

# KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

## FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

### Part 187

#### THE BATTLE AT ARMAGEDDON (continued)

“And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs...for they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them *to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief.* Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together *into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon*” (Rev. 16:13-15).

The battle of the great day of God Almighty, like everything else in the Revelation, is a *spiritual battle* just because it is **God's battle!** God does not fight His battles with carnal weapons of tanks and guns and missiles and bombs, but with the *sword of the Spirit*, which is the *living word of God!* The setting of this battle is concerned with the destruction of Babylon the Great and the judgment which is sent upon it. Hear it! “And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and **great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the fierceness of His wrath (passion)**” (Rev. 16:19). As we move from this passage on into chapters seventeen and eighteen *everything* is about the judgment and destruction of Babylon! The dealing of God upon Babylon is a mighty *spiritual operation* of God — not a literal warfare. But the carnal-minded theologians and the ignorant secular world have seized upon the word “Armageddon” and have used it as a cryptic synonym by which to describe the final world conflict. Some of the erroneous usages of the word “Armageddon” include such definitions as: “Site of the great end-of-the-world battlefield of the Apocalypse”; “Atomic Armageddon”; “Will the next war be Armageddon?”; “Armageddon occurred in the holocaust of the Second World War”. There is no scriptural or spiritual basis for any of this when one reverently considers the context as a whole.

The battle at Armageddon occurs first of all *within* the Lord's people, but also *through* His people. And as God assembles the “kings” to this battle He says, “*Behold, I come as a thief.*” The church and the world are both going to be greatly surprised when they learn that the so-called “battle of Armageddon,” the “battle of the great day of GOD ALMIGHTY,” unleashed in all its fury, is first and foremost the greatest display of *divine power and glory*, revealed through God's people, that this world has ever witnessed! It has been said that heaven would be hell to the sinner. And that is exactly right. The unveiling of the might and power and glory of God in the midst of this crooked and perverse generation is going to produce on the one hand great consternation, distress, shrieking, gloom, and destruction to all the hardened hearts and organized systems which are opposed to God, and on the other hand life and victory and deliverance when the judgments have accomplished their work and every knee bows before His majesty.

As we have pointed out again and again the battle at Armageddon is the battle of THE GREAT DAY OF GOD ALMIGHTY. The prophet Joel prophesied of this great “day of the Lord,” saying, “*Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision, for the **day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.** The sun and the moon (ruling powers) shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The Lord also shall roar out of Zion (the mount of sonship), and order His voice from Jerusalem (His holy city); and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope (shelter) of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel. So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain*

***(kingdom): then shall Jerusalem (the Lord's people) be holy...and it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains (strong kingdoms) shall drop down new wine (joy and revelation), and the hills (lesser kingdoms) shall flow with milk (of the word), and all the rivers of Judah (those who are a praise) shall flow with (living) waters, and a fountain (of life) shall flow forth from the house of the Lord"*** (Joel 3:14-18).

What can be more clear than this: the great day of the Lord brings the shaking of heaven and earth, that is, judgments from the Lord — while at the same time, in that ***same day***, in God is shelter and refuge and new wine and milk, and refreshing waters from the house of the Lord! Little wonder that the day of the Lord is called both a “great” and a “terrible” day! A battle unto victory is always both great *and* terrible! Armageddon brings the triumph of God's kingdom within His people. It brings the glory of the saints. “Then shall Jerusalem be *holy*.” “So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God *dwelling in Zion*.” It brings to an end the rule of religious Babylon over the Lord's people, the destruction of every system and device of man, life and liberty to the captives. The veil of spiritual blindness that hangs like a pall over God's people shall be removed and at last they shall see things as they really are and behold the glory of the Lord. Wine and milk and living waters shall flow as life-giving streams to every saint of God everywhere. What a day! A day of darkness and gloominess on one hand, but to those who wait upon the Lord it is “the morning spread upon the mountains.”

As God assembles to this battle He says, “*Behold, I come as a thief*” (Rev. 16:15). This battle comes “as a thief” upon those who are attacked by the Lord! By this we are to understand that the sleeping church recognizes neither the war of Armageddon nor the day it ushers in. What divine sense that makes! For the masses of God's people are still looking for a war in the Middle East instead of God fighting the battle in their hearts! How often we look in the wrong place to find our enemies. Our true enemies are WITHIN. These are the enemies that prevent God's people from possessing their full inheritance in their promised land — CHRIST. Kings in the Middle East have nothing to do with that! The Lord's people are blind and asleep in relation to the true battle of God's great Day. A thief comes while people sleep, unheralded, unsuspected, and unrecognized. He blows no trumpet; he wants no fanfare. He works in secret and by stealth. Then when the morn comes, they learn of their loss, but too late. The thief has come and gone, and with him their treasures. Thus the Spirit conveys to us the great truth that when God sets His hand to deliver His people out of Babylon ***He slips up on them and they aren't aware that He has conquered their hearts and delivered them of all their “earthly” and “religious” treasures until the work has been accomplished!*** What a marvelous strategy!

