate in the dark. In the dark there is no *sight*, no *vision*, no *comprehension* of the realities about us. It was fitting, therefore, that the first thing God created was light. Darkness is not sin, although sin does darken the world by obscuring the light like a cloud. Can we not see by this that darkness is *ignorance*, *error*, and *unbelief*. The light of God is the *light of Life*. Ignorance — the lack of understanding — error, and unbelief are anti-light and anti-life.

It should be obvious to every believing heart that the darkness that fills the beast’s kingdom is not a literal darkness like that in Egypt in the day of Moses, but truly *spiritual darkness*. Hear it! “**Understanding is a WELLSPRING OF LIFE** unto him that hath it.” Certainly one reason so many millions of Christians are living in carnality and immaturity, far beneath their privileges in Christ today, is because they neither know who, where, or why they are. Truly a great and dreadful darkness is upon the kingdom of Babylon! This condition is explained by Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians. “This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the *vanity of their mind*, having the *understanding darkened*, being alienated from the life of God *through the ignorance* that is in them, because of the *blindness of their heart*” (Eph. 4:17-18). In this passage we learn, among other things, this one simple truth: **DARKNESS IS IGNORANCE**. In its spiritual meaning, to be in darkness is to be in ignorance! Ignorance is a condition of the *mind*, in which the mind *lacks understanding*. The inspired apostle tells us that men have their “understanding darkened” because of the “ignorance” that is in them! It means that either they don’t know much, or the information they have been given is incorrect! And it is this

condition of *spiritual ignorance* that causes the whole world of men, and vast numbers of the Lord's precious people, to walk in darkness, alienated from the abundant life that is in Christ! Oh! How many of the Lord's people walk in spiritual darkness, or spiritual ignorance, because the teaching they have been fed by those who are supposedly the messengers of God is not the truth at all! Men are in darkness because the blindness of their hearts has kept them from the glorious Light of Christ penetrating into their lives!

It is that which comes forth from the heart, the *understanding of the carnal mind*, which interprets the things of God on a carnal level and misses the deep *spiritual truth and reality* altogether! Oh! How the churches today are groping about in the darkness that covers the kingdom of the beast! All the dead, carnal church systems were built up by men who were saved by receiving just enough Light to know Jesus as Saviour and Blessor, and then, out of the overshadowing gloom yet untouched in the vanity of their minds and the darkness of their carnal hearts they proceeded to build upon the foundation of Christ every kind of grotesque structure of tradition, doctrinal error, man-made organizations, ritual, form, legalism, license, fleshiness, and worldliness: great towering edifices of hay, wood, and stubble! The carnal and childish interpretations of men put upon the word of God, out of the blindness (lack of *spiritual understanding*) of their hearts, has created a great ignorance among God's people, and they are alienated from the glorious flow of divine, heavenly, spiritual, and incorruptible Life by the blindness that causes them spiritually to see men as trees, walking!

It has always, from the very beginning when the serpent whispered to Eve, been the adversary's policy to misinterpret truth, to distort and carnalize the word of God, in order to hinder mankind from seeing the great beauty and majesty of the purposes of God for His creation. The more absurdities the adversary can get interwoven into man's doctrines and concepts respecting God, the church, eternity, the final destiny of man, judgment, hell, heaven, the "end-time," and a hundred more, the better he will succeed in separating men in their consciousness from reality. Thus for centuries the great adversary has been working most successfully and has covered and hidden some of the most precious and glorious truths under the most specious and repulsive errors, and the progress of the Lord's people has been correspondingly stunted. But, thank God! we are now living in the time when the veil of ignorance is being dissolved, when the darkness of the beast's kingdom shall be penetrated by the *holy city* descending out of heaven from God, having the *glory of God: whose light is like unto a stone most precious, and the Lamb is the light thereof*; and the nations of them that are saved shall *walk in the light of it, and there shall be no night there*. Isn't it wonderful! It's all in the book, my friend — in the book of Revelation! The people of God are being drawn by the Spirit to look away from the creeds and systems formed for their enslavement during ages past, and to open their hearts directly to the spirit of truth that leads to the living God! Therefore lean no longer upon thine own understanding! Judge neither after the sight of the eyes nor the hearing of the ears, but seek that Living Spirit of UNDERSTANDING that comes from God alone!

