

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 195

MYSTERY BABYLON

(continued)

"And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Rev. 17:5).

*"And the woman which thou sawest is **that great city (Babylon)**, which reigneth over the kings of the earth" (Rev. 17:18).*

In our previous studies on this subject we have seen that in John's visions in the book of Revelation two women and two cities are clearly presented. One of the women is a pure virgin, clothed with the resplendent glory of Christ. The other woman is a harlot, gaudily attired with scarlet and purple, and decked with gold, precious stones, and pearls. One of the cities is the holy city, New Jerusalem. The other is called Mystery Babylon the Great. In the symbolism of prophecy a "woman" signifies a *church* and a "city" signifies a religious or spiritual *government*. Thus, the virgin woman represents the true church, the bride of Christ, and the harlot woman represents the false church, the fallen, corrupt, apostate church systems of man. The "holy city, New Jerusalem" is the symbol used to represent the established rule and government of God composed of the holy and perfected bride of Christ and the overcoming sons of God. "Mystery Babylon" can be nothing else but a church which is also a religious government, a great ecclesiastical kingdom, backed by the power and influence of the world — the carnal church systems of man exalted to power and dominion in the earth.

Let us look at that young virgin church which Jesus brought forth in the earth when He came in the power of the Spirit. What a flood of light fell upon the world in the ministry of Jesus and His apostles! The gift of the Holy Ghost, with its attending gifts of power, knowledge, and utterance, followed on the ascension of the risen Saviour. The church, the body of Christ, was birthed, and gathered from Jew, Israelite, and Gentile alike, a vast multitude into its bosom. The shadows of the Law were replaced by the glorious and eternal realities of a living, indwelling Christ. In those first holy years Christ was the only Head of the church and unity and harmony flowed like a river and the body of Christ was one. There was no government but the government of the Spirit! Love and wisdom shone like the sun from the mind of God! When the human body knows no government but the government of its head, all is order and unity, and there is health and power. So also it was with the body of Christ!

And what glorious days those were! One only has to read the book of Acts to see how much God blessed His people in those days. Mighty signs and wonders were performed as God confirmed His word with signs following. The word of God, anointed by the Holy Spirit, swept the world like a prairie fire. It encircled the mountains and crossed the oceans. It made kings to tremble and tyrants

to fear. It was said of those early Christians that they turned the world upside down! — so powerful was their message and spirit. In spite of persecution it grew and multiplied, for God dwelt mightily in the midst of His people. The knowledge of the glory of the Lord covered the earth as the waters cover the sea. Paganism fell. That corrupt and inhuman state of things was swept away by the power of the gospel that broke forth upon the empire of the Caesars. The mighty Roman Empire yielded up its idol temples, sheathed its persecuting sword, and sat down as a disciple at the feet of Christ and His apostles.

In the midst of such a precious walk in the Spirit the apostle John, banished to the desolation of Patmos, was caught up in spirit and in the visions of God and foresaw that the church would spread over the world, and that, becoming popular, many would arise within its ranks who would appreciate its *form* without having been transformed by its *spirit*. Grace had wrought a wondrous work, but alas! with many the *inner nature* remained unchanged. The natural man with his carnal mind was still at enmity with God, and the cloak of Christianity could not long conceal his corruption. The beautiful infant virgin church was not very old before the seeds of *rebellion* against the Headship and the living presence and power of Christ began to appear. We read of false teachers, false prophets, false brethren, and false apostles exerting their influence and control over the people. We read of hard-bitten old *Judaizers* who insisted on adding the bondage of their law to the liberating grace of Christ and the unfettered walk in the Spirit, perceiving not that those who freely partake of the grace of God and walk and live in the Spirit and by the Spirit already have the very *spirit of the law* written in their minds and engraven in their hearts!

The very moment that the love of God, the truth of God, and the power of His indwelling Spirit begin to wane from our spirits and fly out the windows of our soul, then *external forms, rituals, and outward observances* of all kinds with all their emptiness and foolishness stalk boldly through the door of that temple which we are. Then men begin to cry for SOMETHING OTHER THAN CHRIST, or for something IN ADDITION TO CHRIST, and the dark mystery of Babylon begins its mysterious formation within their hearts and its subtle rule in their midst. It is impossible to either fully understand or adequately explain the many ways that the mystery of Babylon works. Even before the first apostles had passed from this life, a spirit and system had set in among the saints of the Lord and many people were embracing the confusion that comes with Babylon's mixture of flesh and spirit, truth and error, and light and darkness. They were instituting rules and regulations, laying down laws and commandments, formulating creeds, observing days, establishing sacraments and ordinances, performing rituals and ceremonies, elevating human government, and becoming disciples of Paul, of Apollos, of Cephas, and of many others. The Babble had begun and the harlot had mounted her beast and begun her swift ride through the desert of carnality!

