KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

e-book

FROM THE CANDLESTICK

TO THE THRONE

Book Eight

The Dragon and the Beasts

By J. Preston Eby
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Chapter 139
The Dragon, The Woman
And The Manchild

John beholds two great wonders, or signs, in heaven. In the first two verses of our text he presents the first of them, when he says, "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered" (Rev. 12:1-2). Then in verses three and four he presents the second sign: “And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads…and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born” (Rev. 12:3-4).

The second sign which is seen in heaven stands in terrible contrast with this glorious, yet helpless, woman and her new-born child. It is a dragon. Do you know what a dragon is? Have you ever seen one? Have you ever touched one? Have you ever heard one? Is there a zoo anywhere in the world that has a dragon in captivity? Is there an animal park where you can drive your car through and observe them? Has any naturalist photographer come back from the jungles or mountains or depths of the sea with a photograph of one? Has National Geographic magazine ever published a picture of a herd of dragons? According to Webster’s dictionary a dragon is “a mythological or imaginary monstrous animal resembling a winged crocodile, with fiery eyes, crested head, enormous claws, and often spouting fire.” A dragon in scripture is not any natural animal of God’s creation, but rather a monster. Not a real monster, of course, for it is a mythological creature created in the imagination of man, just as little children in their imaginations create within themselves the fear of the “boogey-man” or the “monster” lurking in the darkness, under the bed, or in the closet. And just like little children, people give power to that image which they have imagined! Image and imagine both come from the same root word. Can you not see that this locates this monster in the MIND OF MAN! The mind is his base of operation and his sphere of activity.

In the book of Genesis this one called Satan and the devil begins as a little serpent and by the time we come to the book of Revelation he has grown into a great red dragon! But it is a dragon of strange appearance. In the first place it is of a red color, the color of blood, war, and destruction. It speaks of flaming heat, of intensity of fierceness, of bloody warfare and death. And this well describes the inmost nature of Satan, as everywhere portrayed. Furthermore, it is a red dragon of tremendous proportions for it is described by John as a “great” red dragon. Therefore it is a great and powerful and bloodthirsty monster that John beholds in spirit! By his very appearance we may say that he signifies some tremendous and evil power.

As I mentioned above, in that long ago paradise Adam and Eve met with a serpent, and there the serpent was none other than the devil. And with that in mind we find little
difficulty in discovering the identity of this dragon for the simple reason that our chapter tells us in plain words that it is the devil, for we read: “And the great dragon was cast out, that ancient serpent, called the devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world” (Rev. 12:9). The serpent is the fittest symbol of the devil because of its subtlety and shrewdness. But the little deceiving serpent of Eden does not adequately picture the devil today! The devil of today’s world must be symbolized as a monster serpent. The little serpent in Eden was of no particular color and had one head and no horns at all. But the great red dragon has seven heads and ten horns!

He is described as “the dragon.” By this title we are to think of him as the old adversary, the devil, but now in possession of great power. In the garden he was the crafty little serpent, using deceit alone. Now he uses coercion, force, and violence! As the subtle serpent came with stealth into the garden of Eden defiling with selfhood the hearts of the parents of the human race, making a murderer of Adam’s first son, so has he developed in mankind from that small and unimposing beginning to become a monster of gigantic dimensions filling the whole world with religious delusion, religious fanaticism, and fleshly corruption. In Genesis Satan entered Eden as a cunning little serpent, but in Revelation he has grown into a monstrous fire-belching dragon in the heavens and in the earth! In Genesis Satan is an enchanting serpent indwelling a mere handful of people, whereas in Revelation he is a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, a composite of peoples, nations, philosophies, and organizations. Though Satan himself is not large, but merely like the little pesky snake to those who know his tactics, still he has gathered to himself quite a huge body; in fact he has stolen the body of Christ and made it his own. “And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High…and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time (for a limited time)” (Dan. 7:25).

So now the network that he runs is huge and powerful and intimidating and dominates the world, all religions, and the church systems of man as well. He is no longer the inconspicuous little reptile of Eden. He is the horn of worldly strength that Jesus claims makes him “the prince of this world.” How is it that Satan began as a little serpent in Eden and ends as a great dragon in the book of Revelation? Because he dwells in the minds of men and men have built him up in their minds and attributed to him such power and authority that the little serpent has been transformed into the great red dragon! The body of that dragon is all the institutions, organizations, and administrations that are dominated and controlled by that satanic religious mind! He is not some sinister creature from outer space, nor a powerful, omniscient and omnipresent spirit. Oh, no! He exists in the mind of man — he’s in your mind if you allow him to be! That’s why the scripture admonishes, “…neither give place to the devil” (Eph. 4:27). How do you give place to the devil? WITH YOUR OWN THOUGHTS!

This brings us to the curse laid upon the serpent in the beginning: “…upon your belly shall you go.” This judgment speaks of infinitely more than a literal snake slithering along upon his physical belly, just as the word “heel” speaks of infinitely more than a location on the foot, and the word “head” speaks of something greater far than a mere physical head in the words of the next verse: “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; and it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Gen. 3:15). Large sections of scripture are couched in symbolic terms, hiding much of the “mysteries” of God in figurative language. This is done quite purposefully by the Lord that the unspiritual while “seeing” actually see not and “hearing” actually hear not (Mat. 13:10-17). The deep spiritual truth of the scriptures can be understood only in the
spirit and by the spirit! So, “upon your belly shall you go” paints for the eyes of our understanding the picture of the serpent crawling in humiliation, prostration, limitation, and subjection upon the ground. The Psalmist uses a similar expression in Psalm 44:25, “For our soul is bowed down to the dust: our belly cleaveth unto the earth.” Such denotes a prolonged prostration and a depth of subjection as could never be conveyed or expressed in normal terms.

The very fact that God states that the serpent was now to crawl upon his belly, which obviously he had not done before, reveals that there was a descending from one realm to another, from a greater to a lesser, from a higher to a lower. Moving on his belly limits the sphere of the serpent’s activity, now he can only creep along the ground. Previously he had access to loftier realms, his sphere of activity extended to higher domains — exalted realms of pure spirit expression — but he is now lowered into the dust-realm, into the world of the natural man, confined to the earthly, and restricted to action upon and expression through THE MAN OF THE DUST. “And dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life” (Gen. 3:14). How truly this accounts for the words of the apostle, “And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, THE S-P-I-R-I-T THAT N-O-W WORKETH I-N THE CHILDREN OF DISOBEDIENCE” (Eph. 2:2).

Ah, yes, this evil spirit is IN MAN! When the ancient serpent was lowered into the dust realm, to crawl upon his belly and eat dust, man became the base of operation for his activity. I do not hesitate to tell you, my beloved, that you will find Satan operative in NO OTHER REALM in the whole universe! You do not meet the devil in rocks, trees, fish, mountains, rivers, clouds, birds, nor on far-away planets, in distant galaxies, in flying saucers, nor in any other object or location outside of man. Can we not see that under the curse God limited Satan to the dust of the earth, to the realm of the first Adam, the natural man, the carnal mind — the man of dust! “The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven” (I Cor. 15:47).

Many have seen the connection between Satan and the carnal mind and, not understanding the origins of these things, have assumed that the carnal mind is Satan. The truth, however, runs deeper than that — it goes to the spirit of the mind. In words fraught with eternal significance the inspired apostle exhorts, “Be renewed in the S-P-I-R-I-T OF YOUR MIND” (Eph. 4:23). As one has so aptly written, commenting of this verse, “Note that it reads: in the spirit of your mind, for this is far more than just mental gymnastics of our own self-efforts. There are beneficial results in the power of positive thinking, even on natural realms. But true transformation comes when the change is in the SPIRIT of your mind.” It is more than merely the renewing of the mind, exchanging our carnal mind for His mind — it is the renewing of SPIRIT — the spirit of the mind. That is the mystery. When there is the exchange of spirit — the spirit of our natural mind replaced by the spirit of Christ — then our mind is able to function on the divine plane. It becomes the norm of our life to just be thinking HIS thoughts, because of the establishment of His Spirit force within us. It is an absolute must to receive from a realm higher than Adam can give in order to have our minds renewed. The change comes in the realm of spirit, not by our self-efforts to change our way of thinking, believing, understanding, or acting.

Elwin Roach has shared this illuminating thought concerning the transformation of the mind. “This word, renewing, is adequately rendered in Romans 12:2; however, to be a little more accurate, the Greek word could be translated renovation (see Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance). We are then transformed by the renovation of our minds.
There is only a slight difference in the two words, but when renovation is used, we get the thought of a complete house clearing, house cleaning, and then a total refurbishing. Everything old is removed and replaced with all new furnishings. God, however, does something differently in His renovation. He does it just the opposite. He does not clear out the old things and leave our minds a total void and then start filling them with new thoughts. He starts bringing in the new thoughts first, and with this the old passes away and gives place to the new — and all this is of God. Think about it!

The activity of the mind is primarily in the realm of THOUGHTS. Thoughts are very real and alive! Thoughts are SPIRITUAL REALITIES, transmitted energy, coming upon your person via the gateway of your mind. Thus energy (thoughts) is transmitted into your conscious mind from the unconscious to cause you to act and react in a certain way. Thoughts do not originate in the mortal brain. Thoughts are invisible and powerful entities which have their origin in the dimension of SPIRIT. The unconscious mind is the link between the physical brain and the realm of spirit. Thoughts originate very deep in the world of spirit. Thoughts do have an objective! Until we understand the connection between thoughts and spirit we will confuse the chemical actions of the brain with the real source of the thought patterns which dominate and control our attitudes, personality, desires, ambitions, and actions.

Every decision that you have ever made or ever will make has its origin, intent, and power in the INVISIBLE REALM — the realm of spirit. You will never understand the mystery of life until you thoroughly know that there is a negative and a positive spirit force. The negative leads to death; the positive to life. The mind is the gateway, the channel through which these energy forces affect our lives. The thoughts that come to us bear the characteristics of the spirit force operating in us. Let us notice what the apostle Paul has to say about the connection between mind, our actions, and life and death. "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not proper; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Rom. 1:28-32). What a list! All of these things originate from a reprobate mind — from the world of thoughts! They carry within them the power of death! Conversely, the "works of the spirit" come also from mind — from the spirit within the renewed mind! Can you not see the mystery?

Through the fall Satan became one with man, incarnate in the unconscious mind, the energy force of human nature, the spirit of the carnal mind, slithering about in the lowest realms of man’s earthiness, in the crooked thoughts, selfish desires, distorted emotions, religious perversion, unrighteous dispositions, in the illusions and delusions of the sense-realm of the world of appearances, and in all the corrupt motions of the flesh. May God graciously give us enlightenment to see that included with Satan is the kingdom of Satan; therefore, since Satan is in man, the kingdom of Satan is also in man. Satan is the prince of this world, so the world too is included in the kingdom of Satan and is also in man. Furthermore, since Satan is intensely religious, religion also is included in the kingdom of Satan and is likewise in man. That is why the natural man, in his unregenerate state, is inherently religious! And that also explains why all of mankind’s religions are false and demonic! The first Adam is not a small man! On the contrary, he is a big, all-inclusive
man! The whole vast realm of reality, positive and negative, is CENTRALIZED AND PERSONIFIED IN MAN! And it is there that the great red dragon stands before the sun-clad woman! Oh, the wonder of it!

When Adam and Eve departed from Eden the serpent was in their hearts, their minds, and in their bodies. It should not be difficult for any man to see that all the unrestrained evils that are running rampant in the world today are but the out-croppings, the fruitage, the increase, yea, the manifestation of the dragon that is now full-grown from the little serpent in Eden. This monster dwells within each of us! It could be explained as the accumulated genetic legacy and cosmic consciousness from hundreds of our ancestors who have lived out of and cultivated the beastly nature. After Adam and Eve were expelled from the heaven-blest paradise of God it was but a short space until the serpent in Cain slew one righteous man, for “he was a murderer from the beginning” — whereas the dragon that stalks the earth today in a vast multitude of billions of Adam’s posterity has slain millions on the blood-stained battlefields of every continent and nation on the face of the earth, and the vast majority have been religious killings, and the saints of all ages have been viciously persecuted to death. Ah, yes, the little serpent has become a giant dragon, stalking and stomping about in the dust of Adam’s race!

We need not be surprised at the increase of this satanic power in the end of the age. Can we not see that in every age the degree of wickedness in the earth is proportionate to the INCREASE OF MANKIND? Of a dim and distant age it is written, “And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth...God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen. 6:1,6). And of our own age it is declared, “This know also that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, devils, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God” (II Tim. 3:1-4).

Two millenniums ago the apostle Paul accurately prophesied, “But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived” (II Tim. 3:13). May the Spirit of the Lord open wide the eyes of our understanding to see the simple and evident truth that as MEN increase in the earth — THE DEVIL INCREASES! In making this statement, I am fully aware that such a thought runs contrary to long-established views of theology, but we are not in the least concerned with the views of Babylon’s theology, for so-called theology is not really the truth of God but the ideas of men. I am concerned only with the truth of God as it is revealed in His Word in the light of inspiration and revelation.

Another wonder appeared in heaven, that is, in the realm of the spirit. All of this is taking place in the spiritual realm! The great red dragon that John beholds appears to be very large, extremely formidable and frightening, and he appears to be in our heaven! Many folks cannot conceive of Satan being in heaven — even the heaven where the manchild sits upon the throne — yet he is there until we overcome him even in that realm and cast him out from that high place. There is no literal great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns strutting around up in some far-off heaven somewhere. These are spiritual realities right in the realm of the spirit where the saints of God live and move and have their being. When John beheld these wondrous things he was “in the spirit” in the day of the Lord! John now beholds another great supernatural sign in the heaven of the spirit. He identifies this great red dragon as that ancient serpent, called the devil and
Satan, which deceiveth the whole world. We have seen that the dragon is the spirit of the old Adamic mind. Is it not true that just as soon as one ascends into the high realms of the Spirit where abides the mind of Christ, the old carnal mind, natural reasoning, and fleshly way of thinking exerts itself in its effort to circumvent, side-track, and derail the very thing the Spirit is speaking and doing.

We see this principle fulfilled in the story of Job. “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them” (Job 1:6). May I reverently add that every time the sons of God present themselves before the Lord — Satan comes also among them! It bespeaks a condition within these sons — our mind versus His mind, our will versus His will, our ways versus His ways. It is a heavenly place within the sons of God wherein we must be tested to show whether we be sons indeed. This impudent devil of self-will is in every man, and even our blessed Lord Himself surrendered His own will to the Father’s, saying, “Father, if Thou be willing remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done” (Lk. 22:42). Until every son has been completely perfected and thoroughly tested it is not possible for the sons of God to come and present themselves before the Lord without Satan coming also among them. Does he not walk in the natural mind of every man? It is written, “And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence cometh thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it” (Job 1:7). Now the Lord’s questions are never for His own enlightenment. He knew well whence Satan came. Oh, yes, Satan had been walking to and fro throughout the earth — God knew this — for he walks in our earth, even that earth which we are! From the east to the west, from the north to the south, from sea to sea and from pole to pole he walks in the earthly places of our souls, in the secret chambers of our minds, in the fleshly motions of our bodies; he travels up and down in us from the heights of our heavens to the depths of our hells. There is not a day that he leaves us! Dust is his habitation.

All the way to glorification this inner antagonist is present. This is why every revival God has ever sent through the ages ended in apostasy. Satan — not the devil with horns and pitchfork — but that inward devil of fleshly wisdom, sense-knowledge, and carnal zeal — has a subtle way of identifying himself with every move of the Spirit of God, so as to corrupt it from within. Many years ago F. J. Huegel wrote: “Students of the great Welsh Revival (1900—1903) say that the wonderful stream of Divine Life little by little lost its saving efficacy, as another stream from a very different source, naturally very filthy, began to mingle with the River of the Water of Life proceeding from the Throne and from the Lamb. ‘Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.’ Beware of false fire! Beware of the counterfeit glow! When the soulish takes the place of the pure working of the Holy Spirit, you have a ‘revival’ whose fires, though they purport to be from heaven are more likely to be from hell. There are any number of ‘doors’ through which Satan may enter to get control of revival. An undue stressing of the emotional; excitement which grieves and suffocates the Holy Spirit who works quietly; a glorying in the ministry rather than in the Lord Himself; clap-trap methods; self, whatever its form, in the ministry itself, obscuring Christ; these are some of Satan’s keys” — end quote.

SEVEN HEADS AND TEN HORNS

“Behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads” (Rev. 12:3).
Some have questioned the relative position of the seven heads and ten horns — how many horns were upon each head? Were there one horn upon four heads and two upon each of the remaining heads — or one of several other possible configurations? The question as to the relative position of the seven heads and ten horns is certainly irrelevant. John tells us nothing about their relative position, so the way in which they are arranged on the dragon is not the point and therefore has nothing to do with any spiritual truth. Rather, it is the fact of the “heads” and the “horns” together with their “number” or quantity that is significant to us. That is what the Holy Spirit is impressing upon us! The numbers seven and ten are symbolical numbers. They do not refer to ten kingdoms, or ten kings, or to seven kings literally; but they denote the authority and power of the dragon, the devil. Heads are the symbol of authority. When the scripture says that Christ is the “Head” of the church, and that the man is the “head” of the woman, it bespeaks a headship which expresses itself through a sphere of authority. Christ is the AUTHORITY over the church! He is the Leader, the Chief, the Commander, the Captain, the Controller, the Administrator, the Master — the LORD! That makes Him the Head of this body!

The Lord gave to Israel a covenant of AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS when He said to them, “The Lord shall open unto thee His good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath…” (Deut. 28:12-13). This is also why prophets, priests, and kings were both anointed and crowned upon their heads — it signified the absoluteness and supremeness of their authority! The same thought of authority in relation to headship is to be seen in such scripture references as, “But God shall wound the head of his enemies…” (Ps. 68:21). Nor is anything else signified by the serpent’s head which is crushed by God’s Christ (Gen. 3:15). And then we read, “The Lord shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath. He shall judge among the heathen…He shall wound the heads over many countries” (Ps. 110:5-6). Clearly this indicates that the Lord strips the authority and headship from the leaders of the nations!

Horns, on the other hand, are the symbol of might, strength, and power. The dragon has seven heads of authority and ten horns of power! Seven and ten are both complete numbers. Seven is a sacred number in this respect, that it generally is used of the perfection of spiritual realities and the completeness of God’s purposes and kingdom. It denotes fullness in the things of God. In the book of Revelation numbers do not actually define amounts at all, but they represent concepts. The number twenty-four, for example, is meaningless as an amount — there are not exactly twenty-four elders sitting on twenty-four thrones up in some far-off heaven somewhere. Some commentators, not understanding this principle, and trying to make twenty-four stand for an amount, have concluded that the twenty-four elders are the twelve patriarchs of Israel and the twelve apostles of the Lamb! Yet the whole imagery of the twenty-four elders round about the throne, together with the twenty-four courses of the typical Aaronic priesthood set forth in I Chronicles chapter twenty-four, shows that the number twenty-four signifies the priesthood of God. It is not an amount; it is the corporate ministry of God’s priesthood! The number 144,000 mentioned in the Revelation is relatively unimportant as an amount; but when we understand that it is a multiple of twelve, and that twelve is the number of divine government, then twelve squared by itself times a thousand (the number representing the day of the Lord) represents the absolute fullness and perfection of divine government within a people in the day of the Lord! Thus it stands for the manifest sons of God!
Seven is very significant in the economy of God. It is the most frequently used number in the Bible! The Hebrew word for seven is sheba. From it is shaba, meaning “to be complete...to seven oneself, i.e. swear by repeating a declaration seven times.” This is how the ancients swore, by repeating the oath seven times instead of placing their hand upon a Bible or merely invoking the name of God. Seven speaks of completion, fullness, perfection. Nothing can be added to or taken from it without it becoming marred. Being a prime number makes it divisible only by itself. The week is complete, full, and perfect in seven days. Seven completes the colors of the spectrum. There are seven notes in the musical scale. The cells of the human body completely replace themselves every seven years.

Ten is the number that denotes the measure of time or space or power as it is allotted and limited to any creature by God’s decree. A divinely limited measure of something is indicated by the number ten. Seven crowned heads, therefore, would signify the perfection and fullness of royal authority. As I mentioned earlier, seven, throughout the book of Revelation, represents perfection and fullness in the spiritual things of the kingdom of God. Therefore we must be careful with the interpretation of this dragon! In chapter five of the Revelation the Lamb in the midst of the throne has seven horns! The seven horns are identified as the seven spirits of God. Seven horns bespeaks the absolute perfection and power of the seven-fold Spirit of Christ! And now we see the dragon appearing with seven heads. Keep in mind, my beloved, HE IS A DECEIVER! John tells us plainly that the great dragon is that ancient serpent, called the devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world! Oh, yes, the whole world is deceived by the dragon into believing that carnal minds and carnal men and carnal means and methods and institutions and governments are the authority in this world! When the politicians and religious leaders and economists and educators and scientists and news men and military generals of this world speak they deceive mankind into believing that THEY ARE THE PERFECT AUTHORITY IN THIS WORLD! Indeed, Seven Heads! The devil is the deceiver. And by those seven crowns on those seven heads you must not be deceived. God did not put them on his head. He put them on himself. They are not real crowns either. They are not made in heaven, whence all authority issues forth; therefore they have no value, they are counterfeit. The heads are an illusion and the crowns are tinsel. The truth is, the devil is the spirit enthroned in the carnal mind of the natural man, and the devil is a pretender, an impostor, an intruder, a usurper. He intrudes into the kingdom of God. When Adam sinned and was usurped by the serpent and fell from the glory of his sonship, upon fleeing Eden the serpent in Adam put on his own seven crowns and for six dreadful millenniums has exercised his dominion over the earth and all things, including all heavenly and spiritual realities (religion), by these seven crowns! And through carnal-minded religion, science, economics, education, and government he has deceived the whole world! That is the mystery.

Now, I mentioned before that the number ten denotes the measure of time or space or power as it is allotted and limited to any creature by God’s decree. The ten horns of power signify that the dragon has just exactly as much power as God has allowed him — no more and no less. It indicates that the power of the devil is limited by the sovereign decree of God almighty and that the devil can do no more, no less, than that which God has decreed for him and which God wills him to do. The ten horns tell us that the devil has power, but it is a limited power, under God’s control and for God’s purpose. He does not out-fox God! He does not thwart God’s purpose! He is not out of control! He can never defeat you, my beloved, matters not how he struts and comes at you charging with his horns. HE THAT IS IN YOU IS GREATER THAN HE THAT IS IN THE WORLD! Aren’t you glad!
THE DRAGON’S TAIL

“And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth…” (Rev. 12:4).

Some people who have never learned the nature of symbolic language try to imagine such a literal scene as the one here described and picture in their minds what an awful thing it would be to see the third part of the stars falling to the earth. But real stars that are fixed or planetary never fall, and if they did, it would only take one to completely obliterate this planet and the rest of the “third” would have no earth to fall upon! But with a knowledge of the spiritual meaning of the symbols we can easily identify the “tail” of this dragon and the “stars” that are cast down.

The idea propagated by the church systems is that our text is a reference to the fall of Lucifer from heaven along with one-third of the heavenly angels. The popular story asserts that away back before the worlds began some angels, one-third of the angels in heaven, in fact, led by the archangel Lucifer, rebelled against God and were cast out of heaven, whereupon the little vandals took over planet earth. God then created man in His image and likeness to show forth His love and righteousness to creation, but made the mistake of putting man on the same planet where the little devils were ruling. Soon Satan and his juvenile delinquents from heaven pulled a fast one on the man God had created and tricked him to fall under the power of sin and death. And that was Satan’s way of getting back at God for kicking him out of heaven! He paid God back by bringing ruin, chaos, and darkness upon the beautiful creation of earth and mankind. So God had to scramble around and quickly develop Plan B, and with this plan God was regrouping and devising a means by which to regain control back from the devil. Under this plan God sent Jesus into the world to regain control of the earth and mankind. But after two thousand years even this plan has not worked out too well, for the vast majority of the human race is still held in the clutches of the enemy. These thoughts are hidden in the teachings of the preachers and I do not hesitate to tell you they are error for they make a mockery of the wisdom, sovereignty, and omnipotence of God, making it appear that He is a fumbling, blundering old man who doesn’t know what in the world He’s doing!

If we were making a law in reference to biblical interpretation surely a good one would be: “Thou shalt not establish doctrine on a word or phrase that occurs in only one passage in the Bible.” The popular doctrine of Lucifer is established on a word that occurs in the King James Version in Isaiah 14:2 and nowhere else. “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations.” How anybody, in their right spiritual mind, can take out of Isaiah chapter fourteen the concept that this refers to Satan is certainly possessed of an extraordinarily wild imagination. There is just no way one can read these verses, even with the greatest stretch of inventiveness or theological license, and derive from them that the prophet Isaiah is speaking of a so-called fallen angel named Lucifer. First of all there is no mention at all of angels, much less one-third of the angels, or an archangel. Then the prophet states plainly that the term “Lucifer” prophetically refers to a man! “Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. And they that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the MAN that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that openeth not the house of his prisoners?” (Isa. 14:15-17).
The entire chapter is addressed to the **king of Babylon**. “Thou shalt take up this taunting parable against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased! The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the scepter of the (tyrant) rulers, who smote the peoples in anger with incessant blows and trod down the nations in wrath with unrelenting persecution — until he who smote is persecuted and no one hinders anymore” (Isa. 14:4-6, KJV & Amplified). The whole section of the chapter about Lucifer follows these verses. Now look at what these verses say, along with the ones in the paragraph above, and you see exactly what the tyrannical king of Babylon did to all the nations he had conquered! And now God is revealing his judgment in highly symbolical and parabolic language. There is nothing in this chapter about the devil, my friend, it is all a taunting parable about the ancient king of Babylon!

The fact is, furthermore, there is no name Lucifer. Lucifer is not a proper name. It is a term that the Catholic translator, Jerome, installed instead of the Hebrew word *heylel* which means “shining one.” Shining one is not a proper name in Hebrew any more than it is in English or any other language. It’s not a name! It’s not the name of an angel. It’s not even the name of the king of Babylon. The Hebrew word is a descriptive term, but its not the name of anything. “Lucifer” is a contrived, invented, concocted, fabricated, made-up so-called name. But it’s not a name! There is no creature in heaven above, in the earth beneath, or under the earth that bears that name. Gabriel — that’s a name. Michael — that’s a name. Lucifer — **not** a name. You only find it once in the whole Bible. If you look in the original Hebrew text you will never find Lucifer. If you look in the Hebrew dictionary you will not find Lucifer. There is no Hebrew word nor any Hebrew name Lucifer. It’s made up! It is the Hebrew term for “shining one,” and it’s not a name. It was brought over into English from the Latin and transliterated as a name. The “name” Lucifer has been given to us by religious superstition, folklore, myth, and fairy tales!

Orthodoxy has long taught that Lucifer was, in the beginning, a high and beautiful archangel in heaven. The theologians and preachers recite over and over how Lucifer was “the anointed cherub that covereth…the most beautiful and wise of all God’s creation!” This being was, so they say, the ruler and leader of the angelic beings and apparently led them in their praise of God and shouts of joy…the greatest being God ever created, one who had unequaled strength, wisdom, beauty, privilege, and authority, and was next to God Himself. This blameless, perfect one, named Lucifer, was created without any form of evil and with the greatest intelligence of any created being. Then, we are told, this Lucifer, suddenly realizing how beautiful and intelligent he was, became inflated with power and pride and his heart was lifted up in rebellion against God. According to the story, Lucifer gathered one-third of the heavenly angels to his cause, mustering an army with which he planned to knock God off His throne and supplant himself as king and god of the universe — and there was war in heaven! Luckily, God won, cast Lucifer out of heaven and he became, instead of an holy angel, the devil that he is today.

It is nothing short of amazing that such a doctrine could have enjoyed such widespread acceptance in the light of the plain teachings of the scriptures on this subject. Man says that Satan *in the beginning* was holy, but later fell from that estate. JESUS said of Satan, “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer (not an angel) from the BEGINNING, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar and the father of it” (Jn. 8:44). This verse states that Satan “abode not” in the truth. In the Greek text the verb “abode not” is in the imperfect tense meaning that as far back as this personality existed HE WAS NOT TRUE. Dr. Robert Young, in his Literal Translation of the Bible, renders this
verse: “He was a manslayer from the beginning, and in the truth he hath not stood, because there is no truth in him.” The Rotherham version reads: “He was a murderer from the beginning, and in the truth he stood not; because the truth was not in him.” J. B. Phillips gives the plainest and most accurate translation: “He always was a murderer, and has never dealt with the truth, since the truth will have nothing to do with him. Whenever he tells a lie, he speaks in character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

Furthermore, there is no mention in the whole Bible of “Lucifer” or “Satan” drawing a third of the angels of heaven into rebellion against God. The only place in all of scripture where “one third” is mentioned as being cast down from heaven to earth is here in our text in the book of Revelation. Here, the great red dragon (not Lucifer the bright, shining leader of the choir of heaven!) who is also identified as “that ancient serpent, called the devil and Satan,” draws a third part of the stars of heaven with his tail and he casts them into the earth. The problem with using this reference to prove Satan drew a third part of the angels into rebellion is threefold. First, it is found in chapter twelve of the book of Revelation, which was written to reveal to the saints those things which “must shortly come to pass,” not things that already came to pass away back before the world began. Second, it is associated with the birth of the manchild and his ascension to the throne, and that certainly didn’t take place before Adam was placed in Eden! Third, almost all commentators completely miss the fact that it is the great red dragon who casts the third part of the stars down to the earth — not GOD! The preachers tell us that GOD kicked the devil and his angels out of heaven, but the only record we have in the Bible of “one-third” being cast down from heaven to earth tells us that the dragon casts them down! “And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth.” This is before the birth of the manchild! Yet, it is after the birth of the manchild and his ascension to the throne that Michael and his angels cast the great dragon into the earth! So the dragon casts the stars to the earth and Michael and his angels cast the dragon to the earth — the former takes place before the birth of the manchild and the latter happens after the manchild is born. We have certainly been told a lot of fairy tales! The notion that any of this can have anything to do with “Lucifer” is an absurdity of enormous proportions!

Let us meditate further on the symbolic and spiritual implications of this great scene John beholds in the heaven of the Spirit of the Lord. It would appear that the great red dragon lashed his tail backward and forward, as if in rage, and with the purpose to frighten and terrorize. What did, and what does, this dragon-tail signify? It certainly signifies something or it would not have been so described. Again, we must go back to the Old Testament for our explanation. In Moses’ time, to be the tail, was to be the lowest; to be the head was to be the highest and most honorable (Deut. 28:44). In the time of Isaiah the tail was the false prophet and his teachings by which the Lord’s people were led astray, and destroyed (Isa. 9:14-16). Isaiah said, “The prophet that teaches lies, he is the tail.” This is the true and scriptural meaning of the tail of the dragon. We know that the dragon is the great deceiver, and his tail is composed of all the false prophets and false teachers who proclaim his false doctrines — lies!

The dragon, that ancient serpent, has always had this tail! He had it in the garden of Eden, he had it when he met Christ in the desert, and he has it today. It is by this tail of error that he accomplishes his pernicious designs in leading men and women away from the living Christ — from truth, life, and reality! From the very beginning of history this tail has grown stronger, longer, and larger, until today he can lash that tail backward and forward over the whole face of the globe, and then even sweep the starry heavens above with it. Yes, this vision says, that by his tail he sweeps the very heaven where the sun-
clad woman is in travail and where the manchild is birthed! He drags down easily and forcibly the shining stars there- from, that they should cease to give their light in the high places of God, but shine dimly in the polluted atmosphere of earth. Stars are heavenly bodies, and signify both divine truths and realities as well as those heavenly ones who walk in the light as He is in the light. Their being "dragged down" signifies perversion of the truth and apostasy of those who walked in that truth. Satan by his tail of religious, spiritual, moral, doctrinal, and practical error changes the truth of God into a lie and accomplishes the downfall of those in whom that truth shone. Just because we are of the manchild company doesn’t mean we don’t have any conflict with the dragon. Oh, yes! Even in the high places of the spirit we encounter the great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns!

Michael and his angels (Jesus and the sons of God) do battle with the dragon and cast him down from the heavenly place where we dwell in the son realm. Are we so blind that we cannot see that not all who aspire to be manifest sons of God will truly shine in that glory? What does it mean to you, my brethren, when John tells us that the tail of the dragon drew a third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth — drew them, enticed them, allured them, tempted and seduced them, even as Eve was seduced and as even our Lord Jesus was tempted of the devil in the wilderness of Judea — and they are cast down, dragged down to the earth, out of the heavens of the spirit into the earth of the soul, abandoning the beautiful hope of sonship to lower themselves back into the soulical religious world of the carnal church systems of man, and sometimes into even darker religious realms.

This sad and painful picture has been with us through all the years of my walk in the kingdom of God and I have myself witnessed a great number of these star-sons drawn by the lies of the false prophets of the dragon’s tail, cunning deceptions of false teachings, of sexual impurity, so-called “free love,” of New Age delusions, of spiritual pride, of kingdom building and sectarian spirits, of going back into Babylon in an effort to impart deeper truth and a more blessed hope to the prisoners there, and they themselves become entangled again with the bondage and unfruitful works of the spiritual darkness of that realm of death! I find words and phrases totally inadequate to describe my sorrow at seeing these bright luminaries of the heavenlies falling down into the wilderness of the earthlies! Yet there is no denying what the Spirit is telling us in this vision.

God’s Christ is now to be revealed out of the heavens of the Spirit of the Lord! God’s Christ has been a mystery, he has been hidden, concealed, but now he shall be seen upon the throne in great power and glory! He will shine like the noonday sun! The ministries of the virgin church have been as stars, they have shone and sparkled like diamonds in the darkness of the carnal church age. These star-ministries will continue to shine as long as the night endures. But when the Day-star has fully risen in the hearts of God’s called and chosen elect, the night stars will fade away. These stars (two-thirds) are not cast down to the earth, they are simply subdued, ruled, and eclipsed by the greater glory of the manifest sons of God! The dragon tried to devour the manchild at the moment of his birth but was not successful, for the sons of God are overcomers who have conquered in all things and in all realms! “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony” (Rev. 12:11). The dragon was successful, however, in casting down from their lofty positions one-third of the stars of heaven — the truths and ministries of the virgin church — drawing them with his tail of deception — and casting them down to the earth realm of delusion and shame.
The ministries of the church realm, even the virgin church realm, can be easily deceived, as we see again and again in chapters two and three of the Revelation. They can be defiled by the great dragon, but he has no power at all against the victorious overcoming manchild. Isn’t it wonderful! Vast numbers of believers are dismayed and shaken when the notable, highly acclaimed, big-name ministries are cast down from their shining positions. We should neither be dismayed nor concerned! We should rather rejoice that these are cast down before the birth of the manchild. We should not want to see them sitting upon the throne! The dragon is ordained of God to sweep the heavens, he is God’s great broom in the heavens to sweep away and remove all who will not pay the price to go all the way with God, and who would hinder or oppose the manifestation of Christ in and through His manchild company of “many brethren.”

It is not the ministry alone that the dragon casts down — in reality it is the message, the word, the truth of God that is robbed of its spiritual life and light that is the instrument of their fall. The sweet singer of Israel penned these meaningful words: “The entrance of Thy words GIVETH LIGHT; it giveth UNDERSTANDING to the simple” (Ps. 119:130). The prophet Hosea, speaking of God, said, “Thy judgments are as LIGHT that goeth forth” (Hos. 6:5). “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a LIGHT unto my path” (Ps. 119:105). Also in II Corinthians 4:6, Paul declares, “For God, who commanded the LIGHT to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the LIGHT of the KNOWLEDGE of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” Can we not understand by this that TRUTH is LIGHT, UNDERSTANDING is LIGHT, KNOWLEDGE is LIGHT and LIFE is LIGHT. We often hear someone say, “I got some light on that.” They are not talking about the light from a bulb, they are declaring the reception of understanding! In like manner, DARKNESS is ignorance and error. “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath BLINDED THE MIND of them which believe not, lest the LIGHT of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them” (II Cor. 4:3-4). The “stars” are the spiritual truths of God that shine in the darkness of this world. When that truth is cast down to a lower level in the understanding of the Lord’s people, they also sink down to that lower level with it. One can only live, experience, and walk on the level of his revelation. Can you not see the mystery?

I will close this message by quoting some instructive words from the pen of brother Bob Torango. “The dragon relies upon the ability to take truths about God and redefine them. Erroneously, some think that the dragon is out to ‘destroy truth,’ to hold it back from being birthed, but that is not its intention. The dragon itself is religious! It loves to take the truth and camouflage it, to disguise it, and give the truth a dragon identity. The dragon needs truth in order to live and be viable. The dragon takes concepts of truth, ingests them, and then changes them into the Lie. Without truthful concepts there would be no lies, for therein lies the power of the dragon, to deceive and corrupt truthful things.

“Notice, the dragon is not concerned about the woman herself. In fact, the dragon needs the woman to give birth to conceptual truths of God so the dragon can feed its religious nature, and so it has done since its inception. I do not believe that this is the first time the dragon has positioned himself in front of the woman to devour her offspring. In fact, if the truth be told, every order birthed by the woman has ended up in the belly of the dragon, a religious mindset that drags every truth of God into the murky depths of the religious, carnal mind. Every great move through the ages has eventually succumbed to the dragon’s power, from the glory of the early church which ended up under the religious-political rule of Constantine on down through the corridors of Catholicism and Popery, on down through Martin Luther and the subsequent branching off of the many aspects of
Protestantism and Denominationalism all the way through the present time of this century with the outpouring of the Pentecostal movement and the Latter Rain and Sons of God movements — all have eventually gone away from the original spontaneous glory into a stagnation of religious mindsets. It is an inherent condition of man to bring the things of the spirit into a manageable, logical, religious mindset that can be structured into precepts and concepts that are relatable to our finite mind.

“So the dragon has been here before, has been positioned before the woman before, and is expecting to devour the child the moment it is birthed from the woman, but this birth will be different from anything else the woman has ever birthed! This is not conceptualized truth, nor is it representative truth, nor is it type and shadow truth. This is a birth of THE TRUTH, which has nothing to do with the religious, carnal mind of men, but is the offspring of the loins of God — Present Truth, Irresistible Truth, Life-Giving Truth! It is not going to be given to the dragon like all the other truthful concepts have been given, and allowed to be devoured according to the plan of God. That is why the dragon is so wroth, so full of rage at being cheated of its usual due, devouring this most precious of all births, because the dragon has always before been given the things of God to corrupt them and make them his own, but not so with this birth! This child is marked with a destiny of change and disruption, because after it is caught up, all hell breaks loose in heaven and earth and NOTHING WILL EVER BE THE SAME AGAIN!” — end quote.
Chapter 140

The Dragon, The Woman
And The Manchild
continued

“And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and, behold a great red dragon...and his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth” (Rev. 12:3-4).

This isn’t some literal fire-breathing monster roaming the streets of New York City! The dragon is a spiritual reality — a negative, corrupted, spiritual dimension. Now let us notice something very peculiar about this dragon. His tail draws a third part of the stars of heaven and casts them down to the earth. What does the dragon-tail symbolize? In the time of Isaiah the tail was declared to be the false prophet and his teachings by which the Lord’s people were led astray, and destroyed. Isaiah said, “The prophet that teaches lies, he is the tail” (Isa. 9:14-16).

From the very beginning of history this tail has grown stronger, longer, and larger, until today he can lash that tail backward and forward over the whole face of the globe, and then even sweep the starry heavens above with it. Yes, this vision says, that by his tail he sweeps the very heaven where the sun-clad woman is in travail and where the manchild is birthed! He drags down the shining stars therefrom, that they should cease to give their light in the high places of God, but shine dimly in the polluted atmosphere of earth. Stars are heavenly bodies, and signify both divine truths and realities as well as those heavenly ones who walk in the light of those truths and proclaim and express them. Their being “dragged down” signifies the perversion of the truth and apostasy of those who walked in that truth. Satan by his tail of spiritual distortion changes the truth of God into a lie and accomplishes the downfall of those in whom that truth shone.

The dragon uses his tail, the false prophet, the tongue of the religious spirit in man, to cast down a third part of the stars of heaven, the heavenly spiritual truths, casting them down unto the earth causing the Lord’s people to perceive them carnally and not spiritually! The dragon always wants to drag down the high and holy truths of God into a carnal form of man’s wisdom, totally refusing to hear the word of God in the spirit and by the spirit. The head controls the tail, revealing the truth that the lies of the false prophets, whether the outward false prophets in our midst or the false religious spirit within each of us, are spoken by the authority of the dragon and carry and impose the dragon’s authority over men. Out of carnal understanding men proclaim as divine truth that which is mere superstition, legend, myth, folklore, and fairy tales of a carnal interpretation of the word of God.

Consider what I now say with all diligence and prayer. Any teaching that is on a lower level than the heaven where the manchild dwells will rob you of your walk in sonship!
Even among the Lord’s elect some are watering down the revelation of sonship, proclaiming that there will be no super-sonship ministry with mighty signs and wonders that will empty the hospitals, raise the dead, bring down the kingdoms of men, convert the masses, and restore all creation into God again. Some are saying that “manifest sonship” is just Christ living out His life through you day by day and we are not to look for a “super-duper” ministry that will strike the world with such force that it will change everything. Others try to make manifest sonship function on the church level through mature saints with gifts of the Spirit and through the five-fold ministry. I have no hesitation in telling you that all such are representations of the tail of the dragon and if you heed them they will sweep you down out of your appointed destiny and cast you into a carnal religious earth-realm where you will serve the Lord on a lower level but can never be the instrument to deliver creation from the bondage of corruption! Just because we are of the manchild company doesn’t mean that we don’t have any conflict with the dragon. Oh, yes! It is here in the high places of the spirit we encounter the sweeping power of the dragon’s tail! Will you be swept away by his lies?

