

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 192

MYSTERY BABYLON (continued)

“Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and *the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication*” (Rev. 17:1-2).

In the ancient world all the major religions of the gods of Babylon, Greece, and Rome joined pagan worshippers to demons through sexual intercourse with religious (temple) prostitutes and sodomites. History reveals that such vile creatures, because they were in the service of demons, under their will, and actually indwelt by demon-deities, were called by the ancients, “holy ones,” meaning “sanctified” or “set apart ones” unto the false god. They were “sanctified” or “set apart” by the will, presence, and nature of unclean spirits. Christians who had once engaged in those shameful practices before being delivered from the adversary’s clutches by faith in the Lord Jesus and the washing of regeneration knew that the practical result of their sanctification unto the Lord was abstinence from fornication (I Thes. 4:4). The indwelling Christ, who of God is made unto us “wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,” enables each to “know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor, not in the lust of sensuality even as the pagans who know not God.” We know that our bodies are the “temple of the Holy Spirit,” and that fornication (physical or spiritual) is a formal act of turning ourselves over to the control of an alien power. Thus, uncleanness may be characterized as “SANCTIFICATION UNTO THE FLESH” — separation unto the flesh and sensuality! The calling of the believer, therefore, is to purity of life that he might be wholly sanctified both in attitude and action, in body and spirit.

The “fornication” of religious Babylon, the harlot church system of man, is a *symbol*, not the fornication of the flesh, but something spiritual, a joining on a religious plane to that which is not Christ. Women in the Revelation are likewise symbolic, either positively of the bride of Christ, or negatively of the soul, or of religious organizations and activities which are *soulical* rather than *spiritual*. These are those ministries, and multiplied millions of believers, who daily sow their seed, deposit their spiritual life of Christ, into man-made religious systems, mingling the reality of Christ with the traditions and commandments of men, joining themselves to carnal programs, promotions, methods, and worldly religious activities, as well as with the political systems and governments of the world, satisfying their own soulish appetites and lusts in the name of the Lord. It is *spiritual fornication*! The church is imitating the world! The church schedule is packed with flesh-appeal programs and activities that run day and night. They feel that unless every night of the week is taken up with some sort of activity, the ministry is an ineffective thing. They have the strange idea that nothing is being done unless someone is talking! So they fairly swarm to conferences, seminars, workshops, committee meetings, platform discussions, concerts, plays, programs, and outreaches of many kinds.

It is distasteful to have to admit it, but the plain truth is that the vast majority of Christians live their lives in *soulish lusts*. The further truth is that God’s purposes are not accomplished by intellect or soulical activity! The church systems go forward today like a little Samson shorn of his locks of power. It parades up and down, boasting of its accomplishments, and like Samson, it knows not that the Spirit of God has

departed from it. But even as Saul and his armies tremble in fear before the mighty Goliath, the Lord is raising up a little David with a sling shot of the spirit of sonship to meet the enemy with all of his stratagems and come off with a mighty victory! The David company is still in preparation, far out in the solitude of the green pastures of a living word, and beside the still waters of the quickening spirit, learning by faith and obedience to slay their bear and kill their lion. But we are gaining new victories every day and learning within ourselves the power of God and the ways of His kingdom! Saul's armor will not do! The sons of God are being prepared to step forth in the majesty of the name of the Lord God of Israel! The preparation does not take place in the seven brothers who appear so tall, handsome, and articulate, so charismatic and accomplished, nor in the hustle and bustle of the streets of Bethlehem, but *alone with God* in the pastures of HIS choosing, outside the camp, in the secret place of the Most High!

Amid all the religious ruckus of the hour, and all the fuss of those who run after many lovers, fornicating with the flesh, the world, and the carnal mind, there is a *little flock* that has climbed the mount with Jesus. They care nothing for the flamboyant humbug of the gaudy harlot's house, but, having beheld the glories of the kingdom afar off, they are pressing through surging waves of flesh-oriented believers to *come apart* to receive instruction from the King of the kingdom. At His feet they hear the call to the heavenly mark and find a door opened for them to enter in to celestial realms and lay hold upon the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

These are they who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth! They lean hard upon Christ! They keep themselves unto Him, and to Him alone! They are not enticed by the heady wine of the harlot's house, with its numbing of the spiritual senses and its unrestrained religious passion and carnal sensuality. As the hart pants after the water brooks, so pant their souls after God! The spirit of sonship to God dwells richly within them! They are partakers of His mind! They have been granted the knowledge of His will! They comprehend with all His called and separated elect His great plan and purpose in the earth, in His sons, and throughout the unbounded universe! They have laid aside every religious weight and the sin which does so easily beset them! They are running the race with patience! They esteem the hope that is set before them higher than all the pleasures of Egypt and greater far than the prestige of Babylon! They are patient in tribulation, knowing that through much tribulation we shall inherit the kingdom! They continue instant in prayer to God, and He comforts them and upholds them with the right hand of His righteousness! To them the voice of the Father speaks in words of everlasting hope and assurance, "Fear not, *little flock*; for it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Isn't it wonderful!

Jonathan Mitchell stated it so well when he wrote, "The figure of the *drinking of the wine* speaks of participating in something that has an effect upon you. Here it signifies participating in the strong passion of her prostitution, which effected a departure from God and an entering into her sins. It causes a drunkenness, a stupor, to come upon the peoples who participate with her. They cannot think clearly, and are led astray like the fool."