Before too many years had passed men began to set themselves up as "lords" over God's people in place of the Holy Spirit. Instead of conquering by the power of the Spirit and by Truth — as in the early days — men began to substitute *their* ideas and *their* methods. Soon the glory and power, and the presence of God in the morning-time church began to be eclipsed, and the power of carnal-minded men gradually took the place of the awesome presence of God and the leadership of His Spirit. Consequently, man's carnal understanding was put upon the scriptures, and as the spirit of Christ fled from their midst, men established a vast and elaborate system of *substitutes* to take the place of spiritual reality. When one does not possess *reality* then something else will be used to fill

the void — to cite only one example — instead of expressing the power and glory of the indwelling Spirit he will burn incense and sprinkle holy water!

The powerful, mighty, glorious presence of the indwelling Christ was supplanted by endless rituals, ceremonial cleansings, outward observances of feast days, holy days, communions, robes, miters, shrines, cathedrals, holy orders, seminaries, catechisms, candles, incense, prayer books, and a hundred more things which have no life of God in them. The ministry could only teach and practice these things because the holy dove of the Spirit had flown away and they had lost the presence of HIM. As the blind led the blind the visions of the people were in error and darkness, and the pure vision and experience of ***Christ living and reigning in His people*** was lost to them. An apostasy of a dark and dreadful nature arose, and in the progress of centuries assumed enormous proportions, and a character so diabolic, as to exceed in guilt ALL the idolatries of the people of Israel in the Old Testament times. The greater light granted was abused and perverted, until it became a darkness exceeding any previous darkness — and the central period of its duration is, by common consent, called “THE DARK AGES”! The religion of Christ became, gradually, the religion of antichrist. Carnal observances replaced spiritual experience, the ceremonial took the place of indwelling life, human tradition obscured the word of God, human authority asserted itself in opposition to the leadership of the Holy Spirit, and idolatry replaced true and spiritual worship!

As the flesh asserted itself the well of spiritual life ran dry, and all sources of free-flowing truth and life and light ceased from what was known as “the church,” and as the drought increased the land of Christendom became parched and made as hard as stone from the calloused dust that was supposed to be pliable, moldable clay formed into vessels of honor and respect and glory unto the King. This arid desert where no green tree of spiritual life grows is just where John in vision first beheld the harlot! *“And he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast...”* Ah, I do not hesitate to tell you that lurid woman in the desert claims to be the church, and there is indeed religion there, but it is a hollow mocking form; worship is there, but it consists in lip service and genuflections, not that worship in spirit and in truth that the Father seeks; the word of God is there, but it is locked in the prison-house of blinding tradition; adoration is there, but it is the adoration of a Christ unknown to those who know Him in the Spirit and by the Spirit — and often it is the adoration of saints and angels, of Pope and Virgin Mary, of picture and crucifixes, of statues, shrines, altars, wafers, buildings, programs, personalities, pageantry, and of a bearded God in the sky. Before all these they bow! How *low* the blind leaders of the blind bend, before the idol-God they create!

We, as some of you, have been through all of this, and we became sick of it all, and now, praise God, we can sing with the sweet Singer of Israel, “My soul is escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowlers, the net is broken and I am escaped” (Ps. 124:7). It was so wonderful to be free from it all and simply worship and walk with the Lord as the Spirit led us to do! Once we begin to KNOW GOD BY THE SPIRIT, once we begin to turn loose of all the “props” of religion, and His Spirit commences to stir and reign within our hearts, giving us a taste of the powers of the age to come — why would men turn back to the beggarly elements of the world, to those things wherein is no life or reality?

God’s true church is not contaminated with the defiling pollutions of Mystery Babylon. There is a little flock, there is a body of Christ, its members are scattered abroad and almost

invisible to the great religious Babylon. They are seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal, and they are the called and chosen and faithful who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. They are those who have turned to God in the spirit from all the religious idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for the glory that shall yet be revealed when God's sons come into their own. They are those who have not the *form*, but the *power* of godliness, those who keep themselves unspotted from the world, and overcome all things by faith. Its ministers are not robed in material robes of scarlet and gold; they are robed in the righteousness of Christ. They are not trained in the seminaries and teachings of men, but by the spirit of grace and wisdom and revelation from God on High. They are not busy interpreting the creeds of the church councils of man; their very lives are the interpretation of the Christ enthroned in their hearts. They have no interest in persuading people to believe *what* they believe; their whole ministry is to bring people into intimacy of fellowship and vital union with *God* and His *Christ*.

In other words, GOD IS SUFFICIENT for this church He has birthed in the world of men! This church stands in need of nothing outside of God Himself! Because God is sufficient, because the Christ within is ALL, this church is left entirely free from all encumbrances to pursue the work God has given it of developing unto maturity the chosen ones so that the church may *be* the revelation of God's manifold wisdom to all the principalities and powers in the celestial realms, and the hope of all creation for deliverance and restoration to the great and eternal kingdom of God! Let all who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship to God know that *Christ within IS SUFFICIENT!* All else is — Mystery Babylon!