Heaven and earth in the book of Revelation signify dimensions of nature, being, reality, and activity. They are spiritual and they are natural or soulish. Heaven bespeaks the spiritual things and realm of God, whereas earth bespeaks the natural and soulish things and realm of man. Men are living souls dwelling on the earth, God is a spirit dwelling in the heavens — the realm of the spirit. Now we find that the dragon is in heaven and surprisingly enough the woman and the dragon have been dwelling together in heaven! There need be no doubt in the mind of any saint who is seated with Christ in the heavenly places that we have had in our midst the dragon. The dragon has been as close to us as the air we breathe, as close to us as the blood coursing through our veins. The dragon has shown up in all our gatherings and has appeared in every experience we have had with God and every word we have received from God. The dragon is that psychic, religious, soulish spirit that takes the bright truths (stars) of God and casts them down from the true order of God into a carnal realm. The doctrines of men, the traditions of the elders, carnal, literalistic, and legalistic interpretations of the spiritual truths of God, static creeds, lifeless rituals, empty ceremonies, carnal means and methods, flesh-appealing programs — these and a hundred more things are all the work of the great red dragon! These, one and all, take the high and heavenly and life-giving realities of God in the spirit and cast them down into an outward form of religiosity.

Some years ago Bob Torango shared the following word in one of his messages which is just as fresh and relative today as it was the day he delivered it. “We are in the midst of a religious age and a message of ‘kingdom’ that has become religious. Now don’t mistake me when I say religious — people look at the dragon and say, ‘That’s the Catholic Church, that’s Rome.’ Our country right now is fighting a war that my son and my grandson have been involved in. They have been sent over to Iraq to do a job for this country, to protect the freedom of this nation. I know we have high moral motives behind this war. But if you want to know where the real dragon sits you can look at the Middle East and see it. This is a religious war that will not be won by bombs or planes or bullets. It will not be won by the changing of a government. It is the very seat of religion! So when I say ‘religion’ I am talking about Rome, yes; but I’m also talking about Baghdad, I’m talking about Teheran, and I’m talking about Jerusalem. I’ll go beyond that. I’m talking about Salt Lake City, and I’m talking about Springfield, Missouri. I’m talking about Cleveland, Tennessee and Nashville, Tennessee. I’m talking about every seat of religious minds that try to portray God as a man, according to the thinking of a religious mind, bringing Him down out of His holiness, lowering Him to a realm where flesh can relate to Him. Every major religion, and
every religious-minded person, has a concept of God and truth that has been imparted to them out of the mind of the great red dragon. The manchild is destined to come forth to *set things right!*” — end quote.

The Spirit of the Lord is calling upon every member of God’s called and chosen elect to search this out within ourselves so that the dragon in us may himself be cast down to the earth where he can no more distort, twist, pervert, corrupt, misinterpret, carnalize, embellish, or tamper with the pure word, revelation, purpose, and working of God in our lives. Elwin Roach once shared this word of wisdom: “I wish I could tell everyone to listen to us and others who might be able to reveal who the tail of the dragon is, so we all could be safe from deception; but truthfully speaking, no one can take the place of what each individual is responsible for. The only way any of us can escape that sweeping tail is to have an authentic attitude of wanting to know the truth, and to continually walk in those ways of truth when they come, regardless of what it is or what it does to our personal life and theological ideas. Jesus said, ‘*If a man will (is determined to) do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God…*’ (Jn. 8:31-32). We will then come to the place of having discernment of spirits and proving them to see if they are of God.”

Stars speak of messengers and the message they bear. The dragon takes a third of the messengers and the truth they proclaim and casts them down to the earth. Out of the earth-realm I am always hearing the voices of these cast-down messengers! There are multitudes of messengers involved with a message that is carnal, soulish, sentimental, natural, and literalistic. Their message is always woe, woe, woe! It’s always about sin, how the nation and the world is going to hell, legislating righteousness, judgments, the Jews, rebuilt temples in Jerusalem, a superman antichrist, tribulation, wars, world events and world leaders, plagues, sorrow, trouble, pain, death, hell, and eternal damnation. It’s always the bad news! Do you understand, my brother, my sister, that bad news is not the *gospel*? Gospel means *good news*! There is no good news from the messengers who speak out of the earth-realm! They are of the earth, earthy, for they mind earthly things. They read Newsweek magazine on Saturday night and now they have a message for you on Sunday morning. They are just full and running over with bad news. Every world crisis is the *big one*, we’re coming down to the wire, and the doom and gloom of the end-times is upon us. Every tyrant thrust into international prominence is the great antichrist getting ready to inflict unspeakable horrors on mankind. It is always woe, woe, woe!

The spirit of wisdom and revelation from the Lord is moving us from that earth-bound mentality of woe, woe, woe, to a heavenly consciousness of Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts: *the whole earth is full of His glory!* There are a lot of messengers that have been drawn by the tail of the dragon. They are the prophets that teach lies. But as stars that abide in the heavens let us understand what is going on in the heavens! Let us be crowned with the twelve stars of a divine kingdom revelation! We’ve been preached to all our lives by the tail of the dragon, telling us what is going on in the earth, and whether it was a message of sin, you’re just human, you’re a sinner saved by grace, nobody can be perfect in this world, everybody has to be sick and die, God is angry at the world and getting ready to zap it with the seven last plagues, God (or the devil) is out to get you, one little sin and you’ll miss the “rapture,” judgment day, wrath and vengeance soon to be poured out, eternal damnation and torture in hell-fire awaits every sinner, and a thousand other heresies that deny the truth of God, impugn the wisdom of God, defame the character of God, slander the love of God, and discredit the purpose and power of God — it has all been woe, woe, woe!
It only proves where these folks are living. The message of woe is the devil’s message to carnal, earth-bound Christians! John heard a loud voice from heaven declaring this very plainly: “Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and sea! for the devil has come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time” (Rev. 12:12). The message of wrath is the devil’s message and he keeps the earth-dwellers occupied with that message because he knows his days are numbered and THE TRUTH IS GOING TO COME OUT! Oh, yes! If you are dwelling in the earth that’s the message you will hear and proclaim today — woe, woe, woe! Turn on your radio or television and listen to those preachers and they will tell you how bad it is on earth, how pathetic and hopeless everything is, how imminent and ominous is the “one world government” conspiracy, what a low-life you are, how big the devil is, the names of all the demons that are roaming the earth and possessing the people, even the saints of God are full of them; they know all about principalities and powers of darkness, yet they have not a clue as to what GOD IS DOING IN THE HEAVENS OF HIS SPIRIT IN THIS HOUR OR ABOUT WHAT GOD IS DOING BY HIS SPIRIT IN THOSE WHO DWELL IN THE HEAVENS IN THIS DAY OF THE LORD! But, my, can they tell you about sin, darkness, and devils! They have a real relationship with the devil and all his little imps — woe, woe, woe, the devil is everywhere tempting, tormenting, and trying to derail the will and purpose of God in your life — these earth-bound ministers of the devil’s message talk more about the devil and his works than they do about the Lord Jesus Christ! Indeed, they are devil worshippers, whether they realize it or not. Have you considered the truth that lies hidden in these inspired words: “Neither give place to the devil.” All the woe in the Revelation is pronounced upon the earth-dwellers and it is the devil who pronounces it! I refuse to give a place to the devil, therefore I do not preach doom and gloom. I preach the gospel, the GOOD NEWS! And my soul is raptured as I hear the loud voice out of heaven saying, “Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them!” What a day of unspeakable glory this is, this is the day that the Lord hath made, and we will rejoice in it and be glad!

THE DRAGON STANDING BEFORE THE WOMAN

“And the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born” (Rev. 12:4).

In this scene we see that the birth of the manchild is resisted by the great red dragon. The dragon-spirit, or the resisting agent, appears throughout the Bible under various names. The prophets of the Old Testament called it crocodile, Behemoth, Leviathan, and always pictured these horrible animals as coming up out of the sea, or out of the fleshly mind and passions of men. The dragon-spirit stands for resistance to the apprehension of truth, life, and the fullness of God under whatever guise it rears its head, for the dragon-spirit knows that if the manchild gains sovereignty, his own regime is ended! Ah, yes, the dragon, the religious spirit of the carnal mind, the spirit of the world and all negative forces, knows what will happen if the manchild is birthed and allowed to live!

The Old Testament type is the fear that motivated the Pharaoh of Egypt at the time of the birth of the child Moses. Beholding the growth of the children of Israel in the midst of the land, and moved by the fear of their increasing numbers and strength, he ordered the Hebrew midwives, “When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live” (Ex. 1:16). The Pharaoh’s consuming fear was that if these sons were permitted to come to maturity they would become a threat against the dominion of the Egyptian spirit and kingdom and would rise up in force to overthrow it and seize power. But God in His
wisdom ruled and over-ruled in Egypt, Israel multiplied greatly, and the chosen deliverer was born, matured, trained, and fully prepared to birth Israel out of Egypt!

This is the same fear that motivated king Herod at Jesus' birth to seek to destroy the firstborn Son of God! When Jesus was born in the city of David the old dragon was there crouching at the gate, ready to spring and destroy the Christ child. You remember the story of the wise men who came from the east, following the star, and seeking him who was to be the king of Israel. As soon as they were in Judea, they supposed that everyone would know all about the king. But no one of whom they asked had ever seen this king or had heard of him! The news of their coming was sent to Herod, the king, who was now a very old man. When he heard of someone born to be the king, he feared that he might lose his own dynasty. He called the priests and scribes and inquired of them about this Christ for whom the people were looking. He said, “Can you tell me where Christ, the King of Israel, is to be born?” They showed him the scripture which stated that He would be born in Bethlehem of Judea.

Then Herod sent for the wise men from the east, and met them alone, and he found out from them at what time the star was first seen. Then he said to them, “Go to Bethlehem, and there search carefully for the little child; and when you have found him, bring me word again, so that I also may come and worship him.” Then the wise men went on their way and the star appeared again and led them to the very house where the little child was. That night God sent a dream to the wise men, telling them not to go back to Herod, but to go home at once to their own land by an alternate route. They obeyed the word of the Lord and departed at once. When Herod received the news he was exceedingly angry! He dispatched his soldiers to Bethlehem. They came, and by the cruel king’s command, seized all the little children of Bethlehem who were two years old or younger, and killed them all. What a cry went up to God from the mothers of Bethlehem as their children were torn from their arms and slain before their eyes! But all this time the child Jesus, whom they were seeking, was safe with His mother in the land of Egypt where they had fled at the warning of the Lord. Oh, yes, the dragon stood before the woman to devour her child as soon as he was born. The dragon knew what would happen if the manchild were permitted to live!

Four thousand years ago it was Pharaoh after Moses. Two thousand years (two days) ago it was Herod after Jesus. And now it's time again in the earth for a son to be born. And the great red dragon, that ferocious religious spirit that motivates and empowers all religious systems, is after that seed! This dragon hates the very possibility of a people birthed in the earth in all the maturity, glory, wisdom, power, and majesty of the firstborn Son of God! They know in their heart of hearts that it will mean their eternal ruin. That’s what Pharaoh was afraid of! That’s what Herod was afraid of! And that’s what the great red dragon of religion fears today! They fear a usurper of their throne, a contender for their influence and power over the lives of men and nations. So the dragon stands before the woman defiling the atmosphere with fiery breath.

The dragon, among other things, bespeaks a religious order — the religious spirit within each of us and the religious order formed in the earth as the outward expression of that religious spirit. Herod was king of the Jews — he represented a religious order, the order of the house of Judah. He occupied a realm of authority and dominion that ultimately would be usurped by our Lord Jesus Christ, the firstborn of the manchild company. Herod sat upon the throne of the Lord’s people and Jesus has now been caught up, exalted to the throne of the Lord! Herod and his forces were the personification of the dragon in that
day, and Jesus is the prototype of the birth of the manchild company! John’s vision reveals that this manchild, the completed body of the firstborn Son, also shall come to full term and be birthed, rising up to prevail over all the religious and fleshly spirits and kingdoms of this world. What the dragon fears shall surely come to pass! Isn’t it wonderful!

I have been blessed by the following testimony of brother Bill Cook. “My first encounter with the dragon’s breath took place in the early 1950’s. I was attending a regular Pentecostal Church. A couple of the elders took it upon themselves to warn me against a certain group in the city who had a special teaching regarding ‘manchild,’ and their very articulation of the word was a phenomena in itself. It was evident that the dragon had corrupted that expression ‘manchild’ in their mind so that it was no longer a true Bible term, but was somewhat of a swear word. And they were quick to try to give me the impression that many terrible, obscene things were taking place among the members of this group. Furthermore, they informed me that the manchild teaching of this group had to be way-off, for Revelation 12 simply deals with the birth of Jesus! Ahem-m-m, I had been fully warned! If I were to get into any strange doctrine or go over the deep end, well, they had done their part to keep me out of such a dire predicament. (In truth, the book of Revelation was given forth by the resurrected, ascended Christ in regard to future events; in no way does it deal with events of His birth or childhood).

“Many of the books written in the various denominations take sides with the dragon, attempting to harm the manchild. One Constance Cumbey has researched the occultic ‘New Age Movement’ in some detail and has written several books on the subject. She formerly had a law practice in New York State. In one of her books she stated that a certain one must be in the New Age Movement, as he kept speaking of a new age forthcoming. (This kind of reasoning from one who is a lawyer!) She made further derogatory remarks about other kingdom ministries, making a play on their words to accuse them. But the point is that the dragon is using all the smear tactics that he can dig up for those of us who see the New Day. He is drumming up these things in a most frenzied manner, for he knows his time is short! A sister we met on our recent trip had read some of these accusations, and a fear rose in her heart, ‘What if this is true, and I am walking in deception and error?’ After the initial fear subsided, she spoke to her soul and comforted herself with the thought that the Spirit of the Lord had led her this way. It was not something that man had persuaded; it was that which the living Christ had taught her, and she had to believe that it was true, no matter what was said about the men who taught kingdom truths. Then she had peace again, but she had felt the dragon’s breath blow hard upon her, and it was a very uncomfortable feeling!

“A writer from the evangelical churches in Calgary, Alberta, has written a booklet warning people against associating with any who speak of the kingdom of God, kingdom principles, the New Day, etc. They gave a formidable list of terms and warned people to avoid those who use any of them, for they were ‘in a cult.’ Even the ‘Feast of Tabernacles’ was a ‘bad word’. But there is no use hassling with them; they are merely regurgitating the words of the dragon! For those who are bound under such teachings (against the truth), the future looks bleak. Yet, God is God! As He drew a great throng out of the denominations in 1906 — 1908, and again in 1948 — 1951, and again in the 1970’s, so at this late hour He will ‘winnow’ many more” — end quote.

Now let us consider further the attitude of the dragon towards the woman and his intention to devour her child as soon as it is born. The woman stands in her glory, but also in her
helplessness, and the dragon stands before her. The dragon doesn’t just appear on the scene — he is already there standing in his place. “And the dragon stood before the woman…” He is watching her and barring her way of escape. Intently the dragon observes the woman and studies her every movement. It is not really the woman he is after, but the child she is about to bring forth. If only that woman did not expect to bring forth that manchild, he would pay little attention to her and her glory! Well he knows that in two thousand years the church has never overcome him or broken his power in the earth! The church of our day is little threat to him, including the little virgin church which is pregnant with the manchild, so for the most part he leaves them alone. Oh, yes, they do blame a lot of things on him, they are always railing against him and fighting him and suppose that he is always “on their case.” But the truth is that he is actually in charge of most of the organizations and activities which they suppose he is opposing!

It is my conviction that our thoughts and comments about Satan should always be tempered with the wonderful truth that he has absolutely no power over a saint of God who dwells in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus! Therefore, as we discuss Satan, we recognize this truth above any other regarding Satan. Furthermore, although we use the pronouns “him” or “he” when referring to Satan, we know “he” is not a singular person running around the universe, but is the evil spirit that works in and through the carnal minds of the children of Adam. It is not our purpose to magnify Satan or to give him undue recognition. Yet, we who are pregnant with the manchild are not unaware of that monster standing before the woman with the intent to devour her child as soon as it is born! And we who are in Christ should know that we are engaged in spiritual warfare! The birth of the manchild does not bring a Sunday School picnic — it brings war in heaven! It is our Father’s purpose, through the mighty, conquering power of Christ in His body, to defeat every enemy, entity, and power in all realms of man, the earth, and the unbounded heavens. Christ is bruising Satan under our feet! (Rom. 16:20). Satan is one of the enemies, along with sin and death, that is being defeated, first in the lives of God’s elect, and ultimately in all of creation.

To the church in Pergamos the Lord Jesus said, “I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is…” (Rev. 2:13). The typical and symbolic church at Pergamos was dwelling where Satan’s throne was located. The Greek word is clearly “throne,” but the translators of the King James Bible softened it down to “seat.” Let us not be afraid of the phrase. It is Satan’s throne! A throne in the book of Revelation occurs frequently as the symbol of dominion, as the center whence the authority of a king emanates throughout his entire kingdom. In the typical and symbolic church of Pergamos, Satan’s throne was situated in the city of Pergamos which means “strongly united, elevated, height, citadel.” Spiritually, Satan’s throne is in the high places of the carnal mind — even the religious mind! “I know where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is.” I know where you dwell, where you are comfortable in your religious system, where you are satisfied to settle down and comfortably remain on your present level of experience in God. I know that you love the pageantry, the beauty, the forms, the sacraments, the rituals, the programs, the activities, the meetings, the praise, the preaching, the gifts, and the glory where you are. But that place where you dwell is Satan’s throne!

The firstborn Son of God understood this very clearly by the mind of the Father! He never condemned the prostitute, the fornicator, the tax-gatherer, the thieves or murderers. He never demonstrated holy anger against the Romans, the world, or the wicked. It was the religious leaders that He scathingly denounced! His anger was focused on the hypocrisy
of the so-called carriers of God’s word! He condemned those who prided themselves on their outward cleanliness, but inside were full of greed and wickedness! Those who paid tithes and fasted and prayed and loved the seats on the platform — I mean the best seats in the synagogue — to be seen of men, He rebuked! Those who distorted the word of God, who turned the truth of God into a lie, who misrepresented the nature of His Father, and loaded people down with religious burdens and obligations, He called a generation of vipers — a brood of snakes!

Let us UNDERSTAND! We blame war, drunkenness, pornography, greed, crime, immorality, drugs, and a thousand other evils on Satan — yet the clear testimony of scripture is these are all the “lusts of the flesh” and the “works of the flesh.” They are flesh! On the other hand, Satan’s activity is primarily in a religious realm, in a spiritual dimension! What a cunning deception has been foisted upon mankind as Satan has concealed his true identity in the dark shroud of religion! Oh, yes, Satan is religious! He spends far more time in church than he does at the bar. The ultimate test for God’s sons will be right there! There is a realm, a realm high in the spirit, a realm reserved for the sons of God — and before any of us step out from under the open heaven where the voice of the Father witnesses to our sonship: “These are my beloved sons, in whom I am well pleased,” to appear as a manifest son in the earth, we will meet Satan there in that high realm of the spirit. It is in the heavens of God’s Spirit that the manchild encounters the great dragon!

That is what the temptation of Jesus was all about in His wilderness experience. He wasn’t being tempted to lie, cheat, steal, cuss, chew tobacco, or run around with women. Oh, no! “If Thou be the Son of God” do thus and thus. To Eve he said, “Hath God said? Why, God doth know...your eyes will be opened, and you will be as God!” It wasn’t about sex or drinking or smoking, it was all about A HIGH REVELATION IN A HIGH REALM OF THE SPIRIT. That is what Adam’s fall was about! Adam did not fall from grace, he fell from SONSHIP! And it was a supposed HIGH REVELATION IN A HIGH REALM OF THE SPIRIT that caused the fall. Eve was deceived! There is a very fine line between the highest truth and the darkest error, between divine sonship to God and our own self-godhood as presented by the serpent to Eve and by the devil to Jesus in the wilderness of temptation!

The firstborn Son of God met Satan, not the Satan wearing a red suit, with horns and a pitchfork, but the Satan that spoke out of His innermost thoughts and aspirations concerning His sonship, “If I am the Son of God why don’t I just turn these stones into bread! I’m hungry, I’m needy, and I’ve got the power! I can do anything I want, any time I want! I’m the Son of God!” There was only one thing wrong with that thought. The purpose of a son is not to do anything he wants, but to do always and only the will of the Father. That is where Jesus was tested in His sonship before ever His ministry of power and glory began! The question was just this — what would He do with the power? Would He use it for His own gratification, His own purposes and designs, His own aggrandizement and glory, or would He do only those things that glorified His Father?

Thank God, where Adam flunked this same test in the garden, Jesus passed the test in the wilderness! “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that is proceeding out of the mouth of God!” Ah, there was the secret. A son comes only to speak what he hears from His Father and to do only what he sees His Father do. The voice Jesus was hearing was the wrong voice — He could not turn the stones into bread just to satisfy His hunger. Only if He heard the voice of His Father commanding Him to do so, would He turn the stones into bread! He recognized that as the Son of God He could
live only by every word that was proceeding out of the mouth of His Father! Then came
the suggestion, “If I am the Son of God I can get the attention of all the people of
Jerusalem by casting myself from the pinnacle of the temple. They will see my power and
will have to acknowledge who I am when God sends His angels to escort me to a soft
landing on the ground! What a witness that will be!” Jesus overcame that wily devil in
that high realm of the spirit within Himself as He answered, “Thou shalt not tempt the Lord
thy God!” Sons don’t do things just to prove their sonship. When people requested a
“sign” from Jesus as proof of His sonship He refused every time. Only then could He
come up out of the wilderness in the power of the Spirit. He had passed the test, He had
regained the sonship Adam forfeited, He was qualified to be a manifest Son of God!
When finally He came to the cross He was able to say, “The prince of this world cometh,
and hath nothing in me.” That, my beloved, is sonship! That is THE REVELATION OF
JESUS CHRIST!

It is here before the church-woman that the dragon stands because another son of God, a
corporate son, a manchild is about to be delivered into the world. This woman is a
beautiful and glorious woman, not the deformed image of the church systems of man. She
is the true church, the overcoming church, clothed with the sun, with the moon under her
feet, and a crown of twelve stars upon her head. In spite of the woman’s glory he still has
no fear of her. In spite of her gifts and apostles and prophets and prayers and worship and
miracles and witnessing and revelation she stands before the dragon helpless, but his
concern is not with her for he knows perfectly that gifts and graces and anointings alone
cannot overcome him. But that manchild that is ready to be born is of extreme concern
to him! And therefore he watches the woman, in order that as soon as the child sees the
light of day he may devour him — not destroy him, mind you, but take him into himself and
assimilate him into his own being, into the very dragon-spirit of religion, thus to “dragonize”
him, making him just another movement, another organization, another system and
denomination like all the others the dragon controls! Can you not see the mystery?

The dragon isn’t trying to do anything to the woman. He knows that the woman is no
threat to his empire. The woman and the dragon co-exist in a heavenly realm. She is
aware of the dragon, but she is not at war with the dragon. The dragon is concerned about
the child she is carrying. He sees something in the woman that if it is permitted to come to
maturity and step forth into the world, will end his reign. The dragon sees something in the
woman that isn’t “woman!” It is the Son of God being formed in the womb of the woman.
It is man! It’s not church — it’s manchild! Jesus has reproduced Himself! The firstborn
Son of God is raising up within the woman, the virgin church, His many brethren! This
manchild ministry is not the five-fold ministry of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors,
and teachers — it is a king-priest ministry after the order of Melchizedek! This
manchild is not one that can be deceived, discouraged, troubled, turned aside, influenced,
used, manipulated, corrupted, or defiled in any way.

Oh, yes! The dragon is concerned about this manchild. This is not a little baby. This is a
mature, fully developed, full grown manchild. In the Greek it is huios — a mature son.
Now let us consider the scene! This great big, bad, fire-breathing dragon stands before
this woman saying, “When this little baby is born, I’m going to chew him up and swallow
him down!” The dragon is about to get the shock of his life, because this woman is not
going to have a little baby! She will give birth to a mature son. He thinks he is going to
grab the little fellow and devour him. No wonder this woman is in such travail to deliver
this child — it’s not an eight pound baby! She brings forth a manchild who is to rule all
nations with a rod of iron, and when he does come forth he is caught up immediately unto God and to His throne. He is born ready to rule!

It is significant to note the progression — in chapter two of the Revelation the overcomer was promised power over “the nations.” I have been deeply impressed that “the nations” in that case indicated the seven nations that occupied the land of Canaan, for those were the nations that the Lord’s people were given to “overcome” in order to possess their promised inheritance. These seven nations are found spiritually within each one of us and must be overcome within ourselves as we possess the fullness of our “land” which is CHRIST! But now in chapter twelve the authority is expanded to the shepherding of ALL NATIONS. The same order may be observed in the Psalms and Prophets, Israel was first commissioned to conquer the seven nations, and to inhabit and possess all the “land,” their very own promised land! But later the prophets foresaw and prophesied of a day when God’s people would rule over all the nations of the world.

“O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph. For the Lord most high is terrible, He is a great King over all the earth. He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet” (Ps. 47:1-3). “God be merciful unto us and bless us; and cause His face to shine upon us; that Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy saving health among all nations” (Ps. 67:1-3). “Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for He hath glorified thee” (Isa. 55:5). “But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: and nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Mic. 4:10-3). “Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee” (Zech. 2:10-11). True to the pattern of the promises, can it not be clearly seen that first we must conquer the “nations” within us and fully possess our own land before we can ascend the throne of our Father with authority and power over all things.

This manchild, first of all, brings a great change in the heavens. He makes a swift and powerful preemptive strike against the dragon! There is a great error in the doctrines of the church systems of man. They harp on and on about some completely imaginary rebellion of the archangel Lucifer against God and how Lucifer gathered an army of one-third of the angels and tried to defeat the Almighty and take over heaven. Yet there is not one verse of scripture in the whole Bible that even infers that Lucifer is the devil, or that Lucifer was ever the name of an archangel. Not one! Furthermore, the scene of this great drama of the dragon and the manchild depicts nothing about Satan rebelling against God or the dragon initiating any attack against the throne of God. As with so many of the doctrines of the church systems the truth is just the opposite! Satan is not leading a rebellion against the Almighty, but he is standing before the woman to devour her child as soon as it is born. His intended action is against the manchild before he reaches the throne. In the story the preachers tell about Lucifer’s rebellion there is no manchild in the
Clearly, this scene John beholds in spirit has nothing whatever to do with the Lucifer story!

Furthermore, Satan does not attack the throne of God, in fact, he doesn't even get to attack the manchild — Michael and His angels attack the dragon! The wily old dragon, like a sly fox, is standing there in readiness to devour the manchild when suddenly, without warning, war breaks out in heaven! The battle begins with God’s swift, powerful, preemptive strike. “And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon” (Rev. 12:7). Only after the opening foray does the dragon respond to defend himself, but his standing in the heavens is doomed from the first round. Of the thrilling outcome we read, “…and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven” (Rev. 12:7-8). It is indeed wonderful! We must conclude, then, that all religious mixture will be thoroughly purged from the heavens where the manchild reigns! The manchild is not an ecumenicist! The manchild does not believe that truth is relative! The manchild does not hold to the notion that all religious paths lead to God!

This order of the manchild comes to cleanse the heavens where we dwell and establish absolute truth and the divine order of the kingdom of God. It has nothing to do with persuading us about anything, for it comes not in the wisdom of man’s words, but in power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost! This order is rising up in the life of every man and woman called to sonship. It will have its way! It’s coming to us and will not ask us if we like it, or don’t like it, or whether we agree, or disagree. This order is rising up to do the Father’s business! It’s all about causing the Father’s will to be done in us. As soon as the manchild is caught up to the throne war breaks out! The manchild isn’t about peace — he’s about war! I know we want to love everybody and just get along and forgive everyone and be merciful, but the manchild is about tough love! The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but are mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God! This is spiritual warfare! And it’s not about exorcising a hundred pesky little demons out of some precious saint, but it is about wrestling with the very principalities and powers that rule in the heavenly realms, the religious spirits that dominate every people everywhere and deceives all nations.

The battle begins in us, the elect of the Lord! Our own heavens must be cleansed, all things that offend, pollute, deceive, and destroy in God’s holy mountain must be gathered out of His kingdom, consumed by the fiery glory of God’s holiness. All the hang-over residual errors of religious Babylon, all the perversions of the New Age delusion, all the self-centeredness and ego of pride, all the spirit of judgment and condemnation, all desire to make a name, to build a kingdom, to gain a following, to manipulate and control men’s lives, all the money-raising gimmickry, all the merchandizing in the temple — selling of books, tapes, CD’s and DVD’s, all the fleshy means and methods that have invaded even the ranks of the very elect — it is there the battle commences! That is the first battle field! The war begins in the very midst of the sons of God! The war will quickly spread to every “nation,” to every religious system of man until there is a new heaven and a new earth in which dwelleth righteousness. But don’t think, my beloved brethren, that you are going out to set things straight in the kingdoms of Babylon until the heavens where the manchild reigns have been thoroughly cleansed! Individually this signifies the heavens of our own minds, thoughts, attitudes, and intents. Corporately it is the ways we function as the people of God. What the manchild is all about is kicking the enemy out of God’s house! It
is delivering each of us from every vestige of a religious mind, and bringing us fully into the mind of Christ!

When the ministry of the sons of God has finished its work every religious mouth will have been stopped and all the ends of the earth will behold the unveiled majesty of the Lord of glory! All will understand and know that He is the only true and living God and that Jesus Christ is His Son and the Saviour of the world! All will know that God’s glorious Christ, Head and body, is the government of God out of the heavens of the Spirit of the Lord! Every knee will bow in humble adoration and every tongue shall confess with joy and gladness that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father!

Oh, the miracle of what God is doing in this new kingdom day ravishes my heart. I am enthralled beyond measure at the prospect of what He has prepared for those that love Him and walk in His purpose. In spirit I can see the beauty of the peace, the harmony, the health, the prosperity, the joy, the righteousness, and the blessedness that will cover the earth and the faces of all men in that day when Babylon has fallen to rise no more. The religion of Islam will have disappeared from off the earth, not by guns or bombs or nuclear warfare, nor yet by the effectual expertise of missionary efforts, but by the surpassing glory and power of the revelation of Christ in sons. The halls of the Vatican will no longer echo the footsteps of pope or cardinals or multiplied thousands of pilgrims and Catholicism will no longer exert an influence on world events nor even exist as an institution in any land on earth. The Buddhist temples will every one be closed, their priesthood dissolved, nor will there any longer be men on earth calling themselves Hindus, Shintoist, New Age, Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Pentecostal, or any other religion. What a day!

Here is the scene. The manchild will be born. The manchild will ascend the throne. The manchild will cleanse the heavens. The manchild will rule all nations with a rod of iron. NOTHING CAN OR WILL PREVENT THIS! John beholds in spirit that the child is born and immediately caught away, caught up unto God and to His throne. The child, therefore, escapes the “devouring.” The devil cannot reach his purpose of preventing the manchild from reaching the throne. He fails. And then he himself is completely and forever deposed from his place in the heavens! Oh, the wonder of it!
Chapter 141

The Dragon, The Woman
And The Manchild
continued

"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the
dragon fought and his angels" (Rev. 12:7).

Down through the centuries many books have been written, many songs have been sung,
many sermons have been preached, and many things have been said about the devil.  Satan
has been blamed for everything from ingrown toenails to the disappearances in the
Bermuda Triangle.  It pains me to say it, but to most Christians Satan is their God Almighty,
for they fear him more than they do the Lord of glory.  I do not believe that Satan is
worthy of one iota of respect or honor, but none can deny that the vast majority of
Christians certainly do, by word and action, ascribe to him the attribute of omnipotence.
Most professed believers do not truly believe in one God — they honor at least two, one
good God, and one evil God.  And to hear them articulating their esteem of these Gods
you would be led to believe that the devil is the more accomplished and the most powerful
of the two, for they talk far more about the devil, and spend more time lauding his praises,
ascribing to this negative realm dread of mammoth proportions.  The good God, according
to the common testimony of church goers, is ever trying to do this and that, trying to get
His people together, trying to get His people to obey Him, trying to make His people holy,
trying to find a man who will do His will, trying to save the world, trying to fulfill His
purposes in the earth and establish His kingdom, while the devil is continually interfering
with His plans, frustrating His purposes, usurping His instruments, and defeating the issue.
On some good days the good God wins, on some bad days He loses, but it seems He
loses more than He wins for after two thousand years of this struggle the whole world
still "lieth in the wicked one" (I Jn. 5:19).

Some continually worry that Satan is lurking around every corner, and when they least
expect it he is going to hit them from behind with everything he has.  The average
testimony meeting is full of praise for the devil.  The devil discouraged them, the devil
tempted them, the devil made them afraid, the devil made them sick, the devil tormented
them through their ungodly neighbor, the devil tripped them, they were really trying to
press on into God and victory, but the devil somehow got the best of them.  If a score were
kept, the devil would come out the winner by about two to one over the Christ, relative to
what has been happening in their lives.  I heard the story once of this certain minister who
dreamed one night that on his way down the road he met the devil.  “Alright, you old devil,”
he shouted, “I am going to kill you and put an end to you for all those nasty things you’ve
been doing.  I am going to let you have it, you old devil!” As he drew near to the devil with
fists clenched, ready to smash the devil’s face, the devil said, “Hold it!  Don’t do that!
Remember — if you kill me, you will have nothing to preach about.”  What a word!
Through my lifetime I have heard vast numbers of Christians going about continually talking to the devil, praying to the devil (though they call It commanding and rebuking), and giving place to him over and over again. They “bind” him in this meeting or in that situation, but, like Samson breaking the cords of Delilah, he bounces right back in full regalia at the next meeting or occasion. These “devil worshippers” ever beat the air against him and do occasionally, they claim, win a battle against him, but the war rages on! If they do not get an immediate answer to their prayer, they are sure the devil is hindering. If everything does not go according to plan, the devil is interfering. If obstacles appear along the way, the devil is fighting them. They live out their lives in a constant state of paranoid devil-consciousness. The churches are literally filled with these devil-worshippers! They do not intentionally plan their worship this way, but it develops into that form, nevertheless. These go on and on about the devil, attributing so much power and mischief to his cause, and inadvertently sing his praise, because they truly do believe in the devil! What faith they have in him! What power and wisdom they ascribe to him! With what cunning does he, to hear them tell it, repeatedly “out-fox” the good God! In their minds he is HIS MAJESTY THE DEVIL!

Of one thing we may be very certain — none of these people is of THE MANCHILD COMPANY!

It is significant that this “war in heaven” does not begin until the manchild has been caught up to the throne and begins his rule. This is what the dragon feared, and why it would have liked to devour the child as soon as it was born. Jesus fought this very battle within Himself as soon as the Father announced His sonship and anointed Him with sonship power. While outwardly Jesus was “led of the Spirit into the wilderness of Judea,” inwardly He was caught up into an exalted heavenly place — the realm of sonship. As soon as He was initiated into the glory and power of manifest sonship the dragon, the devil, was standing right there before Him to attack Him! “If thou be the Son of God, command these stones to be turned into bread.” And the battle raged! It was an inward battle — the voice of the tempter within the mind, against the voice of God within the spirit. What a tremendous victory was forthcoming!

Ah, yes, there was war in the heavens of Christ’s mind and spirit and the tempter prevailed not, neither was his place found any more in the heavens where the Son dwelt! The great dragon was cast out, that ancient serpent, called the devil, and Satan: he was cast out into the earth for “then the devil leaveth Him” (Mat. 4:11). After an illustrious sonship ministry, as Jesus approached the hour of crucifixion, and spoke of it with His disciples, He testified, “Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me” (Jn. 14:30). Oh, yes! “The prince of the world is coming. And has no claim on me — he has nothing in common with me, THERE IS NOTHING IN ME THAT BELONGS TO HIM, he has no power over me!” (Amplified). Christ’s sensitive nature perceived the approach of the evil thing, as some old timers can tell when the thunderstorm is about to burst. His divine nature, working as it did, even within the limits of humanity, knew not only when the storm was about to burst upon Him, but knew who it was that was raising the tempest. And so He said, “The prince of this world cometh…”

But note, yet more important, that tremendous and unique consciousness of absolute invulnerability against the assaults. “He hath nothing in me. He is still the prince of the world, but his dominion stops outside my breast. He has no rule or authority here. His writs do not run, nor is either his presence or his dominion recognized or acknowledged within this sacred realm.” Was there ever a man that could say that? Are there any of us,
the purest and most spiritual among us, who, standing single-handed in front of the devil’s raging in the earth-realm, dare to profess that there is not a thing in us on which he can lay his black claw and say, “That is mine.” Ah, this is the glory of sonship — nothing in common with Satan! There was nothing in Jesus that corresponded to, and nothing that responded to, the agenda of the adversary! There was none of the nature of Adam that pertains to Satan. And he had no more place in the heavens of the Son-realm. So mighty was the indwelling life of the Father within that firstborn Son that Satan had no power over Him, no place within Him. And, precious friend of mine, when you have died completely to that old Adamic life, when there is none of the dust of Adam left in your consciousness, and when you have met the devil in the high realms of the spirit and have cast him out from thence, and your heavens are cleansed, SATAN WILL HAVE NO POWER OVER YOU, NO PLACE IN YOU. Satan’s base of operation will have been destroyed, his sphere of activity removed, and for you THERE WILL BE NO DEVIL ANY MORE! It is clear that there is to be a further "revelation of Jesus Christ," as He is revealed in the collective triumph of HIS OVERCOMERS. Aren’t you glad!

Again I would quote from a message written by brother Bob Torango in which he focuses on some very significant points in relation to this “war in heaven” and its personal, individual, and internal applications. He says, “When we read in the twelfth chapter of the book of Revelation about the two wonders in heaven, the woman and the dragon, and the birth that delivers a manchild unto God, we must understand that all these elemental characters are first and foremost to be recognized as a part of our being. We all have the woman, we all have the dragon, and we all have the manchild contained within our entity and there is being acted out in our lives this great event of birth, war, separation, judgment, dominion, power, and rule. Personally, I see the great red dragon as the seat of power upon which the carnal, religious mind sits and from which it operates. I don’t view it as being a spirit of the air around us or as something that is entirely set apart from the events that are surrounding us in the heavenly places of God’s dealings in our lives — but I do see it as being very much a part of God’s workings in us and in all of mankind.

“We are at war! Make no mistake about it, the time has come for the cleansing of our heavens to begin, and that which God winked at in times past, He is now dealing with in judgment and deliverance. When I put at the first sentence of this paragraph the phrase, ‘We are at war,’ I suppose many had a mild knee-jerk reaction at that terminology, considering the past history of the meanings that men have ascribed to that word ‘war,’ but just because we have only known the natural order of ‘war’ as men wage war, we should neither discount nor negate the fact that God will allow war to break out in heaven at the appointed time and season. The Manchild Order is a warrior-priest order, a king-priest operation that rules with righteous judgment. The dragon of the religious mind in every man must be cast out of our heavens, and that measure of removal and dispossession is going to take the kind of rule and authority that the Manchild Order represents.

“So it is, that I see a dragon in me, a religious mindset that seeks to corrupt every truth of God that is being revealed to my spirit, and I know that in me there is a war that is beginning to break out, and a casting down of the dragon into my earth is taking place, even as the birth within me of a Manchild Order is being ushered into the Throne Room of God within my temple. As a result of this ‘casting down’ of the dragon in my being, my spirit is ascending and taking a seat in the throne of God, which is causing a new rule and dominion in my being which is ushering into my life the endless government of the kingdom of God.
“This is no small thing that I am writing about! I am speaking of nothing less than the overtaking of my vessel by the power of the risen Christ, and the pulling down of all strong holds of ego and self-worship, leaving only one voice and one will in my heart, that being the lordship of my Prince and King Jesus Christ, whom I now serve with all of my heart, soul, and mind. The overthrowing of my kingdom and the reinstatement of God’s kingdom is what the war is all about! My kingdom will not give up its place willingly, because it is governed by the rule of the dragon, which has entrenched itself in my very thinking and keeps me under its enchantment by the power of lust and greed and my inherent god-complex, seated in the realm of my psyche.

“The dragon in me is wroth and is trying to find a foothold in me. I am in disarray, with different parts of me in servitude to God and other parts in me in servitude to the dragon, but this will not remain so, for He that began this work in me will bring it to its finality and He will not rest until every enemy in me is brought under the foot of His rule, including death itself. Because I know that He is after my soul, I have positioned myself in His holy place and will remain there until the desolation is passed over me. I have committed my members to Him and I have taken my hands off of my life, even to the door of death, trusting in His love toward me, surrendering to Him to perform His curious work in my being; I am not in struggle, but some of my parts are in struggle, to continue to live their own life, but I am in Him, and death cannot find me there. Though it may find my earthly body, and though it may sorely grieve my soulish heart, death cannot approach ME, for I am hid in Christ, and the life that I once had is no longer my life, but my life has become intrinsically entwined into His eternal life.

“I thank God for the unrest of my soul, for the unrest signifies change, and change signifies the manifestation of the kingdom of God overtaking my kingdom. Until He has accomplished the necessary overthrowing of my dragon, I will incline my heart to Him, and I will sing of His greatness and the enduring mercies of David. I will have my rest in Him, until the kingdoms of my world become the kingdoms of the Kingly Lord. Let the heathen rage and let the earth reel to and fro like a drunkard, but I will stand still and hold my peace, for the Lord is my deliverer and my reward. Woe to the inhabitants of my earth, for the dragon is cast down into my earthly mind, and there will be great judgments upon that part of my fallen self, but I will stay in the house of the Lord and will open up my doors and my gates to the rising King and He and I will sup together and will drink the new wine of His kingdom and break the bread of His fellowship. Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him!