Vladimir Lenin was not speaking an original thought when he said that "religion is the opiate of the people." The thought that we have before us now is exactly that thought! The Holy Spirit spoke it two thousand years before Lenin recognized it! Mystery Babylon is said to have *made the inhabitants of the earth drunk with the wine of her fornication*. An opiate puts people to sleep; wine puts them into a stupor. It is only the gospel and the living power of Christ which causes people to awake from their sleep and arise from their death that they may walk in the light of the Lord. In all the *earth-realm* — the carnal religious realm — the people are made drunken — stupefied — by the ecclesiasticism of a counterfeit church and by the religious paganism taught and practiced by that counterfeit system. To be "drunk" means to be intoxicated, inebriated, besotted, overcome by something induced, giving a false sense of reality. The *wine* of her fornication is simply her doctrines, her rituals, her ceremonies, her entertainments, her pageantries, her programs, her methods, etc. They are one and all laced with that which perverts the living truth and distorts spiritual reality in the minds and hearts of the people!

Her wine is that by which the people are seduced into her fornication. The love of a harlot is a *feigned* love; and its hatefulness consists largely in the fact that it is put in the place of the true love of a wife. The harlot's aim is to secure favors for herself. To that end she not only prostitutes whatever she may have

of a womanly charm, but she brings into play all manner of seductive arts, and adorns her person with whatever may increase her attractions in the eyes of men. But specially reprehensible is her *pretended affection* for those she seeks to ensnare in the web of her fascination and enchantments. Such is the false church that feigns a deep solicitude for the spiritual good of the great ones of the earth, and exerts a mysterious and intoxicating influence over the *inhabitants of the earth-realm*, making them, as it were, *drunk with the wine of her fornication*; the religious exercises which conceal the basest of motives behind the mask of pretended affection and fondness. From the time the “greeters” meet you at the door until you become a dedicated member of the congregation her underlying motive is to aggrandize herself — to increase her numbers, to magnify her prestige and power, to expand her influence in the world, and to fill fuller her coffers! As the Holy Spirit testified, “*How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously!*” (Rev. 18:7).

The wise man said, “*Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is **deceived thereby is not wise***” (Prov. 29:1). This is not talking about a glass of wine with your meal! “Deceived” infers inebriation, intoxication, liquored up — *drunk*. It could be rendered, “*whosoever is **inebriated** thereby is a fool.*” It is inebriating wine, wine that excites the passions and removes the restraints, leading to fornication — spiritual uncleanness. Furthermore, Babylon’s wine is called, “The wine of the *wrath* of her fornication” (Rev. 14:8). Does “wrath” mean the harlot is practicing her fornication in a state of anger, rage, violence, and retaliation? Not at all! The word “wrath” in this verse is from the Greek word *thumos*, and surprisingly Strong’s Concordance gives as the basic meaning of this word, “*breathing hard, passion.*” It has nothing whatever to do with vindictiveness or vengeance. It should have been translated, “The wine of the *passion* of her fornication.” Why haven’t the preachers told us this before! Now, I ask, who ever heard of wrath being sweet, intoxicating, and seductive *like wine*! And who would ever think of the sensual pleasures of fornication as being angry, vengeful, full of fury and violence! When we consider the true meaning of the word *thumos* it becomes crystal clear — “For all nations have drunk of the *wine of the **passion*** of her fornication.” What a difference that makes! People who have sex are caught up in *passion* — not *vengeance*! The King James translation makes no sense at all. The correct rendering signifies that all nations and all the inhabitants of the carnal religious earth realm have become “high” on the passion and seductive excitement of the harlot activities of Mystery Babylon! That is the mystery.

The apostate church has been given false teaching and has become drunk with it. She doesn’t even know the truth because she’s drunk! When people are drunk they lack perception; they’re deceived; they cannot see or reason clearly. As long as men are inflamed by the heady wine of Babylon’s seductions, they are not free to either know or love the truth. Those who are drunk on the false teachings in Babylon are so totally confused that they mistake “heresy” for “orthodoxy.” They are so drunk on these false doctrines that they suppose that eternal damnation in hell-fire for the vast majority of men who have lived and died on this planet is the pure, unadulterated Word of God! In their eyes *you* are the heretic if you suggest otherwise! They are so drunk that when they read of the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, with a street of gold, a river of life, a tree of life, and the throne of God, they mistake the *symbol* for the *reality* and drunkenly imagine that this city *is heaven as a place* and they will one day fly away up there and own a mansion, a robe, and a crown somewhere on Hallelujah Boulevard!

They are so drunk that in their stupor they are quite sure that the Bible clearly teaches that they are going to heaven in a “rapture” and everyone else will be “left behind” to face the horrors of the antichrist and the great tribulation. I do not hesitate to add that one *has* to be drunk to find that teaching in the scriptures! Others, in their state of intoxication, confuse law with grace, supposing that we are somehow under the Old Testament laws of meats and drinks, holy days, sabbaths, ritual cleansings (baptisms), tithing, and various other things. Preachers tell the people that if they don’t pay their tithes into the church, “*You are cursed with a curse,*” and under grace lay the curses of the Old Testament law upon the people. FORNICATION! FORNICATION INCITED BY DRUNKENNESS! Oh, yes! Many, many nations and untold millions of carnal-minded Christians are in bed with the harlot and have committed fornication with this wanton whore. Almost everyone you meet is religious, but you have only to discuss spiritual matters for a very few minutes to discover just how drunk they are on the teachings of Babylon! Multitudes of Christians are not serving God, they are consorting with the harlot’s house. The wine that all nations, and all denomi-nations, have drunk is the wine of false teaching and false religious practices!