There is a coming of the Lord as a thief. It happens at the battle of Armageddon! Nearly all Bible teachers have missed this fact. This is not a coming or appearing of the Lord that is before the public. It is not an unveiling before the multitudes. You will see no report of it on CNN. A thief does not go down to the public square with a sound system and say, “I'd like to make an announcement. At three o'clock in the morning I'm going to visit the *wealthiest lady* in this town and I'm going to steal everything I can get my hands on.” He doesn't do that! He comes at the darkest part of the night. He comes with softest tread, without noise, without light, without warning. He comes as silently and stealthily as possible, unobserved by the sleepers. He comes to rob. He comes to take away everything that he can. He is after gold and pearls and jewels of great price. Men are unaware of the event until he has come and gone and the items of value to the owner have disappeared with Him. The Lord Jesus says that at the gathering of the forces to Armageddon HE WILL COME AS A THIEF!

The “rich lady” to be robbed is Babylon! As our friend Connie Asbill once wrote, “Like Israel who was *rich* in covenants and promises, this woman (Babylon) is rich with the word that has been brought to her, not only by the scriptures, but by those men who have been raised up out of the midst of her to speak truth under the anointings of God. In Revelation 17:4 she is seen ‘arrayed in purple and scarlet color, decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand...’ Babylon is, indeed, a RICH WOMAN. That she is rich by the hand of God, and is not merely pretending to be rich, is seen in Hosea 2:8 where the Lord Himself affirms that He is the source of her wealth. Babylon is not, however, aware in the depths of her being that He is her supply, and therein lies her ultimate undoing, for the Lord said, ‘She did not know that I (the Lord) gave her corn and wine and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold...therefore will

I return and **take away** my corn in the time thereof and my wine in the season thereof and will **take away** my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness, and now will I **discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers and none shall deliver her out of my hand.**'

"Babylon is a rich woman — but it is with these very riches from the hand of God that she has prepared her own idols, having held the truth in unrighteousness and changed these riches and truths of God into a lie. That is what the Lord says in this passage: 'She did not know that I gave her corn and wine and oil...which THEY PREPARED FOR BAAL.' Deceived by the very riches that were given to bring her to God, Babylon exalts herself because of that which she possesses, saying within herself, 'I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow' (Rev. 18:7). Now, I am aware that the highest meaning of Babylon does not mean the organized church system but is, rather, a condition in the mind or spirit of man, which means that we have all, at one time or another, and perhaps even until now, are partakers of her. But the Spirit of the Lord quickens to me that in this case He is specifically talking about the **church system**, as such. All that the church possesses was given to her out of the anointing of God, imparted to her through anointed men, and these men of bygone generations she admires. Nothing has changed, however, since the days of Jesus when He said to the religious leaders, 'You garnish the sepulchers of the dead prophets — but kill the living ones.' The anointed word has been set in concrete in the church system, and like the *rephaim* — the physicians of no value who *embalmed* Israel — so has the church system so **embalmed the Christ** — fixed Him in a **static position** so that He can move no further. Holding the very *form of truth*, the church system denies the essence and life of that truth...and boasts in her wealth! Yet, the Lord says, 'Because thou sayest, **I am rich and increased with goods** (doctrines and forms and rituals and eschatology charts) and have need of nothing (not even the anointing) and **knowest not** that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked...' Because of all this, 'I will spew you out of my mouth!'" — end quote.

Our text reveals two significant truths. First, the battle of Armageddon is fought for the destruction of Babylon. Second, in this battle the Lord comes upon Babylon *as a thief*. He comes in a spiritual visitation of judgment to strip and purge from His people in Babylon the death of the carnal mind; those outer, earthly things they cherish above the spirit and truth and glory of Christ. That is what a thief does — he plunders the house, carrying off those things treasured by the householder! He appears as a thief in the night, and there have often been times in the lives of all of God's called and chosen elect when He has stolen out of the dark hour of our ignorance some carnal concept, some religious tradition, some perverted doctrine, some Babylonish garment of exquisite design that we have hidden in our tent of experience. Ah, we must stay *awake* to joyfully receive Him in His coming to us, His appearing in us; if we fail to do so He will come like a thief, He will come into our world uninvited and unannounced, He will overtake us unexpectedly and break up our life style and smash our religious games, exposing our pretense. Those who are *awake to reality* do not have their houses plundered. These willingly yield up the things they once prized, which now are counted but dung that they might win Christ.

Armageddon happens to every individual in a personal sense. Every man's heart is an Armageddon, a battlefield in which the forces of flesh and spirit struggle against each other. Within our own inner man is where the great battle of the day of God is fought, and God in our spirit must prevail against the world, the flesh, the devil, and the spirit of Babylon that are striving for the mastery there. No person who comes to the full knowledge of the truth, no person who comes to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, no person who comes either to manifest sonship or to the marriage of the Lamb can escape this battle!

As we have previously shown, Armageddon is a Hebrew word signifying the "mount of Megiddo." The town of Megiddo occupied a very marked position on the southern edge of the Plain of Esdraelon, and commanded an important pass into the hill country. This locality was the great battle-ground of Israel, on which were fought many of the famous battles of Old Testament history. There Gideon and his little band alarmed and discomfited the Midianites, who destroyed one another in their flight (Judges 7:19-23). There Deborah the prophetess met the enemies of Israel, like grasshoppers for multitude and armed to the teeth, and without a weapon, just when it seemed Israel was being surrounded to be totally exterminated from the earth, out of heaven God sent His deliverance (Judges 4 & 5). There the backslidden king Saul was defeated by the Philistines (I Sam. 31:1-6). There king Josiah was slain by Pharaoh-Necho in one of the most disastrous conflicts in the history of Israel (II Chron. 35:22-25). There also king Ahab and his wife Jezebel lived, in the

city of Jezreel, where Jezebel afterwards met a horrible death (II Kings 9:30-37). Because of its commanding position, many other nations, according to secular history, warred around Megiddo — Jews, Gentiles, Saracens, Crusaders, Egyptians, Persians, Druses, Turks, and Arabs have all pitched their tents on the Plain of Esdraelon.