“As a result, in my earth, the dragon rules and reigns and is worshipped and adored. But in my spirit, I am living in the heavens and am situated in the mount Zion with the Lamb of God, the captain of my salvation. Hallelujah! In my earth, death reigns and my body and mind are subject to aging and disease, each day bringing new signs of the corruption resident in my earth. But, in my heavens, there is the sound of singing, glad tidings of the Lord mighty and true, and there is a gathering taking place in these heavenly places of the Lamb and the hundred and forty-four thousand, an ingathering of the highest order, and I am at rest in my God and in the wisdom of His plan. For, you see, He has said that He will not leave my soul in hell, neither will He leave me a divided house, but He is coming forth out of His secret place and is making another appearing in His sons, individually first, then in a corporate anointing rising upon His body. There will be a company of sons, each marching in rank and file, under the command of the Supreme Ruler and Commander-in-Chief, the Lord Jesus Christ” — end quote.
I call your attention to the great truth that all real battles are not fought with material weapons. It is not necessary to have guns and tanks and airplanes and bombs in order to fight this battle. No, this battle is purely a spiritual battle. Many people on the so-called “religious right” have the idea that when the western nations send armies and overthrow Hitler, the Communists, the Taliban, or Saddam Hussein, that they are fighting God’s war and delivering the world from evil. But the savagery of warfare is itself evil! It has nothing to do with the spirit of the Christ who taught us to love our enemies, bless them that curse us, do good to them that hate us, and pray for them that despitefully use us, and persecute us. Carnal warfare is also contrary to the spirit of sonship, for the firstborn Son has given us the blessed revelation that God has not sent either His Son or His sons into the world to destroy men’s lives, but to save them. Therefore carnal warfare is the very antithesis of the gospel! And though you send an army and make captive people free from political tyranny you in no way deliver them from evil! Evil runs deeper far than that, my brother, my sister, for evil lurks in the heart of every man! You can have tyrannized evil people or free evil people — that is all the difference carnal warfare can make. The people of the religious right are for the most part warmongers in their attitudes and that in itself is a great evil! True warfare that defeats evil is fought not with material but spiritual weapons which are mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds! Regeneration and spiritual transformation deliver us from evil — not guns and bombs!

Elaine Cook once wrote, “I am laying a foundation for sharing the warfare that is presently upon us. I have tried to show that our warfare is definitely not over, but is changing because of the realm of spirit into which we are entering. This realm is called Paradise. It is the realm where man was first tempted by the serpent. It is the spiritual state in which Jesus walked while on earth and in it He was also tempted by the same serpent.

“Larry Hodges said, ‘Let us not be under the false presumption that once we come into the Paradisiacal state that we are somehow forever escaped and out of reach of the tempting serpent, for it is here that he must be finally and completely overcome. There is yet war in heaven and it will not be fought with the carnal weapons of men but with spiritual weapons. Paul said that ‘we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against the SPIRITUAL WICKEDNESS IN HIGH PLACES’ (Eph. 6:12). What are these rulers of the darkness of this world? Perhaps not what you may think! ‘For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds. Casting down IMAGINATIONS, and every high things that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and BRINGING EVERY THOUGHT INTO CAPTIVITY TO THE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST’ (II Cor. 10:4-5). The battleground is the heaven of our skull, our Golgotha where our will is laid down, and the enemy is the reasoning mind and all the vain imaginations brought forth from the reasoning mind. What other ruler of the darkness of this world has so ruled over men and nations through their minds than King Reason?’

“The battle here is to be of one mind with our Father! As Adam fell from Paradise in his mind, his fallen imaginations took him away from God. He began to be ruled by a mind other than God’s! He came under the dominion of the starry constellations — the thoughts and imaginations of fallen man. In this day, praise the Lord, we now see, in His firstfruits, the old heavens being rolled up and put away like a scroll and a new heaven being prepared to take their place. While we are going through this transition, there will be war in our heavens. The enemy will rage and accuse and raise doubtful questions in your mind about yielding up your ‘old heaven’ to God. This is our personal ‘Battle of
Armageddon.' The manchild is being caught up unto God and to His throne and there is war in heaven or Paradise! There is a great renouncing of the beast and his realm. The dragon and his voices are being cast out of our Paradise into our earth so that we may have a new heaven wherein dwells not the dragon and all his accusing voices, but righteousness!

“The whole course of nature is so designed to appeal to the natural, outward man. There is enmity and revolt against man’s realm by those who esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of this present Egypt, for they desire a better country, even a heavenly one. Now, a civil war has begun because these look for that city which hath foundations in another realm, a realm about which Reason knows nothing, and about which he cannot speak at all except to denigrate and slander. These have chosen to walk by faith and Wisdom. The battle shall rage until their new walk is established and they walk according to the laws of Paradise. These laws are contrary to the natural laws by which the rest of mankind must walk for the preservation of its natural life. Press in, dear saints! Be of good courage to go in and possess this new land of the spirit! Wage a good warfare for what was ours from the beginning — even the mind of Christ that is always in union with the heavenly Father. Hear the Spirit say to us as He did to Joshua of old: ‘Be of good courage to go up and possess the land!’” — end quote.

MICHAEL AND HIS ANGELS

“And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels” (Rev. 12:7).

We have learned who the dragon and his angels are — the devil and the whole soulish-religious realm of man and the religious spirit that activates and motivates that realm.

Now let us consider who Michael and his angels are. In Old Testament times the Lord often appeared to men through the manifestation of “the angel of the Lord” (Judges 6:20; II Sam. 24:16; I Kings 19:5-7). In chapter five of the book of Joshua, the children of Israel had just crossed over the Jordan and were ready to invade the promised land. There in full view of the new camp, stood the strong walls of Jericho. Joshua went out to look at the city; and he saw a man all armed coming toward him. Joshua walked boldly up to the man and said to him, “Are you on our side, or are you on the side of our adversaries?” If an angel were to tell believers today what this man told Joshua, they would probably get depressed, because this messenger said, “Wrong on both counts! I’m not with your enemies, and I’m not part of your army. I’m part of another army, and I have come with orders from God. Standing all around me and behind me in great and mighty columns, are myriads of angels (messengers). You can’t see them, Joshua, but there is a host of them, and I’M THEIR CAPTAIN!”

Then Joshua saw that he was the angel (messenger) of the Lord — the Captain of the Lord’s host; and Joshua, bowing down before him, said, “What word has my Lord unto His servant?” And the Captain of the Lord’s host said to Joshua, “Take off your shoes from your feet, for it is holy ground where you are standing.” Joshua did so, and the Lord said to him, “I have given you Jericho and its king and its mighty men of war; and I will destroy the city of Jericho before you.” Then the angel of the Lord told Joshua the way in which the city should be taken; and Joshua went back to the camp of Gilgal and made ready to march as God commanded. During the next seven days all that was done was according
to the word spoken by the angel of the Lord to Joshua. And you, dear reader, know the rest of the story!

Oh, yes! God has an army, a great and strong and fearful army, and His army has a glorious and invincible Captain. In view of the many passages of scripture which speak of the army of the Lord, and their exploits to soon be revealed, this brings new meaning and depth to God’s purposes in His people. “I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones…the Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle” (Isa. 13:3-4). “And the Lord shall utter His voice before His army: for His camp is very great: for He is strong that executeth His word: for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible, and who can abide it?” (Joel 2:11).

Ah, here is good news for you, my friend: GOD HAS AN ARMY! And God’s great army has a CAPTAIN! The Captain of this army is the One Joshua met outside of Jericho and the One who delivered Jericho into the hands of the children of Israel! Can you imagine who that illustrious One was whom Joshua met? He was the Captain of the Lord’s host (army)! And just who is the Captain of the Lord’s army? John met this same One in his visions on the isle of Patmos and here is his description of Him: “And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war…and on his head were many crowns…and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron…and he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS!” (Rev. 19:11-16).

Who is this Captain of the Lord’s army? “For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God” (I Thes. 4:16). That is a WAR CRY, my beloved, made by the Captain of the Lord’s army! The Lord Jesus Himself is the Captain of His army, and it is none other than He who descends from heaven in a war cry, in the VOICE OF THE ARCHANGEL, as Captain of the Lord’s host! This points us to the time of the great battle, the conflict of the ages coming to its final climax, with the CAPTAIN OF THE HOST descending to lead His army of overcomers into battle. The sons of God shall go forth in the glorious age and ages to come as the invincible ARMY OF THE LORD, strong and doing exploits, pressing the battle through the very gates of hell itself, until there be an ending to the reign of sin, sickness, sorrow, limitation, and death everywhere. The battle will rage just as it now rages within our breasts, and the conflict will be tremendous and severe. But the Lord, the mighty Captain, shall descend in the midst of His sons, and will UTTER HIS VOICE BEFORE HIS ARMY, for His army is very great!

Oh, yes, He is coming in truth, in righteousness, in judgment, in mighty spirit power and in great glory, to press the battle to the finish right here on earth, in the hearts of all men great and small, bringing redemption, deliverance, and restoration everywhere to all men, praise His name! What a day! What a day! And the wonder of it all is that this day is even now breaking in the earth. The hour has come for the manchild to be birthed and caught up unto God and to His throne! And already war has broken out in our heavens! The crisis hour in the history of the world is upon us, and God is not silent. Many who read these lines have heard the call to join this army — and have, in fact, been conscripted and made keenly aware that the Lord’s army for this new kingdom day is at this very moment in careful and diligent preparation. Many find themselves even now in their own “boot camp”
where they are learning the ways of spiritual warfare and are qualifying for God’s great battlefield by first being successful in casting the dragon out of their heavens. Only then shall the armies which are in heaven descend into the earth-realm, both within and without, to gain the victory there! Thus there are two great battles in the book of Revelation — a battle in heaven in chapter twelve, and a battle in earth in chapter nineteen. Great is the mystery!

The inspired apostle Paul tells us that the Christ comes in the voice of the archangel (I Thes. 4:16). “The voice of the archangel” is another striking symbol of great import and significance. We have at times pointed out that angels are not, as commonly represented, beautiful creatures with wings. The word “angel” is not a translation of the Greek word aggelos at all, but merely an English transliteration of the Greek word, which means nothing to the average person. The doctrines taught concerning these angels are nothing short of popish ignorance, superstition, and deception. Aggelos means merely “a messenger,” one possessing power and authority to speak for God (II Pet. 2:11). Thus, the “archangel” is the CHIEF-MESSENGER, or the PRINCE OF MESSENGERS. And hence the “voice of the archangel” means the voice or the message of one with supreme authority. He comes in his message, in the voice, He comes as the message, His very presence and word bring light and truth, encouragement and power, illuminating the minds of God’s elect, empowering them for the greater ministry which is coming at the manifestation of the sons of God! And who is this Chief-Messenger, this glorious Prince of Messengers, this preeminent message, this message of messages, this revelation of all revelations? With a mouth filled with praise, and a heart of thanksgiving, I answer: IT IS THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST — CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD! “The LORD HIMSELF shall descend from heaven IN the VOICE OF THE ARCHANGEL.” That is the mystery.

Permit me to follow that question with another. How many “archangels” are there? Nearly all Christians will tell you that originally there were three archangels: Michael, Gabriel, and Lucifer. So-called “orthodoxy” has long taught that Satan was, in the beginning, a high and beautiful archangel in heaven. But where is the scripture for that? It is non-existent! It is nothing short of amazing that such a doctrine could have enjoyed such widespread acceptance in the light of the plain teachings of scripture on this subject.

Man says that long ago, before the first shimmering light dawned in God’s creation, Satan was one of three archangels in heaven. But the Bible nowhere speaks of three archangels! The Bible nowhere calls Lucifer an archangel! Furthermore, there is not one scripture in the entire Bible wherein the mighty angel Gabriel is designated an archangel! In addition to all this, there is absolutely no instance in scripture where the word archangel appears in its plural form — “archangel(s).” There is no plurality of archangels inferred anywhere in God’s blessed Book. Our omniscient God has nowhere told us that there are more than one archangel, or that there ever were two or three archangels. You will have to tear the Bible all to pieces if you teach that! It is an extra-biblical notion! It is now time to awake, time to leave the superstitions of the Dark Ages, and begin to face up to the truth. It is time to open wide our hearts to the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God!

Dear reader, whom do you choose to believe? God or men? Men say there are or were three archangels, but the Holy Spirit declares in the plainest of language that there is only one. Jude, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, penned these meaningful words, “Yet Michael THE archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee”
(Jude 9). Michael is not spoken of very often in the scriptures, but when he is, it is most significant. According to Jude there is only one archangel; he uses the definite article, “the” archangel; and “the” archangel is named MICHAEL. Only one other passage of scripture mentions the archangel, and that is the verse we quoted earlier, “For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven in a shout, in THE voice of THE archangel…” That, precious friend of mine, is all the Bible has to say about archangels! Only two verses in the whole Bible! Incredible, isn’t it, after all the fanciful tales and elaborate doctrinal theories we have been given! And they spout all that stuff with a straight face as if a hundred scriptures back up what they are saying! I have very little time, and less patience, for the kind of offensive ignorance which, because men will not hear what is written, misrepresents these and other plain statements of the word of God. How I thank God with joy unspeakable and full of glory for the illumination of this, HIS DAY!

It should be clear to any thinking mind that by the very nature of the case the existence of more than one archangel would be most improbable, indeed. The Greek word archo (arch) is a political term which means “to be first in political rank or power.” FIRST! Do you hear it? How can three angels be FIRST? It is a contradiction of terms, a linguistic and grammatical absurdity. It is like a nation having three kings, three presidents, or three prime ministers! It is like a woman having three husbands (heads)! It is like saying that so-in-so is the president of the United States of America, and then adding, “…but two other men are also the president, you know!” In Daniel 10:13 Michael’s position is said to be “one of the chief princes,” but as Dr. Young has pointed out in his rendering (Young’s Literal Translation of the Bible), the sentence should read, “FIRST of the chief heads.” And that is precisely what makes him THE ARCHANGEL! There are other principalities and powers, but he is above ALL OF THEM. Of Michael alone it is said, he is “The Angel” and “The Prince” and “The First” of the chief heads! (Dan. 12:1; 10:13).

In the book of Daniel Michael is expressly identified with the Messiah (Dan. 12:1). In Daniel 10:21 he is called, “Michael your prince.” This personal pronoun “your” is of interest. The archangel is definitely a warrior, and his name means “who is like God.” He defends the celestial realms, exalting the glorious God, yet his ministry is wondrously on behalf of God’s people. “At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people…” (Dan. 12:1). In I Thessalonians 4:16-17 the “voice of the archangel” is represented as the voice that awakens the dead. “And the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven…in the voice of the archangel…and the dead in Christ shall rise first...” Significantly, Daniel 12:1-2 draws the same connection. “And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people…and many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth SHALL AWAKE…” And whose voice is it that quickens men and raises them out of the death-realm into the life of God? None other than THE VOICE OF THE SON OF GOD! “Verily, verily I say unto you,” Jesus asserted, “the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear THE VOICE OF THE SON OF GOD, AND THEY THAT HEAR SHALL LIVE” (Jn. 5:25). The voice of the archangel, therefore, is the voice of the Son of God!

There can be no doubt about it — the title “archangel” signifies CHIEF MESSENGER — and the question follows: WHO IS GOD’S CHIEF MESSENGER? Who else but our glorious Head — the Lord Jesus Christ! His name is called The Word of God! “And He Himself existed before all things, and in Him all things consist — cohere, are held together. He also is the Head of His body, the church; seeing He is the beginning, the Firstborn from among the dead, so that HE ALONE IN EVERYTHING AND IN EVERY RESPECT MIGHT OCCUPY THE CHIEF PLACE — stand FIRST and be PREEMINENT” (Col. 1:17-
The name “Michael” means WHO IS LIKE GOD — an appropriate title for Him who is “the sole expression of the glory of God — the Light-being, the out-raying of the divine — and He is the perfect imprint and very image of God’s nature” (Heb. 1:3, Amplified). No one who ever lived can be compared to our incomparable Christ, for He is King of kings and Lord of lords. He is alive forevermore, by many infallible proofs. At the sound of His voice all who are in the graves of sin, sorrow, and death will arise to live in His presence. Certainly the whole Christ body, all who are made ONE IN HIM, share this life, victory, glory and image!

In the light of such a profound array of scriptures as those we have just considered, can any doubt that in the Revelation “Michael” is the code-word for our Lord Jesus Christ, the Chief Messenger; and “Michael and His angels” who fight against the dragon, and prevail, and cast the great dragon out of the heavens of the Spirit, are indeed none other than Christ and His many brethren, the manifest sons of God! Ah, yes, the sons of God are the army of God, and Jesus Christ our Lord is the Captain of His army! An army is for war, and there is war in heaven! Our great Captain is He who knows the end from the beginning, and He has already written the advance report on the outcome of this war! That report is recorded in chapter twelve of the book of Revelation. I have read the report, and I have good news for every soldier in the Lord’s army. Fight on, saints of God, THE VICTORY IS ASSURED! It is indeed wonderful!
Chapter 142

The Dragon, The Woman
And The Manchild
continued

“And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night” (Rev. 12:10).

The great red dragon is called the devil (Rev. 12:9). The Greek word is diabolos. This word means “accuser” or “diabolical one.” If you pause to think you will become aware that the word teaches a great truth — accusations are diabolical — devilish! Dia means “through” and bolos means “to hurl something.” Diabolos will take his evil accusations and hurl them right through the heavens of the spirit where you dwell. Don’t tell me, dear saint of God, that you have lived so high in the heavens in your walk in the spirit that you have never experienced this! The diabolical one speaks through the carnal mind and accuses you — and so do his ministers.

One of the great victories that leads to sonship ministry is this one of defeating the “accuser.” The scriptures draw a wonderful contrast between the intercession of Christ, on the one hand, and the accusation of the devil, on the other hand. As I have studied the word of God and been taught by the precious spirit of truth many things have become evident, one of which is that while intercession may be Godward, the scriptures reveal that the primary thrust of the intercession of the Christ is not Godward at all, but manward, an intercession that is to us-ward, to bring us to God, to draw us to the Father, to work mightily in us, that we might yield ourselves unto Him, to live out the revelation of the Spirit in our lives. The real truth about the intercession of the Christ has been clouded by the corrupted theology of man.

I am sure that you, as I, have heard preachers try to describe His ministry of intercession. It goes something like this. Satan, our enemy and the accuser of the brethren, stands before the Father up in heaven accusing us day and night. Satan tells God all about our failings; he enumerates to God every sin we commit in thought, word, or deed. He is constantly, unceasingly, relentlessly, and unmercifully accusing us of every shortcoming and weakness. The Father, on the other hand, is portrayed as greatly offended and incensed by our sins, and exceedingly wroth with sinners; a vindictive punisher, somehow obligated by His superior sense of justice to be the avenger of every little thing we do wrong. Many parents have unwittingly darkened the hearts of their little children with threats of the certain vengeance of this God who is a constant terror over the life. “Now don’t you do that because GOD will punish you!” And even much stronger things are told to little children. God becomes a mean, harsh, vindictive old man up in the sky with beady little piercing eyes possessing wonderful x-ray vision which can penetrate into the deepest recesses of mind and heart, and the thickest darkness of night, with a punishing whip of large proportions!
Enter the Son. You know as well as I do that the church systems have always taught that this God of exacting justice and undiminished wrath must be appeased, soothed, turned aside from His furious vengeance, and that this feat can only be accomplished by the bold and insistent intercession of the COMPASSIONATE SON, our wonderful Lord and elder brother, standing opposite Satan, before the judgment-throne of the Father, as our advocate, our lawyer, pleading our cause, beseeching God to be kind to us for His sake, to commute our sentence, and begging for our lives on the ground that He paid the price for the forgiveness of our sins. According to this hypothesis the anger of God can only be appeased by looking upon the bloody sweat and cruel, ugly death of His Son, as He stands there interceding for us. I do not hesitate to tell you that such a teaching is utter rubbish and the brashest sort of nonsense! It springs from the Romish tradition that likens God the Father to a fearful and offended despot, spoiling for the blood of the offenders, and it makes Christ to be the One who pleads with God on behalf of the victim until the Father is consoled or placated. And if it weren’t for our advocate, Jesus, God would listen to the devil’s accusations and really lay it on to us! We could even lose our salvation because of Satan’s accusations, if it weren’t that the merciful Jesus is there to prevent God from casting us into hell, by presenting His blood on our behalf. Such is a gross caricature of the truth! More than that, it is a stupid absurdity and a horrible blasphemy! Praise God, the Spirit is unfolding truth in ever-increasing dimensions of glory which magnifies God’s glorious nature of love and mercy, His wisdom and power, His goodness and the prudence of all His plans and purposes.

It is my conviction that not even Satan is senseless enough to believe that he could approach our Father and convince Him to condemn us because of our failures. Nowhere does the scripture state that Satan accuses the saints to God. What it does say is that “the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which ACCUSED T-H-E-M B-E-F-O-R-E OUR GOD day and night.” It is one thing to be accused before, that is, in the presence of, or in front of another person, and another thing altogether for the accuser to accuse you TO the other one. It should be self-evident that Satan does not accuse us to God, he merely accuses us before God. It is not the almighty and omniscient God, my brother, my sister, whom Satan wishes to convince of your unworthiness — it is YOU! Satan has no misconceptions about his ability to persuade the all-wise, all-knowing God of your weakness and worthlessness, but if he can influence you to believe that you are unworthy, that you are a failure, that you are hopeless, that it is impossible for you to attain to the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, that it is beyond the realm of possibility for you to be conformed to the image of the Son, or lay hold upon life and immortality; or that God does not love you, leaving you condemned and hopeless — his accusations have accomplished his nefarious purpose of robbing you of all your hope, faith, confidence, peace, joy, and victory! Then the manchild will not be born in you!

Think not, dear one, that this scene is set in some far-off heaven somewhere! Satan is not standing in a red devil suit before the great white throne somewhere beyond the milky way — ah, he lurks, rather, in the corruption and unbelief of our own carnal minds, in the unrelenting voice of our own distorted conscience, in the perverted reasoning and logic of our silly superstitions about God, slithering about from realm to realm within our lives. The reason why so many saints fail when it comes to the temptations and condemnations of the devil is that they don’t really want to resist Satan. We have been taught in the past to flee from the great red dragon, to remove ourselves from his turf, and we have been doing this all along; but on this Day, this glorious Day of illumination and truth, the Day of the Lord, all of us who walk in the light of this Day have discovered that it has been the very serpent, yea, the great dragon that has been bruising our heels all these years right in our house, causing us to miss the mark! And it has been the very dragon that has been ACCUSING YOU DAY AND NIGHT BEFORE GOD IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD WHICH YOU ARE AND BEFORE THE THRONE OF GOD WITHIN YOUR SPIRIT!
You see, the vision John saw of the “dragon” reveals the nature of the dragon-spirit; but Satan never comes literally as some hideous monster with horns, a forked tail, and a pitchfork. He doesn’t blare at you through a loudspeaker. He comes in your own desires! He speaks in your own thoughts! He makes his case within your own imaginations and reasonings! He torments you through your own feelings and emotions! The battle rages in the mind, whisperings out of the dust realm, accusations that shout at you from within! He will plead his case within the very precincts of your spiritual life! And God is there, too! The indwelling Spirit of God likewise speaks from within, out of the spiritual mind, out of the inner sanctum of that most holy place within you, the voice of inspiration, the spirit of revelation, words of grace and wisdom and divine hope drop from His tongue, the still small voice of the Father within His temple of clay! The Father’s voice graciously assures His sons, “I love you, my beloved son; you are my very own son, and I will be a Father to you; I will strengthen you, I will uphold you, for I am the Faithful One and will complete the good work I have begun in you and present you faultless before my throne.” And there, before God in His temple — within — rises the voice of the antagonist, the voice of the carnal mind, even the religious mind — the Accuser! It is there in the imaginations of the mind, in the heavens of that universe which you are, that Satan the accuser must be cast down, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God within.

The devil may accuse us, but God will never condemn. Satan is the accuser, the condemner. If God condemns any man then He and Satan are in the same business — they are partners! Is God for us, or against us? Is He on our side, or isn’t He? “What shall we say to all this? If God be for us, who can be against us? Who can be our foe, if God is on our side? He who did not withhold or spare even His own Son but gave Him up for us all, will He not also with Him freely and graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect when it is God who justifies? Who shall come forward and accuse or impeach those whom God hath chosen? Will God, who acquits us? Who is there to condemn us?” (Rom. 8:31-34, Amplified). That wonderful Father! That gracious Redeemer! The most loving and faithful of all beings! He turned my heart back again and restored me into His life. God, the Father, sent Jesus — the very fullness of His own heart — sent Him into the world to die on Calvary’s cross. Ah, religion tells us that Jesus must appease the Father’s anger; yet the truth is that it was the Father Himself that so loved the world that He gave us Jesus! We did not choose Him, He chose and ordained us! We love Him because He first loved us! Who is He that condemns? Not God! “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” What can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus? The answer is sure — there is not one created thing in all the vast universe that can separate us from God’s love — certainly not the accusation of the devil!

God has a great and unconditional and unfathomable love for every man! His only desire is to help, bless, deliver, transform, and make beautiful every life! And He is not judging you for your failures, but will follow you and stay with you until His victory is raised up in you, His law written in your heart! He sees every person through those eyes of love and intense yearning and desire for them. He plans better and greater things for every man, woman, and child in this world. Does that mean nobody is punished? Not at all! Every man still reaps what he sows — if a man smokes for fifty years and dies of lung cancer, this is the reaping of what he has sown — not the condemnation and vindictive wrath of God which not only kills him, but sends him to the flames of hell! All condemnation is from the adversary. God does not condemn! He does not condemn us who are His children. He corrects us, purges us, and purifies us in love and everlasting faithfulness. But He does not condemn! The preachers love to attribute the work of the great dragon to our blessed Lord. But God is not the accuser, nor does He pay any attention at all to the accusations. That is the “gospel" because it is GOOD NEWS!

David Wilkerson once wrote: “You see, even after I repent, I feel I have to make it all up to the Lord. But like the Prodigal Son, I can have the Father hugging my neck, kissing my
cheek, putting rings on my fingers and a robe on my back, telling me to forget the past and come into His house and enjoy the feast He has prepared for me. Yet inside I’m saying, ‘I can’t go in — I’m not worthy! I’ve sinned against You. Let me pay you back. Let me grieve and carry the guilt a little longer.’ It’s easy for me to believe God forgave Israel, Nineveh, the heathen, the dying thief. But I find it hard to understand how He so quickly and lovingly accepts me as if I had not sinned! I’m sure many who read these lines can relate to that — my, WHAT A NUMBER THE ACCUSER HAS DONE ON US!

The accuser loves to throw your Adamic nature up in your face and make you feel hopeless because of the outer flesh man. But God has forgiven us all our trespasses, past, present, and future! He has also quickened us and made us alive in Christ. I will not come to perfection, maturity, the image of God, and sonship by trying to make my Adamic life more godly. Adam can’t do it! The adulterous woman found that out! The accuser will tell you that Adam can do it, or that at least he should, and then condemn you when he fails. He’s a mean rascal, isn’t he! But there is a Life, even Christ, flowing from the very essence of my being that has absolutely nothing to do with my human personality, natural character, or Adamic life. It is a power greater than all! It is Christ who must be raised up in me, to be my life, my righteousness, my reality. Christ isn’t formed in us in one day, one month, or one year. We certainly don’t expect such maturity and experience in a human baby that quickly! But Christ is growing up in all the elect who have received the call to sonship! And one precious key I have learned that will assist you in casting down the accuser from his place in your heavens is the sure knowledge that our Father does not condemn us while we are going from victory to victory, but still fall short of His holiness. All our sins are covered until we have FULLY OVERCOME! No license to sin here, just abundant measures of His grace, mercy, and great faithfulness UNTIL WE REACH PERFECTION. Once this deep mystery is unveiled within our hearts the accuser will HAVE NO MORE A PLACE IN US! Aren’t you glad!

What does it mean, that Jesus makes intercession for us? Jesus is our mediator, our intercessor and our advocate; He stands between God and us, but just what is He doing when He does that? Is He pleading with the Father to be merciful to us and forgive us? No, a thousand times no! The Greek word is entuchano meaning “to meet with, to converse with, to entreat.” The question is just this: With whom does the Christ meet, with whom does He converse, and whom does He entreat? God, or man? God so loved the world that He gave His Son for us. God so loved! God gave the Son! Does the Father of love have to be entreated to be kind and merciful and gracious unto us? Listen! “To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, NOT IMPUTING THEIR TRESPASSES UNTO THEM…now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though GOD DID B-E-S-E-E-C-H Y-O-U by us: we pray (Greek: beg, petition, beseech, intercede) you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God” (II Cor. 5:19-20). Therefore, we find that HIS INTERCESSION IS TO US-WARD, to meet with us, to converse with us, to entreat us, to petition us, to intercede with us, to reveal the Father’s heart to us, to bring us back to Father, that we might be reconciled to God! His intercession works in us that we might know Him in all His glorious and eternal reality! All this attention of Christ is directed toward us! God does not need to be interceded with for us, it was the invisible and unknowable God who sent the Christ to us, to meet with us, to draw us that we and the Father might be one again. Oh, the wonder of it!

Ray Prinzing wrote of these “accusations of the devil” on this wise: “Not only is there the universal captivity and bondage which all creation shares in the natural realms, but we also read of those who are caught in ‘the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will’ (II Tim. 2:26). Here the Greek word for ‘captive’ is zogreo meaning, ‘to catch alive.’ The devil, accuser, would lay his snare and trap many, bringing them into a form of bondage which is most devastating, the bondage of the mind, mental confinement and harassment. The very clue to this bondage is found in the nature of the ‘captor’ — for the meaning of the Greek word translated devil is accuser.
“What accusations — what condemnations are hurled at mankind by this instrument of torment! Transforming himself into an angel of light, to quote and misquote the truth. One of the greatest of all deceptions and bondages is simply to be bound by a HALF-TRUTH. To be given enough truth to ensnare, but not all the truth which makes men free. Suppressing the truth to a degree that a wrong inference is given, and then the mind of man grapples with the distorted facts and reasons himself into feverish turmoil groping for answers. Ah, Cathedrals are filled every week with these ‘prisoners’ of the Accuser! So blinded, so bound, and they know not the truth, even though ‘the voices of the prophets’ are sounded forth as the scriptures are read every Sabbath (Acts 13:27). But they cannot hear, for they are in a snare of half-truth, and when any other message is declared, they recognize it not, though it be a pure gospel.

“Perhaps one could describe at length this sad state of affairs, but it is known already, and at times our hearts ache with the grief of this condition, yearning that men might come into the knowledge of the truth which will set them free from the snare of the Accuser. Yes, and from the prison of all the forms of self-condemnation which arise because not knowing the truth, they are whipped with the scourge of lies, and wounded with the traditions of men. Thank God, for this captivity also there is deliverance! ‘And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose (contradict) themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance (A CHANGE OF MIND) to the acknowledging of the truth; and they may recover themselves from the snare of the devil…’ (II Tim. 2:24-26).

“Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free’ (Jn. 8:32). It is a FULL REVELATION which dissipates the lies of the Accuser, and the more we are brought into the knowledge of the truth, the less room there is for him to deceive and torment us. In this present age it is the holy Spirit of God which has been given to us to guide us into truth. And while the Spirit of God will always be that source of life and truth, as we move into the next age, we find that God will have His pastors ‘which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding’ (Jer. 3:15). You say, Why doesn’t all the preaching set men free now, surely there is no lack of preaching? No, there is plenty of voices in the land — but when the blind are leading the blind, there is but one thing sure to happen, they will all fall into the ditch. Thank God, there are some speakers of truth even today — and God is using their message to bring a certain degree of liberty and freedom. Men are being loosed from heavy burdens of self-condemnation. And as we cease following the old order of law, and begin to minister the life of the new covenant, there is a growing freedom felt in the lives of our hearers. And when the ‘ministry’ has been fully loosed into the free life of the Spirit, they will be able to teach others — not with a ‘deliverance meeting’ of past orders, to line them up, pray for them, demand demons to flee, etc., but the poor benighted souls WILL RECOVER THEMSELVES OUT OF THE SNARE OF THE ACCUSER as the truth becomes life in them. Praise God!” — end quote.

And now this confirming word from brother Elwin Roach. “This crafty creature (the dragon) is a master at deception, and if deceit doesn’t break our union with God, accusations will be the next line of attack. These two methods come from within and without. Our own religious devil will deceive or accuse us from within our own minds, and the religious devil in the world’s church system will deceive and accuse us outwardly. One form of accusing is to continually preach against our sin and shortcomings. This will cause self-condemnation, and when we condemn ourselves, there will be no need for anyone else to do so; for the accuser has succeeded in one of his missions. Accusations will always come when it is seen that we are drawing close to God; for this poses a real threat to the leaders’ church structure, their power over the people, and the system’s financial wealth. We will be accused of spiritual error, heresy, blasphemy, or worse. They make it clear that if we are not joined to them, we are forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, we will lose our covering, and there is no way to know the truth without their covering. We will sink deeper and deeper into Satan’s pit of deception, so they say, until there will be no
hope left for us. The caldron of eternal damnation will be our lamenting portion if we do not boot-step to their religious gait.

“Neither can such accusations be avoided when we ascend into heaven! The dragon of our own religious minds will be there, as well as that of the world’s church system. They both will step forward and accuse us continually before God. Sadly, we sometimes believe them! It is easy to believe we just don’t quite measure up when we are faced with such damning evidence, or when there is so much more we can do to please God, or a thousand other things to cause self-condemnation” — end quote.

“And the dragon stood before the woman...” Let me ask you a question. Where did Satan get his legs? In the garden of Eden the little serpent was cursed and lost his legs, confined to slither about in the dust realm. Job is the oldest book in the Bible and by the time we get from Eden to the estate of the greatest man in the east somehow that rascal has sprouted legs! Many people talk about demon possession, but demons are not the devil. Yet is it not true that the devil himself became incarnate in the carnal mind and sensual body of the fallen, natural man and now walks in man, thinks in man, reasons in man, makes his distorted judgments in man, schemes in man, lusts in man, commits wickedness through man, and speaks through man? Thus we find that it is man who has given the dragon not only his legs, but his mind, his body, and his mouth!

The word dragon appears twelve (the number of government) times in the Revelation, revealing the governmental, controlling, dominating principle of the kingdom of darkness. Satan’s most vociferous mouthpiece for accusation is the preachers in the church systems of man! When I was a child and a young man I remember the “Bible-thumpers” and “street preachers” who stood on the street corners of our little Alabama town with Bible in hand loudly screaming their so-called gospel, warning the people of their sins, telling them how lost and wicked they were, and what terrible judgment and damnation stared them in the face if they did not repent. These, as well as the preachers behind the pulpit, missed the point altogether! With stern countenances, breathing out threatenings, prophesying judgment, dangling men over the flames of hell — that is not the gospel! That is Old Testament mentality! That is from before the grace of God and the salvation of God appeared unto all men preaching peace by Jesus Christ! (Eph. 2:16-18). Those who try to preach Christ by accusing the sinner are ministers of the devil, diabolos, the accuser! There are some even in this walk of sonship who still are of the mindset that every tsunami, hurricane, tornado, earthquake, or other disaster that strikes a city or country where wickedness reigns is somehow God’s judgment punishing them for their sins. That could, of course, be true were it not for the great and eternal truth that “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, NOT IMPUTING THEIR TRESPASSES UNTO THEM” (II Cor. 5:19). I must emphasize again, all such judgment and condemnation preaching is the devil’s message, out of the mouth of the same great red dragon that stands before the woman and is the accuser of the brethren!

Now, if that were the end of the story, we might reach the conclusion that since Jesus paid it all, therefore every man is O.K., go out and live like the devil and make heaven your home! But that, too, would be one of the half-truths of which Ray Prinzing spoke. The condemnation of the old covenant is gone, but the blessing of the new covenant hasn’t been experienced! By way of illustration, let us suppose someone sends me an e-mail informing me that they have deposited one million dollars into my bank account. But I don’t believe it! I just ignore it. I never write a check on it. Now, obviously I am not under any condemnation or judgment from the person who gave me the money, and I’m certainly not in jail as a result of anything they have done to me; but neither am I enjoying the blessing of the $1,000,000.00 I have received! In like manner, salvation is something more than my sins being paid for — it is all the riches of Christ opened up for me — riches of peace, joy, love, righteousness, deliverance, transformation, provision, fullness, glory, and power!
This explains why just the knowledge that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, is itself a half-truth! The second half of that wonderful truth is just this: “...and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, BE YE RECONCILED TO GOD!” (II Cor. 5:19-20). That’s why men are exhorted to come to Christ and believe! Apart from believing, though the condemnation is gone, the blessing cannot be obtained and possessed! “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” “For with the heart man believest unto righteousness.” “That the blessing...might come on the nations...that we might receive the promise of the spirit THROUGH FAITH.” A hundred more such scriptures might be added!

There is a significant statement that fell from the lips of the Lord Jesus as He taught in the temple one day. “Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever” (Jn. 8:34-35). The one who commits sin is the servant, or slave of sin. We all understand this! As Paul said, the thing I want to do I don’t do, and the thing I don’t want to do is what I do; I have the will to do good, but when I would do what is right I find another law in my members, sin in my members, bringing me into captivity to the law of sin and death. Slaves of sin! But the lovely Jesus tells us in words sweeter than honey in the honey comb that the servant abides not in the house forever. A servant is not an heir, his arrangement is temporary, he will one day be let go, set free, or will die and none of his seed will inherit anything. But the Son abides ever! The slave is the natural man, the outer man, the Adamic man. He is the slave of sin! But this arrangement is temporary — no man will be a slave to sin forever! The Son is Christ, even Christ in your spirit, the inner man, the new creation. That inner son is the heir of God and it is the son who abideth ever! The message is just this — your Adamic life has an end. Not just the end of your body in the grave, but the very nature of the Adamic life, the carnal mind, the human consciousness, the weakness of the flesh — this will not abide forever. It shall not stand! Not in any man! Only the SON will abide in the house forever! The son will have the victory! If the Son makes you free, you are free indeed. The Christ in every man will triumph and all men will abide in the Father’s house as heirs of all the riches of God in Christ Jesus! Isn’t it wonderful!

“And there was war in heaven...and the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil...he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him” (Rev. 12:7,9). “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God” (II Cor. 10:4-5). My heart’s desire and prayer to God is that He will give the spirit of understanding to all who read these lines. As we step forth to put on the fullness of Christ the devil comes to accuse us. When we agree with the accusation we exalt ourselves above the knowledge of God. God knows that nothing can be held against us — there is no condemnation! If I slip and sin today God has no fiery wrath to pour out upon me! Because of Calvary and the blood the devil has no grounds for accusation in any realm of earth or heaven. The Son has come to encourage, strengthen, deliver, and transform me, not to condemn, threaten, and beat me down. The word says we are forgiven all our trespasses. The word says we are reconciled, clean, sanctified, and made a new creation. The only thing the whisperer can do is suggest, enticing us to live beneath our calling as the result of believing a lie. Oh, how he seeks this, because he knows that the birth of the manchild, Christ in us, means the end of his activity on this planet. Oh, yes! He is a liar and the father of it!

The only weapon the dragon has is suggestion, accusation. And it sounds like this: “Hath God said?” Notice, it’s a question. Now, the way to cast the old dragon down is by the word of our testimony. “And they overcame him (the dragon) by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony” (Rev. 12:11). We turn the question around and
make it an imperative, “Yea, God hath said!” The devil tried that tactic on the firstborn Son of God and He answered, “It is written!” “God hath said!” “And the devil departed from Him.” In that blessed moment Satan was forever cast out of His heavens! No wonder Jesus could say, “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven” (Lk. 10:18). This enlightening statement is in no way a reference to the myth, the fable, legend, folklore, and fairy tale about Lucifer being expelled from heaven. It wasn’t something Jesus had witnessed in some far-off heaven before God spoke the creative fiat, “Let there be light.” Oh, no! It was what He had experienced in His own encounter with Satan in the heavenly places of His sonship to God! Jesus beheld Satan fall from His own heaven, the heaven of His mind, the battleground where the battle was fought, just as every son of God must fight the same battle on the same battleground and behold Satan falling from their very own heaven!

Jane Leade, a woman who lived some four hundred years ago, and whose writings are just being discovered again, talked about being caught up into high and lofty places in the spirit where she would meet with the Father. The Lord showed her visions of the heavenly city, New Jerusalem, and in some of these visions she was caught up into the realm of the heavenlies and suddenly she looked, and the devil was there too. She thought, “The devil shouldn’t be in this high place. The devil shouldn’t be here!” We all know that when the sons of God presented themselves unto the Lord in the book of Job, Satan came also among them. All of this reveals to us the great mystery of the red dragon, the accuser of the brethren, in heaven. How often when we have entered into the presence and glory of the Lord we heard voices that tried to distract us, to draw us away from the realization of the Lord’s manifest presence and voice. The voices inform us of many reasons why we should not be there, they remind us of our weakness and failings, they amplify our doubts and fears, magnify our unworthiness, and if nothing else they remind us of some mundane thing that needs our attention, to draw us away to a lower place. Often when I found myself caught up consciously into a high realm in the glory of the Lord Satan would appear there with me as the accuser of this brother!

TRUTH ON THE HIGHEST PLANE

Now — while all the foregoing, all of which we have spoken in our last message and in this one — is true, and one aspect of our experience, there is a truth beyond all this — truth on the HIGHEST PLANE!

Let there be no doubt in the mind of any reader of these lines that the dragon does not really spring into action in the heavenly realm until the hour of the birthing of the sons, the manchild company. His “tail” had drawn a third part of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth, but as the woman prepares to give birth the dragon himself comes and plants himself right there before the woman to devour her child as soon as it is born. Later, after he is overcome and cast out of heaven, the dragon is referred to as “the accuser of our brethren.” It is abundantly evident to me that “our brethren” are the sons of God! Does this not clearly indicate that the greatest and fiercest accusations of the dragon are not made against the baby Christians in the carnal church systems, nor yet against the woman, the virgin church, who brings forth the manchild, but against the manchild himself following the time of his birth. And the accusations are made in heaven — in the very highest realms of the spirit! Can you not see the mystery?