The ministers of Babylon give their flocks to drink of the wine of the *passion* of her fornication — the *mingled wine* of the harlot, a *mixture* of truth and error, of spirit and flesh, of the ways of God and the ways of the world, which like any intoxicant, benumbs the sensibilities, and causes him who drinks to turn from purity, truth, and singleness of heart. Babylon, the great Old Testament kingdom which offered the worship of idols with gross sensuality, is used by the Spirit in the Revelation to symbolize the church systems of man, which, like the Jewish nation in the days of Christ, mix the philosophies, methods, and spirit of the world with the truth of God, and offer this wine to men in the place of the living word of God and the precious mind of Christ. The church which does this, realizes its inability to reach the souls of men, and employs the flaming passion of the harlot to seduce people, utilizing all kinds of flesh-appeal activities, religious forms, programs, contests, entertainment, social and political action, and in some countries even the coercive power of the state, to suck men into the orgy of her sin. There is a form of godliness, but no power therein!

We have passed through a time of great darkness. But thank God, the first rays of light of a new day are painting the eastern sky! Thank God, a few of His chosen ones have arisen to behold the glories of the dawn and to drink in the exhilarating freshness of the morn! But the popular churches are still lost in dreams. They have not awakened. They know not of the dawn. And the scripture describes them and their shepherds in very uncomplimentary terms. The heads of the churches are symbolized by the Holy Spirit as “the drunkards of Ephraim” (Isa. 28:1-4). Then in Isaiah 29:9-11 we are told, “*They are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your heads...hath He covered. And all vision hath become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed.*” And when these drunken shepherds spread tables for their flocks, instead of those tables being loaded with good wholesome spiritual food, the prophet says, “*ALL tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is **no place clean***” (Isa. 28:8).

But those who are of the Day, who are not lovers of the mingled wine of Babylon, nor of the drunkenness of religious teachings and promotions, nor sleepers of the night, have a higher heritage. “*Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation*” (I Thes. 5:5-8). All who in this significant hour 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! It is time to forsake the shame and error, and time to look up, time to arise and shine. The day is at hand. The night is far spent. We must go forth and lead the way for all who will follow. “*Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion (sons of God); put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem (bride of Christ), the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean*” (Isa. 52:1). Because the church today has not received of God’s enlightenment, we find Christians in the pathetic state of darkness. Because Christians today, whether baptized in God’s Spirit, or not, have stopped far short of God’s fullness, and are still spiritual babes, they, with few exceptions, do not discern the things that pertain to the kingdom of God. Their human minds comprehend the natural side of things, but deep spiritual realities are veiled from their view. They have not arisen above the mists of night. But the Day which God’s called and separated elect has now entered calls for all who will to awake, and to go forth, beholding the more glorious scene of an **abundant entrance into the kingdom of God!**

THE WILDERNESS

“So he carried me away in the spirit *into the wilderness*: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns” (Rev. 17:3).

The messenger carried John “away in spirit” to a wilderness or desert. In chapter one, verse ten, John was “in the spirit” and saw a vision of the resurrected, ascended, and glorified Christ. In chapter four, verse two, he was “in the spirit” and saw the vision of the throne of God in the heavens of the Spirit of the Lord. This time his experience is something like Ezekiel’s for he is conscious of being “carried away.” Here, in a

new vision, he sees a woman in a wilderness sitting upon a scarlet colored beast full of blasphemous names. Since John is carried away “in spirit,” this signifies to us that what he sees is also “in spirit.” Just as Jerusalem was “*spiritually called* Sodom and Egypt (Rev. 11:8),” John is now given the picture of a woman-city which is given another “spiritual” name — Babylon!

We meet this term “wilderness” in only two places in the book of Revelation — first in chapter twelve where the woman who births the manchild, that is, the true church, “flees *into the wilderness*, where she hath a place prepared of God...and to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly *into the wilderness*, into her place” (Rev. 12:6,14). This woman’s “wilderness” was a place of safety and liberation; a sanctuary to which the woman was taken to be **protected** and **sustained** by God. Here I would draw your reverent attention to the fact that this first woman, this virgin bride of Christ, flees into “*the wilderness*,” the well-known one, spoken of from the book of Exodus all the way through to the book of Revelation. Herein she is distinguished from the great whore. The great harlot of our present study is seen by John in “*a wilderness*,” or “*a wilderness in spirit*,” as we should most probably connect the words. The first woman’s flight was into *the* wilderness, signifying the spiritual condition into which many of the Lord’s people have fled to escape the fury of the adversary! This was the place of safety for Moses, after Pharaoh was angry and designed to slay him. Hither fled Israel from the face of the Egyptian king. To this refuge did Elijah betake himself from the threats of Jezebel. And Jesus Himself retreated thither after John the Baptist was slain, and near to it He dwelt after His life was sought by the priests and rulers at Jerusalem.