Have you ever prayed that God would *open the eyes of your understanding* that you might truly and correctly and fully know what is the *hope of His calling*, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance *in the saints*? Ah, how much better this would be than to pray for temporal blessings for the outer man, for the heart of the Father is truly pained when He beholds His called and chosen ones neglecting their devotion to His highest purpose while they diligently pray and seek for earthly blessings. If we but seek, God will bless us with ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST JESUS! Walk no longer in the *vanity* of your mind, having the *understanding darkened*, thereby alienating yourself from the *life of God* through ignorance! Never spend your days seeking the things of this carnal life, or a golden mansion in some far-off heaven somewhere, for they make themselves wings and fly away and have no power to reveal Christ in you or to deliver creation from the bondage of corruption! Every son of God who is pressing forward to lay hold upon the prize of the high calling of God in Christ is COMING OUT OF THE DARKNESS HANGING LIKE A PALL OVER THE KINGDOM OF RELIGIOUS BABYLON, OUT TO WHERE THE SUN OF DIVINE LIGHT SHINES IN ALL ITS BRILLIANCE AND THE AIR IS PURE AND RAREFIED WITH THE LIFE OF GOD! It is indeed wonderful!

The prophet Isaiah penned these words for God's elect, "Arise, shine; for *thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee*. For, behold, *darkness shall cover the earth* (Heb. "land," God's people, the earth-realm), and *gross darkness the people* (of God): but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and *His glory*

shall be seen upon thee!” (Isa. 60:1-2). The darkness that has covered the minds of God’s children is truly **gross darkness**, and there will be sorrow, tears, and gnawing of the tongues when they do see — thank God! The reason there is darkness today is because of the false doctrines and dark traditions of the church systems. No wonder God’s people are full of unbelief, filled with doubts, and overwhelmed with fears. No wonder they magnify the works of the devil and declare him more than they declare God! No wonder they think the devil is winning the battle and is soon to take over the earth with his antichrist! No wonder they shudder with fear in the face of all the events happening in the outer world and all the dark conspiracy theories propagated by the doom-casters who call themselves “end-time” teachers! No wonder they are waiting for the Lord to come and evacuate them off of planet earth! They know not the DAY in which we are living, because of the incredible darkness that has covered the kingdom of the beast! They are held there in the thick darkness, receiving death and feeding on darkness all about them.

Without doubt, it is going to get even worse! If we would grasp the full warning of John’s vision, we must bear in mind that the Darkened Kingdom exists now, in our very midst; that it is a Kingdom of Darkness already, though not as yet has fallen upon it the *consummating end*. Since, then, it is possible for any one of us to be drawn into that Darkened Kingdom, to share its blindness even now — though most of those who read these lines have already been there and have escaped — let us thank God for His merciful revelation of its real nature and its awful end! Let us heed more earnestly than ever the inspired warnings to “cast off the works of darkness” and to “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness,” but rather to “walk in the light as HE is in the light,” so that thus “we have fellowship one with another.” Truly this bespeaks the fellowship of *sons*!

Isaiah prophesied of such a condition of darkness upon the Lord’s people, saying, “Go, and tell this people, Hear ye (the word of the Lord) indeed, but **understand not**; and see ye indeed, but **perceive not**” (Isa. 6:9). Following this the prophet speaks of the “plague” that is sent by the Lord to bring an even **greater darkness** upon His people, saying, “**Make** the heart of this people fat, and **make** their ears heavy, and **shut** their eyes; **lest** they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed” (Isa. 6:10). Then Isaiah asked the Lord, “How long must it be this way? How long must they be held in this thick darkness?” And the Lord’s answer was: “**Until** the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be **utterly desolate...and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land**” (Isa. 6:11-12). Ah, this is how God brings Babylon down! If He were to allow them to hear and see while they remain comfortable in their habitations, it would only cause them to feel that God was BLESSING THEIR ORGANIZATION AND HONORING THEIR DOCTRINES AND THEIR SYSTEM and the thing that God wants to kill (the witch Babylon) would be healed. No, the darkness must continue until they cry out in desperation, until they gnaw their tongues for pain, until the **whole land** is forsaken, until the **whole kingdom** is utterly desolate — until no one can even STAND to dwell in it any longer! I once heard a brother put it this way: You will stay the same until the **pain** of staying the same is greater than the pain of the change! When this work is finished in God’s people, then will they hasten to run to the light!