Today, the “mount of Megiddo” or “Armageddon” lies in ruins. Actually, the city had been deserted for more than five centuries when John saw his vision on Patmos! But the choice of Megiddo as the type of the greatest of battles was no accident. In John’s day, even after so many years, Megiddo’s violent history still commanded fear. The ruins aren’t impressive. The palaces and temples were destroyed, removed by archaeologists on an expedition in the early twentieth century as they uncovered city after city built one on top of the other. The huge trench they dug now dominates the site. Megiddo’s magnificence derives from the fact that a visitor can stand on a ledge overlooking the trench and see fragments of life from more than twenty different cities — five millennia of human history cut into bedrock. Each group that came built on top of the ruin of the city there before it.

The one thing of importance here is that the book of Revelation is a book of *symbols* in which is set forth in symbolic form the final and ultimate struggle within the Lord’s people between truth and error, the mind of Christ and the carnal mind, righteousness and unrighteousness, spirit and flesh, light and darkness, the Lamb and the dragon, the world system and the kingdom of God, and the true church and Mystery Babylon. In this portrayal are used, on the one hand, such symbols as “beast,” “dragon,” “false prophet,” “Babylon,” “harlot,” “unclean spirits,” “frogs,” etc.; and on the other hand, “Lamb,” “manchild,” “144,000,” “overcomers,” “bride,” “holy city,” and others. “Armageddon” is another of the symbols used in the book, and it is associated with the great and final deliverance of all God’s redeemed people from the carnal church systems of man and all the ignorance, delusions, errors, carnality, and limitation of that realm. It is the day when Christ arises as the Mighty Conqueror within His people! It introduces the third spiritual feast — Tabernacles!

When we take these important facts into consideration, the word Armageddon assumes a significance just as definite as does Waterloo, although a very different one. It reveals a struggle in which God is specifically interested and in which HE totally and completely directs the issue, assuring final and glorious victory for the spiritual forces of His kingdom. Since this is the last great spiritual battle to be experienced by those who comprise His church on earth, it must result in the defeat of all the agencies and influences of the world, the flesh, and the devil — thus opening up the way for the deliverance of all God’s people from the Babylonian religious systems and their growth, development, and perfection into the fullness of Christ. This is why it is described as “the battle of that GREAT DAY OF GOD ALMIGHTY!”

When we consider this great battle, we are not, therefore, to expect any gathering of the nations *literally* to the hill of Megiddo. Rather we are to look for that which is symbolized by that mountain. Armageddon is to be viewed in a *spiritual sense* as is everything else in the book of Revelation. It is first and foremost a spiritual battle *within* the Lord’s people, yet it also involves the great red dragon and the manchild — the manifest sons of God. The battle actually begins in the heavenly realm and then spreads to the earth-dwellers and the sea-dwellers. “*And there was war in heaven: Michael (Christ) and his angels (messengers) fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels*” (Rev. 12:7). This is why, when the sons of God have prevailed and have cast the dragon out of the heavenlies, the cry goes out, “*Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth he hath but a short time*” (Rev. 12:12). The devil’s passion and determination meets head-on with God’s passion and determination — and Armageddon begins! We shall, therefore, see this battle carried forth in both the heavenly and earthly realms — both individually and collectively.

All through the ages men have, by faith, reached out and appropriated some measure of deliverance from the carnal mind and the carnal nature; but corporately as the body of Christ and as the church we have never really done so. But let me say that the deliverance of the Lord’s people *as a body and as the church* is just ahead and the completion and consummation of that perfecting work the Spirit has been progressively bringing forth in a company of saints over the past several decades. God’s people have been groaning with the apostle Paul for the past two thousand years, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the

body of this death?” (Rom. 7:24). God has certainly heard our cries, and soon He shall bring His Army into a glorious liberty in the spirit, wherein they shall be completely delivered from their sins, from their carnal minds, from the spirit of Babylon, and from all sickness, pain, and death! The perverted soul of man shall finally be restored under the dominion of the spirit and in union with the spirit, and even this vile body shall be transformed, fashioned like unto HIS body of glory. This great deliverance **MUST COME!**

Let us stop trying to justify ourselves, insisting on our outward holiness of conduct, when we ourselves know that inwardly we are yet raving beasts, and beholding our strife, pettiness, envyings, and fleshiness it is apparent to everyone about us that we do not possess it. “Living epistles” do not have to tell the world how holy or how spiritual they are! This world will see it and will be amazed to discover something real and genuine in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. The victory of which we speak is the victory of **CHRIST HIMSELF**. When we attain to this victory, there will be no need to formulate weak excuses why the victorious saint can again fall into carnality and sin and suffer defeat — for this place *in Christ* knows no defeat. We shall not have to explain how Satan gained an advantage over us and planted a new seed of unbelief in our heart, and the victory we once had was lost; for this victory *is the very victory of Christ*. “Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died **unto sin once...**” (Rom. 6:9,19). Here victory over **death** is linked with victory over **sin!** Christ died to sin once, that is, completely — *therefore* He was raised from the dead to die no more! He that overcometh enters into the very victory and triumph of Christ — a victory which is complete and can never be lost, reversed, or forfeited. It is the very victory of Jesus Christ Himself *over sin and death*, and the overcomer is therefore “more than conqueror” through Christ that loved him.