The great whore, however, is not found in “*the wilderness*,” but rather in “*a wilderness*,” that is, **another** wilderness, a **different** wilderness, which is specifically described as “*a wilderness in spirit*,” — a SPIRITUAL WILDERNESS! The portrayal of her dwelling place is very descriptive. It is a dry and unproductive place, a place of spiritual scarcity, lack, deficiency, dearth, famine, privation, and desolation. It describes a condition where no springs of God are found, no fountains of living water flow, and almost no spiritual food exists. I have been in stark deserts in Israel and Egypt, and elsewhere, where not a blade of grass grows, and no man lives. There are no houses, no cities, no oasis, no movement of any kind except for the howling winds and blowing sands. It is the place where those that are thirsty can never be spiritually satisfied, where leanness of soul prohibits any from growing up into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. It is a state of barrenness, bleakness, emptiness, solitude, — a spiritual wasteland! To the anointed eye this is the very wilderness encircling far and wide this great whore of religion. In this wasteland she sits astride her scarlet colored beast of the bestial carnal nature and man-made organization, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

This is a picture of one’s spiritual experience. Whenever you are thinking in terms of being *in Adam*, or *in the flesh*, or *in the carnal mind*, you are viewing a wilderness. You don’t know where you are, you know not where you are going, nor do you know what you are doing. You are frustrated, confused, disoriented, lonely, hopeless, hedged in, shut up, lost, with no way of escape. All of the world is a wilderness! The people of the world have no idea where they are, where they came from, what they are doing, what their purpose is, or where their true destiny lies. We are amazed sometimes that men of learning, with brilliant minds, and great accomplishments and power do some of the stupid things they do. We ought rather to be amazed that they do as well as they do! They dwell in a spiritual wilderness. They are blind. They are dead. They know nothing as they ought to know. They are bound. They live in a state of emptiness and desolation.

Christianity is a wilderness. Of course all the pagan religions are a wilderness, a spiritual wasteland, but Christianity is a wilderness just as vast and great and terrible. In their wilderness they have substituted the reality of God with man-made methods and forms of worship. Speaking of this, brother Bennie Skinner once said in a message, “I know how those things work, I was educated in them. Do you know that I could have filled this building up many times over in the thirty-four years I have been in West Palm Beach if I would have just used the methods I was taught? We could have a church here with thousands of members in it! We would have had to sell this property and buy a larger plot of land. I was educated in those techniques, I know how to do those things. And it works! You can have thousands of people coming and getting all excited about their religion and activities and the programs and the outreaches and the success and the overflowing attendance and expanding membership rolls. I know all about that. I understand how to get

others to work to accomplish all those things. You say, ‘Well, brother Bennie, why don’t you do it? We could sure use a few of them!’ I’ll tell you why I don’t. I am called of God to set before a people a High Way. It is called the *way of holiness*. It’s reality. It’s the real thing. It’s not joining a church. It’s not walking down the isle popping your chewing gum and saying, ‘I’ll take Jesus as my Saviour,’ and the preacher says, ‘Oh, wonderful, now you’re saved.’ There’s a lot more to God’s purpose than that! The fact is, there is nothing to that at all. There is a calling and a reality in God far deeper and greater and more glorious than any of that!”

Now I would draw your attention to a further, more personal, aspect of this great wilderness where the whore rides upon her beast. In the book of Hebrews the writer speaks of entering into God’s rest. *“Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief”* (Heb. 4:1,9,11).

What is this rest? We have to look at a type in the Old Testament to discover its meaning. After the children of Israel were delivered and saved from the land of Egypt, they were brought into the wilderness with the intention that they should go on into the land of Canaan. The land of Canaan was their promised land of rest, a type of CHRIST. Christ Himself is the good land of Canaan, and He is our rest! If we are going to enter into the rest, we must enter into Christ. The Israelites who were delivered out of Egypt (typifying the body, or flesh realm), instead of going on into Canaan, wandered for many years in the wilderness. What does this speak to us? You see, the wilderness was a blessed provision for their escape from Egypt — but it was not intended to become their dwelling place! It means that many of the Lord’s people, after being saved out of sin and darkness, are simply wandering about in the wilderness of the SOUL...in the barrenness and unfruitfulness of their own carnal understanding, thoughts, desires, emotions, affections, and wills. The reason the book of Hebrews was written was that many believers were saved, but rather than entering in to possess for their entire being the fullness of Christ and the perfection, glory, and power of God deposited in their quickened spirit, they were still wandering in the restlessness, variableness, limitation, confusion, and defeat of their soul life. They had been saved from the gross sins of the body realm (the flesh), but they would not press on from the wilderness of the soul into the good land — that is, INTO THE MEASURE OF THE FULLNESS OF THE STATURE OF CHRIST IN THEIR SPIRIT, where there is the nature of the Father, the mind of Christ, and the power and glory of the kingdom of God!