The truth that is set like a diamond in the pages of God's word is the absolute and total *sufficiency* of the Christ within. To say that Christ Himself is not sufficient for our whole life as sons of the most High, that the indwelling Spirit is not enough, that there is something we must do to add to, supplement, or somehow improve on what *He is within us* is an insult to God and an affront to our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet we see men doing this on every hand! The carnal mind is never able to take God at His word! It continually seeks to initiate some additional actions or services on the natural plane to take the place of pure spiritual reality. Men do not need religion. They need CHRIST. They do not need to know creeds or catechisms. They need to KNOW HIM. They do not need to perform ritual, ceremony, or ordinances. They need to EXPERIENCE CHRIST. Tradition can do nothing for them but cause them to walk in blindness, but Christ is the light of men and the light of the world, and all who follow Him will not walk in darkness but have the light of life. This is why God will judge, throw down, burn, and utterly destroy great Babylon; and this is why God is building up His holy city, the pure bride of Christ and the holy sons of God, New Jerusalem, to shine with His scintillating light of life to lighten all peoples and all nations, filling the whole earth with His glory!

New Jerusalem is the capital city of God's kingdom, and will reign over that kingdom for ever and ever: Babylon is the capital city of the great kingdom of religious Babylon, which kingdom shall pass away. The mount Zion, where the "many brethren" of Jesus reign, is the chief eminence, the highest pinnacle attainable in grace in Jerusalem: Babylon is founded upon seven mountains of shame. The true church is a woman crowned with twelve stars of divine and heavenly government: the false church is also a woman, with her own name and shame written upon her forehead. The head or husband of the true woman, God's church, is the Christ: the head or husband of the false church is her paramours, the kings of the earth. The true woman brings forth children unto God —

the manifest sons of God: the false woman brings forth her harlot brood. The city of God, New Jerusalem, is to be the habitation of God for evermore: the city of Babylon shall become heaps, the habitation of bitterns and owls, "...and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts" (Isa. 14:23; 34:11-17).

In relation to a man's involvement with, and departure from, Mystery Babylon, I have not read a testimony more sobering and yet enthralling than that of the late George Hawtin. In his little booklet *Mystery Babylon* he relates his heart-gripping experience in these words:

"Forgive me if I boast a little, for this boasting is not the kind that savors of pride, but rather brings great sadness to my heart. There may be many men in the world qualified to speak of these things, but few have been more qualified by experience than I both to see and discern the many ramifications of the Babylonish system. I was born into the system many years ago. I walked its streets and wore its garments before I ever knew Christ as my personal Saviour. The denomination was everything. It mattered little how men lived or whether they had any personal experience with God. The thing that mattered was whether or not you were a church-goer. You did not hide the Babylonish garment in your tent; you wore it with pride. Neither did you hide the talents of silver or the wedge of gold. The more you contributed to the organization the better Christian you were. Then one day I found Christ and my heart was filled with joy because of a love I had for Him. I wanted to be near Him and point other men to Him. He was to me the center of all things and the most important person in all the universe. It was not long, however, before I saw that I was falling into another sect. They wanted me to speak their language and help to build their tower. Was I going to join them? Was I going to preach for them? Was I going to wear their garment? Was I going to be distinctly theirs? But God was leading me on, delivering me from the prisons of Babylon, opening the rusty gates, and leading me out into the broad ways of His grace divine.

"Perhaps it was a miracle. I do not think it was chance. I learned that men could be baptized with the Holy Spirit. So I sought and found this blessed new experience in God, and joys flowed like a river as the Comforter came in. But here again the arms of another daughter of Babylon began to enfold me. Was I going to join their church? Was I going to preach for them? Was I going to take out papers and credentials? This time I was persuaded, and I did, and for seventeen years thereafter I was a faithful slave of the organization, speaking its language and building its visible tower. But I was never fully satisfied, though I loved the work, I loved the people, and I loved the students of my old Bible School. Many dozens of them went out to minister far and wide and many found their way to distant and foreign lands. I am sure their rewards will be many, indeed.

"All the while there was a longing for a freedom which I did not know, a relationship with God that I did not have. Many times I taught the people that some day God would send a revelation of truth, but the very denomination we had so faithfully built would not be able to receive it. When finally that revelation did come, they were not able to receive it, and those of us who did receive were vomited like Jonah from the belly of the denominational whale, thrown up upon dry land, for we had sickened his stomach. God does not leave you in a dry land for long if you are bound to be one with Him. Should my life be very long on earth, I shall never be able to forget the glory, the awe, the reverence, the holiness, and the power that came to our class room as we waited on God that glorious 13th of February, 1948, when God began to do a new thing that was destined for a time to shake the church systems all over America. How we sang the songs of deliverance! How the

praises of God echoed down the corridors of the soul and re-echoed among the battlements of heaven! Music of heavenly choirs of earth went sweeping up the sky steeps while angels stood at heaven's gates and swept their harps of gold. Day after day, month after month the celestial wonder continued. Heaven came down our souls to greet and glory crowned the mercy seat. People came for thousands of miles to drink at the ever flowing fountain of life and it looked for a time like the walls of Babylon were to be broken down and the whole church would come marching to Zion.