Let us consider the firstborn Son of God, for He is the proto-type for every son of God. Do you suppose Jesus had any accusers during those years He was growing up into His mature sonship in Joseph’s carpenter shop in Nazareth? There is no record of them! The accusations began following His baptism in the Jordan and the anointing of the spirit of sonship without measure. Oh, yes! No sooner did His heavenly Father bear solemn witness, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” than Jesus was “driven by
the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.” That is where our Elder Brother first encountered the accusations of the adversary in the highest realm of the spirit — the realm of manifest sonship! Then the great red dragon, through his body of the religious system of that day, unceasingly brought accusations against the firstborn Son — the Head of the manchild company. The record speaks for itself.

“And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the Sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him. But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth. And they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus” (Lk. 6:7,8,11).

“And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak many things: laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him” (Lk. 11:53-54).

“And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, they said unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him” (Jn. 8:3-6).

“Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was very early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; so that they might eat the Passover. Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man? They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee” (Jn. 18:28-30).

“And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying, We indeed found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute unto Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King. And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him” (Lk. 23:1-2,5,10).

And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing” (Mat. 27:12).

In accusing Jesus falsely, the Pharisees, scribes, chief priests, and elders of Israel proved two things about themselves: (1) They proved that the accuser of the brethren sat on the throne of their hearts and (2) They proved that they did not know the God they professed to worship. No, their god was not by any means the God Jesus represented! Jesus said they were of their father, THE DEVIL! They were by nature ACCUSERS! He was from His Father in heaven. “You are from beneath,” Jesus said, “I am from above.” This means simply this: “You are carnal. I am spiritual. You judge after the flesh. I judge no man. You teach the law but do not live it because you understand only the letter of the law. I know the spirit of the law. Therefore, I can and do live it! In fact, I AM the law made flesh!”

Do you suppose, my beloved brethren, that you have been accused of the devil through the spirit of condemnation? Has the voice of the serpent hissed in your ear, accusing you of every lustful thought, every evil desire, every fleshly emotion, every wrong attitude and false spirit, every unwise and hurtful action, of every stumble and failure, convincing you that you are unworthy, weak, helpless, hopeless, without strength, wisdom, or holiness to stand before God as His son? That is without doubt one level of accusation by the
adversary. But I tell you the truth when I say that you haven’t truly known accusation, nor will you experience the full cunning of its insidious power, until the son of God is birthed in you! Then the accusations come — You’ll never be perfect, you don’t pray enough, you don’t show enough love, you’re not spiritual enough, you don’t have enough power to heal a fly if it had a headache, nobody likes or appreciates you, you’re a nobody, who do you think you are? If you’re a son of God show us a sign — come on, do a miracle for us, turn these stones into bread, cast yourself down from the top of the Empire State Building, prove to us the power you claim you have! What makes you better than anyone else? What makes you better than the people in the churches? You make yourself equal with God — you blasphemer! You transgress all the truths of the church, you trample all the traditions of Christianity, you present yourself as superior to the pastors, overseers, bishops, cardinals, and the pope himself — you think you’re a king sitting on the very throne of God to rule over everybody and everything in the universe — you are a dangerous ego-maniac! You’re mad! You’re a victim of wishful thinking — you’re really a hypocrite! You cast out devils by the prince of devils — you are possessed! You are a deceiver and a charlatan! You should be locked up in the state mental hospital. We will have you examined by the state psychiatrists to determine your state of megalomania — and the accusations go on and on as he seeks to defeat us in our own heart!

And if they could crucify you, they would! And they would stand around your cross taunting you — If you’re the son of God, come down from the cross! Prove to us who you are! You saved others, now save yourself! Oh, yes! Wait until you become a threat to the whole organized system of religion, as well as the institutional, educational and governmental systems of man; wait until the churches begin to empty out, their coffers run dry; wait until the Moslems turn from Mohammed, the Jews forsake Torah and the synagogue, the Hindus and New Agers abandon their gurus and channelers and books and charms and rituals; wait until the doctors have no more patients, and the jails have no more inmates, the bars have no more drunks, the politicians can’t tell anymore lies, and the whole system is about to collapse — then you will overcome the great red dragon by the blood, the life of the Lamb, and by the word of your testimony!

For you see — the real battle is not being attacked from without — God uses the external, outer things to stir and establish us internally! One can never overcome that which is without until he has overcome it first within himself! That is why before Jesus ever dealt with the accusations of the scribes, Pharisees, chief priests, and elders, he first met the dragon within himself in the solitude of the wilderness and there overcame him and cast him out of His heavens! When you have cast the dragon down out of your heavens, then peace is established upon the throne in your heavens. Strength is established in your heavens, with wisdom, understanding, knowledge, faith, and power! Then nothing without can move you or stand before you. It was in the face of all the accusations and opposition of the religious system of the Jews and the power of Rome that Jesus was able to say, “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven!”

If you are not sure of who you are, where you are, and absolutely possessed of the knowledge of the Father’s will and purpose, you will be moved by those outer attacks that come against you. Do you really, really understand why Jesus was never affected, moved, discouraged, doubtful, or turned aside by the open accusations of the scribes and Pharisees, by the angry, shouting mob, or by the agony of the cross? Because long ago in the wilderness that day at the beginning of His sonship ministry, He fought with the dragon and cast him out of His heavens! If the dragon is not cast out, when he says, “Fall down and worship me, and I will give you all the kingdoms of the world,” you will see a short-cut to the throne and follow Adam out of Eden. The battle is in the mind, in the soul, in the consciousness — in the high places of our spiritual life, understanding, and experience. You had better know who you are as you commence upon the sonship ministry and you will never know it for certain until Michael and his angels fight with the dragon, and the dragon fights and his angels, and prevail not; neither is their place found
anymore in the heavens where you dwell. Oh, hallelujah! This battle takes place within the life of each and every son of God. The battle is portrayed in symbols in John’s vision, but both the battle and the victory are very, very real!

WE MUST NOT BE DEVILS!

We must be careful that we neither assume the roll, nor imbibe the spirit, of the “Accuser.” From the beginning of the age Christians have assumed that it was their right, if not their duty, to speak evil of Satan and rail against him. I have even heard Christians screaming, “I hate you, you dirty devil, and I command you to come out in Jesus’ name!” There was even a little song back in the 1950’s that people thought was cute, all about hating the devil. But the apostle Jude warned us that our unwise railing against Satan was not only ignorance, but error. “Likewise these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominions, and speak evil of dignities. Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee” (Jude 8-9). If we bring railing accusations, then we, too, are become accusers, placing ourselves upon the same level as Satan himself, who is “the accuser of the brethren.”

It is important to understand that Satan is given primarily for the maturity and perfection of God’s sons. In the Bible the first mention of “Satan” is when the adversary stood up against Israel, and again when he provoked David to number Israel (I Chron. 21:1; II Sam. 24:1). Then, as we have mentioned earlier, in Job’s day the sons of God came to station themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also in their midst. Next, we see Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him ((Zech. 3:1). In each of these instances Satan is portrayed as a dignitary, as an important personage in a position appointed for him by the Lord, and occupying an official office as “adversary” in the great scheme of God’s purposes in and with His people.

Our trials and testings are associated in the word of God with the ministry of Satan. You never thought of Satan as having a “ministry”? “Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit to be tempted (tested) of the devil. And when the Tempter came to Him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread” (Mat. 4:1-3). “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried...be thou faithful...and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev. 2:10). “And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Lk. 22:31-32). “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world” (I Pet. 5:8-9).

We flounder a bit in our understanding of these things, but as time passes by and the Holy Spirit takes the things of God and reveals them unto us, we begin to understand that in all the universe a thing is a thing ONLY BECAUSE IT HAS ITS OPPOSITE. “Good,” for instance, has no meaning apart from the knowledge of “evil.” Who could possibly speak of the day if night had never been known? There was no first light if there was no darkness! What could we know of life if there were no death? What could we know of health if there were no sickness? What would we know of wealth if poverty had not spread its specter upon the earth? No man can be trusted until he has been EXPOSED TO THE OPPOSITES, until he has been tempted, tried, and tested. No man can be declared strong until he has been tested for weakness. Nor can he be an overcomer until he has faced the dreadful foe! Those who are worthy to slay their Goliaths must first have slain their lion and their bear. No man can be an overcoming son of God until he has
encountered the serpent in the wilderness and the great red dragon in heaven and come forth victorious!

The very fact that our heavenly Father Himself uses Satan to accomplish His work in His sons should be cause enough to help us see that his nefarious work as the “accuser” has a vital role to play in uncovering the carnality, weakness, and immaturity in the saints, that we might repent of our lack and be cleansed from the corruption of the carnal mind that lurks hidden and unrevealed even in these apprehended ones of God. But we have no desire to join in that negative spirit of the devil ourselves, becoming the accusers of Satan, and railing against him! Can we not see him for who he is and leave him to do the job appointed to him by God? The Lord Jesus cast out evil spirits, and we share that authority also, but He never railed against the devil — He simply commanded the spirits to come out and the spirits obeyed Him, for they recognized the voice of the One who had authority over them! When one truly has authority there is no need to heap insults and abuse upon anyone — just speak the word and it will be obeyed! No need to shout and go through all kinds of verbal gyrations, the word may be whispered ever so softly, but when it is a word of authority it will be obeyed! When a judge sentences a convicted criminal it would be beneath the dignity of his office to say, “I hate you, you dirty criminal, and therefore I sentence you to life in prison without chance of parole!” His personal feelings do not enter into the equation at all, for he is not acting upon his own feelings but simply carrying out the judicial responsibility and authority of his office. Heaping abuse on anyone, even Satan, is in reality a sign of weakness. WE HAVE AUTHORITY — THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB AND THE WORD OF OUR TESTIMONY! We are not Satan’s accusers, but He that is in us is greater than he that is in the world, and therefore WE SHALL OVERCOME!
Chapter 143

The Dragon, The Woman
And The Manchild
continued

“And the great dragon was cast out...he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him” (Rev. 12:9).

Throughout the book of Revelation we have seen the great truth that almost all the events in the book take place in one of three dimensions: HEAVEN, EARTH, and SEA. These are, of course, symbolical and prophetical terms! They represent states of being, lifestyles, levels of consciousness, and dimensions of life within each of us. The lowest of these three realms is the sea. Throughout the book a number of things transpire in the sea. "And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood." “I stood upon the sand of the sea, and I saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns.” “And the sea gave up the dead that were in it.” “Woe to the inhabitants of the sea, for the devil is come down unto you.”

Throughout the scriptures the sea is a type of the inner storms and turbulent nature of the Adamic man. The prophet Isaiah penned these inspired words: “The wicked are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, unto the wicked” (Isa. 57:20-21). Jude also described wicked men when he said, “These are raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame” (Jude 13). The beloved John, on the isle of Patmos, had a vision of a great whore sitting on many waters. The angel revealed the meaning of the many waters, saying, “the waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues” (Rev. 17:15).

No one can dispute the fact that it is this restless, turbulent, raging, evil heart of the fleshly man that inspires every wicked and devilish perversion, and has filled the world with ever increasing confusion, faithlessness, immorality, falsehood, fraud, hatred, violence, greed, cruelty, strife, wars, bloodshed, and oppression. Ah, the sea is the lowest realm on earth, and this vast sea of fleshly, Adamic humanity represents mankind at his lowest point — as bad off as man can be! Individually, however, it speaks of the lowest aspect of our human nature and life — the body with its passions and lusts. The sea represents the physical, animal desires and impulses that are restless, driving, compelling, and raging out of control!

The second realm is that of the earth. In contrast with the sea and with heaven, the earth is the symbol of the second dimension of life, a realm higher than the sea, but lower than heaven, an intermediary realm which at its highest peak kisses heaven, and at its lowest level embraces the sea; yet, in the true sense, it is, of itself, neither heavenly nor degenerate. The sea, as we have seen, comprises the masses of restless, surging,
sinning, warring men who live only and always after the unrestrained desires of the flesh (body realm). *Heaven*, on the other hand, speaks of those who have been quickened, raised up, made alive in Christ, seated in Him in the heavenly places, who walk only and always *in the Spirit*. Those who “dwell upon the earth,” however, are a moral class, religious folk, with many up-right 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 daily lives “mind earthly things.”

On the individual level the earth speaks of the *soul* — mind, will, emotion. It is an intellectual and even religious realm, but also the realm of the carnal or natural mind. Out of this realm comes our organized society, law and order, charities, good works, even good religious works which are deemed spiritual, but which do not originate out of the spirit. The man who walks in this realm of “earth” is that good neighbor of yours, a nice fellow, a good person, who wouldn't cheat or lie to you or misuse you in any way, in fact, he may be helpful, caring, and compassionate. He may attend First Methodist or St. Mary’s Church; he may be a Sunday School teacher, a deacon, or board member; he is socially and religiously active, a God-honoring, flag-waving man, but has never ascended into the heavens and does not live out of a heavenly dimension. You can’t accuse him of any gross sin, or any wicked or ungodly act, but if you start talking to him in a spiritual realm he will look at you like you came from Mars. He has absolutely no idea, not the foggiest notion, of what you are talking about! The things that are real and glorious to you simply don't compute! He doesn't live in the sea, BUT NEITHER HAS HE BEEN TO HEAVEN!

The biblical expression, “the natural man,” refers to the “earth dwellers” and is rendered more accurately by many versions as “the unspiritual man.” The word “natural” is translated from the Greek word *psychicos*, which comes from the root *psyche* or soul. The words *psychology* and *psychiatry* also stem from the same root. *Psychicos*, then, is the *soulish* man or the *intellectual* man. In speaking of the natural or unspiritual man, the scriptures refer to the individual who is governed by his soul-life, or, to be more explicit: *self*. His behavior and actions are dictated by his intellect, reasoning, and soulicial emotions. Because the soulish man is influenced and controlled by faculties which are not spiritual, he cannot accept what is of the Spirit. In fact, the things of the Spirit are to him sheer folly, nonsense, extreme, fanciful, and fanatical. They neither appeal to his emotions nor can they be understood by his rational mind. The soulish Christian substitutes reason for revelation; sentimentalism for spirituality; and rules, regulations, traditions, rituals, sacraments, pageantry, and programs for the inward living word of God by the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

Both the “heaven” and the “earth” dimensions exist in the visible church today. The “heavenly” people are those who cannot be content with a spiritual status quo. These are those who find themselves moved within their spirits to seek out the hidden things of God — who find a holy unrest and discontent within their hearts as they hear the inward call of the spirit to “come up higher.” These are those who seek God in the spirit, not in organizational structures; in the living voice of God, not in philosophical traditions; in wisdom and revelation, rather than creational knowledge; in humility and holy brokenness, rather than in grandiose programs and promotions which make a splash and receive recognition in the eyes of men.

The “earth dwellers” have heard no such call. They toddle about in the clothes of spiritual immaturity, feeding on the milk of the word, unable to see beyond the grandiose schemes and promotions of well-meaning but misguided infant spiritual leaders. They have not recognized that the work of God is in the deep, inward move of the spirit, nor do they comprehend that the church systems of man are but the world’s methods garbed in religious garments. The heavenly man, on the other hand, has discerned the shallowness of all religious things and understands that they do not, in reality, promote the kingdom of
God, but hinder it. Deep within the spirit of every spiritual man is a response to the call to self-denial as the avenue to power with God. There is a moving within to truly follow on to know the Lord in all His glorious and eternal reality!

The heavenly man thinks spiritually. He who is of the earth thinks naturally. What is birthed in man’s mind are images which are literal and tangible, of the physical realm to which the natural man is limited. He sees heaven as sky and space, and earth as soil and rock. He sees God as a personage sitting on a literal throne and Jesus as a man sitting at His right hand. He sees “many mansions” as physical buildings in a place beyond the galaxies, and the New Jerusalem as a literal golden city with streets, trees, and a river. He sees God’s kingdom as a government established in Jerusalem, Israel or in London, England with Jesus and the saints occupying thrones there. He sees hell as a physical place with real fire and people in bodies tormented in the flames forever. He sees angels as creatures with wings. He sees the millennium as a period of one-thousand earth years. But to the heavenly, spiritual man, all things have become new and he beholds in the spirit the DIVINE AND SPIRITUAL REALITIES BEHIND AND BEYOND ALL THE SYMBOLS AND SHADOWS!

The highest of the three realms is heaven. This is the highest dimension of life, the dimension of spirit. Those who live out of the spirit are spiritual and heavenly! The Greek word for heaven is ouranous meaning elevation, height, exaltation, eminence. It has both physical and spiritual applications. The natural, soulish, earth man sees only the physical application, whereas the spiritual, heavenly man sees the spiritual reality. In its spiritual sense heaven bespeaks the eternal, invisible, and omnipresent realm of the spirit in which God and all celestial beings dwell — far above the realm of the physical, material, earthly, and corruptible. We shall still remember with a smile Zona Gale’s parable of the tadpole: “What!” exclaimed tadpole to tadpole. “Do you mean that when you put your nose above water, there is actually something else than water to breathe? Absurd!” Let tadpoles chatter — there is a realm higher than this earth-realm! It is neither a geographical nor an astral location. It is not a planet, a galaxy, or a place. It is a DIMENSION OF LIFE, REALITY, AND BEING. It is a SPHERE OF EXISTENCE, A PLANE OF CONSCIOUSNESS. Every spirit life-form lives on a plane of spiritual awareness. Each of these planes constitutes a “heaven,” a spiritual realm above the physical.

Heaven is all around us! It is as near as the air we breathe, closer to us even than the blood coursing through our veins. We are one with it, conscious in it, by virtue of our spiritual life. “He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.” We touch heaven as we touch God in our spirit. We behold heavenly things as with our spiritual mind we perceive and behold spiritual realities. We walk in heaven as we walk in the spirit. We think as celestial beings when we think and know by the mind of Christ. We act heavenly when we live by divine nature. Heaven is, furthermore, the realm of God’s government — His infinite authority and almighty power. The kingdom is rooted in our spirit, the heavenly dimension of our life. As the Lord Jesus made known to us, “The kingdom of God is within you.”

No word written or spoken could hold more truth in this regard than the word of the apostle Paul wherein he speaks of “the power which God exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavens, far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come” (Eph. 1:20-21). These wonderful terms used by Paul are figures of speech. God is omnipresent spirit — He doesn’t physically sit on anything! Nor does He physically have a right hand! It means that Christ is raised up permanently into that highest spiritual realm where He has all power and authority! The “throne” spoken of in other scriptures refers to His omnipotent power. So now we know where Christ ascended. HE ASCENDED INTO THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION OF SUPREME
Then Paul makes a remarkable statement. He says, “And He raised us up together with Him and made us sit down together with Him in the heavenly sphere” (Eph. 2:6, Amplified). It will be a blessed day for us when God makes it clear to our hearts that we have already been raised up and given joint seating with Christ in the very same heavens where He is enthroned with His Father! YOU ARE WHERE HE IS! And you didn’t have to leave planet earth to get there — it happened in your spirit! Jesus didn’t ascend up into a place, He ascended into a higher dimension of consciousness and reality in the spirit. That is the true heaven — not visionary mansions, golden streets, or a flowing river out of the throne. The “earth dwellers” have no idea where the true heaven is, what heaven is, or where we are dwelling even while we stand right there before them! Therefore they exist in the consciousness of a lower realm out of which they think, walk, act, and live.

May I point out once more that when John beheld the dragon and his angels cast out of heaven, cast into the earth, the apostle wasn’t seeing the fall of Satan in the swirling mists of antiquity. Rather, John in the spirit beheld that fall of Satan that could only come when the manchild company is caught up unto God and to His throne! The truth is just this. It is only through the kingdom ministry of Jesus and His many brethren that Satan falls as lightning from heaven! There is no other fall of Satan in all the pages of God’s holy Book! When the devils were subject to Jesus and His disciples at the preaching of the kingdom of God, Jesus saw the mystery of the kingdom unfolding before His eyes. The devils were subject to Him because the firstborn Son of God had already cast Satan down from the heavens of His life. Therefore He had authority over the devil’s kingdom in both the heavens and the earth! The ministry of the firstborn Son is the prototype of the ministry of the son-company in preparation in this very hour! The woman church has not been able to cast Satan down from their heavens, thus he continues to operate in their spiritual realms. It is through the authority of sonship ministry that Satan is cast out of the heavens of his power. Only the sons of God can dethrone Satan! That is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth!

My next thought has already been expressed so aptly by brother Elwin Roach that I will simply quote his words. “It must be clear by now that this is a spiritual war, one on one, and such an enemy will not relent. But the day will come when there will be a mass assault upon the sons of God, and please be assured — if we cannot run today with the footmen, how then can we contend with the horses? (Jer. 12:5). If, however, we are not wearied with the individual footmen in our lives, and we rise to the occasion and cast the serpent out of those little hills and rout out the demons of their heavens, we shall do well in that great day when the dragon and all his angels are cast out. Yet, we must know that the greatest victory comes in casting them out of our own heavens, especially the devil of religion and the demons of dogma. It is then that salvation, and power, and the authority of Christ and His kingdom will forever be known. It is then we can descend into the earth and move mountains! Once our heavens are made secure, once the dragon and his hoards have no longer a seat of authority, we who ascended to the throne can then descend and shake the earth! Our presence will ignite everything that can be kindled. The mountains of men — flesh, carnality, humanism, legalism, and all the rest — shall burn and tremble in the presence of Heaven’s Descenders, God’s Holy Angels. We can see it as being akin to mount Sinai when the Lord descended upon it.”

NOW IS COME...

“And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down” (Rev. 12:10).
Yet, this victory is accomplished only through warfare! “And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought with his angels.” We must not think of this “war in heaven” as a battle fought in some far-off heaven away back before the dawn of creation. If we have been deceived by the false doctrines of religious Babylon we may receive the impression that such is the battle presented, and that Satan and his angels rebelled against God and God employed the good and holy angels to expel them from heaven. But this explanation is soon proven to be impossible if we only consider what the text actually says. The great voice in heaven, or the revelation of the spirit within ourselves, tells us of the result of this spiritual battle. It tells us that now the salvation and the power of the kingdom of God have come, that the authority of His Christ has appeared (Rev. 12:9-10) — things which surely could not be said immediately following a rebellion of Satan and his angels in some pre-historical time! “Now is come,” that is, now has appeared, now has been revealed, THE SALVATION AND THE POWER AND THE AUTHORITY OF HIS CHRIST! This is the result of the war in heaven and the casting down of the dragon!

As soon as the dragon is cast out of our heaven it is said, “NOW is come...” Let us understand! In that blessed moment when the accuser of the “brethren” of our Lord is cast out of the heaven of our spiritual understanding and experience there is immediately a realization that says, “NOW...not today, not tomorrow, but right now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down!” In other words, the kingdom of God, the righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost is fully manifest in us because the old mentality of sin consciousness, doubt, questionings, and the temptation to misuse the power and glory given to us in sonship is completely eradicated from our thought processes, desires, emotions, inclinations, and value system.

My heart sings a thousand hallelujahs, for now in our heavens is heard a loud voice proclaiming that now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ. Oh, yes, a LOUD VOICE! It is a powerful proclamation, an inward knowing beyond question or dispute. And the voice of the dragon is not heard in our heaven anymore! Your spiritual man, Christ in you, cannot hear the voice of the dragon. Now he is heard only on earth, for he has been cast out into the earth. He is heard only by the carnal mind of men who walk after the flesh. But in heaven, whose voice? The voice of the Son of God! His is the loud voice, the powerful word proclaiming our triumph!

Once Satan is cast out of the heaven where our spiritual life reigns we see all things as they really are and there is no more condemnation. Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we’re free at last! That is what evokes the proclamation, “NOW is come salvation!” Someone says, “But I thought we already had salvation!” We do, but the salvation mentioned as now impending refers not to salvation from the guilt of sin but to salvation in the sense of deliverance and completion of God’s transforming work in us. Salvation means total and complete deliverance, health, wholeness, soundness, victory — incorruptible life! Peter wrote about this full salvation. “Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (I Pet. 1:5). The Amplified Bible says it so beautifully, “Who are being guarded by God’s power through your faith till you fully inherit that final salvation that is ready to be revealed for you in the last time.”

“NOW is come strength!” The reference to strength (Gr., dunamis, power) implies that God is going to strengthen His sons and manifest the fullness of HIS OMNIPOTENT POWER in and through them. No more weakness, no more susceptibleness to the wiles of the devil, for we have overcome him — we are truly overcomers! There is to be a revelation of the fullness of the power of God now invested in the firstborn Son of God who testified, “ALL POWER is given unto me, in heaven and in earth.” This time, His power will
be revealed through His body to set mankind free from the power of sin and death, bringing deliverance and restoration to the world!

"NOW is come the kingdom of our God!" where there is no lack, no imperfection, no fear, no torment, no bondage, no sickness, sorrow, pain, or death! The kingdom of God is more narrow in scope than the region over which God rules as Sovereign. At all times and in all circumstances God has dominion. He is Lord of ALL. Even evil men and vile deeds in their worst expressions are under His sway and scepter. Satan is a servant of God as an adversary to challenge us so that we may grow stronger in the Lord. Yet wicked men have not entered into the kingdom of God! Neither has Satan, though he does God’s bidding, been translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son. All men are subject to God’s sovereignty — if He willed them to be changed at this time or to be gone, they would be gone! But when we come to the kingdom, the scriptures speak of a “calling” to the kingdom of God, of “entering” into it, of its being “shut” or of people being “cast out” from it, of its being “sought,” “given,” “possessed,” “received,” and “inherited.”

The kingdom of God is limited to that domain where God’s saving power has defeated all opposition, broken down every wall, transformed all that is contrary to God’s nature, mind, and will, and has brought men into willing submission to His authority. Where the nature of God and the mind of Christ have mightily conquered, the state of things is called the kingdom of God. Where hearts are changed, where sin and error and darkness have been defeated, where truth and righteousness advance, where the will and ways of God are raised up as reality and life in a people, where the mind of Christ rules out of union with God — there the kingdom of God is come! In the kingdom it is no longer God ruling over you by sovereignty, but the life, mind, heart, nature, power, wisdom, knowledge, and will of God entering into you, becoming your very own reality. Can you not see the mystery? As soon as the dragon is cast out of our heavens a loud voice proclaims, “NOW IS COME THE KINGDOM OF OUR GOD!” It is indeed wonderful!

According to the good pleasure of His will the purpose of God from eternity focused on the kingdom. A kingdom not of this world, a kingdom not of men blindly ruled and over-ruled by the unobserved sovereignty of an unknown God, but a reign in the hearts of willing and loyal subjects. The story is told of a king who was famous for his abhorrence of waste — so it was quite surprising when he came into the room where his aides were assembled carrying a breathtakingly beautiful pearl in his hands. Showing it to the first of his aides, he asked, “What do you think this pearl is worth?” “Oh, many trunks full of gold, your majesty,” he replied. The king said, “Smash it!” “It would be an insult to the king to destroy such a beautiful pearl,” replied the aide. The king turned to a second man and showed him the pearl. “How much do you think this pearl is worth?” he asked. “One cannot put a price tag on such a beautiful pearl as this,” replied the second man. “Smash it!” said the king. “Such senseless destruction is unthinkable,” replied the second aide. The king turned to a third man. He was a humble laborer who, in return for a kindness he had shown the king, had been invited to live in the palace. “What do you think this pearl is worth?” he asked the man. “More than all the gold I have ever seen in my entire life,” he replied. “Smash it!” said the king. Without a moment’s hesitation, this man took the pearl to where there were two large rocks and in an instant, reduced the pearl to a thimbleful of useless dust. “The man is mad!” cried the others in the room. Holding up his hand to quiet the murmurs, the laborer said, “Which is of greater value; a beautiful pearl or obedience to the king’s command?”

The kingdom of God that I am proclaiming today is composed of that company of elect sons of God who have aligned themselves with God; who listen to His voice, who put on His mind, who obey His commands, who walk in His nature, who do His will and carry out His divine purpose in the heavens and on the earth. They are the loyal subjects of His kingdom and ever do His bidding. Their King is the Lord God Almighty and He is also their Father. They obey without question; for it is their nature to do only and always those
things that please the Father! They are the true citizens of the kingdom of God. They are first under His rule and authority, but they are ambassadors of that divine kingdom. They are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ! They are destined to share His glory and sit with Him upon His throne! They are the members of the government of God and the kingdom of heaven is expressed through them, and the power and the glory of the kingdom is being committed into their hands for the age and the ages to come!

This is the kingdom Jesus came and announced, taught, personified, demonstrated, and brought into reality among men. Are all Christians in the kingdom of God? Perhaps you have heard someone say, “All Christians have Jesus as Saviour, but not all have Him as Lord.” A young boy might put it this way: “I am the son of my father, but I don’t want him to tell me what to do.” The kingdom of God in its simplest definition means that JESUS CHRIST IS LORD! He must be Lord in us, and He must be Lord through us. This is the mark of sonship! This is the power of the kingdom! Of those sons of God who cast Satan out of the heavens of their minds and hearts it can now be said, “NOW is the kingdom of our God!” These sons are themselves the embodiment, revelation, expression, and manifestation of the kingdom. If you have seen them, you have seen the kingdom, for they are the kingdom. The kingdom comes to pass in them when the dragon is cast out of their heavens! They become the government of God prepared to reign with Christ, to subdue and restore all things to God. The final thing they must subdue within themselves is the great red dragon!

“NOW is come the power of His Christ!” Oh, how the world needs that! I often think of this when I observe the feverish activity of the church world. We live in a world of aggressive and high-powered leadership. Men are enamored in the religious world with big organization and great projects. That the machinery has become too heavy is due to the fact that men are operating it with human labor, fleshly strength, and carnal means instead of running it with power from above. They are filled with doctrine and program, tradition and church activity, ceremonies, rituals, entertainment, soulish excitement, sensational hype, and lying signs and wonders, and though they profess it to be Christ’s work, they would not know Christ if they met Him on the street. Oh, let us awake from such vanities and come to know HIM in the power of His resurrection! The powers of heaven are at our disposal for they are our Father’s powers and we are the sons of His love. And God does have a plan for the salvation and deliverance of all humanity!

Earth’s power is very helpless power. Ah, yes, Jesus has real power — “power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as the Father has given Him” (Jn. 17:2). Other men spoke and their words died with their echo: Jesus spoke and His words shook the world. Other men died martyr deaths and were not long remembered; He died, and His cross now stands against every skyline. He is the true King, THE MAN WHO CAN. He has power, the power of God’s Christ! Because all the earth is His, and because Jesus is King of kings, God is raising up the body of the Christ, a Royal, Priesthood, sons of the God of heaven to reign in mighty spirit power and authority over the earth, not to be little human dictators, but with an outflow of life, and light, and love, that God may indwell men by His Spirit and live and rule in them in power and great glory. The kingly nature in us is not to dominate other men’s lives, but to deal with and break the power of self-hood and rebellion and sin and death and the devil that men may be restored into God again. Kings have power and authority, priests reconcile in mercy and love. Kings and priests — these are God’s Christ! God’s Royal Priesthood shall reveal to all realms the awesome POWER OF GOD’S LOVE AND GOODNESS until all are made one in Him. When the dragon is cast out of our heavens, then is come THE POWER OF GOD’S CHRIST! Ah, we are ready, as Jesus was when He came up out of the wilderness of temptation, to come in the power of the Spirit! We are prepared to begin our sonship ministry, to go forth and do exploits, to do the greater works, and deliver creation from the bondage of corruption! NOW all of this and much more is come!
Let us return to our thought. The church systems tell us this scene is about Lucifer being cast out of heaven before the foundation of the world. But listen, my friend, at that time there was as yet no manifest salvation! There was as yet no manifestation of the authority of God’s Christ! But there is more. The devil is here called “accuser of our brethren,” and there were no “many sons brought to glory” to be “accused” in that supposed long-ago day! It is in that connection that this battle is fought! It is also as “accuser of our brethren” that the great dragon is cast out and his place is found no more in heaven! Yet, all through the Bible, after Lucifer was supposedly cast out of heaven, Satan is seen again and again in heaven! So it could not be this battle in chapter twelve of the revelation. The same great voice announces the wonderful truth that these “messengers of Michael” who fight against the dragon, who are also “our brethren,” overcame the great red dragon “by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony: and they loved not their lives unto the death” (Rev. 12:11). Surely any thinking mind can see that none of this has anything whatever to do with some supposed “battle in heaven” before men walked this earth! Think about it!

THE DRAGON, THE ANCIENT SERPENT, THE DEVIL, AND SATAN

“And the great dragon was cast out, that ancient serpent, called the Devil and Satan…” (Rev. 12:9).

The great accuser is given a fourfold name revealing the fourfold characteristics of his nature, working, and power. He is called in this verse “the dragon,” “the serpent,” “the devil,” and “Satan.” “The great red dragon” carries with it the thought of monstrosity and by the description of his activity indicates a devourer, fierceness, and wrath. In the word “serpent” there is the idea of cunning, slyness, seducer, deceiver, and traducer. It is not the thought of monstrosity and fierceness showing itself in a public way, but diplomacy working undercover and accomplishing his objectives underhandedly, “the wiles of the devil” by which he “deceiveth the whole world.” The word “devil” means an adversary who seeks to destroy through slander and accusation.

In the word “Satan” we have the thought of an adversary, an opponent, or a resister. There is no thought of monstrosity, cunning, or slander — but simply opposition. One of the fundamental laws of creation is that an OPPOSING FORCE is necessary for growth, and to produce strength, stamina, and endurance. Any living thing that grows up without any opposition is weak and powerless. A plant that grows in a greenhouse sheltered from the winds and rains, pampered day after day, may grow large and beautiful, but it is inherently weak, and if suddenly exposed to the elements will wither and die. But a plant that is constantly exposed to the fierce winds and pounding rains, burning heat and chilling cold, is strong and not easily destroyed. God’s MANIFEST SONS must be strong and powerful, and anything that desires to be strong, or anyone, must wrestle with a force that is contrary to them. Any man who wants to develop muscular power to be strong, must spend weeks and months and years in vigorous training doing heavy exercises, lifting heavy weights, using the OPPOSING FORCE of gravity to DEVELOP HIS STRENGTH.

So it is with us as human beings. One who grows up in a sheltered environment, who is coddled and pampered all his life, grows up a weak, spineless individual. Adversity builds strength of character. If we were never exposed to trials and tribulations, we would grow up weak indeed! The more we are exposed to adverse circumstances, the more we have to wrestle with our environment, the more we are challenged by the world around us, the stronger we become. Saints, IF WE WOULD BE THE SONS OF THE MOST HIGH we must be STRONG in the Lord and in the power of HIS might! Our Father wants us to be strong, so He has wisely given us wrestling partners to wrestle with, so we will become strong. There are opposing forces (thank God for them!) that we must constantly battle against. Some of these adverse things are described by Paul as principalities and powers.
in the heavenlies. “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12. There is a great and magnificent future ahead for the sons of God, and a great work our Father has for us to do in this new kingdom day and in the age and ages to come, and He is preparing us and making us ready for the high and holy place He has for us. Can we not see that ALL THE OPPOSING FORCES WE NOW ENCOUNTER IN THE HIGH PLACES OF OUR SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE are working together for our good — to develop the strength, character, wisdom, and power we must acquire? Why Satan? After every battle I may say, “Thank you, Mr. Satan! for helping to make me a son of God!”

Whether it be as the fire-breathing monstrosity, or as the cunning, deceiving “wisdom” of the serpent, or as the vile, intimidating, debilitating accuser, or just as the sparring adversary, each of his characteristics is a significant negative force which the sons of God are called to encounter, overcome, and conquer on every plane and in every realm, from the lowest sea to the highest heaven. He works as a monstrosity, he works as a serpent, he works as an accuser, and he works as an opponent. These are the fourfold negative force we have to meet and conquer within ourselves. ALL four areas must be overcome!

WOE TO THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH!

“And the great dragon was cast out…he was cast out into the earth…woe to the inhabitants of the earth…for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath…” (Rev. 12:9,11).

In the heavens we meet the accuser in the high realms of the spirit of sonship. Once cast into the earth, we only meet him in our soul, especially in the religious, soulical realm. We see the work of the accuser in the carnal-minded Christians who have earthly concepts of God and spiritual things. This cannot be a pure realm, for woe is pronounced upon all who dwell in the earth-realm! The woe is that the devil is come down unto them, having great wrath, bringing to and through them a false message of wrath, which is truly the message of the devil by which he distorts and perverts the image of God in the minds and hearts of men.

In their earthly concepts of God they see God sitting physically on a great white throne, having a long white beard, stern countenance, and fiery eyes, whence He will summon every man, woman, boy, and girl, both sinner and saint, in rank and file before Him to be judged, amidst great convulsions of nature — earthquakes, bursting graves, rending rocks, and falling mountains; that the trembling multitude will be brought from the depths of everlasting woe and from all their dwelling places in the realms of spirit to hear their many sins rehearsed and to learn their eternal fate in the hands of an angry God. Should you have even one secret sin unconfessed and not covered by the blood of Christ you will surely be consigned to an eternal and merciless doom of fiery indignation and torment! I do not hesitate to say that this is a very crude conception, which is entirely out of harmony with the whole picture of judgment as revealed in the scriptures. Yet this is the kind of “doctrines of devils” the adversary promotes in the carnal “earth-realm” of religion to cause men to have a DREADFUL FEAR of God rather than falling in love with Him!

Little wonder, then, that the voice from heaven cries out, “Woe to the inhabitants of the earth...for the devil is come down unto you having great wrath!” The devil in the soulical earth-realm of religion loves to have Christians believe that these literalistic, legalistic, judgmental, naturalistic and earthly concepts are biblical truth! It is there he preaches his devilish doctrines of an angry, vindictive God — the theology of FEAR. Yet, the wrath so loudly proclaimed by the people in the earth-realm of carnal-minded religion is, in reality, not GOD’S WRATH at all — it is the DEVIL’S VERY OWN WRATH projected...
upon God, attributed to God, to make our heavenly Father appear as one of the same nature as Satan himself. Truly the devil IS a liar and a deceiver! People’s fears play a very important role in most of the world’s religions. Fear is one of the most prominent tools of nearly all religious systems used to keep their people in bondage to the system. You must admit that fears of malicious spirits, fear of pain, fear of suffering, fear of death, fear of coming judgment, fear of spiritual punishment, fear of hell, fear of Satan, fear of excommunication, fear of tribulation, fear of the antichrist, fear of the end-times, fear of missing the “rapture,” and a thousand other fears plague and torment the religious “earth-dwellers” unto to whom the devil has come down in great wrath and accusation!

You would be amazed to know just how much plain old superstition many of God’s precious saints have in regard to so-called “end-time” events! Some people become fearful around every election time. I heard a brother in Florida in 1960 predict that if Kennedy won the election the Pope would rule the United States and every Bible-believing church would be closed by the time his term expired. I heard of another preacher who predicted essentially the same thing and when Kennedy won the election this man had a heart attack and almost died! I knew some lovely people who campaigned for “God and Goldwater.” They believed that if Goldwater lost the election the tribulation would be upon us! I know others that fear of the Beast Government, Y2K, or some prophesied destruction caused to sell their homes and property and move to some remote “safe” area. All through the years I have seen this same scenario played out in the lives of believers as we have moved from one political scene or from one catastrophic event to another. Their lives would be better, happier, and more productive for the kingdom of God if they had stayed right where they were!

Too often people become alarmed about what this world leader or that world leader is going to do. And now it is the terrorists that people fear! But I call to your remembrance the night when Pilate said to Jesus, “Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?” Jesus answered, “Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above” (Jn. 19:10-11). I have come to see that there is really no point in becoming involved in the politics of “this present evil world,” as though my vote for one man whom I may imagine to be better than another is going to preserve the world from economic collapse, socialism, terrorism, the beast government, the tribulation, nuclear holocaust, or some other evil. I still believe the word of the Lord is true and sure: “Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are HIS: and HE changeth the times and the seasons: HE removeth kings, and setteth up kings: HE knoweth what is in the darkness, and THE LIGHT DWELLETH WITH HIM” (Dan. 2:20-22). The message is just this: OUR FATHER IS THE ONE IN CONTROL!

There are many preachers, even in this message of sonship and the kingdom, sad to say, who specialize in preaching FEAR instead of the glory of God. These suppose they must always tell the bad side of things. They wildly speculate about world events, presidents and prime ministers, economic collapse, world war, one world government, conspiracy theories, the antichrist, and a hundred more negative things, supposing that every national or world crisis that comes somehow portends the end. With each new election, treaty, crisis, or change they suspect a vast conspiracy. If they don’t like the Jews, all the trouble in the world is blamed on the Jews. Or it is the Communists — everyone they don’t especially agree with politically is branded a Communist. Or they blame the United Nations, the Moslem radicals, some minority group, the Illuminati, the world bankers, computer systems, or the Catholics! They constantly live on the brink of Armageddon — and apparently feel they should preach fear all the time so they will have plenty of company.

One brother said in a meeting with us in 1971 that the “Beast Government” would rise up in the earth and take over the United States within three or four years. These brethren were raising up “farms” in remote jungle areas of the earth where the “woman” could flee
to from the face of the dragon, where they could live in seclusion in the “wilderness” and live off of the land, until the manchild should be born. They offered to keep our children on one of the farms, care for them and educate them there, if we would travel with the ministries spreading this word. I must admit that I struggled with this. What if they were right? What if the beast did take over the world in the next few years? What if I didn’t flow with them — we would be alone, have no safety, and be swallowed up! As I earnestly sought the mind of the Lord in this He spoke so clearly one day, and with such power: “I HAVE NOT GIVEN YOU THE SPIRIT OF FEAR!” In that one blessed moment my eyes were opened and I clearly saw the “wilderness message” for what it truly was — an earthly, soulical message that moved men through FEAR! People sold everything they possessed and laid the money at the feet of the apostles and flew off into the wilderness, not because the Spirit of God had truly spoken to them, but because they were seized with a terrible, gut-wrenching, fear! My earnest prayer to God is that He shall deliver all His people from this carnal, soulish, sensationalism of the earth-realm! These are, one and all, “doctrines of devils” — of that devil who roams through the isles of the churches where the Lord’s people dwell in the earthlies! Truly it is “woe” to all the inhabitants of the earth!