And now the faithful dealings of God to bring this very thing to pass have come: the purgings, the strippings, the processings, the refining fires, together with the raising up of the faith, nature, character, revelation, wisdom, and power of Christ within us. Ah, it is truly a picture of darkness and gloominess on the one hand, but on the other hand it is “the morning spread upon the mountains!” It is indeed — Armageddon! It is the battle which shall finally usher the Lord’s people into the **FULLNESS OF REDEMPTION**, spirit, soul, and body, free from the curse, delivered out of Babylon, having passed through **their Armageddon**, to lay hold upon the fullness of Christ’s victory and triumph! Yes, friends, we are still talking about Armageddon! The *last battle!* Armageddon is the end-game. That is what final judgment is all about! For you it will not be 2,000 years from now. Your Armageddon may be today, ten years from now, or in the next twenty-four hours. I dare say, it is going on right now! It is within you, it is within God’s elect, it is coming within the whole church, and it is coming wherever the beastly carnal nature and the bestial world system seeks to place its mark of ownership on men. Whenever it comes, it will bring an **end** to your rebellion, to your struggles, to your captivity. It will bring glorious and eternal deliverance! And in this battle the *last enemy* that shall be destroyed is **death!** And **sin** is the enemy destroyed *just before* death! How much greater, grander, more glorious are the fruits of this victory than any that could be obtained by some carnal war over in the Middle East!

*This* is Armageddon! The battle of the ages. The overthrow of the adversary, and of sin, sorrow, limitation, and death. It is here, within, that the devil, carnality, bondage, error, sickness, pain, and death must be dethroned. It is here that the flesh, the carnal mind, and the world must be overcome. It is here, within, that the kingdom of God must come in righteousness and power. The death in us must be conquered. Sin in us must be overcome. The curse in us must be removed. Rebellion in us must be subdued. Life in us must break forth in fullness. Then we will really have something to minister to a sin-weary world in its darkest hour of despair and hopelessness. We will possess within ourselves *the answer* that can lift men out of Satan’s bondage, out of sin’s clutches, out of religion’s grip, and out of death’s darkness — once and for all. Church history has never produced a people that could do this. But the day of the Lord is at hand! Press on, saints of God, for we are on the winning side! I know, for with anointed eyes I have read the last chapter of the Book!

## KEEPING YOUR GARMENTS

“Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, *and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame*” (Rev. 16:15).

In the midst of this conflict, Jesus inserts a word of encouragement and warning. He lets us know that we are dealing with a **spiritual truth** — **not a natural event**. He states that we must be *watching*. It helps to note just what “watch” means. It does not mean counting dates. It does not mean standing gazing up into the sky. It does not mean keeping up with world events on the news. But “watching” means being ready, that is, alert, attentive, vigilant, awake, alive to what God is doing, aware of what is taking place, and guarding, protecting, and preserving our *garments*, our spiritual covering, and in so doing we shall be *blessed*! Those who do not do so will be found *naked*, and men will see their *shame*. Our text above proves beyond any doubt what this battle is all about! To be naked means **to have one’s flesh exposed**. Therefore, during the heat of the conflict “keep your garments,” your spiritual covering, so that you will not be found naked — your flesh exposed — and people behold the shame of your carnality! Therefore the great purpose of the battle is to conquer and get rid of ALL CARNALITY!

In the very earliest pages of man’s history we read of Adam and Eve, “And they were both *naked*, the man and his wife.” It seems to the unenlightened mind that this little statement could have been omitted. Of what importance is it whether Adam and Eve moved about in Paradise naked or clothed? Yet it is an important and necessary little statement; it uses a rather insignificant fact, as it appears to us, to show forth something wondrous in the whole economy of God. Ah, beloved, the story of Adam and Eve in Eden is far too intricate and wonderful for my little mind to fully grasp, but I am able to see that the Holy Spirit has been very faithful and remarkably specific in recording the exact state of being of man in the beginning and of us IN OUR BEGINNING!

Adam and Eve were both...NAKED! That is the divine assertion. I do not see, as some teach, that Adam walked in the Garden clothed upon and enveloped in some kind of effulgent light. There is not one verse of scripture in the whole Bible that even suggests that Adam was originally ***clothed in heavenly light***, or that he lost his vesture of light when he sinned. What is stated, unequivocally, is that he was NAKED...and in that state he was ***not ashamed***. Following the fall there was a great difference, man was still naked but...***was ashamed***! He did not don the apron of fig leaves because he was newly naked, but because he now ***knew, understood*** that he was naked! Can we not see by this that man’s first state in Eden was that of ***innocence*** — naked but with no shame. Little children are naked and are not ashamed simply because they are innocent! Among all the creatures which God made, Adam-man stands out unique...stark naked...which means devoid of true wisdom and knowledge, with his inner nature revealed, opened up, exhibited, and made bare. Oh! that God may give us understanding to see that to be naked simply means to have THE FLESH UNCOVERED AND EXPOSED!