“But the Babylonian captivity was not yet over. As I look sadly in retrospect now, I can see with clearness that the great and blessed move of God was not two years old before the sectarian spirit began to show its ugly head and men began to hide the Babylonish garment in their tents together with the *silver* and the *wedge of gold*. Much as we may despise the Babylonish garment, let me use this pun: The moment the gold gets its wedge in, we are on the way back to Babylon. It is true that we vociferously denied that we had become a sect. Oh, no! Not we! We had no name; we were not registered with the government as a sect and never would be. We had done away with many of the institutions that had characterized other sects. Gone were the Bible Schools. Gone were the church buildings. Gone were the hireling pastors. Gone were so many things that would have identified us with either the Mother of harlots or any of her daughters. The old Babylonish garment was well hidden deep beneath the earth of the tent, but it was there none the less, and the whole move was becoming more and more enfolded by another tentacle of the great octopus. Stricter and more rigid became the teaching and the discipline. There was to be no fellowship with anybody who was not within the confines of our ever narrowing circle. We were the true church. We were the elect. We stood on the foundation and all other men stood on sinking sand. No man must cast out a devil unless he followed us. No teaching was worth the time it took to tell it unless it originated with us. We were the most spiritual people in the world! We were going to reign in the Kingdom and even now we were beginning to reign! We had the gifts of the Spirit, and we were going to ‘call the shots’ in the tribulation.

“We did not know that through the years false apostles had crept in among us, men who were apostles in name only, who had never founded anything in their lives but were building on the foundation of others. We did not know that the doctrines and deeds of the Nicolaitanes (*which God hates* — Rev. 2:6) were prevalent among us. The word Nicolaitanes is formed by two Greek words: ‘nikao’ which means *to conquer* and ‘laos’ which means *the people* or the laity. This doctrine had reared its ugly head to the extent that the people had no voice in anything. The elders were no longer fathers, but men who were to carry out the will of those who were lords over the heritage of God. Everything was cut and dried and firmly enfolded in the arms of another of the harlot daughters of the Babylonian system. We boasted of the gifts of the Spirit, but what had become of them? Where were the healings? Where were the miracles? Where was the faith, the gift of languages, the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge? The only thing that was left was prophecy and it became a weariness to the flesh, flowing continually from the mind of man and scarcely ever having any fulfillment. Prophecy that has no fulfillment comes from one of two sources: from the mind of Satan or from the mind of man, but never from the mind of God. How often I have listened to people fumble for words as they prophesied thus giving the lie to their words having been inspired of God. How is the faithful city become a harlot! It was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers (Isa. 1:21).

“I shall never cease to thank God that I was vomited out of the belly of this whale also, for we never know the depths to which we have sunk until we are able to view Babel at a distance. Then and then alone our heart gives thanks to God for deliverance from another of the harlot daughters of Babylon. *‘My soul is escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowler, the net is broken and I am escaped.’* Nevertheless one is scarcely delivered from his bondage until another arm of the Babylonian octopus lies waiting to enfold him again. But the spirit of Babylon goes much deeper than sects and denominations. It is a mystery the spirit of which seems to be deep-rooted in the heart of man. It is like an octopus with many arms reaching in all directions. If it cannot catch you with one of its arms, it will enfold you with another. It is like a demon which, being cast out, will return with seven other demons more powerful and cunning than itself. You do not have to look for the spirit of Babylon in some great and powerful denomination; you will find it in your heart if you look close enough. Mystery, Babylon, is in the forehead!” — end quote.

Oh, yes, Mystery Babylon has found outward expression everywhere throughout the society around us, but we must heed the words that we just read alerting us to an expression of this wanton harlot which is more dangerous by far, and more subtle and seductive than any of her manifestations in the world of appearances. Three and a half centuries ago a brother by the name of Joseph Salmon penned these anointed and penetrating words of deep spiritual insight:

“Know therefore, O man, whosoever you are that judges the whore by these carnal conceptions of her, that you are far deceived by her in her fleshly appearances to you. Thus while sons of men seek to behold this strumpet in her proper sphere and center, they deceive themselves by looking too fleshly and carnal upon her. Know first then O man! that **THIS GREAT WHORE IS IN YOU**. While you seek to behold her without you, while you behold her in other men, **SHE IS IN THE MEANTIME ACTING IN A MYSTERY IN YOU**. While you despised the appearance of her in other men, she has by guile caught you, and has stolen your heart from God...while you think you have nothing to do with her, **SHE IS IN YOUR BOSOM**; while you think she is far distant from you, this is done in a Mystery and you see it not. Truly, until such time as the Lord takes a soul up into Spirit, though the wisdom of flesh appear openly to him, though she shows her very forehead, yet he cannot discern her in her appearances. But now when God has caught the soul into Spirit, and carried him away in Spirit, then he sees the whore in her apparitions. He beholds Mystery in the forehead, or palpable workings of the whore; Mystery in all her specious pretenses: and notwithstanding all her shows of glory, yet he sees that she is in deed and in truth ‘Babylon the Great’: the great confused whore, which breeds all the confusion of spirit in a Christian; and all the commotion, disturbance and out-cries that are in the heart of man...all the disorder that many a time is in the soul; every hard thought of God; every despairing imagination; all the gnawing of conscience of the creature. So that (I say) he now sees her to be the great Babel, or confused whore, who is the Mother of Harlots and abominations of the earth” — end quote.