Oh, wonder of wonders! The great truth that the Lord is now revealing within the hearts of His elect is the truth that the “sun” which is “darkened” in our text is the sun of the *old religious heavens* we have lived under, the light (rulership, authority, dominion) of that old world of man, of man’s thinking, man’s interpretation, man’s philosophies, man’s orders, man’s programs, man’s ways, and all the rest, is smitten and darkened in the lives of God’s people until they can no longer see even the little light that had illuminated their pathway. It is not just the people’s desire to imbibe of those things that is taken away, but the rule of the hierarchy — their authority — their power is **broken**! What we see here is the doing away of the old creation and the bringing forth of the new. It is the dominion of God’s government coming and being established in the midst of all His people which evokes the darkening of the old heavens! As Isaiah prophesied, at the same time that the glory of God is arising upon His chosen and separated elect, the old light goes out and the kingdom of the beast is cast into gross darkness! The type for this was first seen in the land of Egypt when God sent the plagues for the deliverance of His people. “*...and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt...but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.*” Is it not remarkable that while there was dense darkness over the whole land of Egypt, yet there was light in all the land of Goshen where the children of Israel lived! The light of truth and reality is arising upon the elect of

the Lord in this hour, while incredible darkness is settling down upon the religious systems of man! That is the mystery.

Do not fear the darkening of the old heavens you have lived under, my beloved, for while thick darkness covers the old past orders of our lives, so that nothing of that realm can function or exert authority over us anymore, yet our gracious and wise heavenly Father has provided wonderful light — a new mind, a new consciousness, a new understanding, a new heart, a new spirit, a new identity, a new nature, a new calling, a new purpose — the scintillating light of truth, life, reality, and power *in the spirit!* Oh, yes! There is light in all the dwellings of the new creation that we are! There is the pure white light of the glorified Christ in our spirit! Just as the darkness over the land of Egypt was designed by God as an instrument to deliver His people out of the bondage of Egypt, so the darkening of the old heavens of our natural lives, all those things, people, systems, and realms which exerted authority and dominion over us, and guided us on our journey, is the hand of God moving to deliver us from the Egypt of this present world system. This is God's work in His elect in this hour — but it is yet to come upon ALL HIS PEOPLE WHO DWELL IN SPIRITUAL EGYPT! Oh, yes, He will lead all of them out by a mighty hand!

God is today doing a marvelous work among the apprehended sons of God who are learning to live and walk in the heavenlies. At the same time darkness has descended upon the earth-dwellers, and gross darkness upon the peoples. We are indeed living in momentous hours! The great Babylonish image seen by Nebuchadnezzar is old and is now standing but shakily upon its unsubstantial feet of iron and clay. A spirit of stupidity has fallen upon the leaders of the world, and upon the ecclesiastics of the religious orders, and a spirit of deception upon its peoples, and the devil has come down with great wrath, knowing that he has but a short time. Oh, yes, he knows! Men, nations, and churches have become “lovers of themselves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, *lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof*; from such turn away” (II Tim. 3:2-5).

God has called you, and raised you up, my brother, my sister, as a light this very day, that you might dispel the darkness and remove these heavens that men have been dwelling under, establishing something completely new in the earth, a new heavens in which the Sun of Righteousness arises with healing in His rays. Oh, yes! Bring forth in your life a new likeness, the image of God; and a new light, the glory of God, that you may declare HIM who is supreme throughout all the earth and that He may reign in every heart. Behold the dawn! But the popular churches are still lost in dreams. They have not yet awakened. They know not of the dawn! But we who are of the day, and who are not lovers of the drunkenness of false doctrine nor sleepers of the night, have a higher heritage. “We are not of the night, nor of the darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others” (I Thes. 5:5-6). We who have received the love of the truth are heirs to a higher calling. We have privileges, and we have duties to perform. We must be about our Father's business! There has been a parting of the ways. God has called upon us to forsake the shame and error of the harlot systems of man, to look up, to arise and shine. Our light has come! The glory of the Lord is rising upon us! The day is at hand! The night is far spent. We must go forth and lead the way for all who will follow!