Even though we may have been saved for many years, we must now ask the Spirit of God to lift the veil that is upon our minds and reveal the truth of whether we are presently living in the realm of the *body* (sensuality, sin), the *soul* (carnality, self-will, intellect, emotions, etc.), or in the *spirit* (divine life, light, love, victory, peace, joy, righteousness, power, etc.). With reverent heart invite the Lord to search yourself in order to be clear where you are! Frankly, many of the Lord’s dear people are wandering day after day in the wilderness of the soul! The Lord is present with them even there, but they have not departed from the wilderness to enter into their full and great and glorious inheritance in Christ! In the morning they may have joyful countenances, but the pressures of the day soon take their toll and their peace, confidence, and victory flee away. Yesterday it seems they were in the heavens, but today they are making their bed in hell, discouraged, anxious, depressed, and defeated. Yesterday they were full of faith and courage, ready to believe God for exploits, but today they are disheartened with their walk in God and fearful about the future. They are continually wandering about in the soul, the wilderness, without rest, where no streams flow, and sustenance is scarce, circling the same dry river bed day after day, getting nowhere. They may have been walking with God for forty years, but are still going around in the same vicious circles, fighting the same battles, filled with the same concerns, experiencing the same weaknesses, encumbered with the same lack of understanding, just as the children of Israel, who wandered for forty years with no improvement and no progress. Why? Because they are living in the soul! The soul is barren and desolate, there is no life in it. When we are in the soul we are in the wilderness. The whole church world today rides the beast of carnal-minded religiosity in that great and terrible wilderness of the soul!

The word of God must pierce us so that we know how to press on from the wilderness of the soul into the heavens and the most holy place of our spirit, where the fullness of Christ dwells! We must know how to bring our body and soul into the most holy place of the spirit so that the whole man may find blessed

rest in the incorruptible life of God and in the blazing glory of His fullness. Only God can teach us this, and He does so as we sit at His feet in adoring submission! Flee, my brother, my sister, from the desolate wilderness of your soul as you would flee from a bear in the forest and you shall find blessed refuge in the promised land of the spirit, for there is a realm there, right within you, closer to you than the air you breathe, nearer to you than the heart that beats faithfully within your breast, more continuously available to you even than the blood coursing through your veins, a sacred place within your spirit where the things of earth do not rule or affect in any way, for Christ dwells there as LIFE, LIGHT, AND POWER!

There is a people rising from the barren dust of the wilderness of the soul to sit together with Christ in the heavenly places of the spirit. God dwells *in your spirit*, dear one, and God in your spirit is infinite, omnipotent, and eternal; therefore, in finding all that is available in God's great kingdom one must be prepared to press ever onward and upward into the vast expanses of God *in the spirit*. If God is *infinite*, there is *no limit* to the experience which we might have in union with Him in the spirit. If God is *omnipotent*, there is *nothing that can stand or withstand* the conquest of His mighty power within. And if God is *eternal*, there can be *no end* to the measure of grace and glory into which He would lead us in the spirit. Think of it! When our astronauts began their explorations to the moon, it was not sufficient that they should have entered a rocket and pushed through the atmosphere for an hour or two. True, they were in space the hour they started. But space is vast — and they must go on, and on, and on — even to the surface of the moon. If God permits, man will yet go on to Mars, and eventually from solar system to solar system, and from galaxy to galaxy, through the unbounded heavens!

Now, God has made us partakers of HIS SPIRIT, and that simply means He has called us to explore the inexhaustible sphere of the DEEP THINGS OF GOD and the INFINITE SUMMITS of His glory, power, and holiness. Our spirit has been quickened by His Spirit for this very purpose: “that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God” (I Cor. 2:12). The natural mind cannot discover these things, the religious mind can never uncover these things, hence the Spirit of God is sent into our spirit to reveal them unto us and to search out and explore “ALL THINGS, yea, the deep things in God” (I Cor. 2:10).

NAMES OF BLASPHEMY

“So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast, *full of names of blasphemy*, having seven heads and ten horns” (Rev. 17:3).

Here we are informed that this beast upon which the woman rides, is full of names of blasphemy. It is not one name but many names, for the beast is filled with them. This word “blasphemy” requires special translation, or decoding. It was a familiar word in the New Testament era. It is not used so much today, but it does have its modern counterpart. Why did the Jews of Jesus' day call Him a blasphemer? That was always their charge against Him! It was because He dared to call God His Father and to call Himself the Son of God. Therefore, they called Him a blasphemer because He was not teaching and operating according to the rules and regulations which *they* had set down — His doctrine was not that of the scribes and Pharisees, but He said that He spoke only what He heard personally from His Father. His entire message and ministry was outside of the “box” constructed by the religious leaders of the Jews. Today if a lawyer is not operating according to the rules laid down by the Bar Association he is called non-ethical or a *malpractitioner*. Just so, if a physician is not following the rules of treatment laid down by the Medical Association, he is labeled a *malpractitioner*. This gives you our modern counterpart of the ancient term *blasphemy*.

Thus we can see that this beast upon which the woman rides symbolizes malpractice, that is, he appropriates to himself what belongs to God; he dishonors Him, vilifies Him, shamelessly offends all that is true and godly — blasphemes Him. That is what both the world and religion do — they usurp the place of God in men's lives, putting their authority above God's truth, dominating men's lives through malpractice! They are not doing things *God's way*! It is not the Father Himself speaking and acting through them. Rather, it is the elevation of Self to either impress, influence, coerce, or control men. You see this plainly in nearly all the rulers of the world's systems, and if you refuse their domination you will be persecuted, discriminated against, fined, imprisoned, exiled, or excommunicated! Oh, yes!