DRUNK ON THE BLOOD OF SAINTS

“And I saw the woman *drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus*: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration” (Rev. 17:6).

The woman is said to be **drunk** from the blood of the saints and from the blood of the witnesses (martyrs) of Jesus. To be drunk means to be intoxicated, inebriated, besotted, overcome

by something induced, giving a false sense of reality. At first impression one might get the idea that the woman is drinking this blood. This, however, is not the case! The “woman” is a figurative description. She is also called a “city.” Thus the terms “drunk” and “blood” are also used metaphorically of the effect upon men who partake of the abominations of Babylon, being brought to a state of *mental, emotional, and spiritual* intoxication. Blood is used in the scriptures to signify LIFE, for “the *life* of the flesh is *in the blood*” (Lev. 17:11). To shed a man’s blood means to pour out his life. This is why the Lord Jesus said so emphatically, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and *drink His blood, ye have no life in you*. Whoso eateth my flesh, and *drinketh my blood, hath eternal life*” (Jn. 6:53-54). Jesus did not die in my place, as the church systems teach; rather, He shed His blood, that is, He *poured out His life* in order to *give it to us!* That is the great mystery of the sacrifice of Jesus! So we are exhorted to “drink” the blood of Christ, which is a physical impossibility, since His blood was spilled at the foot of the cross. We drink His blood by PARTAKING OF HIS LIFE which He has made available to us because of Calvary. Great is the mystery!

Knowing therefore that we are confronting *symbols* in all the scenes of John’s vision, we can see that the “blood of saints” and of “martyrs” are also symbols pointing to a reality. The “blood of martyrs” certainly indicates something beyond drinking the literal blood from physical martyrdom! Anyone can understand that. Can we not see that Babylon, its spirit together with the whole church system of man, is *hungry for power*. She thrives on the domination of human lives. She will absorb you into her system and will suck out of you every ounce of your life — your time, your money, your talent, your ability to think and act on your own, and to know God for yourself. She is drunk on the blood — the souls — the very *lives* of the saints! She exploits the blood of the saints. She takes God’s precious little children and enslaves them, causing them to labor and toil for her — for her grandiose plans, schemes, and programs to save the world.

Later on John revealed that “in her was found the blood of the saints.” In today’s terminology the statement could be framed thus, “In her was found the *very life-blood* of the saints.” What Babylon requires is every ounce of life-force that you have! She will demand your time, she will pilfer your money, she will exploit your talent, she will harness your anointing, she will capitalize on your giftings, she will control your ministry, she will dominate every step of your walk in God. She will use the life-flow of the saints and the witnesses of Jesus to enrich, enhance, and embellish her stature before men.

I mentioned that God has given us His life through Jesus and that life is the life of God and the life of the kingdom of God. As this life is raised up in us in the power and maturity of Christ within, the kingdom of God is established within us by life and as life. There are very special dealings of God within each of us in relation to the development of that life. The Lord Jesus put it this way: “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit” (Jn. 15:1-2). Every branch that **beareth fruit** — He **purges** it! The purpose of purging, or pruning, is to effect a concentration of the life. When all the branches of the vine are permitted to grow unrestricted there is a resulting debilitating or weakening of the life. It is like diluting a chemical — the more water you add, the weaker it becomes.

The nourishment and vitality of the vine are sapped by all the multitudinous branches, shoots, and tendrils, and utilized to keep them alive and bearing abundance of foliage rather than being

channeled into producing fruit. Thus, with the excess branches and shoots cut away, the life becomes more concentrated and stronger in those remaining, and the clusters of grapes become more rich and full. In like manner it is necessary that our natural tendencies, actions, and desires, with all carnal religious activities and exercises, must be cut away, so that the virtues and powers of our Lord be concentrated, wrought, and manifested in our lives. It has been my experience that God not only prunes away the sins of the flesh and the emotions and tendencies of the soul, but a great deal of religiousness — religious activities and *those involved in them* — as well. When Jesus speaks of “bearing fruit” He is not talking about “winning souls,” rather, He is speaking of the formation within our lives of **the fruit of the spirit** which is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. All these are the underlying nature of the sons of God who reign in the kingdom of God!