Then suddenly “they *knew* that they were naked” — they became conscious that their flesh lay bare and exposed — sad fruit of the tree of the ***knowledge of*** good and evil! No sooner does a man discover his nakedness than this knowledge gives birth to a sense of ***condemnation*** and there follows the impulse to make an effort to *cover* the nakedness. Thus, in the case of Adam and Eve, the discovery of their nakedness was immediately followed by an effort of their own to cover it — “they sewed fig-leaves together and made themselves aprons.” This is the first record we have of man’s attempt to remedy, by his own device, his condition, but this was not the single act of Adam of old, it is truly the act of each of us, yes, OUR VERY OWN! The Spirit would make very real to our hearts, dear reader, that Adam’s effort to cover his nakedness was not a mere physical or moral act, it was a RELIGIOUS ACT. The nakedness in Eden bespeaks the revealing of a carnal state of being, and the attempt to cover that nakedness was indeed an expression of RELIGIOUSNESS!

In an attempt to appear other than he is man sews together very wide leaves of the fig tree, that is, he tries every device he can, including multiplied religious works and observances, to gloss over his true condition. But all the garments which men devise to hide their nakedness become mere “spider’s webs” when the dazzling light of God’s revelation shines upon them. There is nothing more obvious than the fact that leaves quickly wither, turn brown and brittle, and fall off and, indeed, clothed in all the dead works of religion ***man’s flesh shows through*** and it becomes manifest that his covering is pitifully insufficient.

What is this “flesh” which can be “exposed,” making a man “naked”? The word *sarx* is the Greek word translated “flesh” in the New Testament. *Sarx* means the *meat of a physical body*, whether it be man, or beast, or birds, or fishes of the sea; not the outer layer of skin immediately visible to the eye, but the *raw meat under the skin*. To physically have the flesh “exposed” in this sense would mean to have the outer skin removed, causing the raw meat underneath to be visible. Thus, the flesh speaks of more than just our physical body with its normal needs and desires for food, clothing, comfort, rest, exercise, etc. God made our body, He knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are but dust, and there is no condemnation for being tabernacled in this body of clay. But “*the flesh*” literally speaks of that *inward nature* which is earth-minded, with its lusts and self-centeredness, its ego and I-will which are in rebellion against the spirit. Thus, the flesh is not the outward, visible man of meat, muscle, and bones, but the inward nature.

The flesh is the name by which scripture designates our NATURAL LIFE, our HUMAN NATURE — soul and body. The soul at creation was placed between the spiritual or divine and the physical or worldly, to the end that both soul and body might be raised up into perfect union in the spirit which would result in man attaining his destiny — a *spiritual body*. When the soul yielded to physical lusts, it came under the power of the body — it became flesh. And now the flesh — human nature, soul and body united in one — is not only without the spirit, but even hostile to it: “The flesh lusteth (wars) against the spirit!” (Gal. 5:17).

To be naked means to have the flesh uncovered and exposed. Good flesh or bad flesh, it really makes no difference. In the “knowledge of good and evil” both the good and the evil are *flesh*! The “good” of that tree will kill you just as quickly as the “evil” of the tree. Adulterous flesh or religious flesh, it matters not. I can guarantee you that I’ve been seen naked a few times! Oh, yes, I had my natural clothes on, perhaps my finest J. C. Penney suit, but I was nonetheless caught naked! Have you ever been caught naked? Have you ever had someone slip up from your blind side in a moment when you were not expecting them and you didn’t reveal anything to them but what you are in your flesh, by some ungodly act, some angry outburst, some un-Christ-like attitude, some trait of religiosity, or some carnal self-assertiveness, and you could only hang your head in shame and confess that for whoever saw you, you didn’t leave one ounce of witness of the life and nature of the son of God that you are, nor did they behold the glory of God at all in you? Then dear brother, precious sister, YOU WERE CAUGHT NAKED, you were discovered with your flesh exposed, you were found with your carnal nature displayed! You may have had your store-bought clothes on, but you were no less naked than Adam and Eve in Eden.

It means that in that moment your carnal state was made bare, laid open, exhibited, and men did not see the Lord’s life, all they saw was your natural, Adamic life. They beheld your nakedness and then you felt ashamed when you realized what you had revealed unto them. In innocence there is no shame when our flesh is exposed. Before God has dealt with us and revealed His robe of righteousness to us, there is no shame. But after He speaks and clothes us with the robe of righteousness, there is always the sense of shame when our nakedness appears before men. And never forget, dear one, that “good” flesh is no better than “bad” flesh! Ministering without the anointing, serving God out of human zeal or with man-made methods, going through the religious motions of worship performed by rote rather than from the spontaneous arising of His life within — all this is as much an exposure of *our flesh* as if we were caught in bed with our neighbor’s spouse!

“Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that *watcheth*, and *keepeth his garments*, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.” This gives us the picture of a Roman sentry supposed to be on guard duty through the night. They wore a garment, a robe, a uniform; the robe was the profession they made to be guards, the insignia or proof of their position, just as nurses, policemen, and many other professions wear today. There was a captain. At certain and unannounced hours the captain made his rounds to inspect and relieve the watch; sometimes he took one guard and left another. At times a guard became weary and slumped down. Presently he was asleep. Is there anything more despicable and criminal than to sleep at the post of duty? What must be said of a captain who sleeps on the bridge? Or a soldier who sleeps at his post? Or a light-house keeper who sleeps in the night? Or a soul who sleeps in the deceptive bed of religious activities, unaware of the movings and wooings of the Spirit? When the captain of the guard discovered the

sleeping sentry, as the custom was, he grabbed the tunic from him without waking him. When he arose his shame was evident, the captain had come and gone, had stripped off his profession, made him naked and put him to an open shame.

So we are exhorted to “watch” for the Lord’s coming at Armageddon, for He comes *as a thief!* Those who are faithless will be stripped of their profession, naked and ashamed before the bare light of day. He comes like a thief to steal from the “professing” church the garment that has under it no “possession.” This is the Lord’s warfare against Babylon! He is coming to snatch away the religiosity, the mere profession, and make it naked before the gaze of judgment. He warns all who name His name to be on the watch, and for each one to keep his garment; that is, to “hold fast” to the robe of righteousness. “*Behold, I come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown*” (Rev. 3:11). Cling fervently to the hope within you today, dear child of God. Embrace and never let go the reality you have found in the Christ within. Trade it not for the worthless tinsel pandered by the harlot system in the broad ways of Mystery Babylon. Treasure the truth you know as you would treasure the most priceless gem of earth, and guard it with all the vigilance of your being, for there, and there alone, is reality, life, immortality, and glory eternal!

The great truth of being spiritually “clothed upon” appears early in the revelation of God to mankind. As soon as man sinned, *God made them garments*, the Bible declares. Some say that the “skins” with which God clothed Adam and Eve were the outer covering of a mortal body, the “skin” of the flesh. It is my conviction, however, that the sinning couple *needed a covering* just because they *were flesh* — for suddenly they “*saw that they were naked*” and commenced to sew together aprons of fig leaves. It is obvious that in their sense of guilt they perceived that *their flesh was exposed!* The slain lamb is the figure all through scripture for God’s gracious provision of “atonement,” and the word atonement in Hebrew simply means “to cover.” Was it not, therefore, the “skins” of the slain Lamb with which the Lord, in a figure, clothed father Adam and mother Eve? And that is the “robe of righteousness”! These are beautiful word pictures with which the Holy Spirit conveys to our understanding eternal and heavenly truths!

The first thing God does is strip away all the artificial, man-made, religious coverings, and presents His own glorious covering, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world! In the symbolism of the garden of Eden story Adam and Eve silently watched as the Lord God selected a lamb and slew it there, fastening it to a tree before their wondering eyes, the victim then being made naked, stripped of its skin, that a covering might be provided for the naked ones. Thus, with this one wondrous act does the God of heaven introduce *the cross, the atonement, and the Christ as man’s covering!* When God clothed Adam and Eve in the skins of the slain Lamb, yet dripping with the precious blood, He showed that they were COVERED WITH THE LIFE OF THE LAMB! When God covers a man with the covering of His own Lamb the covering is so complete that *no flesh will be seen — only Christ!* This is not merely a reference to our initial salvation, but speaks further of the finality of our perfection as the sons of God! Fully clothed in the life of the Lamb, we bear the Lamb’s own image, likeness, and identity. Therefore, blessed is he that *watcheth*, and *keepeth his garments*, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame!

### THE BOWL POURED INTO THE AIR

“And the *seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air*; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done” (Rev. 16:17).

The previous bowls have been poured out upon the earth, the sea, the rivers and fountains, the sun, the throne of the beast, and the great river Euphrates. This, the last and greatest, is poured into the air; and immediately there is heard a voice out of the temple in heaven, proclaiming, “It is done!” What, then, is symbolized by the plague poured into the air? Of what is the “air” the emblem? In the Revelation the whole of nature is used as a great complex parable or symbol. What does the atmosphere especially signify? And the answer is not difficult. If earth, sea, rivers, fountains, the sun, a throne, etc., denote *manifest spiritual realities*, the air obviously would symbolize an *invisible spiritual realm*. And here we are helped by sundry hints of scripture usage.

This plague is certainly not any natural phenomenon like the explosion of an atomic bomb or a nuclear device in the atmosphere or in outer space above our earth, causing a deadly fallout and



contaminating the very air we breathe. Nor is it some form of biological warfare spread through the atmosphere by terrorists. To aid our understanding of the symbolic significance of the term “air” in scripture, let us turn to another mention of it. “*We...shall be caught up together with them...to meet the Lord IN THE AIR: and so shall we ever be with the Lord*” (I Thes. 4:17).

Many years ago, while meditating upon this precious passage of scripture, the Spirit unfolded within my consciousness the significant truth that our catching up “into the air” can never be properly understood apart from the inspired words of the same apostle Paul wherein he states, “*And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the **PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR, THE SPIRIT THAT NOW WORKETH IN THE CHILDREN OF DISOBEDIENCE***” (Eph. 2:1-2). There are several key words or terms that unlock the storehouse of spiritual truth contained in these verses. Consider — PRINCE, POWER, AIR, SPIRIT, WORKETH, and IN. According to these plain statements of scripture there exists a “**power of the air.**” This “power of the air” is identified as a “spirit,” and this spirit is located “in” the children of disobedience, wherein he “works.” Can we not see by this that the “prince of the power of the air” is not something or someone outside of us, but a spirit-power that operates right here WITHIN MAN. Furthermore, this spirit-power that works within man also emanates from man, exerting an influence throughout the atmosphere that surrounds the earth, giving motivation to the myriad activities and events that transpire in the world, which Paul calls “the course of this world” that men walk in under the control of this “power of the air.” Thus it is called the “POWER of the AIR.”