HE DECEIVETH THE WHOLE WORLD

“And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world…” (Rev. 12:9).

All who dwell not in the heavens of God’s Spirit are deceived. “He deceiveth the whole world.” Throughout the book of Revelation we have encountered various realms where people live in their spiritual experience — the abyss, the sea, earth, and heaven. Now we meet the word “world.” It is the Greek word kosmos meaning “orderly arrangement” or “system of things.” It refers to the present order or system of things upon earth — the world systems of man. It includes such things as culture, religion, politics, economics, business, education, law enforcement, military, science, government, and various other institutions and orders that govern the lives of men and nations. The Holy Spirit testifies that “we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one,” and “the great dragon was cast out…which deceiveth the whole world” (I Jn. 5:19; Rev. 12:9).

Can we not see by this that everyone who lives by the standards of this present world system and order is deceived! Does that mean they are all bad people? Not at all! There are millions of decent, honest, hard-working, law-abiding, good, loving, even God-fearing people who live by the norms of their culture, education, religion, ethics, and society. It means that they simply do not understand nor do they know the truth — the true nature of all things. Many of their opinions and conclusions about life, reality, and the purposes of God are flawed, mistaken, and erroneous. We have all been there! Even after being anointed by the Holy Spirit we have been there!

The religious systems are deceived. The educational systems are deceived. The medical profession is deceived. The political and governmental realms are deceived. Even the world of science and technology is deceived! How can we know this? If the educational systems were not deceived, why would the most educated, sincere, and brilliant minds on earth teach as fact the theory of evolution? Why would they oppose the Bible record of creation and scoff at one of the most self-evident of truths, the truth of intelligent design? If the medical establishment were not deceived, why would most doctors treat the patient’s symptoms, rather than the underlying cause of their disease? Why would doctors prescribe the drugs that kill more than 106,000 U. S. citizens every year and do harm to nearly a million more? If there was an herbal supplement on the market that killed even 106 people annually, it would immediately be banned! And should there be several dietary supplements that killed just 106 people annually, every health food store in America would be closed! The military machines of the world are deceived, for they operate on the
assumption that war brings peace. It doesn’t! History, even recent history, reveals the immutable truth that every war sows within itself the seeds of the next conflict. On and on we could go, from example to example, but the absolute truth of John’s observation that the great red dragon is he who deceiveth the whole world is clearly and unmistakably evidenced in all the institutions and systems of “this present evil world!” There is no question about it. The carnal mind, which is the seed of the serpent, with all it produces, is deceived!
Chapter 144

The Dragon, The Woman
And The Manchild
continued

“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death” (Rev. 12:11).

What does it mean that they overcame the great red dragon by the blood of the Lamb? To Moses God said that He gave the blood upon the altar to be an atonement for the soul, because THE LIFE OF THE FLESH IS IN THE BLOOD (Lev. 17:11). That is, the blood in the body is the life of the body. Ah — the power of any blood is in the worth of the life! In the blood of Jesus THE POWER OF THE DIVINE LIFE DWELT AND WORKED — hence its intrinsic value. He was the Son of God by conception, and the Son of man by birth. He was a specially prepared body to contain a specially prepared blood that was to be the life of all humanity! The blood was precious from the fact that it was a unique blood which could do something for all humanity that no other blood could ever do. It was the Word of God that became flesh (Jn. 1:14), who was made a man. It was the life of God that dwelt in Him! Jesus did not live out of the natural life of human blood as all men have lived. He lived out of the indwelling life of the Father! That life is His true blood, and that gave His blood, every drop of it, an infinite value. The blood of a man is of more worth than that of a sheep. The blood of a king or a great general is counted of more value than hundreds of common soldiers. The blood of the Son of God! It is in vain the mind seeks for some expression of its value! All we can say is, it is His own blood, the blood of the Word made flesh! The life is in the blood. As the value of this life, so the value of the blood. In Christ there was the life of God; infinite as God is the worth and the power of that blood!

When Adam transgressed, the life of God which had been breathed into his nostrils, fled from his soul, and by that separation of soul and spirit all that was left in man’s natural conscious life was a residue, that mortal something which flowed in the veins of his body. That blood contains nothing of the life of God, and in its composition is similar to the blood of the animal kingdom, for when the glorious power of divine life was separated from Adam’s soul (consciousness), he entered into the kingdom of death. Some say that there was no separation between man and God, but there was a separation right within man — soul and body separated from spirit. The soul cleaved to the body, and man was unable any longer to live and walk after the spirit. Before this Adam’s spirit and soul had existed in blessed union. The record states that Adam was made a living soul. From the Greek the statement reads, “The first man was made a zoe psuche (living soul).” Zoe, throughout the entire Greek New Testament, is always used in reference to the life of God — divine life. Psuche, on the other hand, is used of the natural life of animals and men. Since both words are used of Adam’s life in the beginning, it is clear that he possessed a physical life imbued, infused, injected, impregnated, and permeated with the glorious incorruptible life.
of God! That is what made him not simply zoe, and not merely psuche, but zoe psuche! It was soul and spirit in union!

This life, zoe, is the life Jesus promised to give to man when He said, “I give unto them eternal life (zoe), and they shall never perish.” This, beloved, is the life that fled from Adam’s soul when he transgressed, leaving his outer man ashamed, fearful, and dead. The life is in the blood, but our blood being devoid of zoe life, incorruptible and divine life, is in reality dead blood and capable of sustaining only physical life, and that only poorly until man returns to the dust from whence he came. It is not without significance that, when the bodies of men are embalmed, the first act is to remove the corruptible blood so that the dead body may be better preserved. The fact that a chemical in the veins can preserve a dead body is proof that the quickening power of incorruptible zoe restored to union with the blood of redeemed men will result in life and immortality! Instead of corruptible and, therefore, deathless blood, Adam’s blood corrupted through sin became subject to death. To fully redeem this dead sinner, life must again be imparted! The only remedy for death is life! This life is in the blood, so blood must be furnished which is sinless and incorruptible. None of Adam’s race could do this, “for in Adam all die.” There was only one, yes, only one, who could furnish that blood, the virgin-born Son of God, the man from heaven, the last Adam, with a human body, but sinless, supernatural blood, inseminated by the Holy Ghost! By the power of God’s Spirit the soul and spirit of this blessed firstborn Son were united as the first Adam’s had been, and in the power of that united life He overcame the world!

Jesus came to bring life to the world! Here is where His blood differed from the ordinary blood or life of men. His blood was precious in that it was able to do something for mankind which man’s own blood or human life could not do. The natural blood or life of mankind was only for a few years at most, but the blood of Christ was the life of the ages. So there must somehow be a discontinuance of the blood of a few years, that the blood or the life of the ages might be injected into mankind.

The thing of importance about the precious blood of Jesus is not its physical structure, but the glorious fact that blood bespeaks LIFE. What Jesus poured out was His life, His holy, pure, undefiled, divine, heavenly, incorruptible life, the zoe, the quickening spirit, the life of GOD! He lived and walked out that glorious life in human form and then poured it out as an offering to God. And God took the offering and poured it out, in return, upon mankind! “He…spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither His flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, HE HATH SHED FORTH THIS, WHICH YE NOW SEE AND HEAR” (Acts 2:31-33).

Ah — the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God, but in a new dimension — the divine and incorruptible life of God as it had been perfected and lived out in the life of the Son of God — was now shed forth as the Spirit of the Son to be received by all men to transform and lift them up high into the holiness, wisdom, and power of God. The precious blood of Jesus! There is an old Roman Catholic dogma which says that Christ carried His blood with Him to heaven in a bowl. Without even knowing its source, evangelical Christianity clings to that ludicrous idea from the Dark Ages by perpetuating a form of mysticism around the physical blood of our Lord. The bowl of blood as carried by the high priest in the Old Testament is indeed a type from the outward, physical ceremony of the day of Atonement. But in its spiritual fulfillment there is no bowl in the universe that could have
contained what Jesus carried into the heavens! When Christ entered heaven (see Hebrews, chapters 8-10), He carried not physical blood, which of necessity would be corruptible blood, but His own DIVINE-HUMAN LIFE. He did not transport a bowl of blood or a bucket of blood; He entered in His resurrection body, with the full power of that divine life He had poured out on behalf of Adam’s doomed race. If He had not poured it out upon the cross, He would have forever remained the only perfect man — the only manifest Son of God. But, blessed be His wonderful name! He shed His precious blood, He released His divine life, He poured forth His quickening Spirit that all may drink thereof and live! The power of His dying was in the power of His pouring out His life unto us, giving us His life that we might live as He lives! Oh, the mystery of it!

Beloved sons and daughters of God! The blood of Jesus! Oh, think what it means! God gave it for your redemption from Adam’s benighted race and your transformation into the image and glory of God. God accepted it in the true tabernacle, in heaven itself, in the heaven of God’s Spirit, when the firstborn of the new creation entered there and presented it on your behalf. God points you to it and asks you to believe in its omnipotent energy, in its everlasting sufficiency. Ah, this celestial man was injected into a whole world full of men descended from the earth-man to impart something we had lacked from the day Adam was driven from Eden’s bright portals. That something was life, living blood, for He said He came to give life to the world. He could impart a life to the world that would change it completely! When our spirit is quickened by His Spirit, there is the release of divine life within us; as that divine life is brought into marriage union with soul and body there is raised up within us LIFE AND IMMORTALITY! That is why the sons of God are now able to overcome the adversary in all of his workings — it is by the power of the life of the Lord within! That is the blood of the Lamb! And that is the testimony, His testimony, our testimony, that the power of HIS LIFE WITHIN avails and prevails! Truly, “they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony!”

THEY LOVED NOT THEIR LIVES UNTO DEATH

“…and they loved not their lives unto the death” (Rev. 12:11).

Hear the blessed words of Jesus as He shows us the path to life and glory. “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Mat. 16:24). “Let him deny himself…” We might paraphrase these words, “Let him forget himself.” That’s totally unlike a child. It can never be an action of immaturity! What is the attitude of a child? “That’s mine!. Give me mine! Mama, make him give it to me — it's mine!” What is the attitude of the church in America? “I want mine…I want my blessing, my promises, my prosperity, my miracle, I want…I want…I want…what’s mine!” “Whosoever will walk the same path that I walk,” says the firstborn Son of God, “let him forget himself. Let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever will save his life shall lose it.” The word there for life is psyche — SOUL. “Whosoever will save, cling to, preserve, deliver his soul shall lose it.”

“Lose” is a strong word — It means to utterly destroy. “And whosoever will lose his life (soul) for my sake shall find it” (Mat. 16:25). Whosoever will utterly destroy his own life, his own soul, his own emotions, his own intellect, his own will, his own desires, his own ways, his own opinions, for the sake of God’s Christ, shall save, preserve, and deliver his soul! What a word is that! We are called to lose our soul, our life, yet to save it in His! That is because the old human consciousness and natural identity is not who we are. Every son of God has laid down his own feelings, wants, and opinions. It's not about struggling with
our soul — it’s about killing it!  Jesus says, “If you want to be a loser, here’s how.  Just keep your own way of thinking.”  “Well, here’s what I think,” someone says.  I don’t care!  I don’t care about what I think, either!  It’s not about what you think or what I think — it’s about the mind of Christ.  The great red dragon stalks about in every carnal thought.  Jesus says, “If you want to be a son of God, here’s how.  Forget about your soul and follow me!”  Forget about your old false human consciousness of the outer man, take up your cross, and follow me to the mount of Crucifixion; I will lead you on to resurrection and you will follow me into the new consciousness and identity of the CHRIST LIFE.  It is the “revelation of Jesus Christ” that is being brought forth in this hour, not the ego of man.  Here is life and reality indeed!  Here is the glory of the new creation!  Here is the revelation of the Son of God with power!

REJOICE, YE HEAVENS!

“Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them” (Rev. 12:12).

As we have pointed out previously, heaven is nought but the eternal, invisible, and omnipresent realm of the spirit in which God and all celestial beings dwell — far above the realm of the physical, material, earthly, and mortal.  Not “far above” in terms of space or light years, but far above in terms of eminence, quality, rank, and state of being.  Just as gold is “far above” copper in beauty and value, and just as a king is “far above” a ditch digger in wealth, rank, and power, so are those who dwell in the heavens of God’s Spirit FAR ABOVE those who dwell in the carnal earth-realm and in the sensual sea-realm.  No word written or spoken could hold more truth in this regard that the words of the apostle Paul wherein he speaks of the exalted position of the Christ: “that ye may know…the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named…” (Eph. 1:18-21).  It is obvious here that the subject is not how far beyond the galaxies Christ went, but how highly He is exalted in eminence, rank, position, and power above all other authorities in heaven and on earth.  Then Paul says, “And He raised us up together with Him and made us sit down together with Him in the heavenly sphere.”  Therefore we can say to every Spirit-led son of God, “Rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them!”

Dear ones, how can we live in the heavens?  Just by being in Christ!  Christ has ascended.  Christ is now the highest heaven in this universe!  Most of those who read these lines understand what it means to experience the ascended Christ, to daily live out our lives in the victory and triumph of the Son of God who dwells in our spirit, and in whom we dwell in blessed union, far above the sorrows, strife, sin, problems, perplexities, limitations, struggles, fears, disappointments, and death of the carnal realm.  THIS is sonship!  In spirit I hear the wonderful words falling upon the ears of the prophet of Patmos, “Rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them!”

Those who dwell in heaven, who walk in the spirit, who think with the mind of Christ, who live out of divine nature, are unaffected by all the “woe” and “wrath” experienced by those who dwell in the earth-realm where the dragon lives.  Those who truly walk after the spirit are not depressed, perplexed, troubled, worried, or victimized by any kind of “earthly” situation.  When our affections are set upon things above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God, and where we sit in Him and with Him, we are resurrected and ascended, for the Christ with whom we are joined in spirit is the Christ who has ascended into the heavens!  When you stand in union with Him you are high above the mountains, not in the
valleys. You are in the heavenly places, far above the earthlies. The things of earth grow strangely dim to those whose life is hid with Christ in God. For those who dwell in heaven everything is in the spirit. We walk in the spirit, live in the spirit, pray in the spirit, worship in the spirit, speak by the spirit, and do all things in and by the spirit. This is sonship!

God is weary of a lot of believers getting together in His name doing all those things that are not of His Spirit. Fellowship and oneness in and by the spirit is the only gathering God is interested in! God is the true builder, and we are the material. God is not interested in the outward edifice of a “house of worship” nor in all the carnal, outward activities men perform in those places. God is concerned with the inner house, or the spirit of man. God is establishing us for His purpose that He may reveal His nature and power in the inner sanctuary of our lives.

In one of His kingdom teachings the Lord Jesus spoke of a day at the end of the age when He would send forth His angels, His messengers, “and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to another” (Mat. 24:31). Notice that the elect are not gathered from one end of the “earth” to the other, but from one end of “heaven” to the other! Then our Lord’s use of the word “gather” is significant. The word, literally, is a verb meaning to synagogue; the inference is that the Lord sends out His messengers, the word of the kingdom through His anointed ones, to gather together those who dwell in the heavens of God’s Spirit, to gather His elect people into His New Synagogue to consciously dwell in the highest heavenly realm in Christ. Jesus is actually quoting from Moses, who had prophesied, “If your outcasts are at the ends of heaven, from there the Lord will synagogue you, and from there He will take you” (Deut. 30:4, Septuagint).

Soon after John the Baptist was thrown into prison, Jesus left the country near Jerusalem with His disciples, and went toward Galilee, the province in the north. Between Judea in the south and Galilee in the north lay the land of Samaria. The Samaritans were remnants of the ten-tribed house of Israel who remained in the land when most of the people were carried off to Assyria. The Assyrians, after conquering Israel, populated the area of Samaria with some of their people and the Samaritans of Jesus’ day were of mixed blood, Israelite and Assyrian. Their religion was also mixed, “They feared Yahweh,” we read, “and served their own gods.” The Samaritans hated the Jews, and in turn were themselves despised by the Jews, and they scarcely ever spoke to each other. They worshipped the Lord much as the Jews worshipped Him, but they had their own temple and their own priests. And they had their own scriptures, which was only the five books of Moses, for they would not read the other books of the Old Testament.

It was a long and tiring journey from Judea back to Galilee, and as Jesus walked along the broad, hot valley floor of the ascent of Lebonah, He would have seen the low-lying hills to the east and the gradually rising heights to the west. He would then come to Sychar, near the ruins of the ancient Shechem. And here, being much wearied from their journey, Jesus and His disciples paused to rest at the well of Sychar. This well had been dug by Jacob, the great father of the Israelites, many hundreds of years before. It was an old well then in the days of Jesus. It was early in the morning, about sunrise, when Jesus was sitting by Jacob’s well. He was very tired, He was hungry, and His disciples had gone to the nearby village to buy food. He was thirsty, too; and as He looked into the well, He could see the water, a hundred feet below, but He had no rope with which to let down a jar to draw up some water to drink.
Just at this moment a Samaritan woman came to the well, with her water jar upon her head and her rope in her hand. Jesus looked at her, and in one glance read her soul and saw her life. He knew that Jews did not often speak to Samaritans, but He said to her, “Please give me a drink.” The woman saw from His looks and His dress that He was a Jew, and she said to Him, “How is it that you, who are a Jew, ask drink of me, who am a Samaritan woman?” Jesus answered her, “If you knew what God’s free gift is, and if you knew who it is that says to you, Give me a drink, you would ask Him to give you living water, and He would give it to you.” There was something in the words and the demeanor of Jesus which caused the woman to sense that He was not a common man. She said to Him, “Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where can you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who drank from this well?” “Whoever drinks of this water,” said Jesus, “shall thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.” “Sir,” said the woman, “give me some of this water of yours, so that I will not thirst any more, nor come all the way to this well.”

Jesus looked at the woman and said to her, “Go home and bring your husband and come back here.” “I have no husband,” answered the woman. “Yes,” said Jesus, “you have spoken the truth. You have no husband. But you have had five husbands, and the man you are now living with is not your husband.” The woman was filled with wonder as these words penetrated her soul. She saw that there was a man who knew what a stranger could not know. She felt that God had spoken to Him and she said, “Sir, I see that you are a prophet of God. Tell me whether our people or the Jews are right. Our fathers have worshipped on this mountain. The Jews say that Jerusalem is the place where men should go to worship. Now, which of these is the right place?” Her concern, and the major issue of the moment for her, had to do with the specific proper location for worship. In this respect, this woman differed little from the multitudes in this hour who ask, “Where should we worship? What church should we attend? What ministry should we submit to? What covering should we be under?” The Lord did not dodge her question! Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe ME, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” The time would come, said the Lord, when both “this mountain” and “Jerusalem”, as well as any other geographical locality, or appointed structure, would be completely irrelevant as a condition to worship!

A newspaper article some years ago was entitled, ISRAELIS AND PALESTINIANS STRIVE FOR SPIRITUAL AND POLITICAL HOME. It included the views of a rabbi and a Palestinian activist. The interview with the rabbi stated, “Today, Jews believe that worshipping in Jerusalem is essential to serving God, many of whose 613 biblical commandments can be fulfilled only here.” At the same time, the interview with the Palestinian pointed out, “So sacred is Jerusalem, Muslims believe, that a good deed committed here has one thousand times the normal weight, while a sin committed here has one thousand times the normal gravity.” Opinions and sentiments concerning Jerusalem still run deep and are strongly felt by the carnal-minded after two thousand years! Even many Christians, even Spirit-filled Christians, spend much money flying to Jerusalem to keep the feast of Tabernacles at the appointed time of the Old Testament law! The modern day city of Jerusalem still is the object of a struggle for power involving pride, envy, oppression, and tyranny.
The Samaritans for generations had worshipped God in their holy mount Gerizim, and the Jews had for generations worshipped in their temple in Jerusalem. Each scorned the other’s place of worship and Jesus is here speaking to the woman of Samaria and telling her that PLACES ARE OF NO CONSEQUENCE! God is a spirit — and mountain worship will not be acceptable! Neither will temple worship in Jerusalem be acceptable to the Lord! If man is to worship God, then man must worship God as He is and where He is — OMNIPRESENT SPIRIT! Man must not worship God as he thinks He is or where man thinks He may be. Carnality and the natural mind attempt to bring God into a realm that will enable them to see God according to their belief. Therefore some worship idols or images of metal, wood, or stone. Others worship the sun or the elements. Some must go to a building, which they call “the house of God,” to worship God and others must have all manner of rites, ceremonies, vestments, and objects in order to worship Him. Some must have a Jesus in a body of flesh, before they can worship God. But Jesus said that God is seeking a people who will worship Him in the realm and sphere in which He exists — in spirit and in truth! Worshipping a location is not spiritual worship. “Oh,” you say, “I do not worship the location, I just go there to worship God.” Precious friend of mine, if you must go there in order to worship God, YOU ARE WORSHIPPING THE PLACE! Worship has nothing to do with “going” anywhere! That is what Jesus was teaching that day at Jacob’s well. When we worship the Father in spirit and in truth, it separates us from all the “helps” and “crutches.” Such a worship takes away all the traditions of men, all the ceremonies and all the rituals and all the orders and forms of “worship” that every religious body of people are cumbered with.

We won’t go to a mountain, neither will we find it necessary to go to a temple. We will not have to work anything up or pray anything down. Certainly the Lord draws His people together for seasons of fellowship, praise, instruction, and edification. We do not oppose such gatherings, as the Lord ordains. But true worship will not take place just on Sunday morning between the hours of eleven and twelve, and perhaps a night or two each week. True worship is a CONSTANT, CONTINUAL STATE OF BEING! God is spirit, and who can know spirit except God takes us unto Himself in the realm in which He abides. God — Spirit and Truth — fills all space, is everywhere present, eternal and unchanging. When we live and walk in the spirit we are always dwelling at home in Him! We are always able to know and experience Him in the heaven of His presence, the true home and heaven of the consciousness of the life, reality, substance, and power of God within.

This is one of the great truths that God has revealed to His sons in this day of the Lord, which the vast majority of believers have not grasped to this day. The place of worship has absolutely no bearing whatever on the act of worship! Today, in order to hold together the system, the religious system men have developed, there must be a place of worship, and men are admonished and required to gather themselves together in that place so that they may worship God. Anyone who claims to be able to worship God equally at any time and in any place becomes a heretic to the organized religionists. For, if the places of worship were taken away, and men truly worshipped in spirit and in truth, the whole religious system would fall apart! There would be no reason for it to continue. The religious systems of man are built upon having a “place” for people to come to so that the works and promotions of men may continue to be carried out. Again, let me affirm that God does indeed gather His people together, but such gathering together is led by the Spirit and is UNTO HIM, and the place and order become inconsequential. It is when the physical place becomes important, or mandatory; it is when preachers and organizations lay a law upon you, demanding your attendance, your submission, and your allegiance to them and their program, asserting that you cannot make it to heaven, or into the kingdom,
or to manifest sonship, or into life and immortality apart from their teaching, their order, their ministry, their program, their elders, their prophets, their apostles — it is there that worship in spirit and in truth is usurped by worship in “this mountain” or in “Jerusalem.” Religion always dictates to us these three things: where, when, and how to worship! Ah, but the Spirit, like a rushing wind, carries us off to that realm of spirit and truth...far beyond the place, time, and techniques...into the very presence of the Father...for it is there we gather to worship!

Let all who read these lines know of a certainty that worship in spirit and in truth is the worship of the new covenant. This worship of the new covenant is a new worship, which Christ Jesus, the heavenly spiritual man, initiated two millenniums ago; and then put down and abolished the worship at the mountain, and the worship at Jerusalem, when He ushered in this worship in spirit and in truth. And this spirit and truth must every man and woman know within themselves, by which they may know the God of truth, who is a spirit, within their spirit. He who is a Jew inwardly worships in his temple, his body being the temple of the Holy Ghost. Those who are Jews outwardly, in the old covenant, sing and pray and preach in their temple, an outward temple made with hands. But the Jew inward, in the spirit, in the new covenant, in the new and living way, sings and prays and rejoices and ministers in the Holy Ghost, their bodies being temples of the Holy Ghost. And yet not the outward body of flesh, but the body of the inward man, the house from heaven, the spiritual body, the body of the Christ which every son of God is putting on within himself as Christ is raised up within!

The type has passed, and we know that the temple built with hands is no more. But what do we see? Men are trying to reproduce it, or to invent a substitute for it, thus perpetuating the old covenant, to walk as outward Jews. Church buildings, cathedrals, and temples are pawned off as the meeting place with God! Call these “churches” if you will. THEY ARE NOT CHURCHES! The very name is a blasphemy. They are mere buildings; and there is nothing sacred or holy about them. God does not honor them as His abode. They are not the “house of God” as the ignorant love to call them. We praise God for the privilege of gathering together with those of like precious faith, and rejoice in any assembling of the saints that is truly unto Him: but in point of fact it is not in any building made with hands that God is worshipped. Ah, how greatly we misconceive our true position! We certainly need not the tabernacle of Moses, the temple of Solomon, nor any cathedral or so-called church building to worship the Father or to minister as the Lord’s anointed; because we are constituted priests of the HEAVENLY TABERNACLE, which no human hand ever reared, and which is the true meeting-place between God and His spiritual priesthood, yea, of all who come to God! “Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them!”

It is an indisputable fact that in all of the recorded history of the human race men have been prone to associate their worship of God with places and things of the earth, and to attach some special sacredness to that place or thing, until the places and things become more important than God Himself. Of a truth I tell you that such are “earth-dwellers,” minding earthly things. Many precious folk imagine that because they met God in some glorious experience in such and such a building, room, or seat, they will find Him there again. I have known people who, because they received the Holy Spirit while sitting in a particular chair, then sit other folk in that same chair so they, too, can be filled with the Spirit, as though there were something “magical” with God about that chair! I remember seeing people, during the great healing campaigns of the late 1940’s and early 1950’s, long after the lights were out, the tent folded, and the trucks departed, returning to stand in
the saw dust at the exact spot where the glory of God had been seen, expecting to meet God in just the same way again. But He wasn’t there in manifestation! God has no concern for places — He is seeking a people!

Whatever your expression or ministry, it should be able to function at any time and in any place, just as well as it does at “church.” God does not move systematically after opening prayer, three choruses, and a few minutes of “singing in the spirit.” The firstborn Son of God NEVER ONCE MINISTERED IN THAT WAY! He ministered in the fields, on the mountainsides, in the streets, in the homes, by the seaside, or in the temple. HE HIMSELF was the temple of God at all times and in every place! His meetings never started at ten and dismissed at twelve. Oh, no! God manifested out of the temple of His Son at all times and in every place. 

This will be the mark of the manifest sons of God! Their ministry will be the sovereign, spontaneous, continuous, unrestrained, unplanned, unrehearsed, unprogrammed, omnipotent outflow of Life and Light and Love! It will change lives, transform churches, revolutionize cities, and conquer nations. It will redeem society, demolish every false religion and system of man, and sweep the nations and all things into the kingdom of God. IT IS THE MINISTRY OF SPIRIT AND TRUTH.

Even now we must learn to live and walk in the spirit if we treasure the beautiful hope of sonship to God! Our Father is teaching us that we must no longer seek out a “place” where we can move in the spirit because we are the temple of God and our whole life IS WORSHIP! While I am not at all opposed to gatherings, preachings, ministerings, etc., the fact remains that the way it is being done today, even among kingdom people, is still after the old order of the feast of Pentecost. Seems to me the new order has not fully come in — but certainly the Father is drawing us to walk only in and by the Spirit and not after the old order of a dying age. For me, the answer does not lie in continuing to do the old, nor yet is it in refusing to meet or minister in a visible and corporate way at all — it is just being led by the Spirit each and every day, doing only what we see our Father doing.

There is a wonderful scripture passage which is troubling to many wherein the inspired writer admonishes, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much more, as ye see the day approaching” (Heb. 10:25). Be not alarmed nor distressed because of those who would use the letter of this word as a hammer to bring condemnation to one who does not attend their weekly or daily set times of assembly! Nor, on the other hand, should one use his “liberty” as an excuse to simply “do his own thing,” becoming self-righteous and puffed-up in his “freedom,” independent and exalted in his own superior sense of “spirituality,” cutting himself off from the body of Christ! Both extremes are unbalanced. On the one hand, there is the person who is in bondage to a group or leader or religious system, feeling compelled to observe the letter of the law, attending every time the group assembles, complying with all their requirements, to prove himself “faithful,” regardless of the leading of the Spirit or the quality of the meetings. The other extreme is the one who is so independent and self-sufficient that he holds nothing but contempt for any gathering, regardless of the presence and leading of the Holy Spirit. In seeking to be free, he has come into bondage to his supposed freedom. Even though Jesus was Himself the temple of God on earth, He still went at times into the synagogues and into the temple of Herod as He was led by the Spirit. He was not under law — neither bound to such orders, nor bound from them. Now that is true freedom! Freedom to be led by the Spirit!

But there is a truth in this passage beyond all this. The Greek word for “assembling” is episunagoge. The word, literally, is a verb meaning to synagogue. It is a compound of the
Greek prefix *epi* with the word *sunagoge* from which we get our transliterated English word Synagogue. *Epi* means **super-imposition** — that which is above, higher than, highest, upon. *Sunagoge* means a meeting, assembly, or gathering. Putting these two words together, *epi-sunagoge* signifies THE ABOVE SYNAGOGUE, THE HIGHER MEETING, THE HIGHEST ASSEMBLY, THE HIGHER-TAN-ALL GATHERING! It bespeaks something far greater than merely collecting so many breathing bodies together in one place. It is a meeting in a higher realm, on a higher plane, in the highest places of the Spirit, in the very heights of Truth.. It is a gathering together in a dimension above. It indicates an assembling *in the Spirit*, as Paul also testified, “…and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus!” (Eph. 2:6).

Tens of thousands, yea, tens of millions of believers gather together in “church buildings” every Sunday morning, and because they make the effort to get out of bed, get the family ready, and drive off to a warm pew, they are convinced that they have met the requirements of the divine fiat: “Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together.” My beloved, they have not even touched the hem of the garment of this truth! We are not to forsake, or depart from, or neglect that wonderful seating we have together WITH CHRIST IN THE HEAVENLIES! That is precisely what the passage is saying. How can we be assured of this? By taking the passage in its context! The subject of the verses leading up to this passage are concerned with our entering in to the MOST HOLY PLACE. Hear it! “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil… and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith” (Heb. 10:19-22). Hebrews 10:25 is nothing but lifeless words, until one sits in the presence of the Father in the Holiest of all, joined in worship with kindred spirits, whether they be near or far, and partakes of that holy communion within the veil! It is only as spirit calls to spirit that the depths of eternal truth are opened. And multitudes who meet together every week for singing, teaching, etc., never have discovered the glorious and eternal reality of that ABOVE SYNAGOGUE! They neither meet nor minister nor live from that higher-than-all-heavens realm of HIS LIFE.

When we meet with a company of the elect, we are not to think of them as the whole of those with whom we worship and minister. The true priest is one of a great festal throng, which is comprising the spiritual and heavenly temple built of the living stones of redeemed and transformed men and women. As priests in the HEAVENLY SANCTUARY, the TRUE TABERNACLE which is above, we are but part of a great and universal congregation consisting of all the elect saints who have gone before, and those now living, gathered out of all ages, and throughout the vast universe of God. The preacher, the traveler, the mother, the ditch-digger, the king — all meet there IN THE SPIRIT REALM, and worship and minister from thence. All are priests, and yonder is the great High Priest of our profession, who has passed through all the heavens and ever lives as the minister of the heavenly sanctuary. He is “a minister of the true tabernacle.” It is the *above tabernacle*! And such are we! He hath raised us up and made us sit together with Him in these heavenly places, and He has made us to be a kingdom of priests. It is not “in church” on Sunday morning that we know the power of this priesthood or our assembly together with Him in the heavens — it is IN THE SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH, it is ASSEMBLED TOGETHER IN THE ABOVE SYNAGOGUE, in reality wrought within, every moment and everywhere and in every situation and circumstance as we live and walk and move in HIS REALM! Oh, the wonder of it!
From the time when the morning stars sang together and the sons of God first shouted for joy, rhythm and rapture have rolled upward and onward through all the boundless and eternal spiritual universe as the sweet expression of the mind and will of almighty God. This universe, this higher-than-the-heavens universe, this kingdom of heaven, is the home and heritage of every son of God. He belongs to it, and it belongs to him. He is in it, and it is in him. He holds himself in harmony with it and fills his soul with its songs. He apprehends its truths, enjoys it beauties, and partakes of its holiness. There is no place in it where he may not feel at home — no place where he has not a right to be; for it has been the Father's good pleasure to give him the kingdom! His life is not measured by years, but by its possibilities and expansiveness. He has already been translated into this heavenly kingdom! This is what we are not to forsake, depart from, or neglect, my beloved; we are not to forsake this UPPER-SYNAGOGUING of ourselves together — the communion and fellowship and expression together in this highest of all realms — IN CHRIST AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD! “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God” (Col. 3:1). Though we should meet and sing a thousand songs and preach a thousand sermons out of the Good Book — if we fail to touch that high realm of life and reality in the spirit we have not “upper-synagogued” at all, having merely assembled and done some religious things on the low plane of soulish activity — in the earth-realm! “Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell therein!”

I feel to close this portion on the “heaven-dwellers” with a sweet word from brother Carl Schwing. “‘He that dwells in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.’ Such awesome words, such a marvelous promise, such a blessed assurance. The secret place is the assembly place of the most High and His vast family of sons. It is large enough to contain the vastness of the universe; yet, it is small enough that a world-weary son can enter, close the door, and be alone with the Father. Not many during earth’s time have been taken beyond the closet of the secret place. However, there has always been the ‘few’ that were chosen to remember their place by Him…finding their all within the secret place of their Beloved. My brother-sister-sons: The secret place of the most High is never far away. When we are lifted up, it is there. When we are cast down, it is there. As we walk through the trials and tribulations of the world, it is there. When suffering is placed upon us, it is there. In the beauty of our aloneness, it is there. In the valley of the shadow of death, it is there. It is always there for us…it is everywhere for us…because we have made the Lord, even the most High, our habitation.”

THE DRAGON’S SHORT TIME

“Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil has come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time” (Rev. 12:12).

Let us prayerfully consider what is meant by the statement, “…he knoweth that he hath but a short time.” Unfortunately, tradition says he knows that he has but a short time because Jesus is coming back and the millennium is about to begin. Hogwash! That’s not at all what the Holy Spirit is indicating. The adversary knows that you have identified with the truth as it is in Christ, you now know who you are, what your true identity is, and the word and spirit of Christ have been raised up into the throne of your life. He knows that you have laid hold upon the power of the ascended Lord who reigns over all things and now nothing shall be impossible unto you! He knows that you have no desire any longer to dwell in the dust realm of the soul, or in the sea realm of the passions and motions of the flesh where he dwells. He knows that his time is short because you will no longer tolerate
his lies and deceptions in any department of your being, in any vestibule of your house, or in any street of your city — the city of God which you are! That's what he knows — and he knows that his ability to operate in any way or do anything in your spirit, soul, or body is now drawing to a close!

Considering all the glorious, divine, and august things written in all the preceding verses about the victory of the sons of God over the dragon — nothing can be more certain than the fact that Satan’s perception that his time is short has nothing whatever to do with a “second coming,” the “millennium,” or the “end of the world,” for none of those things are even alluded to in chapter twelve. It’s all about the manifestation of the sons of God! It is indeed wonderful!
Chapter 145
The Woman In The Wilderness

“And the woman fled 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 passage calls to our mind that it was “when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth” that he turned to “persecute the woman which brought forth the manchild.” These words refer to the battle that was fought in heaven, the battle between the dragon and the overcoming sons of God, a spiritual battle in which Satan is cast down out of the heavens of the spirit where the manchild dwells, cast into the “earth” — the soul realm of each of us individually, and the soulical religious realm of the corporate woman, the church. In its individual application, the Spirit is catching us up in part — in our spirit — and that part of us is made to overcome, casting out the serpent. The serpent then goes after the earthy part of us, our soul, which is the woman within us, with its mind, will, emotions, and desires, and the soul enters into a “wilderness experience.” Individually the “manchild” is the spirit within us which is seated with Christ in the heavenly places, whereas the “woman” is the soul. Corporately, the “manchild” is the body of the sons of God which make up the “man,” the bridegroom company. The “woman” is the virgin-church, the bride of Christ.

While the woman had been seen in heaven from a spiritual standpoint, she is now seen on earth, that is, in her position as the church in the world. Here our text begins, and it speaks of the tremendous conflict between the woman-church in her earthly sojourn, and the great red dragon-spirit.

The dragon now comes down to earth. He has failed in every respect thus far! He failed to prevent the birth of the manchild, and he failed to devour it when it was born. He also failed in the war which he fought with the sons of God, and failed to retain any place in the heavens of the spirit-realm where they are seated upon the throne. And because of this absolute failure, and because he also realizes that he cannot continue to fight indefinitely and that his time henceforth is short, he is filled with raging fury, spitefulness, and desperation. And thus he comes down to the earth for the purpose of persecuting the woman who brought forth the manchild!

The woman continues to function as the church on earth, though greatly diminished and weakened by the birth and removal of the manchild. This is clearly revealed by the vision John saw; for when the manchild is brought forth, separated from her, and caught up unto God and to His throne, the beloved seer still beholds her on earth, fleeing into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God for her, and where someone comes to her assistance and nourishes her for a thousand two hundred and sixty days. The cause of her flight was not at first disclosed. It is mentioned in verse six, but then the narrative is interrupted to relate the “war in heaven,” and the casting down of the dragon-spirit. That being told, the account returns, in verse thirteen, to the woman, to reveal what happens to her following the birth and enthronement of the manchild. She is seen in her earthly walk,
and the dragon comes down to that earthly place, defeated in the heavens of the spirit, to take his vengeance out on her!

THE DRAGON PURSUES THE WOMAN

“And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he pursued the woman which brought forth the manchild” (Rev. 12:13).

The dragon appears to pause a moment, as though stunned by his fall. Then assessing his predicament, determining his former position to be incapable of recovery, he rises and takes off after the woman. The King James Bible says that he “persecuted the woman,” but the word should be “pursued.” The Greek word has more than one shade of meaning, sometimes meaning to persecute and other times denoting to follow or pursue, which also is a form of persecution, just as the Pharaoh and his armies pursued the children of Israel as they fled from Egypt into the wilderness. The Greek word here translated “persecuted” is rendered as “follow,” “press toward,” and “ensue,” in the sense of “pursue” in the following verses, among a number of others: “Go not after them, nor follow them” (Lk. 17:23). “The Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness” (Rom. 9:30). “Israel, which followed after the law” (Rom. 9:31). “Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace” (Rom. 14:19). “Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts” (I Cor. 14:1). “I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I also am apprehended of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:12). “I press toward the mark for the prize” (Phil3:14). “Let him seek peace, and ensue it” (I Pet. 3:11). The woman in this case fled and the dragon pursued her. But his pursuing of her was in the “earth” before she went to her place in the wilderness, for in her prepared place in the wilderness he could not touch her!

I am persuaded that the woman is still of great value in the purposes of God, even after she brings forth the manchild, else why would the dragon pursue her so fiercely even after her child is born? The devil is not a deranged fool. He is certainly a fool, but he is not a mad fool that has no rhyme nor reason to his actions. Being a religious spirit, he does not do things that have nothing to do with the plan and purposes of God. You may depend on it, if the woman after she has brought forth the manchild was of no account any more, the devil would not trouble himself about her! He knows full well that this little woman is destined to become the glorious bride of Christ. Of her it shall ultimately be said, “Let us be glad and rejoice… for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready” (Rev. 19:7).

Just as Eve was the wife of the first man Adam, so is the virgin-church the wife of the last Adam. When in the distant mists of Eden the Creator presented Eve to Adam, He gave both Adam and his wife joint dominion over all things. “God created man in His own image…male and female created He them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over every living thing that moveth upon the earth” (Gen. 1:26-28). My reader will observe the use of the word “them” in this passage. God is blessing “them,” and giving “them” JOINTLY THE PLACE OF UNIVERSAL GOVERNMENT. All the inferior orders of creation were set under their JOINT DOMINION. Eve received all her blessings in Adam: in him, too, she got her dignity and position and power. Universal dominion was not given to Adam alone; it was not said, “Let him have dominion,” but “Let them have dominion.” There was no other creature so near to Adam as Eve, because no other creature was bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. What affection Eve had for Adam! What nearness she enjoyed! What intimacy of communion! What full participation in his thoughts! What
shared responsibility over all things! In all his dignity, in all his glory, wisdom, and power, she was entirely ONE. He did not rule over her, but with her. He was Lord of the whole creation, and she was ONE WITH HIM! They were the king and queen of the universe!

Prefigured by Adam and Eve in Eden, this is the perfect man, man in the image of God, male and female, Christ and His bride, given joint dominion over all things. The bride of Christ is the New Jerusalem, having the glory of God. The throne of God and the Lamb is in it and the glory of God lightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. All that dwell upon the earth shall walk in its light and enter through its gates. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honor into it. Then shall the whole earth be filled with the glory and the knowledge of the Lord! Christ and His bride, Jesus with all the holy sons of God in union with the glorious bride-city, shall enlighten all the world with truth, give all men to drink of the water of the river of life, and deliver the whole creation from the bondage of corruption. It is indeed wonderful!

This glorious destiny which the woman has explains the dragon’s interest in her. He has but one purpose and he lives but from one principle. It is the purpose and principle of opposition against all that pertains to God. This principle he never denies. The dragon was created with this nature to be the adversary, and God is God because there is an opposite, an adversary, an opponent, and God will be God to you, dear one, when you have encountered the adversary in all his works and overcome him there! And here we have God’s perfect wisdom in the formation of the human race and in bringing forth a convenient opposite, the wrong one, the evil one, THROUGH WHOM HE WOULD BRING BOTH HIS VAST FAMILY OF SONS AND HIS GLORIOUS BRIDE TO MATURITY AND PERFECTION.

“Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered” (Heb. 5:8). “For it became Him...in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Heb. 2:10). “And the Lord said, “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou hast turned back again, strengthen thy brethren” (Lk. 22:31-32).

If you are of no account to the coming of God’s kingdom and are in no way related to the glory of God, the adversary does not trouble his head about you! It is only when he perceives that you are a called and chosen one of God that he begins his action against you. That is his nature! That is his purpose! Thus it is with both the sons of God and the woman! The very fact that the dragon in fury indeed turns against the woman, to pursue and persecute her, reveals the great fact that she is still of great importance to the kingdom of God and the fulfillment of His purposes.

Why is the woman represented as being on earth and fleeing into the wilderness? It seems so very strange! Wasn’t she the glorious sun-clad woman who birthed the mighty manchild? Ah, yes, but in spite of her child she is not the manchild! Just as Mary was not Jesus, so the woman is not the son. Just as Jesus was resurrected and caught up to heaven, while Mary remained a woman in mortal flesh, so the manchild is caught up unto God and to His throne, whereas the woman that bore him finds herself in a great and terrible wilderness condition. Since the dragon-spirit cannot get at the sons of God who have overcome him and cast him out, he now turns on the woman which brought forth the manchild. Let the fact be imprinted indelibly upon our minds — once the great dragon is cast out of our heavens he is not able to persecute the manchild. When the accuser is cast down, whether out of our heavens or out of our earth, he can no more do anything TO
us in that realm. Not that he does nothing AGAINST us, but his activity has no effect upon us!

TWO WINGS OF AN EAGLE

“And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place…” (Rev. 12:14).

Now we are told that the woman receives the wings of a great eagle and that with them she flies into the wilderness. The idea is clear. The dragon is pursuing her in the earth. But in her weakened condition after having given birth to the manchild, she cannot outrun the dragon. If she turns to do battle with him, she cannot stand in the fray. And therefore there is but one place of escape, and that is the wilderness. There the dragon cannot live, for there is nothing for him to feed on. There is nothing there for the woman to feed on either, but her only hope is to flee thither. There she is nourished in a miraculous way, and there she is hid from the face of the serpent. And at the same time, she has not the strength to run into the wilderness, but the loving care of our Father at all times and in every circumstance is revealed in the fact that the woman was given two strong wings of a great eagle and was able to soar through the air, with two great wings outspread, like an eagle hastening to his wilderness home, lifted up into the strength of God, thus escaping the snare of the fowler. The serpent pursues her up to the very edge of the desert, but cannot follow farther. And therefore in his rage he casts a great stream of water after her, not to drown her, but to carry her away out of the wilderness, so that he may approach her. But the earth opens up her mouth and swallows up the stream, which is in keeping with the idea of the arid desert, where streams often vanish suddenly into the sand. And finally, the dragon, seeing that also now his efforts are vain and that all his attempts to destroy the woman are futile, turns to her other children, the “remnant of her seed,” in order that at any rate he may destroy them. Thus is the symbolism.

“Eagles’ wings” are first presented to us as the way Israel achieved freedom from the pursuing armies of Pharaoh — all the way from slavery in Egypt to security in the land of promise, from death to life, from helplessness to the heart of God. It was not fearless fighting and brilliant military maneuvering that delivered Israel from the hosts of Pharaoh and brought them into the solitude of the wilderness. Actually, it was not by their own efforts at all! It was what God did for them — He carried them on “eagles’ wings.” Three months out of the land of Egypt when Israel had established their camp in the wilderness of Sinai, Moses went up the mountain into the presence of God and the Lord said to him, “Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you unto myself” (Ex. 19:4). Borne by wings is the apt symbol of God’s gracious deliverance! But why on eagles’ wings? The eagle is admired and applauded for its exploits. It is the jet plane of the bird family! It soars the highest, goes the fastest, and is superior to all other birds in this respect. These features are noted on the pages of the holy scriptures. Concerning God’s care for Israel He said, “As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him” (Deut. 32:11-12). “They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles” (Isa. 40:31).

Therefore the wings of the eagle are given as the symbol of our God in the spirit. By the strength of its great wings it is able to soar to the heights and perform unusual feats. Thus the eagle is set before us as being a symbol of God’s gracious intervention in our lives,
whereby He gives us eagles’ wings, so that in our hour of weakness and testing sovereignly the strength of the Spirit is raised up in us and we are able to “mount up with wings as an eagle!” God, the indwelling spirit, is the eagle! And it is significant to note that the expression “two wings of a great eagle” is not altogether correct. In the Greek text it is not “a” great eagle, indefinitely, but “the” great eagle — signifying in type the species of eagle which has the most powerful or masterly flight. Surely it is divine power that is referred to in these words! It is the power of the Christ within! Oh, yes, my brother, my sister, matters not the seeming hopelessness of the situation or the circumstance — the wings of the great eagle are right there within you ready to be unfurled as you wait upon the Lord to renew your strength! And it is not a one-time experience, for the phrase “that she might fly” is in the present tense, the form of the Greek construction indicating that “she may continuously fly” or “repeatedly fly.” As my friend Jonathan Mitchell has pointed out, when God births something new in us, this pattern will always be followed, and we will need to fly into the wilderness away from the serpent’s face. The wings are always there — our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble! (Ps. 46:1). Aren’t you glad!

Some have suggested that the two wings of the great eagle are the wings of prayer and praise by which we soar into the presence of God, into the heavens of the spirit. And that may well be — but beyond that I see these wings as a dimension of power released right out of the realm of spirit. It is a power that lifts us within ourselves above all earthly bondage, restriction, and limitation, enabling us to move forward into the purposes of God. It is a divine transportation that carries us from one place in God to another from the face of all that would hinder and thwart us!

THE WILDERNESS

“And the woman fled 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).

As God delivered His people from the fury of the Pharaoh in Egypt by bringing them into the wilderness, so also now He brings His virgin-church into the wilderness to escape the rage of the dragon-spirit. But the difference is that in Israel’s case it was a natural, physical wilderness into which they were led, whereas in this case the figure is employed to signify something spiritual. The question follows: what is the meaning of the wilderness into which He enables our individual soul and, corporately, the woman-church to fly in order that she might escape the vengeance of the devil?

It has been said that the wilderness is here used to depict the want and deprivation which the people of God must suffer in the world. They are the despised of the world, they must suffer all kinds of persecutions and indignities in the world. And therefore the world is a real wilderness to them. And, of course, this is true in itself. But it is not the meaning of our text. For, in the first place, the woman is driven into the wilderness after the birth of the manchild and his exaltation to the throne. And it cannot be said that being subjected to trials and testings and troubles of all kinds is peculiar to the woman who brings forth the manchild. A long list of witnesses in chapter eleven of the book of Hebrews could tell you of them! The early church likewise, and blessed saints throughout the ages, have suffered want, deprivation, persecution, and afflictions. In the second place, it is difficult to see how such troubles could possibly be a means of hiding from the face of the devil, so that he could not attack. Yet “escaping from the devil” is evidently the purpose of it all!
woman received these wings to fly into the wilderness in order to be hid from the face of the serpent, and so be safe. And, in the third place, the wilderness is a place prepared for her by God, where she does not suffer want or deprivation, for she is supernaturally nourished, cared for, and protected for the length of her stay there. Therefore, this cannot be the meaning of the term “wilderness” in our present passage!

John’s “wilderness” comes from a different strain of biblical imagery, the typological use of Israel’s flight from Egypt into the wilderness; it was a place of safety and liberation; and it is to such a sanctuary that the woman is taken to be protected and sustained by God. I would draw your reverent attention to the fact that the woman flees into “the wilderness,” the well-known one, spoken of from the book of Exodus all the way through the book of Revelation. Herein she is distinguished from the great whore. The Great Harlot of chapter seventeen is seen by John in “a wilderness,” or “a wilderness in spirit,” as we should most probably connect the words. Our woman’s flight is 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.

Well did Ray Prinzing write, “Do remember, these things are given in a figurative sense, it does not mean that every Christian is transported to some desert place, nor hidden in a retreat, but this is a new and different dealing of God, deeper than the church has known before. ‘The Lord thy God hath led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart’ (Deut. 8:2). When this testing and purification are complete, He will ‘present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing’ (Eph. 5:27). How we have longed for, prayed for this to be a reality, and, thank God, He knows just the time and process to bring it to pass.”

In the literal and natural sense of the word the wilderness, or desert, is a place in the world, but not of the world. It may be right in the midst of the world, yet it is absolutely separated from the life of the world. 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 a place in the midst of the world, yet separated from the world. If one is in the wilderness, he is separated from the life of the world. This bespeaks a people as described by our Lord who are “in the world, but not of the world.” A people separate in every respect from the life, nature, and ways of the world. They have nothing in common with the world’s spirit and institutions or with the religious activities and systems of man. These exist, indeed, in the world. They are neighbors, co-workers, relatives, and friends of those who daily function in the world-system, but they exist and function as a separate community from the world. They live right in the midst of the world, work on the same jobs, shop in the same stores, drive on the same streets, attend the same schools, yet they are spiritually separated from that life, and live their lives from the principles of the kingdom of God and the spirit of Christ.

This virgin-church is a separate institution in the world. She has her own King. She does not recognize any other lordship. No institution of man has any power over her. She has her own laws, and they are the laws of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. She does not mingle with the politics of the world. She has no armies. She does not fight with the
sword. She does not live by the world’s standards and values. She does not think like the world thinks, or act as the world acts. She lives in separation, in another world, in the very midst of the world! Even as the children of Israel in the desert lived in separation from the world-power in Egypt and other nations round about, and even as they received their own laws from their own King in the wilderness, so also the woman-church is in the wilderness with regard to the world and its power and its life. She fights her own battles, which are spiritual battles, and does her own work, which is spiritual work. She lives her own lifestyle, which is a heavenly lifestyle, and walks her own walk in the kingdom of heaven. She is separate from the life of the world. She has received a God-prepared place in the wilderness! Oh, the wonder of it!

Although the wilderness is specifically the place of separation and safety from the world and its ways, as well as from the Babylon church system of man, and her ways, this is not to say that there is no specific and special dealing of God in the wilderness. Every order God leads His people into is uniquely designed to contribute to their growth, development, and perfection in Christ! Again I will quote from the words of brother Ray Prinzing, for he expressed it so well when he wrote, “Oftentimes our processings are as a LED THROUGH THE WILDERNESS type of walking, yet with the assurance that He is doing the LEADING, and that because of His day by day guidance we need not stumble. The outward aspect of the wilderness is like unto a desert with its howling winds and barren existence...no smooth pathway, but a going on in faith step by step, receiving that daily supply of manna divinely provided, and drinking of that Rock which follows us even unto the ends of the earth. Then with joy we sing, ‘My Lord knows the way through the wilderness, and all I have to do is follow. — Strength for today is mine all the way, and all that I need for tomorrow . . .’. He leads, why need we fear? Furthermore, it is written, ‘perfect love casteth out all fear,’ and we know that HE IS PERFECT LOVE, therefore the more He dwells within us by His Spirit, the more we are KEPT IN PEACE.

“Darkness may obscure our vision, but we do not stumble, and though many things seem as obstacles in our way, placed there for our OVERCOMING, still we shall not falter. Why? Because He leads, and ‘He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: He that keepeth thee will not slumber’ (Ps. 121:3). We ask for bread, He does not give us a stone. We ask for fish, He does not give us a serpent. No one needs to fear about stumbling in this wilderness when they have put their trust in Him to guide, He leads THROUGH the wilderness! It is essential that we go through these processings, for they work in us much of His purpose, and we would not seek to escape His dealings, but we can go through without worry, fear, or inner turmoil. ‘Unto Him that is able to keep you from falling (Greek, from stumbling), and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy’ (Jude 24)” — end quote.

Over past months and years a number of anointed voices have come in printed form across my desk which also bear eloquent testimony to this significant truth, and I will quote the words of a few of them for the edification of those who read these lines. A precious brother, Charles Haun, wrote: “‘And the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai: and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran…and the people pitched in the wilderness of Paran’ (Ex. 10:12; 12:16). It is beautiful. It is a wonderful place, this spiritual wilderness called Paran! The wilderness of Paran is ‘glory’ or ‘beauty,’ according to the meaning of the Hebrew word. To see the wilderness in such gratifying terms, one must first become aware of God’s intentions in bringing a person into the wilderness. Once a believer comes to this awareness, he can then begin to understand why and how glory and beauty are in the Wilderness of Paran.
“The wilderness is God’s workshop. He has designed it for us. He brings us to it, ‘even every one who is called by my name, whom I have created for my glory’ (Isa. 43:7). We are brought there to see His glory, to relate to it, to learn from it, and most importantly, to be conformed to His image. We would prefer that God does all His work on us in green grass and beside still waters. Although these and other lovely and pleasant places are part of our spiritual experience, certain types of work are not accomplished in us, except in the wilderness. The wilderness is a part of our development. It is necessary for our growth. It is God’s method of opening our vision to Himself and to His provisions for us. It is that which the Lord uses to bring spiritual enrichment into our lives. It is a method that God uses to develop our faith and trust in Him. The wilderness is an essential part of the Christian life, whether we like it or not!

“When I entered Bible School as a first-year student, the Lord was like a bright light to me. His presence was so near and intense that I could neither eat nor sleep on a regular schedule. I loved the light. But after several weeks of this, it all lifted, and I found myself in total darkness, and dryness. I was in the wilderness. I was impressed. I was terrified. I learned darkness and dryness. More importantly, I learned many things which can be learned only in such circumstances. I learned that God is faithful to me, even in dryness. I learned that He could be my light, even in darkness. But the greatest event spanning those two years in the wilderness was the treasure I gleaned for myself. I came out with a complete trust in God. So complete that it defies description. So complete that I would expect no one to believe its extent. This treasure of perfect trust was worth the two years of darkness and dryness.

“The wilderness was the place of opportunity. Here, from the Wilderness of Paran, the children of Israel could have moved into greater opportunities. The possibility of taking the Promised Land was theirs! God Himself actually initiated the conquest of Canaan at this time from this place, as seen in Numbers 13:3: ‘And Moses by the commandment of the Lord sent them from the wilderness of Paran: all those men were the heads of the children of Israel.’ (These men were the spies sent to spy out the land in preparation for its conquest). The wilderness may not be seen by some people as being a launching pad into an orbit of spiritual reality and living. But the wilderness is that, and more! It is a place of opportunity. The children of Israel were brought into the Wilderness of Paran for the specific and express purpose of going farther, to possess the Promised Land! There are two areas of blessing as related to the wilderness. One area is the blessings that are within the wilderness. The other area is the opportunity for blessings based upon the wilderness itself. The Promised Land was the opportunity for blessings based upon how the children of Israel responded to God in the wilderness.

“God’s direction can be seen and somewhat understood as the Israelites first approach the Wilderness of Paran (Num. 10:12). ‘And the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran.’ This was not their choice, rather it was God’s choice; it was God’s direction for them. The Israelites simply followed the cloud, stopping where it stopped, moving when the cloud moved. Here, the cloud stopped in the Wilderness of Paran. The first lesson to be learned is to follow the cloud. The believer must learn to follow what he knows to be the direction of God. Don’t be afraid of the wilderness! Times in the wilderness will become the only occasions when God imparts certain divine meanings and rich revelations to us. The wilderness will be the place of our greatest progressions in God. There are certain things which God can bring to us only in the wilderness, as we properly relate to His glory in the wilderness.
“The second lesson to be learned is that we are not to complain and question God as we follow. ‘Why did the cloud stop here? Doesn’t God know that there is no water here?’ ‘Why does God lead us into the wilderness? To kill us because there are no graves in Egypt?’ The children of Israel followed the cloud to green grass. The name of the place was Hazeroth. The stem of this Hebrew word means ‘green,’ ‘grass,’ ‘leeks,’ ‘enclosure.’ This Hazeroth must have been a luscious place! The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia refers to it as ‘the best pastures.’ This would have been most pleasing to those camping there! When we go camping, we don’t like to camp in the desert, or in a wilderness. We like to camp in an oasis; we like to camp where there is much green grass and a stream with fish. How long are we allowed to camp in the green grass beside the still waters? Not very long. We must follow the cloud. It soon moves from Hazeroth, as recorded in Numbers 12:16. ‘And afterward, the people removed from Hazeroth and pitched in the wilderness of Paran.’ The green grass of Hazeroth is desired by all, but it does not fully and totally meet man’s spiritual needs. The leadership directly under Moses failed in the green grass, for it was there that ‘the anger of the Lord was kindled against them (Aaron and Miriam); and He departed…’ (Num. 12:9).

“What is seen, or not seen, in the wilderness depends upon our point of view. Our point of view is the direction in which we habitually look. ‘And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud’ (Ex. 16:10). The gaze of the Israelites had just been on the meat which they did not have, but desired to have. Only when they looked toward the wilderness did they see the glory of God! The glory of God was not in the meat which they desired. The reason why many believers, upon many different occasions, miss seeing the glory of God is that they are looking toward that which they desire. They are looking toward Canaan Land, when they should be looking toward the wilderness. If the glory of God is appearing in the wilderness, and we want to look longingly and constantly at the Promised Land, we may see the Promised Land, but we will not see the glory of God. When the glory of God has come to the wilderness, it is time to give the wilderness our attention.

“Although many are brought to the wilderness to see the glory of God, not all see it. The direction of our vision at any particular time in our life will determine what we will see. It will also determine what we are not seeing of that which God wants to show us. We will miss seeing His goodness if we constantly gaze at unfulfilled desires and long for the comforts of the flesh. Let us lay aside our fleshly desires and follow our Maker without complaining and without questioning. As we accomplish these things we will see more clearly the intentions and purposes that God has for us” — end quote.

Another brother, Bruce Caisse, has shared the following. “‘Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caeser...Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness’ (Lk. 3:1-2). Annas and Caiaphas should have received, in the temple, the word of the Lord. However, the Lord bypassed them and spoke, in the wilderness, to John. The Lord, unable to find a channel that could hear His voice, used the wilderness to prepare a voice through whom He could announce the first appearing of the Messiah. Why did the Lord choose the wilderness? We often think of the wilderness as a place where people go through a time of difficulty. It is usually thought of as being a place where the ‘presence’ of the Lord cannot be felt, or where the ‘rain’ of the Holy Spirit does not fall. It is considered to be a place of dryness and barrenness, both naturally and spiritually.
“Yet, from time to time the Lord brings us into a wilderness experience. The wilderness should not be thought of as a barren place. It becomes a wonderful place when we begin to understand all that the Lord can accomplish within us during this time. What is the wilderness? It can be defined in one word: Separation. Here, the Lord is able to deal with us concerning all of the ambitions and drives that are within us. In the barrenness of the wilderness, He is able to take initiative in our lives and separate us unto Himself. When we view the wilderness as a place of separation unto the Lord, we will see that it has great value and purpose. Consider the children of Israel as they were led out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, and into the wilderness. There were different levels of separation in this journey. The most obvious one is the Red Sea. God opened the way through the Sea. As they reached the other side, the waters closed up upon the Egyptians. There were no more bricks to be made! Now, they were to abide under the cloud of glory by day and the pillar of fire by night!

“However, they began to murmur. This was to have been a time of preparation, being made ready to possess the land that was before them. The pulls of Egypt had been left behind and they were closed in with the Lord Himself. This is the purpose of the wilderness. Israel failed, however, to understand this. ‘Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt’ (Hosea 2:14-15). The Lord is portraying Himself as a husband whose wife has been unfaithful. She has been distracted by the pull of things that steal her affections from Jehovah. Yet, the Lord seeks to restore her and separate her unto Himself. ‘And I will visit upon her the days of Baalim, wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgot me, saith the Lord’ (Hosea 2:13). This is expressive of the experience many of us go through, even after we know the Lord. We are pulled in other directions. The Lord’s cure for this is expressed in verse fourteen, ‘Therefore, behold, I will allure her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her.’ The word ‘comfortably’ means ‘heart.’ The Lord is saying, ‘I will speak my heart to her.’ He removed the distractions by taking her away from Egypt, which speaks of the pulls of the world. The purpose of the Lord in the wilderness is to separate us from ‘things’ and cause us to know Him and His voice personally and intimately. The preparation of John the Baptist in the wilderness is a type of what the Lord is seeking to do within us during this present time of transition.

“The Song of Solomon speaks prophetically of the Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ, and of His beloved bride, the church. The question is asked, ‘Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?’ (S. of S. 8:5). This ‘leaning’ speaks of a dependence and trust that had been developed during a wilderness experience. Again, we see the purpose of the wilderness. It provides an atmosphere in which we have no choice except to get close to Him. Here, He is able to begin sharing His heart with us! If we are leaning upon Him, we can get no closer. John the beloved leaned and laid his head on the breast of Jesus. Here, he heard His heartbeat. Jesus could whisper to John because of this intimacy that had developed.

“Why is it that the word of the Lord came to John, and not to Annas and Caiaphas? It was because John the Baptist gave himself to a period of separation. He heard the voice of the Lord alluring him into the wilderness and responded to this time of separation. He left all that he might be alone with God. John began to hear the heartbeat of God as the Lord began to speak His heart to him. ‘I will allure her and speak my heart unto her.’ We do not
know how long this took, or all that was required of John. But, he was willing to give himself to the Lord. Why did not the priesthood hear from the Lord? A verse in Jeremiah gives us some understanding of this. ‘For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.’

“The spiritual leaders of that day were drinking from broken cisterns. Somewhere, they forsook the Lord and broke communion with Him. The rain had fallen at one time upon the house of Israel and they were still drinking from that cistern which only spoke of a former day. They were not ready to hear a present word concerning the appearing of the Lamb of God. We cannot rest in a past visitation, or word from the Lord! There must be that continual listening for a present word from the Lord. There must be a present receiving from the Fountain of Living Waters! Only then will we be qualified to minister the word of the Lord. When the Lord begins to rain His blessing upon us, we hold up our cup until it is filled. If we remain satisfied with this, then five years later we will still be saying, ‘I received this cup of water from the Lord, would you like a drink?’ Five year old water does not taste at all good! However, if we cultivate a link with the Fountain of Living Water, we will have water that will be fresh each day.

“John was allured into the wilderness, where God spoke His heart to him. What was the result of this processing that took place in the wilderness? ‘And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias’ (Jn. 1:19-23). John could have said that he came in ‘the spirit of Elijah.’ Jesus said of him that he was Elijah that should come. However, in hearing the heart cry of the Lord, John found that his identity had been consumed. He lost himself in the burden of the Lord. Psalm 69 tells us, ‘For the zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up.’ While John was alone in the wilderness, the spark that quickened his heart concerning the burden of God’s heart grew and grew until it consumed him and he became simply the ‘voice of one.’ John said, ‘I heard Him alluring me into the wilderness and I went. The Lord birthed within my heart the cry of His heart and it consumed everything that was within me. I have become the expression of the voice that you have not heard for hundreds of years. He was still crying and I went out and listened.’

“The Lord desires to bring each one of us to the place where we will be able to hear this cry. We can be content with, or so busy with the program within the temple, that we do not hear His alluring call into the wilderness. Annas and Caiaphas knew the written word of God, but did not hear the voice of the Lord. John the Baptist probably did not know the written word of God as well as they, but he allowed the Lord to separate him unto Himself so he would be able to hear the very heartbeat of God. The Lord is calling out a people who are willing to be separated unto Him! The wilderness is not a physical place; rather it is an attitude of heart. ‘He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken’ (Isa. 53:8). There is a challenge here. Are you willing to be one who is ‘cut off’ from the land of the living — separated unto Him in the wilderness that you might become one to declare His generation? The Lord is looking for a company of ‘John the Baptists.’ He is not looking for ability, rather He is looking for availability. Each
one of us can be a part of this corporate body that is being prepared to express the Word of the Lord in our day!” — end quote.

Another has penned these challenging words. “The story of the Hebrews’ journey out of Egyptian bondage is a wonderful illustration of spiritual development. The Bible tells us that Moses spent forty years exiled in the desert, tending sheep, before leading the children of Israel out of slavery. That might not appear to be the best training for a great leader! Yet during those years, he was growing spiritually. As his understanding of God developed, he overcame personal doubts about his ability to follow divine direction. Eventually, he led the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage. Yet they, too, spent forty years in the wilderness before making it to the Promised Land! It wouldn’t have required that long to travel the few hundred miles between Egypt and Palestine. But in reading the Bible one gets the impression that the real journey involved spiritual progress, not physical distance. What a mental distance between thinking and living as slaves, and thinking and living as the Spirit-led people of God! In the wilderness the children of Israel were learning the difference. It wasn't at once that they understood God’s Voice — or saw what it meant to obey Him. Ignorance, immaturity, and fear held the people back. They made mistakes, took 'detours,' and had to retrace some steps. Still, they recovered and kept going.

“Although their route wasn’t as direct as it might have been, spiritual progress was going on. Their experiences were teaching them what it means to have only one God, to trust Him, and to have their lives corrected and governed by Him. They were learning lessons they needed to learn! Did it take forty years? It seems that spiritual maturing, not time, was the issue. And that's of particular interest to us when — individually or collectively — we're going through a 'wilderness' time. In the midst of the pressures, stripplings, and purgings, have we ever wondered, ‘How long is this going to take? Is there a faster way?’ When we go back through the accounts of the Bible, we see that spiritual progress doesn't allow for skipping steps we need to take or avoiding the spiritual lessons we need to learn. There is a right path and a way for us to stay safe in it, going in the right direction” — end quote.

Steve Wilbur adds these insights. “THE WILDERNESS — Did you shudder when this title caught your eye? Was the surface of your consciousness ruffled by this disturbing question: ‘Will God take me into the wilderness?’ The wilderness! A word calculated to inspire fearsome awe without further qualifiers. Yet Moses qualifies it with the terms ‘great’ and ‘terrible’ (Deut. 1:19). The word occurs over three hundred times in scripture. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, let us explore something of the meaning of the wilderness.

“First, it is unfriendly. It is selective, working to favor some things, yet militating against others. God’s man finds that in the desert some things die while other personal qualities are accentuated. The wilderness is unfriendly to the carnal, the personal, the worldly, but constructive to the development of those eternal qualities the Lord is seeking. The desert is the place of specially adapted life. The Lord desires to cultivate what man disdains or neglects to cultivate — the spiritual life. This calls for a hearing ear. It means you delve so deeply into the wilderness that you hear no other voice speaking, but the voice of the Lord. This was so with Moses, who finally turned aside at the burning bush.

“We next notice that the wilderness is dry. There is no evident blessing or revival. In Numbers chapter twenty, the children of Israel demonstrated against Moses and Aaron. Verses three through five tell us they reproached Moses and accused him of bringing the Lord’s congregation into the wilderness to die of thirst. They describe their environment as
evil, saying, ‘It is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates, neither is there any water to drink.’

“We learn also that the wilderness is uninhabited. God deals with His people both corporately and individually in the wilderness experience. The Bible abounds with examples of a single person being brought face to face with God. Consider His dealings with Enoch (Gen. 5:22). ‘Enoch walked with God’ (alone). Abraham’s separated walk involved numerous encounters with his God. Consider Joseph’s specifically tailored trials; Elijah’s crying out in the wilderness, ‘I, even I only, am left’ (I Kings 19:10). Jeremiah’s agonizing, ‘I sat alone because of Thy hand’ (Jer. 15:17). ‘And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day’ (Gen. 32:24). And finally, Matthew 14:23 declares of Jesus, ‘He was alone there.’ The wilderness is a place where very special things happen! The people of God tumbled helter-skelter out of Egypt, but the wilderness brought them into divine order. They became an organized army that marched in ranks into Canaan. Psalm 103:7 tells us that God made His ways known to Moses. His ways are ordered ways.

“The wilderness is also the place where the power of simple instruments is revealed. In Exodus 4:2 the Lord asks Moses, ‘What is that in thine hand?’ And Moses replies, ‘A rod.’ The unique power of Moses would forever after be associated with a common shepherd’s staff. When Samson was assaulted by the Philistines, the Word says, ‘they shouted against him.’ But Samson found a jawbone of an ass, and with it, he slew a thousand men. This instrument, found often enough in the wilderness, was at the same time both common and powerful. What a contrast between God’s ways and man’s ways! Man’s method of salvation is by costly and complicated machinery — salvation by mechanics. God’s means of salvation is by vital energy — salvation by dynamics. Here the simplest of instruments suffice.

“Finally, the wilderness is the place of drastic reduction. To reduce is to convert to simpler form. For example, Acts 7:22 describes Moses before he was forty years of age, as being, ‘learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and mighty in words and in deeds.’ Forty years later, we find him at eighty years of age confessing, ‘O my Lord, I am not eloquent…but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue’ (Ex. 4:10). It is to this man Moses, so reduced that he asked sincerely, ‘Who am I?’ (Ex. 3:11), that the mighty ‘I AM’ reveals Himself. Moses’ excess baggage — cultural, intellectual, social — had been dropped during his forty-year journey through the wilderness! How far will God reduce us? We could conjecture that when Moses approached the burning bush that day, he had his garment, his rod, and his shoes. Not much. Yet one third of even that had to be set aside before he could draw near to God! ‘Put off thy shoes.’ The prophet Amos graphically depicts God’s people reduced to bare necessities. Nothing is left but two legs and a piece of an ear — just enough to HEAR A WORD AND WALK IN IT! (Amos 3:12).

“If our guided tour through the wilderness has had its proper effect, a transformation of consciousness should have taken place. Although at first we had instinctively recoiled from it, as though it were ominously threatening to our sense of self-preservation, we will now really embrace the wilderness as a great friend and servant. We will have the inner sense that only when the Lord Jesus gets what He wants from our lives will life finally stabilize. Thus we know that those who emerge from God’s wilderness are indeed the thoroughly processed members of which the unblemished Body is composed. Their coming into view provoked the astonished exclamation, ‘Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved’ (S. of S. 8:5) — end quote. 
In closing I would share these confirmatory words from the pen of David Minor. “Many men have been sent to the desert. This is a place that every one of us would like to avoid if we could. We find it unpleasant when God cuts across our path and says, ‘I want you to go to the desert.’ Every life that God uses has this desert experience! The desert experience is an absolute necessity in the lives of God’s people. He does not choose to perfect His vessels in the city, but rather in the desert place. You can tell when a person is in the desert because you hear him say, ‘I feel so dry. I don’t feel any life. I don’t understand what is happening to me.’

“We are so interested in ministry and in multitudes! We want to be going. God is saying to you, ‘Son (or Daughter), I want you to come aside. I want to draw you away from the crowd. I want to separate you. I want to get you out here alone under the stars in a solitary place where I can talk to you. I want to give you a message. I want to burn a word into your soul. I want to get down into your innermost being. I want to do a work in your heart.’ The solitary place is a place we don’t want to be! We cry, ‘But I don’t like the solitary place. I like people around me. I like people to know what I’m going through. I like people to sympathize with me. I like people to understand me. I like companionship.’ But God says, ‘I’m bringing you to the desert place because I want to meet you there.’

“I want to talk about this desert. Thank God there are streams of water. Thank God there are mountains. But in the life of every man and woman of God there is an appointment with destiny. Everyone who comes forth with a burning message, every prophet that comes before the face of a nation, is a person that God has led to a solitary place; it’s a desert place — a lonely place — a place of midnight darkness — a place where there is no moisture, and where God speaks and deals and shapes and fashions and forms. Then God sends that man or woman from that desert with life-giving water. If you’re coming to God’s people with signs, wonders, and miracles, and you’re going to carry a rod that brings deliverance, you must meet a burning bush in God’s desert place. Don’t think that someone is going to call you out of a congregation, lay hands on you, and impart a ministry to you that is going to bring men and women out of the prison-houses. Don’t think that you’re going to attend Bible School and somebody will hand you a diploma that will qualify you to deliver creation. If you’re going to bring people out of the bondage of Egypt, you’re going to meet God at the backside of the desert! God will take away the pleasures. He will take away the comforts. He will take away the things that you’ve trusted in and He will drive you from men to a solitary place where it’s you and God. There you will meet Him on the backside of the desert of human experience. Every prophet has his desert.

“Then you can say, ‘God, I understand now why everything is as it is. I understand now why You’ve let these things happen and You didn’t send any rain into the desert place of loneliness, heartache, despair, rejection, privation and misunderstanding. It was You that brought me there! I didn’t understand at first.’ I questioned, ‘Why? What does God have against me? What have I done? Where have I failed God? Why hasn’t God opened the door? Why am I in this situation?’ You’re there because God is preparing a man or woman to take the message of His everlasting love and unfailing grace to humanity. He’s going to sustain you. You’re going to embrace this desert experience. You’re going to thank God for it! The sweetest hour you’re ever going to know is where God comes down in that desert place and a burning bush appears in that lonely, solitary place. When you’re homesick and weary, then suddenly the angel of God comes and you cry, ‘Bethel! It’s Bethel, the house of God! I thank God for this lonely, windswept mountain.’ Then God will
lead you out of the desert place to touch men and women with the power of mighty supernatural deliverance!” — end quote.
Chapter 146

The Woman In The Wilderness

continued

“And the woman fled 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).

I would again draw your attention to the fact that the woman flees into “the wilderness,” the well-known one, spoken of from the book of Exodus all the way through to the book of Revelation. The great types of the wilderness experience are first met in Moses who for forty years lived in the desert, under the big sky, where his brash points were worn down by the immensities around him: the star-studded sky at night; the empty, echoing canyons; the days of seeming unending silence, broken only by the howling winds and blowing, choking, blinding dust. Deserts diminish a person. Surrounded by lifeless rocks and sand, beaten by howling winds that make skin leathery, a person learns his or her true measure. Deserts purge, purify, prepare. They downsize, humble, empty, break. For forty years (for God is not rushed) the desert did its carving, chiseling, sculpting work on the gifted but proud and impetuous young man Moses. Then, finally, he is ready for…the fire! And it comes! The strange bush flames up like a dried-out old Christmas tree on fire…and just keeps on burning and burning. Moses is captivated. He leaves the sheep, forgets his work, stops his routine, steps out of the ordinary…and gazes. He does not know it yet, but here is a symbol of the next forty years of his life: he will be like this bush, filled with the fire of God, so fully, so constantly, that he will never burn out. And he didn’t. Forty years later, when he died at age 120, “his eyes were not weak nor his strength gone” (Deut. 34:7). Desert, fire. Desert, fire. That’s the pattern of the pilgrimage. God empties us; then fills us with His fire. That’s the way of the wilderness!

As God through the fire-consuming Moses delivered His people from the fury of Pharaoh in Egypt by bringing them into that very same wilderness, so also now He brings His woman-church into the wilderness to escape the rage of the dragon-spirit. But the difference is that in Israel’s case it was a natural, physical wilderness into which they were led, whereas in this case the figure is employed to signify something spiritual. The wilderness signifies a place of safety and liberation; and it is to such a sanctuary that the woman is taken to be protected and sustained by God. In the literal and natural sense of the word the wilderness is a place in the world, but not of the world. It is a place in the midst of the world, yet it is absolutely separated from the life of the world. The key word here is separation. This depicts a people as described by our Lord who are “in the world, but not of the world.” A people separate in every respect from the life, spirit, and ways of the world. In the wilderness they are not only separated from the world, but are indeed separated unto God!

In our text the wilderness is called “her place” — a place belonging to her which God has specially prepared for her. As we have already pointed out the types of this spiritual
experience are found in the desert to which Moses fled for safety from the wrath of Pharaoh; to which Israel fled from the tyranny and rage of the Egyptians; to which Elijah betook himself for refuge from the wrath of the bloody Jezebel; to which the faithful Jews retreated from the persecutions of the Syrian kings in the Maccabean times. Having served as a place of shelter for God’s faithful ones on so many occasions, it may well be called “her place” — the one locality out of all places on earth specially prepared and consecrated as a place in the world but not of the world, a separated place where the Lord’s people find refuge from the fury of the adversary, to experience in solitude those unique dealings of God which humble, empty, break, purge, purify, and prepare them for His further and higher purposes. “Her place” is thus spiritually a state of being and a dealing of God appointed and ordained for her growth and development in the spirit. She is “nourished” there, indicating that provision is made for her to be not only sustained, but strengthened and enabled to grow and increase. Aren’t you glad!

Some in our day have missed the spiritual import of this wonderful scene and have sought for some supposed physical “safe area” to flee to in the day of trouble. We have known many precious ones who fearing nuclear war, Y2K, the tyranny of a one-world government, the great tribulation, the beast, or some other imagined calamity have searched for a place of safety. There is a group just north of us in New Mexico who came here many years ago from California. They believed that fearful disasters were to befall the state of California. Their prophet told them that they were the woman who was to flee to the wilderness, and a particular area of New Mexico was the wilderness. They have certainly been prospering there for nearly fifty years, but their visions have so far not been fulfilled.

We know some who went to remote wilderness areas of South America, Canada, Alaska, etc. Many have now come home. I visited one such wilderness farm in 1970 on the Cacataw River in the jungles of Columbia, South America. It no longer exists. In fact, the drug-lords have taken over that area of Columbia and one cannot even travel there anymore! One couple we knew had found a “place of safety” in a certain mountainous area of the state of Arkansas. But before they could get moved there a missile blew up in its silo right in the middle of their “safe area”! They never have gone. I prophesy that many who carnalize and literalize this precious “wilderness message” and run to what they believe are safe areas shall experience that of which the prophet Amos spoke when he prophesied that it would be “as if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him” (Amos 5:19).

Certainly God can speak to people to locate in a particular area for whatever purpose, but the only “safe place” is IN THE SPIRIT, not a geographical location. David put it this way: “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, HE IS MY REFUGE AND FORTRESS: my God, in Him will I trust. Surely HE shall deliver thee…He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust…thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; BUT IT SHALL NOT COME NIGH THEE. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. BECAUSE thou has made the LORD, WHICH IS MY REFUGE, even the most High, THY HABITATION” (Ps. 91:1-9). Ah — there is safety indeed! Yes, my beloved, there is “her place” which God has prepared for her, a place in the spirit, a place of separation unto God, where the protection, nourishing, and sovereign dealings of God accomplish their wonderful work!
NOURISHED IN THE WILDERNESS

“...she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days...and to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly...into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time” (Rev. 12:6,14).

It is in the wilderness that we need to be fed. The idea is that of a miraculous feeding, and the past is prophecy of the future. It was there that God supernaturally sent the manna to feed the fugitive millions of Israel. Elijah was miraculously fed by an angel, and received a meal from heaven, in the strength of which he went forty days, in his flight to this “mount of God.” It was in the desert place, where the multitudes followed Jesus, that He multiplied the loaves and fishes and fed five thousand faint people. In the seasons of blessing there is abundance, but in the wilderness food and water are not available and must be in some way supplied. Before entering the wilderness you readily partook of the abundance of spiritual food — of gifts, and ministries, and movings of the Spirit. But in the wilderness the Lord separates you from even that! The feeding of the woman here, indicates the depth of her straits, and her utter helplessness in any resources of her own. She is in great need, and no amount of activity on her part can supply her with sustenance. Yet, one doesn’t need to spend a long time in the wilderness if he truly understands and appropriates what is provided for him there. Oh, yes, provision is made in the wilderness! Israel’s experience in the wilderness is the blessed type. In the wilderness He “set a table before them.” If you can truly understand that the Rock smitten in the wilderness (Ex. 17:1-6) is Christ in your spirit, you will soon receive the vision and strength that will deliver you out of your wilderness! If you can somehow see by revelation that the Branch cast into the bitter waters of Marah (Ex. 15:23-25) is a picture of the Christ within, then by forsaking all other means you will cast the spirit of Christ into your bitter experience and by the overflowing of His grace and love be enabled to get rid of the bitterness of your carnal thinking and fleshly emotions — then you will receive faith to arise and depart out of the wilderness! When you can catch the vision by the Spirit that the Manna (Ex.16;14-22) is not just “What is it?” but that Christ Himself within you is the true bread that has come down from heaven, then, dear one, you will be quickened to arise, hasten, and leave the wilderness behind! If you are in a wilderness, Christ as life is what you must feed upon in order to get out of your wilderness! Those who fail to feed upon Christ as life, the only food provided in the wilderness, can never get out of it; like Israel of old they continue to go around and around in the desolation of the same dry desert, making the same mistakes, struggling with the same old problems, weaknesses, and limitations again and again, dedicating and rededicating, getting revived from time to time, but never fully gaining the mastery, overcoming, maturing and being made perfect. And in the end they perish in their wilderness!

I have been encouraged and edified by the following words from the pen of Art Groesbeck. “There is a place in God that is to the exclusion of all else; a place where there is no struggle; a place of entering into rest. The Lord brings us to this place by way of the wilderness where He humbles us and tries us that we might see what’s in our hearts. ‘And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or not. And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live’ (Deut. 8:2-3).
“It was also said of Israel, ‘I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown’ (Jer. 2:2). God takes His called out ones first to a place of separation; a place of preparation, if you will; a place of processing where we forget everything the Egyptian, and the type it represents, has taught us; a place of temptation where we learn to depend totally upon the Lord our God. And we learn not to tempt Him by saying, ‘Is the Lord God among us, or not?’ (Ex. 17:7). It is a wilderness, a ‘no man’s land’ in that no man can survive there, only God can sustain life in this place! Man will have to die there, because no natural seed can grow in this environment. It is a place not sown. It is a place of the supernatural only, a place of no longer looking to the natural or carnal realm of reason. The temptation that must be overcome is to do so. It is a place where God’s higher thoughts and higher ways must prevail. It is the beginning of the laying aside of every sin that so easily besets us that we might run this race with patience. It is the place of growing in grace, and in the knowledge of HIM. It is the place of entering into His kingdom.

“This place is desolate, in that it must be a place not sown, a place where the seeds of man’s carnal reasoning and man’s ways which have gotten him much recognition in the flesh, will not prosper. It is a desolate wilderness, but through kingdom principles sown by God, it blossoms like the rose. The only thing that grows there is that which comes from heaven, even the Word of God. Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. This principle was seen in the manna rained from heaven. Notice — it did not come up from the earth, which was desolate, which even if it were able to produce bread, could only sustain temporarily. But the Word of God sustains life eternally! Bread speaks of the earth-realm, the realm of man — what we have so long preserved as life, but the ends thereof are death.