There was a time many years ago when we made the circuit, speaking for the Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship and various organizations and movements within the Pentecostal and Charismatic realms. Our desire was pure — to share the present truth of sonship and the kingdom of God — to inspire and bless and challenge any and all possible to the deeper life of the Christ within. Here and there we found an elect few who had ears to hear, and hearts to understand, but for the most part it became evident that we were merely “spinning our wheels.” Then, one day it dawned on me! Our word was not producing **fruit** in those places! Oh, they were delighted to have brother Eby come by and share his testimony, even minister a revelatory word, and perhaps prophesy over some people with the laying on of hands, momentarily satiating the intense craving in a few hearts for a richer diet of spiritual fare. But after I left, nothing changed! There was no fruit. There was no heightened vision, no maturing of life, no going *on* in God, no raising up of the kingdom of God within. These merely took the word we ministered, diluted it with their own shallow church program, and used it to further their own kingdom on a lower plane. Ah, they enjoyed drawing life from us so long as it didn’t require them to bear **kingdom fruit!**

As long as our ministry could be *used* to increase their branches and put on many beautiful leaves — the manifestation of life without fruit — we were welcome in their midst. But what they were doing was “sapping” the life out of us to enhance and embellish and strengthen their own Babylonish system! Suddenly the voice of the Spirit thundered authoritatively in my ear, “Enough!” And the Celestial Husbandman did a pruning work. He pruned away from my life a RELIGIOUS REALM that will draw life but will not bear fruit of that life. God does, indeed, prune *people* from us! “Every branch *in me* that beareth not fruit He TAKETH AWAY; and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.” The doom of the unfruitful is: They are TAKEN AWAY. I am not talking about them being eternally lost or going to everlasting hell. Oh, no! But they are pruned away and dealt with by God’s fire until they are changed and transferred into another dimension in God. There are multitudes today who loudly profess to be in Christ who yet do not bear fruit of the Christ life. Though they are branches of Christ, and His life in them produces abundance of foliage, God will cut off their life-supply that they may be seen as dry ones reserved unto a future day of His fiery dealings.

Those called to this high calling, who shall rule and reign with Christ in His kingdom, are being separated from all that binds them to a lower order, that they may enter into the fullness of His life. Many people find it a lot easier to be *one* with the Babylonish religious systems, where the

crowds are, where the excitement is, than to become separated to go out **beyond**, leading the way for others to follow. How I rejoice that God is now calling a people — sons of the kingdom — separated ones — to a realm beyond the clapping, beyond the revivals and conventions and seminars, into the new and seemingly strange paths of HIS LEADING. The prunings are not easy, friends and loved ones and precious brethren do not readily understand, especially the preachers and organizations set upon holding you within their pews and coffers. I do not doubt for one moment that many of these church programs are being used of God on some level, in spite of the worldly methods and fleshly techniques, to touch many lives with salvation, healings, and blessings. We are thankful to our heavenly Father for His blessing on every plane where He chooses to work, but when the call comes to leave behind the outer court of salvation and the holy place of the baptism in the Spirit in order to ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD, those called to be of the manchild company, to be kings and priests unto God, *come aside* to submit to His dealings and prepare for the glory soon to be revealed, to make ready for the next great move of God in the earth!

George Hawtin expressed this same significant truth when he wrote, “For over twenty years I have earnestly sought to show God’s people that the modern church system, whether Protestant or Catholic, which daily becomes more closely allied with the world, the flesh and the devil, is MYSTERY BABYLON. She is drunken with the blood of the saints. She saps and sucks their life away. While she grows richer in silver and gold, plush seats and lavish buildings, she robs the saints of their progress with God. She denies and contradicts all true revelation and so shuts out the transforming light of God’s glory. Her preachers preach and prophesy, but tell their people nothing they have not heard a thousand times as they rehash the philosophies of bygone years. They have taken away the *key of knowledge*. They enter not in and those who would enter they hinder. It is the bright shining of the face of Christ that brings the knowledge of the glory of God. I write these things because I know it is not possible for any Christian to proceed to the realm of the more excellent glory while he remains associated with the harlots of Babylon. ‘Give not your strength to women,’ was the exhortation of the wise man of Israel. It should not be difficult in the least to grasp the spiritual application of that statement, because the women here referred to are the ecclesiastical harlots of our generation, the entire church system, mystery Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.”

The harlot thrives on power. The more people she gets under her power, the more people she hypnotizes with her enchantments, the stronger she gets. Her sole motive is to survive. Like the mythological blob that eats buildings, cars, and everything else, she must continue to devour the blood of the saints to survive. She must continue to exert her authority over people, over precious saints, exploiting their gifts so that people can flow in, yield up their time, talents, money, yea, their very *lives*. Thus she gets people all involved, wrapped up, and enslaved in her program.