Dr. Charles Price wrote a little book entitled *Made Alive* in which he shares this instructive information: “Every atom of matter — every piece of mineral — indeed everything which is the result of God’s creative intelligence is surrounded by an ‘aura’ or an emanation which is identical with and corresponds to the *nature* of the substance from which it comes. There is a sense in which personalities are possessed with this ‘emanation’ and ‘extension’ of themselves into their surroundings. It is a radiation which can be felt when someone walks into a room in which you may be seated. Our personality becomes affected by their personality. They have power to elevate or depress.”

I would like you to really get a grasp of this thought. We all know people who by their very presence can lift us up, and impart a sense of well-being, who can lift our spirits up to heights of joy and happiness. Others can leave you feeling depressed just by spending a few minutes in their presence. The thought I want you to get is the fact that every created thing has this *aura* surrounding them, which is an actual radiation of their nature and personality into their surroundings. It is an extension of themselves into their environment on an invisible spiritual level. This aura or emanation is our nature and emotions radiating from us into our surroundings, and it affects everything and everyone around us. It is a radiation that flows from our spirits or our souls, and the stronger our spirits or our souls are the greater the radiation. If you find it difficult to believe the very atmosphere or air waves are charged by the emanations of energy, positive or negative, then go directly from a worship service where the saints are worshipping in the spirit, and enter a night club where ungodly men and women are drinking, cursing, lusting, laughing, and singing, and the difference you *feel* in a very real and powerful way is the difference between the positive and the negative life force.

Grasp it! A couple centuries ago we could not have understood as we do now how communication by sound and picture can be broadcast instantaneously THROUGH THE AIR. Wherever you are as you read these words, chances are there are myriad voices, pictures, and music IN THE AIR around you. A radio, television, or other electronic device tuned to the right wavelength would make them audible to you. You may not have realized it, but both spirit and soul in every man are a receiver and a transmitter. You may be tuned in on the wavelength of the Holy Spirit or you may tune in on the wavelength of the negative realm, the demonic, the *spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience*. Prophets are uniquely sensitive to the spirit realm of God, whereas “psychics” are often sensitive to the soulful realm of man. You don’t hear anything with your natural ears because spirit and soul do not broadcast in audible words or sounds. Spirit broadcasts in thoughts, attitudes, impulses, and emotions. The flesh broadcasts in thoughts, attitudes, impulses, and emotions of lust, perversion, greed, vanity, jealousy, anger, envy, deceit, fear, competition, strife, hatred, rebellion, violence, bitterness, debate, etc. Here is the real cause of all the world’s evils! Why do movements like communism, New Age religion, the hippy movement, the rock culture, the drug culture,

casual sex and sexual permissiveness, and a hundred more movements contributing to the deception of masses of people and the moral breakdown of society, suddenly rise up and sweep across the earth within a few short years like a plague, permeating everywhere, changing the attitudes, outlook, societal character, and moral fabric of everyone, including the people in the churches? What is this? It is the work of SPIRIT — invisible, intangible **energy — power!** Invisible, but very real. And very powerful! There is constantly in this world a transference of spiritual energy from the invisible world into the visible. Ah, it is the **power of the air, the powerful spirit organization in earth's atmosphere, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience!**

That awesome **negative spiritual energy** permeates the atmosphere, producing a SUPERCHARGED ATMOSPHERE, influencing, impressing, affecting, impacting, swaying, impelling, changing and altering the opinions, convictions, desires, and actions of vast masses of the population. The people hear no audible voice, they do not see a visible Satan, and they comprehend not from whence come such attitudes, impulses, and desires. The adversary has a large elemental power. The natural man breathes in, as it were, the satanic influence. In their daily lives they think and live by this spirit influence and according to this world's system of things. On the other hand, when great and glorious revivals spontaneously break forth and sweep across a community, a nation, or around the world, it is the **spirit of the living God** moving, energizing, quickening, transforming, permeating the very atmosphere, sweeping men up into the living presence and power of God! Oh, the wonder of it!

The word for “air” in the Greek language is *aer* meaning “to breathe.” The “power of the air” is thus the ENERGY OF BREATHING! Thoughts and influences from the invisible realm and unconscious realm **breathed in** and **breathed out** — expressed in words in the conscious realm and lived out as deeds in the physical world — going forth as energy, power, spiritual influence in the atmosphere of earth. These are not *merely* thoughts or *merely* words, for both spirit and soul of man are tapped into the timeless sphere of eternity wherein is that which is called by the scriptures “*the powers of the heavens.*” This is the realm of PURE ENERGY, and the unconscious mind of man is tapped into this vast supply of energy, and not only tapped in, but when the mouth is opened, the energy is brought forth from the unconscious realm and released into the atmosphere of man's physical world, carrying a very real power capable of either blessing or cursing mankind. The ungodly movements of the world, be they social, entertainment, political, religious, educational, or otherwise, are the direct result of negative spirit influence transmitted to the masses through faithful ministers of unrighteousness who have become filled with the un-holy spirit, and consequently transmitters of the same, producing the supercharged atmosphere of sin and death. In this way Satan is indeed the “prince of the power of the air,” meaning that he is the **invisible ruler**, which activity and authority he exercises **in** and **through** men — “the **spirit** that now **worketh in** the children of disobedience!”