“God has to remove us from our familiar surroundings, all that we have come to know life to be, even as He did starting with Abraham. Abraham was removed from the land that he was familiar with, and from his kin from whom he had taken counsel all his life, to a place that God would show him — a place apart where God would become his counselor, his sustainer, and his reward, based upon God’s promise and not on Abraham’s merit. Moses experienced the same thing in that when he realized his calling to deliver his brothers from the hand of Pharaoh, his attempt at doing so ended in failure. He first had to be removed to the backside of the desert for a time of emptying out of all that he had become in Egypt. We, too, must experience a separation, a wilderness experience, an emptying out of all that we are, that we might be filled with all that He is. We must experience that time of testing even as our Lord was driven into the wilderness and tempted of the devil forty days. Remember His words to Peter, ‘…for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men’ (Mat. 16:23). So Satan tempts us to think even as we have learned as man to think, not in some way that is unfamiliar to us at all.

“God is taking us in a way we have never gone before! This why we must learn the way of life in the wilderness. Life in a place where life is not possible without God being the source. The way we have known, the way of man, was a way whereby we established ourselves; the effect being pride and self-exaltation, envy and strife, works of the flesh, all the result of not knowing God as our source through the subtle deception of the evil one. The key reason for our removal to the wilderness and its desolation is that we might see how we relate to it. This aspect of the wilderness and how it pertains to us individually, is that we and the wilderness must become one. We must become barren in order to become fruitful! I have heard it said, and know it to be true, that Abraham’s greatest asset was Sarah’s barren womb and their inability to bring forth life. So, any fruitfulness out of
their dry ground had to be the result of the promise of God and Abraham’s belief in the God who promised. You see, a woman being barren was considered to be a curse from God. Woman is a type of the earth, the place where the seed is sown. God cursed the earth in Adam, ‘thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee,’ and to the woman, ‘in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children,’ — more thorns and thistles! When the Spirit of the Father planted that heavenly seed in Mary, He brought forth life out of death. She saw the impossibility of it in that she said, ‘How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?’ (Lk. 1:34). This could have nothing to do with man; it must be a virgin birth! The best Mary could do is to say, ‘be it unto me according to thy word’ (Lk. 1:38). The best we can do is to say, ‘be it unto me according to Thy word,’ and know that the ability to bring forth life out of our barren wasteland is not of man, but of GOD. To God be the glory!

“When I was a boy growing up, I remember the phrase — God helps those who help themselves. It sounded reasonable to me in my unregenerate state, but I have found that scripture knows nothing of it. As a matter of fact, more rightly put, God helps those who can’t help themselves — but only when they have come to realize it and cry out to Him. Surely there is a no man’s land and it is a people established by God in God, to the praise of the glory of His grace. ‘The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose’ (Isa. 35:1)” — end quote.

I mentioned earlier the manna which was the Lord’s provision for the nourishment of His people in the wilderness. There is no doubt that the manna perfectly pre-figures the nourishment provided for the woman in the wilderness! When the people of Israel first saw the manna they asked what it was — that strange substance lying on the early morning ground. Moses told them, “It is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat…gather of it, every man of you, as much as he can eat; you shall take an Omer apiece, according to the number of persons whom each of you has in his tent.” It is described in the book of Exodus as “a fine, flake-like thing, fine as hoar-frost.” Significant is the fact that during the period the children of Israel subsisted on manna they were to eat their daily allotment the same day, and eat of it fully, for if anyone would not eat all of it, or if he attempted to hoard his surplus, it decomposed with supernatural rapidity. Only enough for the day, gathered morning by morning, was the divine order. It was natural for some of them to want to put away a little for the coming days, but God arranged it in such a way that it could not be done — the manna spoiled and bred worms within hours. The only exception was on the sixth day — on that day they could gather twice as much for both the sixth day and the Sabbath, tomorrow’s bread today, and it kept fresh through both days.

As in the natural, so in the spiritual! The supply of yesterday will not do for today, anymore than yesterday’s dinner will suffice us for today’s work. You cannot live on yesterday’s revelation, for it was strength only for that day. You cannot live on the memory of past spiritual experiences. You cannot live on the lingering aroma of blessed fellowship you had with the Lord in days gone by. You cannot live on the recollection of mercies and miracles received in previous moves of God. For every day you need fresh grace and a new dimension of glory! The manna of old only held good for one day. It had to be gathered fresh every morning. The manna of one day grew corrupt and worthless before the next. And we wonder why the glory of yesterday’s visitation has faded! We are disturbed because the move of God of yesterday has been polluted in the hands of men! Yesterday’s visitations of the Spirit are a stench in our nostrils today. Already (in such a short time!) they have become a weariness to our spirit. They have been taken over by the flesh and it pains me to say it, but one and all have settled into stagnation and death. None has pressed on to GO ALL THE WAY WITH GOD. Oh, they still go through the
motions of yesterday’s visitation, but the so-called gifts of the Spirit they tout are most often a pitiful sham. People are ‘slain in the Spirit’ through psychological inducement and mass hypnosis, and sometimes even pushed. Worship has become soulish and mechanical, people having “learned” to sing the song of the Lord after the song has ended. The prophesyings bear the distinctive sound of a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. Numerous groups have been brought under the domination of false apostles, while others have fallen victim to a sectarian spirit — “We, and we alone, are the body of Christ; we, our group, are the sons of God; we are the manchild company; we are the kings and priests after the Order of Melchizedek; our movement is the select of the elect that will bring in the kingdom and rule the nations with a rod of iron.” There was a great move of the Spirit beginning in 1948 called “Latter Rain”. Its days were like heaven on earth, its glory unspeakable, its power earth-shattering. Within a few years the rain ended, yet to this day there are people out there “dancing in the rain,” not having noticed that the clouds have dispersed, the sun is burning, and the rain is over. They go through the motions, but the glory has departed. The memory is sweet, but the body is dead, lifeless, empty. All the great moves of God of bygone generations are become the swaggering harlot, a cesspool of corruption. All the filthiness of the Babylonian church system is but the worm-ridden manna given by God for another time, preserved by man unto today. The worms are obvious to all who can see by the Spirit!

Well did brother Carl Schwing write: “Allow me to write freely and I would speak gently and lovingly…my brethren, if your soul still feeds upon the ‘left-over manna’…finding nourishment in the past message…you fall short of your calling and cannot see afar off. You are pressing backward rather than pressing on…and you are still following man rather than the Lamb. All that we hope for, hunger for, and moan for is found in sonship, and sonship comes forth from the Father…sonship is the very image of the Father…and who but He has the words of life? I do not write of tomorrow or someday…I write of today…for it is today that the Father walks among us…sonship is part of God’s Now…we are being born by Him, from Him and for Him…this miraculous delivery is in the process. He is offering us ‘eternal life’…alas, some shall be offended…others will turn and walk no more…but there are the ‘faithful few’ who will know that He alone speaks life-giving words.”

You see, my beloved, every day you need a new gift of grace, a deeper dealing of God, a fresh word from the throne, a further revelation of the Spirit, a greater dimension of life. The manna is only good for one day — for one step in your forward journey into God. You must get it fresh every day! This is the prayer for you and me, for all who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship — “Give us this day our daily bread.” GIVE! Yes, this is a gift. You cannot buy the bread of life. Its price has never been quoted in the markets. No money can purchase reality. God never sells. God is a King, He gives. Buy? No, you cannot buy. You may buy books and sermons and papers and tapes and CD’s from preachers who haven’t learned the ways of the kingdom. You may even buy a “prophecy” or a “blessing” from the false prophets who peddle them in return for your offering. But you cannot buy the Word of Life!

Can you buy pardon? Can you buy peace? Can you buy righteousness? Can you buy sonship? Can you buy the mind of Christ? Can you buy the image of God? Can you buy the kingdom? No, you cannot buy; but what you cannot buy God will give. Listen, “It is the Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” Listen again, “Everyone that thirsteth, let him come and take of the water of life freely.” Listen yet again, “The gift of God is eternal life.” Giving! This is royal giving. And so it is said of this woman in the wilderness, “she
hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her...her place, where she is
nourished...” The expressions “that they should feed her” and “she is nourished” denote
her passiveness. No amount of self-activity would supply her with food in the desert. She
“is fed” as food is procured for a child, not by it. A number of actions on her behalf cluster
around this woman. “Her child was caught up.” “Two wings of a great eagle were given
her.” “That they should feed her.” “Where she is fed.” Oh, yes, this is God’s provision in
the wilderness! What assurance and expectation this inspires within our hearts!

Someone may ask, “Why dwell on the woman being nourished in the wilderness — we are
not the woman, we are the manchild, and the manchild has already been birthed and
captured unto God and to His throne at the time when the woman is fed in the
wilderness!” True, but never forget, dear one, that the woman is simply coming by the
same route that the manchild has already come. The one hundred and forty-four
thousand, who are also the manchild, are the “firstfruits” unto God and the Lamb! We
have already traced the revelation of God’s dealings with His firstfruit company all the way
from chapter one through chapter twelve of the Revelation. Those who follow are required
to walk the same route as those who go ahead! And just as the woman has her
wilderness experience and is fed, nourished in the wilderness, so the firstborn Son of God
had His wilderness experience and was fed, nourished in His wilderness! As soon as
Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness was accomplished we read, “Then the devil leaveth
Him, and, behold, messengers came and ministered unto Him” (Mat. 4:11). Jesus had
just said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that is proceeding out of
the mouth of God.” And now, the messengers of God — the living word of His Father —
came unto Him and nourished Him in His wilderness experience! Therefore, the
experience of the woman in the wilderness is instructive for everyone who has received
the call to sonship, for we all must tread the same pathway, every man in his own rank!

THREE AND A HALF YEARS

“And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that
they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days...and to the
woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into
her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of
the serpent” (Rev. 12:6,14).

The measure of time here indicated requires no lengthy explanation. We meet it again and
again, expressed in different terms, throughout the book of Revelation. It is clear from the
context that the twelve hundred and sixty days mentioned in verse six is the same time
period as a time, times, and half a time in verse fourteen. It should not be difficult to
understand, then, that both terms indicate three and one half symbolic years. One
symbolic year, plus two symbolic years, plus half a symbolic year. One symbolic year is
calculated to be three hundred and sixty days according to the Hebrew calendar, thus
three and a half symbolic years equal twelve hundred and sixty days. This is obviously the
same period as the forty-two months of the testimony of the two witnesses in chapter
eleven. For, taking a symbolic month to contain thirty days, as in the Hebrew calendar,
fourty-two months would again give us twelve hundred and sixty days, a time, times, and
half a time, or three and a half symbolic years. It is always the same length of time stated
in different terms and figures. The thing to keep in mind is that the Revelation is a spiritual
book, therefore all these indications of time signify, not a literal time-period, but a spiritual
reality! That is the mystery
The significance lies in it always being three and a half, that is, **half of seven**. Seven is the complete, perfect number denoting fullness! Three and a half, then, shows a broken, limited period or work, that which can never endure forever, but must be cut off and come to an end. All the numbers in the Revelation are symbolic. They cannot be fitted into the framework of world history or outward world events, past or future. The spiritual interpretation of this great book must be maintained at all costs, for the writings of those who apply its prophecies to outward world events either past, present, or future, are strewn with the carcasses of confident predictions which now are fit for only the ash-heap of history.

If not a measurable period of chronological time, then what does the figure of three and a half years signify? We have already mentioned that in actual time it is **one-half of seven years**. Thus we are dealing with an indefinite period of time, in each case known only to God and not intended to be measured by man. It is my deep conviction that these strange time figures in the Revelation in each case indicate **THE BROKEN SEVEN**. That which is a **positive seven** denotes divine completeness, fullness, and perfection. Included in these are the seven golden candlesticks, seven angels, seven spirits of God, seven lamps of fire before the throne, seven seals, seven eyes and seven horns of the Lamb, seven trumpets, and the seven thunders. But that which is a **positive seven** also denotes that which is **eternal** — that which **has no end** and will **never pass away**! It is significant to note that all of the "halves" of seven are associated either with dark and sinister works and operations, or with that which is **limited**, **failing**, **partial**, and destined to **come to an end** and **pass away**! The message is just this — anything in the book of Revelation that lasts for forty-two months, twelve hundred and sixty days, a time, times, and half a time, or three and a half years is not God’s perfect order, nor God’s eternal order...it will not endure, will not last forever, is not a permanent state, but, when God is through with that stage or that state it will come to an end and pass away! Thank God, the **wilderness** is **not a permanent condition**, **not a unending experience**, nor the ultimate consummation of God’s purpose in His woman! Wonderful that the Lord prepares this place for the woman in her hour of need, protects her there, and nourishes her, bringing her into a new and higher place in Him. But that is merely preparation for her next step forward into God! He will take her, as He is now taking His sons, step by step and stage by stage, from glory to glory, from realm to realm, until she is seen coming down out of a heavenly realm adorned as a bride prepared for her husband, having the glory of God, and the life of God, and the word of God, and the dominion of God — enlightening the whole earth, bringing salvation to all nations, quickening and transforming all things. That order, precious friend of mine, **WILL LAST FOREVER**! It is indeed wonderful!

How we rejoice and sing hallelujahs that the wilderness is ordained of God for the woman-church, but it is not his ultimate order for her and it has its end. The time of her confinement and secret dealing of God will end after three and a half symbolic years, when the wilderness experience has accomplished it full work in her. The day will surely come when she will "come up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved" (S. of S. 8:5).

Her beloved, upon whom she leans, is described by the Shulamite in these words, "**I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, until he please. Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?**" (S. of S. 3:5-6). Ray Prinzing has commented upon this verse: "TILL HE PLEASE — and what is His pleasure now? To bring forth a company out of the wilderness! Ah, how well we know about the wilderness, with its dry, barren areas; or with
its tangled underbrush which hems us in from all sides; or with its wild and unknown expanses filled with wild beasts and terrifying noises. The purpose for this is found in Deuteronomy 8:2,5-6. ‘And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee...in the wilderness, to humble thee, to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no. Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee. Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways, and to fear Him.’

“‘And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face...and I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: and I will purge out from among you the rebels (or, the rebellious)…’ (Eze. 20:35,37-38). There is so much in the heart of God’s children that was rebellious, though we were not always aware of it. We have rebelled against the circumstances which He ordered for our path, and we rebelled against His will which crossed our will — until He led us through the wilderness, and there we were taught to yield all to Him, and find in Him our hope, our rest, our glorious peace. We even read that Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, and dwelt there for forty days and nights, tested and tried; but we also read that ‘Jesus returned IN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT...’ (Lk. 4:14). Truly He came up out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchants!

“And now we read of a company that comes up out of the wilderness leaning upon their beloved. These are one in Him, share His nature, and come forth in HIS FULLNESS. This company, too, comes up out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed...a sweet smelling savor...a life that has been touched with the bitter experiences, the crushings, and now HIS DIVINE FRAGRANCE shall permeate the whole. With myrrh, a very bitter gum resin used for perfume, and also for part of the ‘anointing oil,’ and in the embalming process. Our bitter experiences in the wilderness will bring out the sweet fragrance of His nature, and remove the stench of our own self-righteousness. And they also become a part of the rich anointing upon us. And not only is the flesh, with its self-life put to death, it is also embalmed with the fragrance of myrrh and no one has to endure the offence. And frankincense — which, among its other uses, was also for sacrificial fumigation. Placed on every sacrifice it counteracted the smell of burning flesh. Though it has been painful, and we weren’t always easy to live with, nor at the moment a sweet smelling savor in our processing, when the work is finished, there will be no lingering odors of the flesh, it will be the sweetness of His life alone that pervades the atmosphere, praise God. THIS IS THE COMPANY WHICH HE IS PLEASED TO BRING UP OUT OF THE WILDERNESS.

“In His pleasure He came to us leaping upon the mountains, judgment was there, correction unto righteousness. And in His pleasure He will lead His many-membered-son-company up out of the wilderness to radiate His life. Then in His pleasure the sons return to the wilderness to bring out the woman — the bride, leaning on her beloved. This is all beautifully borne out also in Revelation 12, where the woman, after giving birth to the manchild, flees into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared of God. There the manchild company feeds her, and when the days of her purification are ended, she also comes forth leaning upon her beloved. How marvelous are His ways, and the purpose in which He delights, as He pleases!” — end quote.
“And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood” (Rev. 12:15).

In this scene of John’s vision the woman fled into the wilderness. At least she began to flee from the serpent who was pursuing her, but soon realized that there was no way that she could outrun the serpent. As she cried out to the Lord, two wings of a great eagle were given her and she flew away to the place in the wilderness prepared for her by God. When the serpent saw that he could not pursue the woman into the wilderness, he stood at the border of the desert and cast out of his mouth a stream of water after the woman, that she might be carried away with the flood. His attempt was not to destroy the woman while she was in the wilderness. He was not trying to drown her with the flood. Our text reveals that his purpose was in reality very different. He knew that he could not approach the woman in the security of her isolation in the desert. He could not touch her! She was “hidden” from the face of the serpent. She must remain there. He must leave her alone. Hence, his only option at getting to her was to cast a stream of water after her, that she might be borne up by that flood and carried out of the wilderness. “And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.” That is his purpose! He does not mean to drown her, but he means to lift her up from her isolation, carry her away to a different place, not the place where the Spirit has placed her and the sons of God are nourishing her, but to remove her from God’s dealing with her in her wilderness experience, and thus carry her back into the world from which she fled.

Understood in that sense, the message of the vision becomes crystal clear. The serpent realizes that under the sovereign hand of God’s dealings, in the isolation of her separation unto Him, he cannot do anything against her. And therefore he makes the attempt to get the woman out of her unique union with God in the spirit, and draw her back under the influence of the world and the flesh. He tries to sweep the woman-church into the spirit of the world, back under the powers of the carnal mind, human reasoning, natural understanding, and the ways, means, and methods of the flesh. As with Job of old, he seeks to remove God’s hedge from around her, attack her life, deplete her strength, and bring her under the dominion of the religious spirit of the world. Then he is certain that no more “sons” will be born of her, and that she will not be able to go on to fulfill her destiny as the glorious city of God. Clearly you may see this attempt!

There is startling drama in the figure which represents the dragon casting out of his mouth a river of water which becomes a flood. To paint a natural picture of this would be meaningless. The “flood” is a symbol, just as the woman and the wilderness are symbols. The flood comes out of the serpents “mouth,” signifying that it is not at all a flood of literal water, but rather a flood of words! The nature of the serpent reveals the character of the
words that stream from his mouth, for he is a liar and the father of lies. The flood that the serpent cast out is, among other things, deceit, accusation, and carnal reasoning. He wants to swallow up the spiritual life and reality within the woman by this horrible flood; he believes the truth will not be able to withstand the flood of lies!

All of us who lived through World War II know something of enemy propaganda. Enemy agents deliberately circulate lies in time of war to destroy the morale of the troops and discourage the people at home. These lies are plausible and clever, and deceive many. But good intelligence is often able to trace these deceptions to their source and reveal them for what they are. Following World War II we passed through the long era of the Cold War. Cold War techniques on the part of both East and West, of secrecy, snooping, and misinformation, used against foreign governments and foreign populations, became tools even of domestic politics, a means to harass critics, build support for questionable policies, or cover up weaknesses and blunders. But the cleverest and most plausible propaganda the world has ever known emanates not from Berlin, or Moscow, or Al Queda, or any other political entity, but from the seat of the father of lies, the carnal mind of man! There has never been a time when so many “words” are available through the many channels as today. The world is flooded with a deluge of words which express the thoughts of man’s mind, each carrying a definite “spirit.” And one particular “river of lies” which sweeps multitudes up and carries them away is the flood of religious propaganda— the many “winds of doctrine,” a flood tide of false doctrine, traditions, commandments of men, carnal-minded interpretations, lying prophets, lying signs and wonders, false apostles, religious hucksters and racketeering televangelists, that would so engulf the woman it would carry her away from her pure walk in the spirit and in the truth.

The flood not only flows from the pulpit, from books, tapes, and television screens, but the source of the flood is the carnal mind within each of us! Words originate in thoughts. A stream of thoughts, a stream of words, worldly words, words of carnal wisdom, words of human ignorance, words of deceiving spirits, words of condemnation and accusation. “Who do you think you are? Look at you! Out here in the wilderness, isolated, encased in silence, waiting on the Lord. You’re not going anywhere! You’re not accomplishing anything! You don’t really amount to anything! You thought you were so high and mighty there, clothed with the sun and a crown of twelve stars upon your head. Ah-ha! And now you are trapped in this desolation, separated from everybody and everything, while creation goes to hell. Just who do you think you are, anyway!” Oh, yes! Can we not see that the “flood” is the same river of accusation that the dragon made against “the brethren” who have now overcome it all by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony! It should be clear to every prayerful heart that this flood from the serpent’s mouth is indeed a flood of the very same accusations the dragon brought against the manchild in the very highest realm of the spirit! Now cast into the earth he continues his work of “accusing the brethren” as he spouts forth his flood of lies, deceits, and accusations against the woman who brought forth the manchild!

THE EARTH HELPS THE WOMAN

“And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth” (Rev. 12:16).

The imagery here is quite a common sight in the deserts of the Middle East, in the rainy seasons. The rolling waters of a flash flood rush on in their open channels and then suddenly disappear into subterranean passages, through which they often gush into the
open again somewhere beyond. To the observer, the earth appears as though she had opened her mouth and swallowed up the floods.

As Israel fled from Egypt, Pharaoh sent his army after them but they were drowned in the Red Sea. As they stood on the banks of the sea, Israel looked back and saw their old masters dead, their bodies floating up upon the shore. With what joy did they sing the song of the Lord with Moses, “The horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea...Thou stretchedst out Thy right hand, the earth swallowed them.” Here is the first example in scripture of the earth helping God’s called and chosen people by “swallowing up” the flood that was threatening them!

Later, in their wilderness journey, Korah and his company rebelled before the Lord. This was not an armed rebellion, there were no swords or spears raised. It was rather a rebellion of debate and argument — a rebellion of words! Their stout words were raised against Moses, God’s chosen leader raised up for Israel’s deliverance and direction. Korah caused an uproar in the camp when he reasoned in his mind that all the Lord’s people were equal before God and therefore he was just as holy as Moses and Aaron, and just as capable to speak the word of God and know the mind of the Lord. He accused Moses and Aaron of exalting themselves above the congregation of Israel, all of whom were holy, separated unto God, and should share in the decision making. Korah was, it seems, the first Congregationalist! But the Lord was not pleased with this uprising against the authority of His chosen leaders. Moses spoke unto the congregation of Israel, saying, “Hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of my own mind. If these men die the common death of all men...then the Lord hath not sent me. But if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord. And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up” (Num. 16:28-32). The earth not only swallowed the men, but their words, and those whose hearts were thinking such words!

But what does it mean that the “earth” helped the woman by swallowing up the flood of words? This is certainly a truth having different levels of application. Individually, the earth signifies the soul, the primary faculty of which is the mind. Is not the greatest battle right within our minds? The serpent sends forth his falsities, his lies, his distortions, his perversions of truth, his arguments, and his accusations and these speak to us in our mind. And it is also within our mind that we are enlightened and taught by the spirit of truth! As we put on the mind of Christ we are given the understanding of the truth as it is in Jesus. Paul refers to this as the “renewing of our mind.” The “earth” is still the soul, but now at last something happens in the soul that is able to save the woman. The quickened soul is raised up into union with the spirit as a mighty defense, so that the mind of the spirit becomes the understanding of the soul. Someone says, “But truth is not understood with the mind, it is understood only by the spirit.” No, it is understood first by the spirit. Then, just as a husband may explain something to his wife until she comprehends it, so does the spirit impart to the soul the understanding of the Lord, until that which is truth in the spirit becomes rationally understood in the mind.

You see, my beloved, when the Lord shined forth into my life the revelation of reconciliation, sonship, and the kingdom of God, it was revealed in my spirit — by the Spirit of the Lord! I first saw the truth by the sovereign, quickening revelation of the Spirit. I did
not understand these things theologically or scripturally. I could not have exegeted them or proved them out of the scriptures. And a thousand objections flooded in, clamoring in opposition. And brethren used all their proof-texts to convince me of my error. Ah, the serpent’s flood! Yet I knew it to be truth within myself, whether I could explain it or not. But as I searched the scriptures to see “whether these things be so” the Lord began to quicken and teach my understanding out of the scriptures until eventually I could see that these were in all reality the cardinal truths which threaded their way all through the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. The truth became so real, so substantial, so established in mind and heart from the word of God, until the un-truths I had been taught all my life in the religious systems of man were seen clearly for the fallacies, myths, superstitions, folklore and fairy tales they truly were! The lies of religion fall to nothing before the understanding of the spirit-enlightened mind. Thus, the “earth,” the “mind” or the “soul,” helps the woman by swallowing up the serpent’s flood! Yea, the spiritual mind casts out of its memory the empty words which stream so convincingly and so violently out of the serpent’s mouth!

It is this union of the soul with the spirit that is presented to us in our text. The soul has become so enlightened by, and one with, the spirit that none of the rush of “waters” out of the deceiver’s “mouth” are able to contaminate, harm, move, or carry away the woman from “her place.” They enter, but cannot wash her away! They simply disappear, swallowed up by the understanding of the spiritual mind, never to be seen — embraced or manifested — again! This is one aspect of that “salvation of the soul” of which the writer to the Hebrews referred when he wrote, “But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe unto the saving of the soul” (Heb. 10:39). To which the apostle James adds this testimony, “…receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls” (James 1:21). Then Peter says, “…yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls” (I Pet. 1:9).

THE REMNANT OF HER SEED

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 12:17).

Armed with the understanding of the beautiful truths clustering around John’s vision of the woman in the wilderness, it is not difficult to understand the last verse of this chapter, where we read that the dragon, being enraged with the woman and yet realizing his impotency to destroy her, goes to make war with the rest of her seed, who keep the commandments of God and bear the testimony of the Lord Jesus. We would expect him to be angry with the earth, which had helped the woman. And since he was, indeed, angry at the woman, we would accordingly expect to hear of other plots and plans against her. Instead, because he saw that the woman was obviously safe, by a transfer of emotions, he “went to make war with the remnant of her seed.” He is out to overcome anything he can, even those who are the least threat to him! At first sight we may think that this is a somewhat strange expression. Is the manchild who was born of her not the sum total of her seed, or offspring? And how, then, must we conceive of this idea that the devil, after he has been cast out of heaven by the overcoming sons of God, then turns on the mother that bare them; and after being soundly defeated in all his efforts to destroy the woman, can still turn to other children she has borne — the rest of her seed? Who are these “other children”? 
This is not difficult to understand, however. During our journey into God there are varying degrees of growth, experience, fellowship, and relationship with the Lord. “In a great house,” like the kingdom of God, “there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and earth” (II Tim. 2:20). The kingdom is indeed a great house, in which are many vessels, varying in quality, capacity, purpose, rank, and order. Jesus said it this way, “Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven” (Mat. 8:11). Paul stated this truth yet another way. “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are but one body: so also is Christ. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole body were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members everyone of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him” (I Cor. 12:12,14-18).

The scriptures and our own experience both give ample evidence that there are degrees in the spiritual walk. The fruit of God that men bear in their lives are, Jesus taught us, some thirty fold, some sixty fold, and some a hundred fold. Paul spoke of those he had fed with milk because they were babes. John wrote his epistle to three classes of believers: little children, who are the new born in Christ, and all who fail to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord; young men, who are those who have grown up and become strong in many ways, yet lack experience; and old men, who are the fully matured sons of God. These are not permanent states, but merely stages of growth and development. “Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing” (James 1:4). “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14). We see the same variety of levels of attainment in the Old Testament economy. Moses was above the other prophets (Num. 12:5,8). Only the tribe of Levi were priests. The birthright was given to Ephraim and Manasseh. The scepter was given to the tribe of Judah. David classified his mighty men according to their attainment (II Sam. 23). All men shall be made alive in Christ, writes Paul, yet not all at the same time nor raised into the same degree of glory, but “each in his own order or rank” (I Cor. 15:23).

Nearly three-quarters of a century ago Seeley Kinne shared the vision given to a brother David Lee Floyd who wrote: “I stood upon a large stadium, that had been erected to face a large gradual sloping hill. The hill sloped downward toward the stadium. Thousands of Spirit-filled Christians were seated upon the hillside, and they faced the stadium. They were grouped in many orders. They were also in many shades of color. I do not mean races or nationalities. Some were very white, some very dark. There were many varieties of shades between black and white. These thousands of Spirit-filled believers were gathered and seated in their various ranks. They were waiting for the Lord to give them the Last Great Message, for the preparation to set up the kingdom of God among men. I was seated in the stadium not knowing what I was going to do more than to just view the thousands of God’s people, seated in their various ranks upon the hillside. I studied their faces. I was fully aware that the Holy Spirit was opening my eyes and my understanding to discern the many ranks of His people. As I have stated above, every group or rank was of a different shade or color. The highest order was the whitest; and the lowest the darkest. Everyone was in rank according to the light of God abiding within them. This had nothing at all to do with their race or nationality. Everyone was located according to their individual rank in the Spirit. I was in deep meditation concerning their various degrees of experience” — end quote. There is a little more to brother Floyd’s experience concerning the judgment of God among his people, but the point of the vision is that there are many
different spiritual levels and companies of the Lord’s people, even among those who are pressing forward into God!

In the great house of our Father’s kingdom there are different degrees of experience and various heights of attainment. In the book of Revelation we see in the progressive unveiling of Jesus Christ within His people a number of different companies or spiritual planes to which men attain in Christ — there is one outstanding company called overcomers, or kings and priests, or the manchild, or the 144,000, or the sons of God; another called the woman, or the bride, or the New Jerusalem; another called the church, or the candlesticks; and then there are the remnant: witnesses, martyrs, messengers, harpers, the great multitude, etc. These companies all correspond to the ranks of believers as set forth in the vision quoted above. These are all a variety of redeemed people who walk with God in varying degrees of light and glory, different depths of intimacy, and diverse orders of calling and experience. Some are very near to the heart of God, while others dwell and serve in the outer courts of His presence. Some are queens, virgins, and concubines; others are counselors, judges, priests and kings; some are soldiers and warriors of varied ranks; still others are servants, guests, and couriers.

I pray that the Holy Spirit will impress upon all who read these lines the great truth that the end of the matter is not any or all of these various companies and ranks. These are merely the blueprint of our progression into God! In that glorious end where God is All-in-all there are no companies or ranks. In the end there is no Outer Court. In the end there is no Holy Place. In the end there is no Holiest of all. At the conclusion of God’s great plan of the ages there is no Passover, Pentecost, or Tabernacles; no First Day, Second Day, or Third Day. In the great consummation of all things there are no servants, no bride, and there are no sons as separate from other orders. In the end there is only GOD ALL IN ALL! It means that God is all, and furthermore He is All, that is in His Fullness, within everyone everywhere! God all in all reveals the blessed fact that every creature will move through the progression from realm to realm, until each is filled with all the fullness of God. Anything short of that is not God as ALL — IN ALL! All may not move in this Day, just as all have not moved in other Days, but God has a great, tremendous, glorious plan of the ages, and all creation will move forward! Isn’t it wonderful!

You see, my beloved, it’s just like a school — it is the great school of God! The purpose of a school is not the school itself. The purpose of a school is the progression through the grades so that you finally graduate. Everybody who enters the school is supposed to graduate! So we are not to glory that we are in the first grade, the seventh grade, or the twelfth grade. We are not to cling to our status as a junior, sophomore, or senior. It is wonderful to be a senior, but if you remain a senior you will never graduate! To be senior is not the goal. The beauty of all the grades is that each in turn accomplishes its purpose, bringing everyone to the same, final state of accomplishment and attainment. Everyone walks across the stage and receives his or her diploma and goes out into the world a finished product in the fullness of God. Hallelujah!

That’s how it is in the kingdom of God! Today we view believers as being nominal Christians, born again Christians, Spirit-filled Christians, deeper life Christians, brideship Christians, sons of God, or some other classification. We equate their standing in God with whether they are in the Outer Court, the Holy Place, or the Most Holy Place. But those are merely broad-swept pictures of their spiritual state of growth and development, their progression into God. Each is just a temporary arrangement, a grade to pass through, and all creation will pass through the grades either now or in the age and the
ages to come! When every man who has ever lived, or ever shall live, has received his
diploma and walks off the cosmic stage of *spiritual graduation* — God will be ALL IN ALL! There will be a sign posted on the door of the school of God’s great redemptive and restorative purposes — “Closed.” When everybody graduates, you don’t need the school anymore!

Some of us have been in school for a long, long time and have moved through many levels of God’s teaching. We have been passing from grade to grade, from experience to experience, from discipline to discipline, from realm to realm, from dimension to dimension in God. We have passed through the Tabernacle with all its furnishings and compartments. We have partaken of the Lord’s Feasts one after another and He has now brought us to the Feast of Tabernacles. We have arrived at the threshold of the Third Day. We have stepped into the Most Holy Place. He has ushered us into the throne room within the City which has the glory of God. We have been passing through the grades, and all creation will pass through the same grades. God has plenty of time. His plan is the *plan of the ages*. Consider how many ages the Lord’s people have passed through since the day Adam and Eve were driven from Eden! God’s progressive purpose began ages ago, and will extend into vast ages yet unborn. In one sense each of us is a microcosm within the macrocosm. There are *ages within us*. I lived a Pentecostal age, and it ended. I lived out a Latter Rain age, and it ended. I lived out an Anglo-Israel age, and that ended too. I lived out an Apocalyptic age, and God took that heaven and rolled it up within myself. Everyone of us has lived ages within ourselves, according to God’s plan of the ages. All creation will come the same way, not necessarily with identical ages, but they will grow experientially into God from glory to glory, and God has plenty of time! God has brought us from Abraham to the Manchild in our brief lifetime, for the ages are within us.

Now in our text we come to a company of God’s people identified as “the remnant of her seed.” Who is “the remnant of her seed”? The word “remnant” literally means *remaining ones* — other, which remain, residue, the rest. The term is employed six times in the Revelation. In every place where this word is used in the Revelation, it refers to the *remaining number* of a class previously mentioned, *but not exhausted*; and according to Greek scholars it can be extended to *any class beyond them*. The simplest understanding is that “the remnant of her seed” refers to all true people of God who are not either seated with the manchild upon the throne or with the woman in the wilderness. The espoused bride of Christ is not all of God’s true people; the manifest sons of God are not all of God’s true people. There are many who know the Lord, love the Lord, worship the Lord, and seek to please and walk with Him in the Spirit. Yet they have not been drawn into that deep, close, personal intimacy with Christ that characterizes *brideship*, nor are they actively *being sons* unto the Father.

This is plainly borne out by the two explanatory phrases that follow. Who are the remnant of her seed? They are those who “keep the commandments of God.” The commandments of God are not the *ten commandments* given through Moses! That is what many people think. Nor are they the other laws, statutes, and judgments set forth under the Old Covenant. Those only had respect to the *externals* of human life, and even then no human could “keep” them. In fifteen hundred years of Israel’s history not one single person ever fully and perfectly obeyed and fulfilled all the law! And Paul said that any man of the New Covenant who lives “under the law” is *fallen from grace*! Ah, “the law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ!” Can we not see by this the law is not the *truth*? It is a natural figure of the truth, but it is not the *reality*! The reality comes not from Moses, but by God’s Christ! Jesus said, “The words that I speak unto
you, they are spirit and they are life." The living words of Jesus Christ, who is Himself The Word of God — there you will find the "commandments of God!"

How can we be certain that the "commandments of God" are not the Old Testament laws, including the ten commandments? Let us see what the New Testament has to say about the commandments of God! John, the writer of the Revelation, also says in his third epistle, "And this is His commandment, That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment, and he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him" (I Jn. 3:23-24). No man can ever dwell in God and God in him by keeping the ten commandments! Now let us notice further what the scriptures have to say about God's commandments.

"For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say...and I know that His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak" (Jn. 12:49-50).

"A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (Jn. 13:34). Under Moses, the command was to love God with all the heart, with all the soul, with all the mind, and with all the strength. But man was impotent to fulfill this order because of his sin, weakness, and limitation. What man could not do, Jesus Christ came and did completely; and now, instead of man being invited to love God, as the law of Moses demanded, man is asked to believe on His Son, the one who did love God as the law demanded. Instead of man being asked to love God now, he is invited to behold how much God loves him through Christ! "We love Him, because He first loved us." God does not ask man now to give Him his heart. But He does ask him to believe on Christ who is the revelation of the heart of God toward man, and when this is done man receives a new heart and love will flow out through the heart and life of man, not so much toward the "neighbor," but toward the "brethren." The commandments of God under the New Covenant are believe, and then love! That's it!

"This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you" (Jn. 15:12).

"Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in Him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth" (I Jn. 2:7-8).

"And this commandment we have from Him, That he who loveth God love his brother also" (I Jn. 4:21).

"I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth (Christ), as we have received a commandment from the Father. And this is love, that we walk after His commandments. This is the commandment. That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, He hath both the Father and the Son" (II Jn. 4,6,9).

"If ye love me, keep my commandments. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him" (Jn. 14:15,21).
“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my
Father’s commandments, and abide in His love” (Jn. 15:10).

“If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things
that I write unto you are THE COMMANDMENTS of the Lord” (I Cor. 14:37).

Again, we ask who are the rest of her seed? First they are true people of God for they
“keep the commandments of God,” which commandments we can see are, under the New
Covenant, the living words of God’s Christ! Second, they are those who “have the
testimony of Jesus Christ.” The word for “testimony” is maturia, and has the significance of
record, report, witness, and evidence. What is this evidence of Jesus? There are two
verses which make the answer to this question plain, and though the word “witness” is
used in one verse, and the word “record” is used in the other, in both cases we have our
word “testimony,” maturia, or evidence. Let us read these verses. “He that believeth on
(Greek: into) the Son of God, hath the witness (evidence) in himself” ((I Jn. 5:10). “And
this is the record (maturia — witness, evidence), that God hath given unto us eternal life,
and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son, hath life” (I Jn. 5:11-12). Ah, the
testimony, witness, and evidence of Jesus Christ is THE LIVING REALITY OF THE
CHRIST WITHIN! We have this testimony, this witness, this evidence within ourselves,
John says, and the evidence is the indwelling life of the Son!

The “rest of her seed” are then the spiritual people of God, made up of all who believe on
Christ, and love the brethren! God has many dear children who are not part of the sonship
company, the manchild, nor part of the brideship company, the woman in the wilderness.
These are a company living on a lower plane than the woman herself, just as the woman in
the wilderness is living on a lower plane than the manchild in the throne. They are the
ones with whom the dragon now is exceeding wrath, and against whom he is carrying out
great war! Can you not see the mystery? Who today upon earth is in a constant battle
with the devil? Who is it that testifies, “The old devil has been after me all week!” Who is it
that says, “The devil made me do it!” I heard of a little girl who was told that the devil
caused her to bite her little brother. She said, “Maybe so, but it was my own idea about
hitting him in the head!” At least she was honest. Who is it that believes the devil is “on
their case” and “out to get them”? Who is it that finds their greatest struggle day by day to
be with the temptations and onslaughts of the devil? Who is it that believes that God is
trying to do this and that, but the old devil is always hindering and somehow getting the
upper hand? Who are those that are, if we judge by their words, more devil conscious
than they are God conscious! Who are they? Not the woman in the wilderness, for she is
“hid from the face of the serpent.” Not the manchild upon the throne, for he sits in the
highest heaven in a realm from which the great dragon has been thrown down!

Gary Sigler once put it so succinctly when he wrote, “Do you know that the devil is a
Pentecostal? You tell me what other realm you can get into today and hear so much about
the devil! I have been in more Pentecostal meetings and heard more about the devil than I
ever heard about God. For a long time I managed the Tree of Life Christian Bookstore in
Eugene, Oregon, and the largest selling category of books that we had were books on
demons and witchcraft and devils. What it was, was books trying to teach you how to deal
with the devil. I’d be a fool to tell you the devil isn’t real, because he’s running rampant in
Pentecost! But I’m telling you there is a higher realm, and in that realm there is no devil.
Remember the words of Jesus, ‘The evil one comes, but he has nothing in me.’ The
only place the devil can be real to you is that place he has in you. If he has no place in
you, then the devil doesn’t bother you anymore.”
Yet, it is not only the Pentecostals, but nearly all evangelical Christians with one accord attribute to the devil almost omnipotent powers. The common perception would be that Satan is like God — omnipresent, everywhere in the world. They see the devil or demons behind every bush, around every bend, lurking, waiting for the slightest opportunity to pounce on them and cause them to sin, to miss God, to rob them of their victory, deceive them, or otherwise derail their walk in God. But it is true that the Pentecostals and Charismatics are more obsessed with the devil and demons than most, for they are the ones who believe they have power to cast out demons. There is indeed such a thing as demon possession. To deny this would be to wickedly repudiate the ministry of the Lord Jesus and His apostles. I do not believe, however, that most of what is called demon possession today is really demon possession at all. For the most part it is merely the works of the flesh. If you have ever seen real demon possession you know that it is far different than what the so-called “deliverance ministry” is calling possession today. They call such fleshly activities as fear, lust, rejection, anger, cursing, lying, criticism, gossip, sexual fantasies, masturbation, adultery, incest, harlotry, nicotine, alcohol, caffeine, gluttony, hatred, envy, and a hundred more — demons! There is no place in the New Testament where the saints of God are exhorted to get “deliverance” from such demons! I tell you, my beloved, it’s not in the Book! Rather we are exhorted to “Put off the old man with his deeds” (Col. 3:9), to “Mortify the deeds of the body” (Rom. 8:13), and to “Mortify your members which are upon the earth (of the earth realm)” (Col. 3:5), and “Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh” (Gal. 5:16). Read all these passages, and many more, and it is plain to see that the works of the flesh are exactly and precisely the very things the deliverance preachers are calling — DEVILS! And the solution the Holy Ghost gives is not in “casting them out” but in mortifying them, or putting them to death by walking in the Spirit!