Some years ago Tony Salmon shared a word on how a technique called “Love Bombing” is used by various cults to draw new followers into their circle. He pointed out how, when you first encounter these groups, they treat you like you’re the greatest person on the face of the earth. They shower attention on you and flatter you, express deep concern for your needs, and pour out love upon you, all the love that your aching, hurting soul has longed for and craved so many years. A sense of “belonging” overwhelms you and you feel that you have finally found that for which you have long been seeking. That’s called “Love Bombing,” but the truth is that it is not practiced just by the “cults,” it is found also in the local church! It is used, perhaps in a milder form,

but it's still the same technique, by the church systems to captivate the lives and souls of men. From the moment you walk into the church building the "meeters and greeters" start pouring all this love upon you. The next thing you know you are mesmerized by the "friendly church." These folks have been trained to cast the net over you, they put out the bait, and as soon as you swallow the hook they expertly commence to "reel you in." The next thing you know they have stolen your soul — you now *belong* to them, hook, line, and sinker!

In the case of the cults, and some times even churches too, the first time you do something displeasing to them, you are given a harsh reprimand. The boom is lowered on you and suddenly you feel, "Oh my God, I'm going to lose their love — they won't love me any more!" At that moment they put their arms around you and assure you, "We love you anyway, we love you just as you are." You think, "Oh, they still love me!" The moment you receive that embrace, that spirit, they *own your soul*. They are guzzling down the blood of the saints. They own you, they have stolen your soul, you now belong to them. Why is it so easy for people to fall into this hypnotic trance — for that's exactly what it is — men are mesmerized by a technique that has nothing whatever to do with the work of the Holy Spirit! Ah, it is the allure of the woman, the enticement of artificial beauty, the wanton seduction of feigned love, and for a price promises of favors (blessings)! That is what the angel showed John in the wilderness! And even John the beloved, when he saw her, "***wondered with great admiration!***"

JOHN "WONDERED GREATLY"

"And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints...and when I saw her, *I wondered with great admiration*. And the angel said unto me, *Wherefore didst thou marvel?* I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns" (Rev. 17:6-7).

John "wondered greatly" at the scene of such a beautiful, attractive, and alluring woman riding on her beast in the wilderness. John, the beloved disciple whom Jesus loved, the one who rested his head upon the bosom of our Lord with intense spiritual love, *wondered* at this woman. John had beheld great and terrible scenes for many days in the visions of God in the spirit, yet, when confronted with this sight of Babylon, he "wondered with great admiration." The word describing John's wonderment should not be "admiration" — it was not admiration at all, it was a wonder of perplexed horror. John looked upon a picture that astounded him. He gazed upon something that appeared so beautiful and at the same time so hideously evil, that even he was astonished. With blank understanding he stared at the form of Babylon the Great. Thus, he questioned with bewilderment upon his countenance, his chin dropped, his mouth gaped open, his eyes widened — the scene was incredible! Most people are equally shocked today when they receive the revelation of who the harlot represents! Therefore the messenger said, "Why do you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman..." Wanting John to understand rather than wonder, the messenger began to unfold the mystery. So also does God want *us* to understand! If I did not believe that deeply and powerfully I would not devote so many articles to chapters seventeen and eighteen of the Revelation!

John was unable to comprehend the scene with his natural understanding, nor can any man understand the mystery with his carnal mind or natural reasoning. The spiritual mind must be

activated — and this is what happened to John when the messenger informed him, “I will *tell* you the mystery of the woman.” Isn’t it wonderful! When the Holy Spirit gives understanding all that was dark and mysterious becomes crystal clear and divinely recognizable. But the mind of the natural man remains exceedingly dark and void of understanding. Therefore do we read, “The beast that thou sawest was and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that *dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world*, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is” (Rev. 17:8).

“They that dwell on the earth” are the *earth-dwellers*, the carnal Christians who dwell in the lowlands of spiritual experience. As I have pointed out many times before in these messages, nearly all things in the book of Revelation take place in one of three symbolical realms — heaven, earth, and sea. The earth is the symbol of a realm higher than the sea, but lower than heaven, an in-between realm which at its highest peak kisses heaven, and at its lowest level embraces the sea, yet is, of itself, neither heavenly (spiritual) nor of the sea (degenerate humanity). The sea, as we have seen, comprises the masses of restless, surging, sinning, clamoring men and women who live only and completely after the unrestrained lusts of their flesh, while heaven comprises those seated together in the ascended Christ who walk only and completely after the spirit. Those that “dwell upon the earth” are a moral class, religious folk, with many upright citizens of the community and church-going Christian people in their ranks; but these, while not overtly wicked, are not spiritual either, but in most aspects of their thinking and daily living “mind earthly things.” They do not wallow in the lusts of the flesh of the body-realm, neither do they walk in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus in the spirit-realm. Their lives are lived out of the “earthly realm” of the *soul*.

The messenger tells John that it is these “earth dwellers” who shall *wonder* when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is, just as John himself *wondered* when he saw the beautiful but evil woman riding her beast! These have poor discernment of spiritual realities and have never experienced the abundant life of Christ in the heavenly places of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Those who are earth-dwellers are perplexed and void of understanding when they see the beast-nature ascend up out of the abyss. They are filled with consternation when the evil lurking right within their hearts rises up and defeats them again and again. Their hearts are smitten with confusion and disappointment when they see envy, strife, debate, betrayal, divisions, separations, and a thousand other eruptions of carnality among those who name the name of Christ.