THEY REPENTED NOT

“...and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and *repented not of their deeds*” (Rev. 16:11).

Our text says that men “repented not.” Now what does this mean? Does it mean that God is going to pour out His fury upon the world of sinful mankind, and instead of realizing that God is punishing them for their wickedness, and repenting, they continue on in their sins? Does it mean that all the humanists, communists, thieves, murderers, and prostitutes will stand up in defiance of God and curse Him to His face for tormenting them? This term appears only five times in the book of Revelation. Once it is used in relation to the symbolic woman Jezebel in the church in Thyatira, of whom the Lord said, “And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she *repented not*” (Rev. 2:21). Twice the term is used under the sixth

trumpet, and twice when the bowls are poured out in chapter sixteen. All of this is very significant! You see, we are prone to apply this to that wicked old world out there, outside of ourselves, but the book of Revelation is addressed to *the church* — it is not addressed to Russia, China, Africa, Hindus, Buddhists, witches, serial killers, prostitutes, drug lords, or terrorists! Jezebel was a condition and a people in the church, she was told to repent, and repented not; then the Lord told her exactly what He planned to do about it!

Just as the seven last plagues are drawn from the imagery of the plagues poured out upon the Egyptians by the hand of Moses, so also this expression, “they repented not,” is rooted in the Old Testament account of the Egyptian plagues. In that case it was the Pharaoh, standing for the whole nation, who repented not. Now it doesn’t state it in those exact words, instead the writer uses the term “hardened his heart.” Again and again Pharaoh hardened his heart until all the plagues had run their course, and at last he *did* permit the Israelites to depart out of Egypt! This term does not signify a permanent condition, but reveals that at this point in God’s dealings the plagues have not all been poured out nor have they finished their work. But all the judgment is designed to bring about the determined end — the deliverance of ALL God’s people from the kingdom of the beast! Each plague adds something, contributing its part toward that final goal — yet in the process there are multitudes not yet ready to flee out of Babylon, so they “repent not.”

In ancient Egypt the physical act of repentance was not too clear, but a complex procedure was devised. While the Egyptians do not seem to have had an actual word for repentance, they quite literally considered it to be a “swallowing of the heart,” which we would call a change of heart or mind, which of course it is. So much is clear from the famous *Book of the Dead*, consisting of 189 spells, which every wealthy Egyptian of the New Kingdom placed beside him or herself in the coffin. To the Egyptians of the 14th century B.C., the heart was the seat of good and evil; a light heart was good, and a heavy heart was evil. Moses, of course, was familiar with that concept, and when the scripture says that Pharaoh “hardened” his heart, as he does after most of the plagues, the Hebrew reads, literally, “he made his heart heavy (*kaved*),” meaning he made it evil.

As an Egyptian approached death, his or her greatest wish was to live on into the next world, and for that he or she had to pass a number of crucial tests. The first one was to have one’s heart weighed against a feather. If the heart was not heavier than the feather, one could pass on to the next test, to be introduced to Osiris, the Pharaoh of the Underworld. During the weighing procedure, the supplicant made a lengthy confession, recorded in spell No. 125. He or she had to declare that they had not committed any of the 42 basic transgressions against the gods, against Pharaoh, or against their fellow men. The whole procedure was carried out by the jackal-headed god Anubis, representing the dead, and the result was recorded by the ibis-headed god Thoth, the scribe. If the heart was too heavy, and there was a suspicion of untruth in the declaration, the supplicant was likely to be swallowed by the Ammut monster and never to see life again. But there was an alternative. It was the opportunity to have a “swallow of the heart,” to change one’s heart, that is, to make repentance! Ah, is that not what all men need — A CHANGE OF HEART! And God’s dealings with Pharaoh through the plagues upon the land of Egypt were designed to ultimately bring about that very change of heart, which is also what the plagues in the book of Revelation are all about! Can you not see the mystery?