I don't know whether you have ever looked up the word blasphemy, and what it actually means. You can look up the Greek word in Strong's Concordance or the English word in Webster's Dictionary, and you will find that blasphemy relates primarily to religious and spiritual ideas and efforts, or words and actions which are against God or sacred things. What could be more blasphemous than religion without the Spirit? One of the worst things men have done is to create false images of God in their thinking, their preaching, and their acting. Most of the church groups today place a name on the front of their building, and usually the name that they put there bespeaks the highlight of what they believe. I do not say that is wrong, however, when the name becomes something so obviously contrary to truth, as "Lutheran Church," "Methodist Church," "Mennonite Church," or "St. Peter's Church," it indeed becomes a *name of blasphemy*. Jesus said, **"I will build my church..."** If the church is *His* church, then when, where, and how did it become Luther's church or Menno Simon's church or St. Peter's church? When you see this beast kicking up the dust as he carries the harlot through the spiritual wastelands of the wilderness of the soul *full of names of blasphemy*, it is not difficult to understand that blasphemies point especially to religious names, concepts, and practices of all kinds. We must face this fact! The blasphemy may be that which *distorts*, *diminishes*, or *impugns* the character of God, the truth of God, the word of God, the purposes of God, the ways of God, or the will of God. Or it can be that which *supplants* or *usurps* the true things of God!

Sects, denominations, and cults have all come into being through the love and elevation of something else rather than the Lord Himself. Oh, how we need to learn that Christ is ALL! And then let Him be *all* IN ALL! Some are followers of man, joining themselves to some charismatic leader or eloquent preacher who can sway their emotions and tickle their ears. Some become followers of specific doctrines and name their movements after the doctrines. The doctrines take precedent over Christ, and unless one believes that doctrine just as they do they will have nothing to do with that person no matter how precious a saint he or she may be or how devout their love for the Lord. Different forms of church government and orders have divided the Lord's people into separate little groups who will not associate with one another. This is a heartache to God and hateful to Him! This is the sectarian spirit, and this is the very spirit that begets all the blasphemous names upon the beast of carnality! These systems are called harlots because the love which should only be for the Lord Himself has been transferred to someone or something else. They are not known for their intimate association with the Lamb, but for their allegiance to someone or something other than the Lamb! Even the Bible can be loved, revered, and exalted to a position in our affections above the Lord our Lover! There are churches which call themselves "Bible Churches." Where do they get that idea? The church is not the church of the Bible — it is the church of CHRIST! Christ is ALL! When the Bible is elevated to a position above Christ it is transmuted into an *idol*. I heard of one brother who had left a group known as "The Move." When he was asked why he had left he answered, "Because the Move was being preached and exalted above the Mover!"

George Hawtin brought anointed insight into this great mystery when he penned the following words: "May the spirit of the living God lay His finger of inspiration upon all that is true, enlightening the eyes of our understanding, giving us abundantly of the wisdom of God that we may be able to discern and easily differentiate between that virgin church without spot or wrinkle, which Jesus Christ is preparing for Himself, and that bawdy harlot system, full of names of blasphemy, who with her multiplied sects and denominations now proudly boasts, 'I set a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow' (Rev. 18:7). One would certainly think that God's people would readily see the difference between the virgin and the harlot, but such is not the case. Would God that the eyes of all men could now see the hidden mystery of Christ and the true church! Would God that all men could see that this hidden mystery, this pearl of great price, has nothing in common with that tradition-ridden system which men in all walks of life believe to be *the church*. So thoroughly do they believe this vast system of denominations to be *the church* that they willingly follow it all their lives, giving their time, their talent, and their abundance of wealth to the upbuilding of that which, being increased in goods and having need of nothing, has made herself drunk with the blood of the saints and thrust Christ Himself outside her doors.

"Thus it was that at the beginning of this dispensation of grace the Lord began that special phase of His aionian purpose, the calling out of a people who would be in the image of Jesus Christ, members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, the *ecclesia of God*. Never did He call them to become members of one of man's denominations. He called them to become members of *Himself, of His body, of His flesh, and of*

His bones. That called out company, which was to form the *living body of Christ*, is the *true and only church*, the great *mystery* of this age of grace. There was then none other church but this. There is today no other church than this. Man has organized his multiple *imitations* of God's church, giving each group some special name to add to the ever increasing confusion of saint and sinner alike, but God recognizes *none of them* as His. He wraps the whole mass of confusion into one great bundle and describes this abominable mystery of man's making as a woman sitting on a scarlet colored beast, full of names, denominational names, sectarian names, which the Spirit declares to be *names of blasphemy*.

"This is the subtle foliage of church tradition which Satan has spread to bury and smother the true ecclesia, but the Lord recognizes none of it as His. He is still admiring that spotless virgin church which has been rising in the heavenly realm throughout the centuries and which He has kept separate and holy unto Himself, as pure today as it was in the beginning. In the very beginning the Lord added to the true church daily such as should be saved, and I have confidence to believe that every day since then during all these long centuries of time He has been adding daily and hourly to that same mysterious church such as should be saved. It cannot be otherwise, for just as there is still in the earth today that gaudy harlot upon her beast there is likewise still upon earth in this hour the pure and glorious virgin clothed with the sun who is in travail to bring forth a manchild.