It is because their names — that is, their *nature* — has not been written in the book of life — their nature does not correspond to the nature of the life of the Lamb — there is no heavenly or spiritual record of the Lamb’s life being raised up within them as their very own life or of them walking out and living out the divine and heavenly life on earth. It is just because the heavenly life is not their daily reality that the beastly nature within their breasts rises up again and again to disturb, torment, vex, overthrow, and defeat them. Just when they think they have won the victory and the beast within them *is no more*, they discover that the beast that *was*, and now *is not*, in fact *still is*! So these who believe the old man died at Calvary, or when they were baptized into the church, or in some other way, are the very ones who wonder, marvel, are astonished and stand aghast when they behold that beast of their own carnal nature appearing right within them and in their midst — again!

Those whose names *are* written in the book of life — who live in the heavenly and divine life of sonship — discern and understand the true nature of all things. These are they that John

beheld — “*And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, thou King of saints*” (Rev. 15:2-3).

Here I would share some blessed insights from the nineteenth century sermons of R. J. Campbell. “Now what do we think about the Lamb’s Book of Life today? Well, I will tell you what it is not. It is not a list of those whom God has agreed to admit to heaven because they firmly believe that someone else has done all that was necessary to get them there. It is God’s roll of honor. It is the glorious company of those who have suffered with Christ. It includes all whose lives have been willingly and cheerfully offered on the altar of love. The very phrase ‘the Lamb’s Book of Life’ is a declaration of this, and distinguishes it from every other list of names that was ever written. Those whose names are in the Book of Life are *life-givers*! They are the servants of Jesus, working in the spirit of Jesus to minister more abundant life to the world. They are believers, it is true; for no work worth doing has ever yet been done apart from the dynamic of faith. But they are not merely believers in the conventional sense; they are living sacrifices, filling up the measure that is behind of the sufferings of Christ in the service of creation. When we speak of the Lamb’s Book of Life we must never forget this! It is not merely the roll of those who have escaped something; it is the designation of those who have achieved something. No mere pious acceptance of the redeeming work of Christ; no comfortable acquiescence in the belief that He has given everything, and you have only to take, will qualify you for a place in the Book of Life. The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world is still being slain on the altar of human hearts, and wherever that divine sacrifice is offered new power and hope stream into this dark and sorrowful world.

“You must be feeling that this explanation of the Lamb’s Book of Life is not so sweet and beautiful as the one to which you have been accustomed, and which you greatly value. You may be feeling that this explanation of the Lamb’s Book of Life is not so sweet and beautiful as the one upon which you have been taught to dwell, and which has been such a blessing to you in your spiritual life. You may be saying to yourself, ‘I do not like this. I want to owe everything. I do not want to think anything else, nor can I readily believe that my place in that Book of Life has anything to do with my self-sacrifice, or anything else but the love of Jesus.’ We have got to see that the sacrifice of Jesus is no use unless it makes us *like Jesus*! It has to be repeated in us! As Paul has it, we have to become willing to be delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake that *the Life also of Jesus may become manifest in us*. There is no salvation that is not this, and the gratitude and reverence that we really owe to Jesus are gratitude and reverence for having made this possible. **THE LIFE HAS GOT TO BE MANIFESTED IN US!** I put it to you again: Which is worthier of Jesus, to believe that He has got us into heaven — a heaven from which all others are shut out — or to rejoice that He has shown us wherein true life consists? I do not care three straws whether I go to heaven or not — using the word for the moment in its conventional sense. But I do rejoice and thank God for that great Master and Redeemer of mankind who has shown me at an unspeakable cost what it is to *live out* His life among men. I wish I could fully live it, but I am frail and earthly, whereas He was divinely strong, and the light of God shown in all He said and did. And yet, no sooner have I realized this than my heart rises in loving thanks to Him once more for the assurance that human weakness and imperfection can and shall be transformed into divine strength and holiness by the power of the indwelling spirit” — end quote.

According to the words of the heavenly messenger those whose names are not written in the Book of Life, that is, those who are not living and walking out the Christ-life are amazed — they *wonder* — when they see the beast of the carnal nature asserting itself in their lives and in their religion. They encounter this beast which was, and is not, and yet is and it is exceedingly troublesome to them! But those whose names are written in the Book of Life, who are the very *personification* of HIS LIFE do not wonder — for they understand perfectly how the mystery of that nature, the mystery of iniquity, works both in men and in religious systems. And the Life in them GIVES THEM THE VICTORY OVER THE BEAST! These blessed ones stand upon the sea of glass, having the harps of God! They sing the song of Moses and the Lamb! They are the overcomers — the Book of His Life opened for all creation to read!

To be continued... J. PRESTON EBY