When Moses told the Pharaoh that Yahweh required that the people of Israel go into the wilderness to worship Him, and requested that they be permitted to journey three days into the wilderness to pay their homage to God, Pharaoh was not of the frame of heart to comply with such a request, and he said, “Who is Yahweh, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not Yahweh” (Ex. 5:2). But Yahweh had a far different view of this, and He said, “In very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth” (Ex. 9:16). Therefore every time Pharaoh’s heart softened a little, and he was about to consider letting Israel go, GOD would harden his heart some more, BECAUSE GOD HAD A PLAN and was using Pharaoh in that plan — to reveal His power and to cause His name to be declared in all the earth! And the fact that God’s name is being glorified even in this writing today, 3500 years later, is living proof of the omnipotent hand of God in that day so long ago! He who had no desire to honor God at all, became an instrument whereby all nations around were caused to give God the glory as they heard of the happenings in Egypt. The more the wrath was built up, the greater the

victory God wrought through it all, and it became a praise unto Yahweh. God will be the Victor in all His judgments, and even though Pharaoh let the people go he still didn't repent for he pursued them and drowned in the sea. The message is just this — the old Adamic mind *cannot repent* — but it will be *destroyed*! A change of mind, a change of heart — a *new mind* and a *new heart* will I give you, saith the Lord!

Many deep spiritual truths of scripture remain locked up to man and cannot be understood with the natural mind. In the Revelation we see *three series* of dealings by which Christ is revealed and God's people are brought to perfection — the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven bowls. It is significant to note that in connection with the first series, the seven seals, no statement is made concerning men "repenting not." The reason for this is abundantly clear! The loosing of the seals represents the *unveiling of Jesus Christ*, the firstborn Son of God, as the pattern for all His many brethren. As we behold the mighty work of the Father in Jesus, bringing Him to His full sonship, we see the pattern and process of His unveiling within each of us. There is no repentance required in the unveiling of Jesus Christ! The mighty raising up and manifestation of His life within will indeed evoke repentance in soul and body, but the *spirit of sonship* needs no repentance! Therefore, the only repentance in the book of Revelation is on the part of the church, in its immaturity, imperfection, and carnality, as revealed in chapters two and three. This repentance is shown on the part of God's firstfruit company who are brought to perfection and the full stature of Christ under the sounding of the seven trumpets, and later on the part of the rest of the Lord's people who are purged, purified, and perfected through the pouring out of the seven bowls.

While it is true that every son of God must repent, it is also true that there is a part of each of us that *cannot repent* and *will not repent*! Truth has been revealed, and the truth is that "human beings" never become spiritual. The spiritual progress we make is to "die" to our human identity, our ego, our natural life, our Adamic consciousness, and be *made alive* to the new creation life of Christ within. No human being has ever been spiritual or ever will become spiritual, because the Adamic man is flesh and blood, and flesh and blood *cannot inherit* the kingdom of God! We are not trying to save our humanhood, nor can we put it under the laws of God and make it righteous, for the word of the apostle Paul is incontrovertible: "*The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*" (Rom. 8:7).

Perhaps Aesop said it best in the fable. A scorpion and a frog meet on the bank of a stream and the scorpion asks the frog to carry him across on its back. The frog asks, "How do I know you won't sting me?" The scorpion says, "Because if I do, I will die, too." The frog is satisfied, and they set out, but in mid-stream, the scorpion stings the frog. The frog feels the onset of paralysis and starts to sink, knowing they both will drown. But the frog has just enough time to gasp, "Why? Why did you do that!" Replies the scorpion: "It's my *nature...*" The old earthly, human, natural, carnal, Adamic mind and nature must be *put off*, for it cannot repent nor can it be redeemed. Adam can only go to the cross! And when we read that *men* "repented not" it signifies the resistance and rebellion of that old mind, that old nature, that old man that must be put off. The plagues are sent to effect this *separation* in the lives of God's people! Think of it!