"So important to the plan of God is this mysterious ecclesia, the *true church*, His body, that He chose *each member* of it *before* the world was founded or ever begun. Before the stars were rolled out in their orbits or the sun and moon took their watch in the heavens, the all-wise Father brought forth the plan of the ages, rejoicing the hearts of the sons of God till the morning stars sang together and the sons of God shouted for joy. He chose the members of His ecclesia before the foundation of the world and ordained that they should be holy and without blame before Him in love (Eph. 1:3-10). This is the true ecclesia of God. It is farther removed from that many-headed monstrosity of man's building than day is removed from night, east is removed from west, or Christ is removed from Belial. The ecclesia, the true church of God, though still a pilgrim and a stranger in the earth, sitteth together with Christ in heavenly places, far above all power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age, but in that which is to come" — end quote.

Even some of God's elect have been deceived into taking upon them *names of blasphemy*. The firstborn Son of God, speaking of the scribes and Pharisees, commanded His disciples, "*But all their works they do to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi (Teacher, Master, Leader). But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Teacher, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you, shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased: but he that shall humble himself shall be exalted*" (Mat. 23:5-12).

How my heart is pained when I see men of God taking upon themselves the titles of Babylon! There is, I believe, no title assumed by man that is more a "name of blasphemy" than the commonly used title "Reverend." The word appears only once in the whole of scripture, and this is what it says: "*Praise ye the Lord. I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation. He sent redemption unto His people: He commanded His covenant for ever: holy and REVEREND IS H-I-S N-A-M-E!*" (Ps. 111:1,9). And the Lord Jesus says, "*Be ye not called Rabbi (teacher, master, leader): for one is your Teacher, even Christ: AND ALL YE ARE BRETHREN.*" We are not "reverends" — we are BRETHREN! Every son of God is the brother of every other son of God, and we are all the younger brethren of our illustrious Elder Brother, the Lord Jesus Christ!

Yet even sweet men of God allow themselves to be addressed as "Reverend" or "Father" or "Bishop" or "Teacher" or "Leader" or some other name of blasphemy. I have known precious men of God who for years were my "brother" in Christ, until suddenly one day I discover that my brother is now called "Doctor"! And now I am expected to recognize him as "Dr. So-in-so." Do you know what "Doctor" means? In the Greek it is *didaskalos*. *Didaskalos* means "Master." One of its Greek synonyms is the word *kathegetes* from

which the words “Rabbi” and “Master” are translated in the verse quoted above from Matthew 23:8. Both Greek words have the same identical meaning and usage in scripture. Both words mean guide, teacher, instructor, leader, master — *Doctor!* It is the same as Rabbi! It is instructive to note that the words Rabbi, Master, and Doctor disappear from the New Testament after the resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus. None of the apostles or ministries in the church were addressed by these titles!

So do you know what it means when a man says that he is a “D.D.”? You know, the boys used to tease them and say, “Dead Dog,” and I even heard someone say, “Devil Doctor.” But it means Doctor of Divinity. And Webster’s Dictionary defines Doctor of Divinity as “*a teacher of religion!*” Oh, yes! It is a title of Babylon, hatched in Babylon, used in Babylon, perpetuated by Babylon — by THE RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS OF MAN! There is no denying it. I must ask, Who made my brother my brother? God made him my brother by begetting him with the incorruptible seed of the word of God and raising him up into the life of sonship! The question follows: Who made him a “Doctor”? Did the Holy Spirit confer that title upon him? Was it given to him by prophecy with the laying on of hands? Did an angel from heaven appear one bright morning to inform him that God was now making him a Doctor? Is “Doctor” a gift of the Spirit or one of the five-fold ministries? In fact, was it not a man-made *system* or *organization* or *theological institution* that granted him his degree, his *doctorate*, whether it be earned or honorary? Now “Brother Brown” is become “Doctor Brown”! Does that make him more spiritual? Does it give him a greater anointing or greater *spiritual* authority? Does it have anything at all to do with sonship ministry or the kingdom of God? Or is it not merely that which feeds the ego — one of the names of blasphemy borne by the beast carrying the harlot!

Notice — the beast which carries the woman has *many names* — is full and running over with them, in fact. The woman has *one name*. John does not give us the *many names* upon the beast, but he does give us the *one name* upon the harlot. “And upon her forehead was *a name* written, MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” (Rev. 17:5). Though the woman has but one name, she has *many daughters* and it should be evident that each of them has a name! Methinks the names of the daughters are the same names that are upon the beast, the very abominations of which she is the mother! This all seems so mysterious. But these are just varying pictures of the same reality. Any name, other than the name or nature of Christ in the spirit and by the spirit — worldly or religious — *is blasphemy!*

Come now, ye ministers of the whore, did she not give you the names you bear, the names of Vicar, Monsignor, Priest, Reverend, Clerk, Curate, Parson, Father, Doctor of Divinity, Superintendent, Overseer, President, Bishop, and a score more — did not the whore give you all these names and titles and are they not among the vast number of *names of blasphemy* inscribed upon her beastly nature?

Well did brother Carl Schwing write: “Too long have we clung to the doom and woes of a tired, dying, old age. An age when the remorse for sin has fled from the peoples of the earth. An age when both Catholic and Protestant faiths sleep together in the bed of the great harlot, Babylon. An age when the people of God look unto men for the word...always dreaming that he is God’s anointed for the hour...such hope and faith only bring forth the deception of Babylon and the wedge of gold. An age when those who led souls to the Lord, kept them for themselves and for their denominations, making them followers of men, thus robbing God of the souls that were rightfully His. Even to this great hour there are those who seek disciples...those who would attempt to revive the past and awaken that which the Father has put to rest.