The air is the realm of the firmament, or a dimension of heaven; therefore the air signifies the spiritual atmosphere, either positive or negative, where men walk. All realms of life have their “atmosphere” — the air. If you go to a bar there is an atmosphere there. If you go to a brothel there is an atmosphere there. If you go to a rock concert there is an atmosphere there. If you go to a Baptist church service there is an atmosphere there. If you go to a Pentecostal church service there is an atmosphere there. The atmosphere at a Catholic mass is altogether different from the atmosphere at a Charismatic meeting. Every realm has its atmosphere! When you enter the presence of a son of God who knows the truth as it is in Jesus, who walks in the wisdom of the mind of Christ, who expresses the unconditional love of God, and dwells in the glory of God — there is a clear, powerful, victorious, confident, peaceful, transforming atmosphere there!

The message is just this — “the air” in its spiritual sense bespeaks the atmosphere of man's **consciousness** and **understanding** — especially his **spiritual understanding** which today is super-charged by fleshly and satanic energy radiating from the cosmic heart of unregenerated and religious men. But I have some good news for you, my friend! Satan shall be bound, removed from his sphere of influence and authority “in the air”! “**And the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done!**” What does this mean? It means that when the seventh angel pours out his bowl “into the air,” he is pouring out GOD'S WRATH OR PASSION on the realm of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, which in this context signifies particularly the SOULICAL RELIGIOUS CONCIIOUSNESS AND THE FALSE RELIGIOUS SPIRIT OF

BABYLON and its fruitage among the Lord's people. It is the intervention of God into the consciousness of His people who are captives to carnal church systems of man. We must always remember that above all *Satan is religious!* Oh, yes! When "the prince of the power of the air" is judged and cleansed from the realm of the "powers of the heavens," THAT POSITION IS NOT GOING TO GO UNFILLED. ANOTHER POWER MUST BE RAISED UP INTO THAT VACATED REALM OF DOMINION TO BECOME THE ENERGY FORCE THAT INFLUENCES, AFFECTS, IMPACTS, SWAYS, IMPELLS, CHANGES, AND TRANSFORMS THE UNDERSTANDING, CONVICTIONS, DESIRES, AND ACTIONS FIRST OF ALL THE PEOPLE OF GOD, AND EVENTUALLY OF THE INHABITANTS OF THE WHOLE WORLD, GIVING DIRECTION AND MOTIVATION UNTO TRUTH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS!

THAT, my beloved, is what it means for the saints of God to be "*caught up IN THE AIR!*" As Satan and all the religious spirits that control God's people are dispossessed from their position in the heavens of man's consciousness, God's chosen and separated elect are caught up or elevated into that place of influence, power, and authority. God is now preparing a company to fill that place, that sphere of spirit-energy and control that has been occupied by the false religious spirits, and thus the sons of God *become* "the power of the air" and "the powers of the heavens," and our Lord Jesus Christ is revealed as the *true* "*Prince of the power of the air.*" Glory to God! We are raised up into that realm now, in the measure that we have appropriated it, but the fullness remains to be revealed. What a prospect! God's people now under the power of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, delivered, enlightened, quickened, renewed, transformed, and filled with the glory of God under the power of the Righteous Ones! What changes shall yet be wrought in the church and in the earth! What righteousness, peace, truth, and joy shall then flow forth unto the people of the nations! Oh, the mystery of it! Oh, the wonder of it!

The natural-minded Christian is looking to be suddenly snatched up into the air, away from the earth, to inhabit mansions on golden streets somewhere in the blue beyond. The spiritually-minded child of God looks to be *laid hold upon by a higher power* and lifted into a heavenly realm in the Spirit from which he can do something for this world. The almighty Father is preparing a people who shall bind the devil and all his false religious spirits and usurp their place of cosmic power in the atmosphere of man's consciousness, supercharging even the very atmosphere of earth with vibrations and influences of life, light, love, righteousness, truth, and glory! When the Righteous Kingdom is in power, the cruel usurper will be absent; when the Righteous Kings hold sway, and the great tempter is overcome, men's motives to godliness, truth, and life will be unhindered. The present activity of God is devoted to selecting, training, testing, developing, and perfecting this conquering, ruling company. Just think — you have the unique potential to be a transmitter of the LIFE-GIVING ENERGY of God Almighty here upon this earth!

The glory of God is the emanation or radiation of His nature, and this glory surrounds Him. As we become partakers of the divine nature, we also radiate the glory of His essence. This is the real purpose of our calling, and the meaning of being caught up in the air. Recognize, O saint of God, the radiant glory that is even now vibrating from your being, and seek His presence, that the glory and power might be greatly increased for the sake of His body as well as a lost world. Release the Christ within! Praise God, what a day! You can change the atmosphere about you, regardless of how dark or hopeless it may appear. You can radiate with His power and glory, like a blazing light where darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people. Arise and shine! Your light has come! The glory of the Lord has risen upon you, and His glory shall be seen upon thee!

To be continued...

J. PRESTON EBY