Our repentance means that we no longer identify with the first man, the earthy, but we consciously identify with the second man, the spiritual, which is the Lord from heaven! We are putting off the old man, including that old religious soulical power, and are putting on the new man of the spirit. The old man that we are putting off *cannot repent, will not repent*, therefore we die to that man and are raised up into the new man, even Christ. That which is born of the flesh *is flesh*, and that which is born of the spirit *is spirit*. To try to change, or improve, or save the old earthy man is an effort in futility. It cannot be done! And that is the great truth and the deep mystery the Lord is revealing to us when He tells us that men "*gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds*" (Rev. 16:10-11). That is old Adam talking! That is the soulical religious nature reacting! It simply means that ADAM CAN'T REPENT! One fact only dominates the life of man upon this earth, and Paul articulates it when he says, "*in Adam all die.*" By the word "Adam" Paul means everything "human," everything natural, everything earthy; he means himself, his natural identity, his history, his language, his institutions, his works, his innate religiosity, his hopes and dreams, his abilities, his world, and over "Adam" hangs the inevitable sentence of death. Adam comes to an end, he passes out of existence, he dies, he ceases to be. And Adam gnaws his tongue for pain, and blasphemes the God of heaven, and repents not — all the

way to the cross! He is typified by the thief who was crucified with Jesus, who complained, accused, and repented not right to his death!

God is in the process of raising up in us the *new creature*, not a revamped, remodeled, renovated old creature, but an entirely *new creation*. It is not really a new creation, for it has existed all the while within our spirit, but it is new *to us*, and new to mankind, because it has been hidden deep within us and we have all walked only in the consciousness of the outward Adamic mind and life. The old has to go until there is nothing left of it at all, and has been replaced with that which to us is entirely new. The new creation is not a remodeled version of the old one, for the new is *spirit and life* whereas the old is *flesh and corruption*. “Behold, I *make all things new*,” saith the Lord! When God is finished everything in the heavens and in the earth will be absolutely new, there will be no place for the old. “*And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away*” (Rev. 21:1). “*For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; the former shall not be remembered, nor come to mind*” (Isa. 65:17). God has no notion of salvaging the old nature (earth), or the old religious realms (heavens), it is necessary to have a new nature and a new spiritual life that comes from God! He has no program by which the old can be remodeled for use by Him. He has no program for it at all! It is condemned, my friend, destined to *pass away, not even to be remembered anymore!* Drunkenness, hatred, murder, strife, war, drugs, thievery, rape, adultery, homosexuality, gangs, tyranny, gossip, slander, godlessness — *passed away, and remembered no more!* Catholic, Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, Pentecostal, Judaism, Moslem, Hindu, Buddhist, New Age — *passed away, and remembered no more!* What a word that is!

In our understanding of redemption, it is important that we recognize that there is no redemption for the Adamic man, that is, the earthly, soulical nature and life. God has not asked the Adam man (the natural man) to consecrate himself to God, because that is the worse thing that could happen! The Adam man tried to make his nature pleasing to God when he sowed fig leaves together to cover his nakedness in the ancient mists of Eden. But that does not please God, because that Adam man was sentenced to death, and die he must! His offspring, Cain, personifying the innate soulical religious nature, tried to worship God by the offering of that which grew out of the earth — man’s own good works, efforts, programs, methods, etc. — but that did not please God either and was entirely rejected by the Lord. That is why God sent the “second man” and the “last Adam” — to *replace* the “first man” and the “first Adam.”

Therefore, if any man be *in Christ* he is an entirely NEW CREATION; old things are passed away, and behold, ALL THINGS ARE BECOME NEW! Can you not see the mystery? God did not save the old Adam, He *replaced him*. We are redeemed and saved by having the old Adam brought to death within us, and being raised up in consciousness and experience into the new Adam. So when Christ sends His Spirit, He does not come to the natural man, for the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit! He comes to the inner man of spirit! “*He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.*” It is *His Spirit* joined with *our spirit* that raises up the new creation man within us! Therefore, he is a spiritual man! And yet, most of Christianity deals with the natural man, because they want him to live before God. In order to get him restored they lay the laws on him, try to get him to conform, to change his behavior, force him to go through the motions, to act righteously, and train him to serve God! It reminds me of what Flannery O’Connor said about one of her characters in the novel *A Good Man Is Hard To Find*: “The old woman would have been a good woman if only someone had held a gun to her head every day of her life.” And, my, how religion does that as they lay the threat of eternal hell and damnation upon every soul who fails to “walk the walk”!