“Some see the Reformation as the coming forth of the ‘true church’...others see it as the birthing of the daughters of Babylon. While the multitudes search the scripture and argue over their own interpretations, there are a few that seek Him, and find Him, beyond the sacred page. While Christians wait for a ‘rapture,’ the sons of God sit with their Elder Brother in the heavenly places. Babylon is more than a duly recognized organization, she is more than creeds and doctrines...she is a body of men, both in and out of the system, being the heartbeat and source of her growth. She has deceived the wisest of men, the lowly of heart, and the hungry of soul; now she would deceive the very Elect...if that were possible. Every name of blasphemy upon her ugly forehead is called a ‘church’...honored for centuries by countries, worshipped by mankind, and declared by all to be the bride of Christ. The church of Jesus Christ, which is His body, is holy, not

having spot or wrinkle. Though it appears to be few in number, the Father has always had a hidden number upon the earth known only to Him. They never bore a name other than His, and they withdrew from all who bore the names of men, movements, or organizations. At the Father's appointed time the members of His Christ Body shall arise in a triumphant display of manifestation.

"When I was a Catholic we waited for the word from Rome. After I was converted to the Lord Jesus Christ I attended the Assemblies of God, where we waited for the word from Springfield. And finally, as I sat inside the little 'Latter Rain' church, we waited for the word from Canada. I did not find life in any of it...because there was no life in it. Christ is Life! Christ is Holiness! Christ is Truth! Christ is the Word, and it is to Him, and Him alone, that we now look. Christ in us is the glory the whole creation awaits! Long before Genesis 1:1 *He was*...and long after Revelation 22:21 *He is*. Hallelujah! Many of you have wondered who I am and what I am. I am not a teacher or a prophet. I do not bear a great title, nor do I seek the praise of men. I am, so to speak, a 'sower'...I have gone out to sow the seeds of the kingdom. I seek no reward except the Father's good pleasure. I am one of you... I seek a better country whose Builder and Ruler is God. I am like you...I yearn for the spirit to rule over the outward man. I am part of you...for I too bear the suffering of Jesus in my body. And with you I look up...for total redemption draws near. I sat with you in another time and in another place...and we all shouted for joy! We share together our birthright in Christ Jesus and we share the longing for our manifestation: the hour of truth and freedom for all creation. Hallelujah!

"Truly we are Blood relations...born of His Spirit before there was time, place, or things. But most important is what He is in us. He is more beautiful than beauty. He is richer and fuller than life. We are not dreamers, we share a vision. We are seeing beyond the limitations of the past, beyond the consummation of the age...beyond the millennium. It is a vision we shared long ago within our Father's House. The vision of the finished plan — man in the image and likeness of God. The vision of a place in Him where condemnation and punishment are met by mercy, a place where light overpowers all darkness. A place where reconciliation replies to the cry of vengeance. And when '*It is done*' is heard, a beginning rises like ten thousand suns...for all things, good and evil, light and darkness, truth and error, life and death, hell and the grave, have all served in His perfect plan to establish forever His glorious kingdom upon the earth, within the hearts of all mankind, and upon all creation, unto the filling of the universe and all therein. This vision leads to attainment...and attainment is the accomplishment of predestination.

"Now, I must speak freely and plainly. This I can do since I am not bound to any man, or any group. This has burned within my heart and spirit for some time. I feel the time has come to speak of it. I have been watching this develop, and I know by the spirit that this thing must stop and be put to rest in the forgotten memories of things that are past. There are some that are building strongholds...they are, as it were, placing the names of men upon their foreheads. For, they are saying: 'I am of Hawtin'...' 'I am of Eby'...' 'I am of Mueller'...' 'I am of Prinzing'...' 'I am of Schwing'...and the list of names continues as long, if not longer, than the many names of Babylon. Consequently, there is an air of confusion...there is envy, strife, and division creeping into the place of sonship and the kingdom.

"Paul was displeased with the Corinthians for this very reason, and I believe the Father to be displeased today. We who write and minister are nothing...GOD THAT GIVETH THE INCREASE IS ALL! If we allow the people to follow us, or cling to us...we are just as guilty. Are we going to allow the spirit of Babylon to continue a birthing process among us? I know that some will disagree, but 'meetings' of all kinds have this 'fellowshipping' effect upon the people. First, just a 'few' gather for fellowship, then a special meeting with Brother ----- visiting the brethren...and more often than not a little 'clique' is formed, their get together then produces and promotes division...the positive proof of man following man.

"Please, allow me to share some things I have been hearing. 'I cannot believe that Brother ----- sat at my table and slept in my room.' 'Oh, I do not read anyone's writings except Brother -----.' 'You must come and meet this good brother, he is so wonderful.' 'God is calling this assembly, please come and hear this dear brother.' 'I feel so good after talking with Brother -----.' 'I don't want to hear anyone preach except Brother -----' 'I just love sending money to Brother -----.' 'The only time we hear truth is when Brother ----- is in town.' I was recently reprimanded for saying that Brother ----- is just a man. WE HAVE DRIVEN

THIS WORD 'BROTHER' INTO THE GROUND! It takes very little to be rejected by the '*brethren*'...that is how shallow all this 'good brother' stuff is" — end quote.

What a timely word that is! May he who has ears to hear, *hear!*

To be continued...

J. PRESTON EBY