But the problem with dressing up and training old Adam is illustrated by the story I read once in a tract. A young boy, on a certain occasion, was walking with his father through the streets of Manchester, England. His attention was suddenly drawn to a man standing before the door of a building, announcing loudly, “**Come in, ladies and gentlemen, and see the great American pig!**” Having his curiosity aroused, he paid his entrance fee and entered the building. There, sure enough, was an amazing pig performing feats and giving evidence of an intelligence no pig had ever before exhibited. At the command of his trainer, he would pick out, from the alphabet lying on the floor, the letters “G-O-O-D P-I-G.” He would also walk about on his hind legs and shake hands with those who stepped up to greet him. This pig had been washed and scrubbed until he was perfectly clean and he was dressed in a beautiful garment. Of course, he commanded the highest admiration and no one could deny that he was well-educated and well-behaved in

every respect. But in spite of his remarkable culture and his attractive appearance, HE WAS STILL A PIG — better off, perhaps, than most other pigs — but yet, after all, only a pig and a pig to remain, however advanced his learning! And there is no doubt whatever that given the opportunity, he would head, fine clothes and all, right straight for the first available mud hole! Ray Prinzing expressed this same precious truth when he wrote, “A NEW CREATION SPECIES IS NOW IN FORMATION! The new life is HIS, for He is the Source of all the new! *‘It is, remember, by grace and not by achievement that you are saved — He has lifted us right out of the old life to take our place with Him in Christ Jesus in the heavens’* (Eph. 2:5-6, Phillips).

A brother once related the following experience: “I asked a man who came to me if he wanted to receive Christ into his life. He said, ‘Well, I — I’ll talk to you later about that. You know, I’m going to try to do better.’ I think I shocked him by saying what the Spirit inspired me to say, ‘You are a liar. You are not going to try to do better because if you are honest you know you have tried before, haven’t you?’ ‘Yes,’ he admitted. ‘How did you come out?’ ‘Well, I didn’t do it.’ ‘Neither will you this time. And I have news for you — God is not asking you to do better! However God is calling those whom He has redeemed to allow HIM TO LIVE IN THEM.’”

Leo Tolstoy once said, “Everyone thinks of changing humanity, but nobody thinks of changing himself.” He was right. But maybe the reason we think so little of changing ourselves for good is not because the task is difficult but because it’s *impossible*. Perhaps you know from experience that trying to change yourself doesn’t work. You’ve read the self-help books to no avail. To conform yourself to the image of Christ is an impossible goal! Trying hard to act like a son of God by gritting our moral teeth and upping our soulish willpower — all this sounds sensible. But all it really amounts to is an exercise in “will worship.” When we think we can make a spiritual breakthrough in our own strength, we have begun to worship our own will. And as the apostle Paul points out, our human will too is under the grip of sin! Anyone who has struggled with the power of an addiction can testify how weak our will truly is. Spiritual progress is possible only through the ***power of the indwelling spirit as Christ is raised up in our life***. Are you relying on your own resources to be conformed into the image of God’s Son? It’s time to face the facts. This is a battle you can’t win! But Christ has already won it for you — He overcame within Himself all things, even death itself — and now His life is being raised up in you from victory to victory! This is what the church world doesn’t know, and this is the purpose of the seven last plagues — to bring all God’s carnal children *to the end of themselves* — to find, at last, the ***reality beyond religion!***

There is a song we sang in the Pentecostal church when I was a child. One line of it says, “O Lord, send the *power* just now, and *baptize* everyone...”

In bringing this message to a close I would like to change the words of that song to express the great truth revealed through the vision of John on Patmos. “O Lord, send the ***plagues*** just now, and ***purify*** everyone!”

Amen, and Amen!

To be continued...

J. PRESTON EBY