All kinds of unscriptural methods and techniques are used by the deliverance preachers in their casting out of devils. Often the “possessed” are exhorted to “cooperate” for their deliverance. They are told to breathe a certain way, or not to breathe. They are instructed to cough or yawn to aid the demons in leaving. Some claim that the most common manifestation of a demon’s departure is coughing — the very one manifestation that is never mentioned in scripture! The exorcists generally use great physical exertion, raising the voice, shouting and screaming at the devils, repeating the name of Jesus again and again, as if such physical demonstrativeness and the very volume of the verbal command could add something to its authority! Let me tell you something, my beloved. The Spirit of God needs not to lift up its voice — the authority of the kingdom of God is legal, judicial, and governmental authority. A judge does not shout his sentence at a criminal, the tone of his voice could add nothing whatever to the authority by which he speaks. The authority is vested in his office — not in his physical demonstrativeness. With a simple phone call and a bare whisper the President of the United States can send all the might of our military into action against an enemy. He has the authority, therefore it works. Hours of shouting, sweating, pleading, rebuking, barking the same command again and again would only call into question his sanity!

That is definitely NOT how the firstborn Son of God cast out devils! When Jesus demonstrated the power of the kingdom He spoke with absolute authority. While following the Master through the Gospels a marvelous revelation is unveiled. Not once did Satan or evil spirits persistently resist Him. They challenged and questioned Him, but they did not carry on a prolonged battle. Not one of His deliverances was progressive with some deliverance this session and a little more the next time. Not once did He scream at devils; not once did He groan over them; not once did He use tongues or any other spiritual gift to
overcome them; with a word He commanded, and at once they obeyed! They recognized His ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY! When Jesus spoke a word to the devils He had no need to “create an atmosphere” with prayers, singing, praise, scripture reading, or sentimental background music — HE HIMSELF WAS THE ATMOSPHERE! THIS IS MANIFEST SONSHIP!

Now what is the difference between sonship ministry and the way the church world today deals with the devil and demons? Just this. The sons of God have cast the dragon out of the heavens where they dwell! He has no more place in them. They are not personally concerned with him. And the woman who brings forth the manchild is free from his molestations, for she is safe in her wilderness, “hid from the face of the serpent.” Yet the devil is in a great battle today! And that battle rages in the church realm! It should not be difficult to ascertain just who the people of God are today who constitute “the remnant of her seed,” for are they not the ones who are engaged in conflict with the dragon? They are the ones with whom the devil is now exceedingly wroth, and against whom he is carrying out his great war. He has turned his efforts against the remaining ones of her seed, those who are truly born from above, but who are not yet overcomers, they are yet in the “earth-realm,” and are subject to the enemy’s attacks. The warfare is not in the heavenlies, but in the earth. And this remnant of her seed is fervently fighting the battle, though they are ill prepared for it. They are indeed a rag-tag army and not very professional. Their weapons are wrong, obsolete, and inadequate. Their methods of warfare are defective, incorrect, and misguided. Their results are less than desirable. Yet they fight on! The vision does not reveal how long the battle lasts or what the final outcome is. Later visions do shed more light, and we will come to that in time, as the Lord wills, but this is where the matter rests at the time of the woman’s isolation in the wilderness.
Chapter 148

The Beast Out Of The Sea

We often miss the truth because too many of us rely on our intellect to interpret to us the scriptures, instead of looking to the Teacher sent from God, to do His work, and perform His ministry. Even Spirit-filled Christians depend mostly on commentaries and books by the hundreds, written by men, and often men void of the Holy Spirit, as their source of information and understanding of the scriptures, especially on issues of Bible prophecy, and the Holy Spirit is relegated to a back room in our minds, and rarely consulted about anything the scriptures have to say. We need to reinstate HIM to His proper position and allow Him to fulfill the ministry He has come to do — to teach us all things and to lead us into all truth. Now don’t think I am against books, I am not. I have quite a large library myself. I use books. If I were opposed to writings I would not be sending out this article. I would not advise you to not read what others have to say and then expect you to read what I have to say! Many people have been helped by what is written, but far too many saints think that through Bible study, and by searching the scriptures alone, they can come to an understanding of the things of God, and acquire a knowledge of the truth.

Yet, if we are really studying the Bible, in the light of revelation, this is what we will find, for this is what the Bible teaches: that apart from the revelation of the Holy Spirit there is no way that we can search out, nor understand, the things of God, and His ways. Hear what the scripture itself says: “O the depths of riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out” (Rom. 11:33). How can we ever search out the unsearchable, or discover that which is past finding out? Impossible by any human means or methods, but not impossible with God, for with Him nothing is impossible. In all truth, we do not have to search anything out, for the Holy Spirit in us is the Searcher! “God hath revealed them (the things of God) unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that we might know the things…of God” (I Cor. 2:10-12). There is a way, His way, and that is by the working of the spirit of truth!

Well do I remember when I was a child in the Pentecostal church, the most intriguing, exciting, and yet frightening sermons I heard were those on Bible prophecy. When a “prophecy preacher” came by for a series of teachings it always drew a crowd! Everyone wanted to know who the antichrist is and when and where he will appear. One tent evangelist came through and announced his subject for a Saturday night: THE GREAT DICTATOR — WHO HE IS, WHERE HE IS, HE IS ALIVE AND IN THE WORLD TODAY! Come Saturday night, every seat was filled and several rows of people stood outside all the way around the tent. Such teaching also filled the altars! But I have learned through the years of walking with God that preaching prophecy to sinners is nothing but time and talent wasted. Unfortunately, many so-called evangelists have not yet learned that fact! There is but one story that can touch sinful hearts: Jesus and His wonderful love (I Cor. 2:1-2). Prophecy is for saints alone. Long centuries ago the Holy Spirit revealed this great truth to...
the prophet Daniel. “Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand” (Dan. 12:9-10). Of course any man can understand the morbid nonsense that is preached as prophecy by the masses today. Anybody can understand the drivel fed the people in books like *The Late Great Planet Earth* or *Left Behind*. Any fool can understand foolishness. But not even the carnal-minded among Christians can understand true prophecy! God does not whisper His secrets to those who will abuse that confidence. Merchandising entertaining and spell-binding books to make money is not evidence of either revelation or depth in God. And so the carnal-minded, even in the church, are without knowledge. The “wicked” of which Daniel wrote are not necessarily those who practice outward sin, but those who have not received a love of the truth and serve the serpent by subscribing to his lies and delusions, however inoffensive they may seem, thus defiling those who listen and dragging them down the road which ends in spiritual stagnation and loss. “But the wise shall understand, and shall shine as the brightness of the firmament” (Dan. 12:10,3).

In the thirteenth chapter of the Revelation the awesome prophecy is given of two beasts terrible in power and strength that dominate all the inhabitants of the earth and make war against the saints. As we approach this scene may I say that it’s not surprising that most Christians, at the mere mention of the events that are portrayed in this portion of the book, start conjuring up mental images of grotesque beasts, one world government tyranny, or a super-man antichrist brutally killing the saints or imposing the fearful “mark of the beast” in their right hand or in their forehead, thus forever sealing their doom in eternal hell-fire and damnation. Thousands of churches and teachers use such apocalyptic imagery to frighten people into confessing their sins and “getting right with God.” Very often, their hearers do not truly get converted to a loving and intimate relationship with the Lord; they merely cry their eyes out and beg God for mercy in order to escape His wrath. As soon as the fear factor is discredited or wears off, the so-called repentance often loses its effect.

I would point out here that there are no chapter divisions in the original text of the Revelation, and armed with this understanding it may be clearly seen that the events of chapter thirteen are the continuation of the great drama unfolded in chapter twelve. The chapter begins with the conjunction “and” denoting continuity of thought and action. To show the flow we will begin with the last verse of chapter twelve and continue through the first two verses of chapter thirteen. Thus it reads, “And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority” (Rev. 12:17; 13:1-2).

John has been moving around quite a bit in his visions, beholding things happening in the heavens, and those transpiring on earth, as also in the wilderness. The closing verses of chapter twelve position John in the “earth” for that is where “the remnant of her seed” is located. The woman herself had been in the earth until she fled from the face of the serpent far away into the wilderness. So John is not now called up to heaven again, but is placed in the earth, upon the sand of the sea, that unique spot where earth and sea meet. The picture reveals what is going on in the earth-realm, the soulical, cultural, moral, and religious dimensions of human society. *And it shows just what power and means it is through which the dragon makes war with the remnant of her seed.* So as soon as the dragon
goes to make war with the remnant of her seed. John is found standing in this earth realm, but he stands facing the sea.

This “sand of the sea” is the realm of earth in closest proximity to the sea — in fact washed by the waves crashing upon it with the ebb and flow of the tides. Call to mind that the term “the sand of the sea” was used to refer to the seed of Abraham in Genesis 22:17, and to Jacob’s seed in Genesis 32:12. So the sand of the sea has a connection with the people of God. The seed of Abraham and Jacob, that is the *fleshy* Israel, is a fitting type of “the remnant of her seed,” the “great multitude” of the Lord’s redeemed people. The sand of the sea signifies the realm of earth where abides “the remnant of her seed,” the rest of the Lord’s people who are not identified as part either of the manchild company of overcoming sons of God or the woman-bride of Christ. Though they are counted as the Lord’s people, they dwell in an exceedingly fleshly, carnal, and worldly condition, as close as one can get to the unregenerate state of the wicked and yet not be in it.

“Epic” — “thrilling” — “bound to hold your attention!” Words like these are often used to describe books, plays, and screen productions, and without doubt these terms can be applied to the visions John saw as recorded in chapter thirteen of the Revelation! John beholds how out of the sea there emerges a frightful monster, a beast, indeed a *wild beast*, as it is in the Greek, ferocious and ravenous of nature. If we compare the term “beast” with the term “dragon” it is clear that the beast out of the sea is *not* the same as the dragon who is in the earth! The beast is not Satan! The “dragon” has been cast into the *earth*, but now a “beast” rises up out of the *sea*. Individually, the beast represents the same thing as the sea out of which he rises, that is, the body-realm, the carnal nature of the flesh man, the natural man, the wicked man, man at the lowest level of his being, the man of sin who is motivated, dominated, and controlled by the satanic spirit. YET THIS BEAST IS SOMETHING MORE THAN THAT! The scene here is not merely one of state of being, but of *manifestation, expression, action, organization, proclamation*, and *power*!

The beast doesn’t remain hidden beneath the turbulent waters of the sea, but rises up into the earth-realm in visible manifestation. He walks, speaks, acts, and accomplishes. The beast blasphemes God and makes war against the saints. Remember the dragon went to make war against the remnant of her seed? Ah, here is how he does it! This is the carnal nature, the man of sin, *manifested* in a visible, organized, and powerful apparatus! In meditating upon these things a strange and wonderful unfolding pervaded my spirit and the truth of this became exceedingly clear. It is my deep conviction that this beast signifies the outward expression of THE WORLD SYSTEM OF MAN. This is the beast lurking beneath the surface of the deep, which rises up from our sea (fleshy nature) having many heads (manifestations of authority), many horns (organized powers), and spewing blasphemies from its mouth. It is a ferocious and vast system originating right out of human nature! And this system relentlessly makes war against the spiritual life of God’s people!

In many instances the pictorial language of the Bible is similar to the manner of speech customarily employed by man. Throughout millenniums, beasts of one kind or another have been used to symbolize kingdoms, or governments. A couched lion was the symbol of the Pharaoh’s right to rule over ancient Egypt. Today we have the British lion, the Russian bear, the Chinese dragon, the American eagle, and many more. In like manner, the Holy Spirit uses beasts to represent kingdoms, or governments. In the seventh chapter of Daniel’s prophecy, four beasts are depicted, to represent four kingdoms, which are interpreted by most Bible teachers as Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. What a lucid picture a
wild beast is of a selfish and cruel government exploiting the people under its control and appropriating their resources for the furtherance of their own selfish ends!

I would draw your attention to the fact that the expression “I…saw a beast rise up out of the sea” is literally in the Greek, “I saw a wild beast ascending out of the sea.” My friend Jonathan Mitchell, in his splendid expanded and amplified translation of the New Testament correctly renders the expression, “…and then I saw a little animal (or beast) progressively climbing up (or repeatedly ascending) from out of the midst of the sea.” John did not say, “I saw a beast ascend,” as a limited, one-time event, but ascending — denoting a continuous action. It is ongoing. It is constantly being fulfilled. By way of illustration, let us suppose I am talking with my wife on my cell phone while standing in front of Niagara Falls. I say to Lorain, “I see the water flowing over Niagara Falls — it is awesome!” Now, I would not mean by that description that the only time water flows over Niagara Falls is at the precise moment I happen to be there. By no means! I am simply describing an on-going action — the water has been flowing for eons, is now flowing, and shall continue to flow. But for one brief moment in time I stood transfixed before a constant, unceasing scene. That, my beloved, is exactly the idea John describes when he says, “I saw a beast ascending out of the sea.” It cannot be bound by, nor does it predict or specify, any actual historical or future event. Instead, the beast is ascending, he is always ascending out of the sea of human corruption. Why are so many human organizations, institutions, and governments corrupt? Think about it! There is your answer. The world system of man — government, economics, commerce, military, education, science, art, entertainment, medicine, religion — these and many more are at all times and in all places arising out of the mind, imagination, heart, and will of the natural man. It never ceases! The oppressive world system pervades every area of human activity. (Jonathan Mitchell’s translation of the New Testament may be ordered online from Amazon.com. Go to Amazon.com and type in the New Testament by Jonathan Mitchell, or you can visit www.jonathanmitchellnewtestament.com to read sample passages, and then order from Amazon via that web site).

The “end time” teachers want you to believe that this beast is a specific world government or world ruler who will suddenly emerge at some future date, take over a large portion of the world for seven years, and fight against God. By focusing attention on a future world empire controlled by some brilliant mad-man, who inscribes an actual number on the hapless citizens of the world, they distract the Lord’s people from the present reality which is lived out in the experience of each of us. And while Christians are busy chasing their fantasies of dreadful world events yet to come, the wild beast is busy wreaking havoc in the daily lives of untold millions of believers. John tells us that “the whole world was astonished and followed the beast” (Rev. 13:3). Truly we can all agree with this inspired statement when we see by the spirit that this wild beast represents the carnal, humanistic, deceived, corrupt, and evil world system of man that stands in stark contrast to the glorious, golden City of God!

Haven’t you known people who were so sold-out to their vocation, to money, houses, lands, education, ego, position, power, religious works, or some pleasure that they had no place in their heart for God? Such people are mesmerized by the spirit of the world and live under the authority and domination of the world system of man, not under the authority of the mind of Christ. The fact is that the world system, with the idolatrous church system as its cohort, deceives the masses of people into worshipping (paying homage to, selling their soul to) this beast — even to the very elect! We will never understand the mystery until we are thoroughly conscious of the fact that the beast is within us in the form of our own fleshly nature and carnal mind — the troubled sea from whence he emerges.
Are you, dear friend, a dweller in the heavens, or an inhabiter of the earth? If you are looking after those things that are coming on the earth, if you mind earthly things, then you will live out your life on the level of your vision and you will be captured by the bestial system of this world. The overcoming sons of God who are sealed with the mind of Christ have discerned in their spirit the ominous and destructive influence of the dragon’s manifestation in the bestial system of the world, and they have resisted it with patience and endurance. They knew from the moment they received their call to sonship that they were fighting a spiritual battle and they put on the whole armor of God so that having fought to the end they might stand and remain victors on the field! Oh, yes! And these overcome the beast and they don’t belong to the earth anymore. They belong in the heavens where they dwell! They are looking after the things their Father is doing, they mind heavenly things! What is happening in the heavens is all that pertains to these victorious ones! They belong to the heavens where they walk with God in the spirit!

The wild beast is described in the text just as John must have beheld it in his vision. What he saw he describes first. Naturally, the heads appeared first of all, and John tells us it was a beast having seven heads. Then John notices the horns upon the heads and informs us that there were ten of them. He further notices as details in the description that the ten horns each had a crown, ten royal diadems, and that on the heads were names of blasphemy written. Finally, as the beast lumbers up out of the waters, making its way onto the beach, he tells us that its general appearance was like that of a leopard, while its feet were like those of a bear, and its mouth a lion’s mouth. Let us prayerfully consider the meaning of this highly symbolic picture. The sea is the birthplace, the source, the origin, of this beast. Throughout the book of Revelation we have seen the great truth that almost all the events in the book take place in one of three dimensions: HEAVEN, EARTH, and SEA.

Throughout the scriptures the sea is a type of the inner storms and turbulent nature of the Adamic man. The prophet Isaiah penned these inspired words: “The wicked are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked” (Isa. 57:20-21). Jude also described wicked men when he said, “These are raging waves of the sea, foaming out their shame” (Jude 13). The beloved John on the isle of Patmos, had a vision of a great whore sitting on many waters. The angel revealed the meaning of the many waters, saying, “the waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues” (Rev. 17:15). I think there could be no better symbol by which to represent the people and society of any day than by the waters of the sea. At times the human race is calm and peaceful, then rough and boisterous, and then dangerous and treacherous. Have you not noticed how that at one election the people will whimsically submerge some political party or some candidate in a great deluge of disgust and in the very next election raise them to the superlative crest of popular favor. To attempt to pacify the people is as difficult as it would be to pacify the waters of the sea. Man could accomplish no more than the legendary Canute who tried to sweep back the waves. Nothing seems more futile, so restless as this human sea!

No one can dispute the fact that it is this restless, turbulent, raging, evil heart of the fleshly man that inspires every evil and devilish perversion, and has filled the world with ever increasing confusion, faithlessness, immorality, falsehood, fraud, hatred, bigotry, violence, tyranny, oppression, greed, cruelty, strife, war, and bloodshed. Ah, the sea is the lowest realm on earth, and this vast sea of fleshly Adamic humanity represents mankind at his lowest point — as bad off as man can be! Individually it speaks of the lowest aspect of our human nature and life — the body with its passions and lusts. Collectively the sea
represents society as it is guided by physical desires and impulses and aspirations that are restless, driving, compelling, and raging out of control! A lot of people, especially here in America, like to think that our society and our government have been born right out of God and the Bible. But I do not hesitate to say that all human government is part and parcel of the beast that ascends out of the sea! As one simple illustration of this fact someone said, “If you think taxation without representation was bad — you should see taxation now with representation!” Oh, yes, the same old beast is stomping on us.

There are wars and rumors of wars and terrorism that strike fear into the hearts of men. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain! Men’s hearts are failing them for fear in looking after those things which are coming upon the earth. It is more than a raging sea of evil — it is a virtual tsunami of self-destruction! As we look at the sad earth today, it is plain for every eye to see that, flowing from the corrupt minds of the corrupt rulers of every corrupt government on earth (and they all are!), taught in the schools, practiced in business and in the courts, and propagated by the media and Hollywood, we find the evil fruit of sin and death manifesting itself. Everywhere on the planet mankind is being overwhelmed by its evil until the earth is filled with violence and the thoughts and imaginations of men’s hearts are only evil continually.

The natural man is not getting better, as some affirm. The unregenerate man, old Adam, is corruptible. That means not only that he is dying, but that he is continually being brought into a worse state and inferior condition leading to destruction. He is on a never-ending downward spiral into oblivion. Is not this the terrible danger of the hour in which we live — enough bombs stockpiled to not only blow planet earth into smitheres but twenty more like it! And all in the hands of unpredictable, corruptible men, and terrorists everywhere on the prowl. You may suffer from the illusion that human nature has improved during the past seventy-five years since the horror of the Holocaust and the savage warfare in which fifty million men, women, and children were blown into eternity, but you are mistaken. Human nature never improves, old Adam can never reform, for his is a corruptible nature, growing steadily more vicious, deceitful, and immoral. The sea has never for long become calm, my friend, and the beast has never been tamed!

The famous preacher of London, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, once described that traumatic moment when he came face to face with the beast within his inner sea. He wrote, “There was a day, or shall I say a night, when as I walked abroad, I came hard upon a spot which shall remain forever engraved in my memory. For there before me lying on the ground I saw the form of a man, or, shall I rather say, a body, a corpse. As I drew closer with bated breath I discovered to my absolute horror that it was a friend of mine. Yes, it was my closest friend. As I looked down into his face and saw the expression of pure agony that marked his dead countenance, I wondered who could have done such a wicked thing as this. Then I saw that his hands were rent by gaping holes, made evidently by large iron spikes, and thus also were rent his feet. His side was ripped open and his back was red with the marks of scourge. Around his brow there were puncture marks where blood had trickled down into his eyes and left its paths upon his face.

“Who could have thus injured this one who never injured anyone but all his life went about doing good?” Then there began to well up within me a feeling of anger and resentment. Who, indeed, could have done such a thing as this? If I could but lay my hands upon them they would feel the sting of my wrath! Could I devise some torture for them, that they should know it full well. If, indeed, this were some criminal, some injurious person, some murderer, then we might say that he had received his due reward, but who could have harmed this
one: the holiest of holy, the gentlest of the gentle? As I thought on these things, suddenly I heard behind me the sound of a footfall and I knew instinctively that the murderer had returned. I whirled around and reached out to grab him, but in the darkness I could see no one. I knew that he was there and I groped for him in the dark. I could not feel him, but I could hear his breathing ever closer to me. Finally, I realized as I groped blindly in the blackness, that he was even closer than my hands. Suddenly I realized that I had him and as I cried out, ‘Aha, I have you!’ I discovered that my hand was on my own breast. And, lo, the murderer was in my heart! I was filled with an overwhelming sense of vileness and wretchedness as I realized that right there before my murdered Beloved, I was harboring the murderer in my own bosom! I fell to my knees and I wept the words, ‘Twas you, my sins, my cruel sins, his chief tormentors were. Every crime was a nail and unbelief the spear’” — end quote.

The scriptures speak of two corporate men — a heavenly man and an earthly man. The humanity that functions in its own conceptions and ideas, bears the image of the earthy. The lowest of this humanity is pictured as dwelling in the sea. They are bestial, they have a beastly nature. The desire of a beast is to **nourish itself** and to **multiply itself**. It has no understanding of any higher thing. It has its own spirit, whereby it lives, and grows, and consumes itself, and that is all it does. Those who have no desire to know God or do His will make up the great sea of humanity; everyone has gone his own way. They know nothing of the will of God, the ways of God, or the word of God. They have no spiritual, pure, godly, righteous, divine or heavenly life in them. They have no conception of these things, nor do they care. Human government originates out of this sea of mankind. It is earthly, sensual, and devilish. But the heavenly man has come to a new reality! He is man in the likeness and after the image of God! Human government does not flow from this man — the Kingdom of God flows from him! The society of this celestial realm is governed by righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost! Its scepter is the will of the Father, its law is the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, its educational system is the living word of God, its military wields the sword of the Spirit, and its social program is **love one another**!

Now let us consider a little further this beast that comes out of the sea. We have said that this beast, when he manifests on earth, is the world system of man. Yet — is he not a beast **in the sea** before he ascends **out of the sea**? May God grant that we may truly see that this beast **in the sea** is the bestial nature of the natural man out from which the world system emerges! The wise man once said, “I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts” (Eccles. 3:18). The apostle Peter also mentions the natural man, likening him to a brute beast. “But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of things that they understand not: and shall utterly perish in their own corruption” (II Pet. 2:2). As Peter suggests, the natural man possesses animal-like qualities. We often hear people likened to animals! Animals follow their instincts relentlessly, oblivious to discipline. These characteristics are evident in some familiar expressions. A woman who quietly slips around maligning others has been called “catty.” A man who pursues women indiscriminately is called a “wolf.” A treacherous man is a “snake in the grass.” A grouchy old man is “an old bear.” A man who preys on those who are in difficult financial straits, who loans money at exorbitant interest rates, is called a “shark.” A coward is called a “chicken.” A cunning, tricky, deceitful man is called a “fox.” A dull person is an “ox,” a stubborn person a “mule,” a glutton is a “hog,” a filthy man is a “pig,” and a foolish person is an “ape.”

The story is told of two friends who early one morning discussed the events of the coming day over a fresh cup of coffee. A noisy flock of crows flew overhead, reminding one of the
men of an interesting fact about crows. “Crows watch out for each other,” he said. “When a
flock feeds in a cornfield, two sentinels stand guard at each end of the field. They warn the
others in special ‘crow language’ of any approaching danger. If something should happen
because the two guards got careless and failed to warn the flock, the retribution is savage,
for crows do not know the attribute of mercy. The rest will viciously attack and kill the two
who didn’t do their job.” “I’ve never heard that before,” said the other man, “but it reminds
me of an unusual trait that chickens have. Chickens are perfectionists. A man who raises
them told me that if one chicken is smaller than the rest or has an open sore anywhere on its
body, the others will attack it and peck it to death. They can’t accept the different, the sick,
or the wounded.” What in the world do these two stories have to do with the beast out of
the sea? Before you conclude that this point is strictly for the birds, let me hasten to make
the point. This message is not about birds at all, but about the natural man who lives and
acts out of a bestial nature!

My earnest prayer is that God will give understanding to mature minds to hear what the
Spirit saith unto the elect of the Lord. I defy anyone to give me a geographical, physical,
historical point of reference to chapter thirteen of the book of Revelation. Ah, I have heard
hundreds! There are as many guesses as there are commentators, I suppose. But let us
consider. “And I stood upon the sand of the sea…” The question follows: Which sand of
what sea? If you wish to speak words that are generic, you could not make a more generic
statement than this: “I stood upon the sand of the sea.” In contemporary terms we would
say, “I went to the beach!” Yet John did not literally stand upon the sand of any beach in the
whole world, for this was a vision. What sea was he looking at? Although John was on the
isle of Patmos it wasn’t the Aegean Sea he was gazing across. No beast ever came up out
of the Aegean Sea having seven heads and ten horns! He was looking at the sea of the
world, the sea of humanity, the vast empire of the darkness and wickedness of mankind, for
on another occasion we receive the explanation of the symbol, “The waters which thou
sawest…are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues” (Rev. 17:15).

Now, can you not see that the beast that rose up out of the sea is not natural. What John
saw come up out of the sea represents the physical expression and manifestation of the
nature and spirit that creates the turbulence in the sea. We must ask, “What kind of a beast
ascends up out from the sea?” First, it is only at the end of the chapter that we discover that
John wasn’t seeing a beast, but he was seeing the manifest nature of mankind! Meditate
prayerfully, my beloved, upon these inspired words: “Here is wisdom. Let him that hath
understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man” (Rev. 13:18).
The number of A MAN! The great truth is that there have never been but two men upon this
earth — the first Adam and the last Adam, the first man and the second man, the carnal man
and the spiritual man, the earthly man and the heavenly man! Thus the Lord has revealed
that the beast is a metaphor for the manifest nature and worldly organization of the
NATURAL MAN!

You can look for a beast in the ancient pagan Roman empire or in the so-called Holy Roman
Empire, or you can look for a beast in Brussels, Moscow, Jerusalem, or Washington D.C.,
but that is not the beast you should be concerned about. It’s the one lurking in your
members, the bestial nature of the flesh man! None can deny that there are motions of sin
that are alive in our members. Even though I was walking with God I used to sin, and I didn’t
sin because I wanted to, I tried to stop many times, but the force of sin was stronger than my
human will. It was like the little four-year-old rascal in Sunday School who blurted out, “Oh, I
wish it weren’t so easy to be bad!” Let me assure you, my friend, sin is not just an act — sin
is a force, a power. When Adam sinned and released sin into the world, he didn’t release
actions, he released a nature that causes the actions. Let us now take special heed to Paul’s teaching in Romans 7:15-18. “For I do not understand my own actions, I am baffled, bewildered. I do not practice or accomplish what I wish, but I do the very thing I loathe. Now if I do what is contrary to my desire, that means that I acknowledge and agree that the Law is good and that I take sides with it. However, it is no longer I who do the deed, but the sin which is at home in me and has possession of me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot perform it. I have the intention and urge to do what is right, but no power to carry it out.”

On the other hand, righteousness is not just something you do — it is a spirit, a force, a power, an inward nature that causes you to do! Those who grow up into the nature of the Christ have released within them the very life-force of the Christ who causes them to do righteousness as automatically as the they formerly did sin. When doing righteousness becomes natural for you, then you are both living and walking in the Spirit. Once I sinned because I couldn’t help it, I had to; and now I am doing righteousness because I can’t help it, I have to! It’s my nature, the law of my life, I’m captivated by it! It is indeed wonderful! The inspired apostle put it this way, “For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death” (Rom. 8:2).

Let me reiterate again that it is this bestial nature of man out of which arises the bestial systems that dominate the whole of mankind. Let us see how this is so. The following observations are based in part upon the writings of another with whom my spirit bears witness. One of the greatest dangers to the people of God proceeds from the many counterfeits the world provides — fellowships and brotherhoods galore. Man is not naturally social; but he does desire some kind of connection with other humans, which is a different thing. Man by nature lives in a herd, as cows or wolves do. He is not a solitary animal, like a cat. You will find, therefore, that because of the herd instinct men would rather live with people whom they hate and detest, constantly slander, backbite and endeavor to injure — they would rather live and quarrel every day — than live alone. Loneliness they cannot stand. So, by a tyrannous instinct we are driven to form cliques, groups, and clubs, and our behavior in these cliques and groups is the same as that of beasts in herds. The individual beasts in a herd will fight with one another for a piece of flesh; bulls will strive for their mates to the death, until a common danger or enemy threatens their herd. Then, for a while, they will drop their quarrels, and fight or flee together, united by a common fear, and a common hatred.

Is that not precisely the way in which members of a nation behave! In time of war we are a nation; in time of peace we are a mob. We fight with one another, one party against the other; we throw mud, criticize, condemn, strive, abuse, detest, impeach, and hate one another until some common hatred or common fear unites us, and then we stand together only as long as that fear and hatred last. What we call patriotism, is at its roots very little else but the instinct of the herd. The nations are herds, and the armies and navies and air forces are their teeth and claws. In time of war, under the drive of this Adamic instinct, men will give their life-blood for the nation; in time of peace they will cheat their government out of every dollar they possibly can, and their country is the very last thing they work for. They will work for greed, for gain, for advantage, for their partisan agendas, for power, always for SELF! And they will step on everybody they have to in order to climb the ladder to the top.

Nor are the nations the only herds of men and women. Men in great trade unions, in political parties, in businesses and corporations, in bureaucracies, and a hundred more behave in the same utterly irrational and bestial way; and, alas! the same mark of the beast is evident
upon all the religious systems of man, including the church system. Who does not know of
the jealousy, bitterness, backbiting, slandering, accusations, and political in-fighting that can
break out, even among those who pride themselves in being the most spiritual among the
Lord’s people? Who does not know how good work can be hindered by the fact that this
person cannot work with that person, and brother Smith will be insanely jealous of brother
Brown when he begins to assert himself in the congregation, because then he will no longer
be a big frog in a little pond? Consider the doctrinal debates, the excommunications for
"heresy," the glint of hatred that comes into the eyes of those who encounter the other side
of a church split — those who now become members of another herd. A pair of black
wolves will tear a white wolf to pieces for exactly the same reason, or unreason, that one
church clique hates another church clique. Both of them will give reasons to justify this
animal instinct of viciousness! Through my many years of ministry some of the most hateful
and hurtful words and actions I have witnessed have been among believers in the churches!

Paul Mueller wrote of this “beast out of the sea,” pointing out that the scriptures refer to him
as “Leviathan, the piercing serpent or dragon in the sea, which also represents the Adamic
nature, which is to be wounded, and then he is to be slain or destroyed. Thus it is written, ‘In
that day the LORD with His sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the
piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and He shall slay the dragon that is in
the sea’ (Isa. 27:1). ‘Leviathan,’ from the original language, is ‘a wreathed animal, i.e., a
serpent, especially the crocodile or some other large sea monster, also a symbol of
Babylon’ (from Strong's Concordance). I believe ‘leviathan,’ the crooked, piercing serpent, to
be the seed of Satan; it is the carnal nature in all of us. It is that carnal, sinful, deceptive and
corrupt nature within all mankind that has produced the three-fold realm of the great harlot,
Babylon, which now fills the whole world with its sinful, corrupt, and counterfeit systems. As
a sea monster, or a sea serpent, ‘leviathan’ dwells within the whole human race; it is that
power of Satan that leads people, especially our leaders, to lie, deceive, and destroy. We
know that ‘leviathan,’ or the man of sin within us, is a sea monster, for ‘his father’ is ‘the
dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan’ (Rev. 20:2). Jesus explained how
those ‘tares,’ or how ‘leviathan’ the sea monster, got into the human race in one of His
parables (see Matthew 13:24-30). ‘Leviathan,’ therefore, is the son of Satan, the seed of the
serpent.

“Both the ‘beast’ and the ‘false prophet’ are ruling the nations in the world today! There is
not a nation or a people on this earth today, except for the elect, who are not ruled by sinful,
old Adam, or ‘leviathan,’ the sea monster and the ‘false prophet,’ who is in league with
Satan, the great dragon, the sea serpent, or the venomous, destructive ‘beast.’ Therefore, a
spiritual war must take place to unseat those two evil entities, clear the earth of their unholy
reign of evil, terror, and destruction, and establish the Kingdom of God in all the earth as a
theocracy, or as the only government in all the earth! The anointed Word of God tells us of
the destruction of those two entities: ‘Both of them were hurled alive into the fiery lake that
burns and blazes with brimstone’” — end quote.

In Revelation 13:1-2 the Spirit describes in graphic pictures what this terrible beastly nature
is all about. In the various beastly forms John saw, which make up the one beast, we see
the characteristics of human nature as manifested through the agency of the world system
of man.

“He was like a leopard.” The leopard is one of the most beautiful of animals. His coat is
sleek and exotic of color. His spots are a delicate cream color set against a background of
exquisite brown. He is one of the most graceful in his movements, agile, swift, and
dexterous. But he is also one of the most cold-blooded, cruel species ever known! Is that not an apt portrait of the world system of man in all its glittering allure and its ultimate spiritual destructiveness!

“His feet were as the feet of a bear.” In comparison to the size of an animal, the bear has the largest and the strongest foot of any animal extant. No other animal has such strength of grip in its paws. He rises above all that opposes his reign and tramples upon all who stand before. The spirit of the world is the spirit of Self-interest, Self-exaltation, and greed which steps on and crushes anyone or anything that is in one’s way to hinder his mad scramble to dominance — to position, fame, gain, prestige, or power. Ah, the world looks as beautiful as a leopard, but its feet are very ugly and ruthless, opposite to its outward appearance. Its systems, whether business, politics, finance, religion, or otherwise, will “use” you, usurp your time and strength, consume your wealth, burn out your health and soul, and then cast you aside as dispensable refuse. It will crush you to death! It has the feet of a bear.

“His mouth was as the mouth of a lion.” The lion startles the forest with his deep-toned solemn roars. And there is mighty power behind that awesome roar! The lion is the largest and most majestic of the feline family. The voice bespeaks the word, the propaganda, the edicts, the pronouncements, the rules, regulations, laws, and creeds of the world system of man. The pronouncements of the leaders of the world’s systems, of kings, presidents, prime ministers, generals, terrorists, scientists, educators, doctors, popes, archbishops, bishops, preachers, self-appointed apostles, and self-styled prophets have often shaken mighty empires and filled nations and peoples with consternation. Where this beast opens its mouth and begins to talk, be it in politics or commercial life, in the market or in the science class, in the media or in the pulpit, in the courts or in government bureaucracies, there everything must be silent and bow. And everything is silent and does bow before this beast! When, for instance, the state declares a law to be valid, no one asks, “What does God say about this?” When the courts ban God and His word from the halls of every government institution, when the courts remove prayer and the Bible and discipline from our schools, when the school boards decree condoms to be made available to ten, eleven, and twelve year old students without parental consent, when the states legislate gay-marriage, when religious leaders hand down edicts to be obeyed upon pain of excommunication or death, to mention only a few milder examples of the lion’s roar — the ruthless power of government — the adoration of man’s order rules supreme. The mouth of the lion has roared, and everyone is frightened into obedience!

The world system is made up of those earthly things which seduce men from God. Put it all together, and it is those purposes, those pursuits, those pleasures, those practices, and those places where God is not considered, consulted, nor wanted. It might be religious, it might be cultivated, it might be refined, it might be intellectual, but it is all anti-Christ and controlled by the spirit of the dragon. And, my friend, it matters not which world system it is — the religious world system, the educational system, the political, scientific, social, economical, or entertainment and pleasure — there can be no doubt in any spiritual mind that Satan is the god and ruler of them all!

So every day mankind moves in this sphere of these world systems, inhaling and inevitably exhaling the atmosphere of these false values and worldly deceptions of the carnal mind and the human intellect. You see, the beast bombards mankind — the men, the women, the young people and the children that make up this world — through the eye-gate, the ear-gate, and the mind-gate with his lies and errors about the origin of life, the meaning of life,
the purpose of life, the nature of God, the destiny of man, truth, righteousness, sin, judgment, hell, and a thousand other things. He bombards them with his insinuations, his imitations, and his counterfeits. He bombards them with dishonesty, false values, false images of God, worldly wisdom, lewdness, and wickedness as being the true way of life. He goes about bombarding them with corruption and impurity as acceptable lifestyles, making a joke of sin, and goes about calling evil good, and good evil; putting darkness for light, and light for darkness; putting bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter (Isa. 5:20).

And what means does the beast use to bombard us with these things? My beloved, he uses false preachers and teachers, political rallies, the editorial pages of newspapers, the magazines, the billboards along our streets and highways, the television screens, radios, movie theaters, school class rooms, psychiatrists and psychologists, and even bombards us with lies from person to person! The beast is working — the lion is roaring — in each and every one of these ways as they give their thoughts, their ideas, their impressions, their opinions, their views, their beliefs, their convictions on all the subjects and circumstances that confront mankind. All of this is controlled by the beast and has his mark upon it, for in most cases they are half-truths, and often no truth at all! All are passing their judgments, their evaluations, and drawing their worldly conclusions about the true nature of all things, about good and evil, about the world and how to govern it. This roar of the lion pierces the hearing of all men at all times TO KEEP HUMANITY CONFUSED AS TO WHAT THE TRUTH REALLY IS!

What confusion! So many voices, all telling of their hopes and aspirations, their dreams and expectations! You can turn the dial of a radio or flip the channels of the television and find a hundred different voices telling you what truth is; and how are you ever going to sort it out? At all times and in all places these things bombard the eye-gate, the ear-gate, and the mind-gate of mankind; and they meet with reception in the affections because every natural man is earthy minded. Only as God in His sovereign grace and power comes to a man and rescues him from this mass of confusion — only then is he given power to become a son of God! “And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship (pay homage to) him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8).

These ruling people, orders, agencies, institutions, judges, presidents, law enforcers, preachers, teachers, “experts” in this field and that, are spoken of as the very high authorities of this world system, as though there existed no higher authority to which they also were subject. One and all are members of the body of the monster out of the sea which has received its great might from the dragon, that beast which is so powerful and mighty that even those who call themselves Christians pay their homage before it. This earthly, fleshly, carnal, material, temporal, animalistic tendency reigns supreme, to which everyone must bow, and to which the masses of mankind do bow willingly. But that mouth which speaks such great things is also the mouth that devours everything! He looks so majestic in his rule, that sleek leopard, that roaring lion! But he’s not for he also eats his prey. So it is with the world systems of man, ruling in pride and pomp, yet within they’re full of evil and devouring. All is used to feed this hungry beast — the poor, the widow, the orphan, the people’s time, their money, their liberty, their sons and daughters, their spiritual life, their very souls — all are devoured by him and are his food and support!
Chapter 149

The Beast Out Of The Sea

continued

“And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy” (Rev. 13:1).

The beast rising up out of the sea has seven heads. Numbers are always symbolic in the book of Revelation with the number seven standing for perfection, fullness, and completion. It does not denote an actual amount. So there is no need to look for exactly seven kings, or kingdoms, or powers of any kind. The same principle was employed by Jesus when He told Peter to forgive, not just seven times, but seventy times seven. He did not mean to forgive precisely 490 times, and then at the 491st time Peter would be free from the obligation. He was using multiples of seven to impress upon Peter the great truth that he should forgive completely and perfectly! To the Hebrews, numbers were descriptions rather than mathematics as each number represented something.

When the beast is described as having seven heads, it speaks of the completeness and fullness of his authority. Heads always indicate headship, that is, command, control, and authority. When we refer to the head of a group, organization, institution, or government, we’re speaking of leadership, managership, governorship — where the supreme authority is invested. In this case it is the headship of the world system of man that is signified by the seven heads. This is a headship over the whole world of men who are subservient to the system. The ruling powers are right in the midst of the beastly system. In man’s eyes, some human governments are good and some evil. But in God’s eyes they all are directed by the carnal mind, intellect, and nature of the Adamic man and therefore all receive their authority from the dragon! No country is truly doing the will of God, not even my own country which I do love and pray for.

Although the ten horns are not literally ten different kingdoms, or the seven heads seven different actual kings, yet the great truth expressed is that this beast represents a combination of all the great empires of the world. It is a composite picture of the nature, authority, and power of the whole world system of man! And this beast is the incarnation of the spirit of the dragon! Now if we really desire to understand the mystery of these things it will be helpful to make some comparisons. First, I would take you back to chapter four of the Revelation. It will be profitable here to consider the scene John saw when he was caught up unto the throne. “And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes before and behind. And the first living creature was like a lion, and the second living creature like a calf, and the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle” (Rev. 4:6-7). In the light of this sublime scene we do well to remember that the beast in chapter thirteen receives his throne and authority from the dragon. But the throne and authority of the four living creatures ( kingship, the sons of God) are from the God of the throne in the heavens! Each — the heavenly kingship company, and the bestial system of man — has a throne and an authority, but what a world of
difference! One is the throne of God and man in that throne; the other is the throne of the
dragon and man in that throne!

And here comes one of the most remarkable things in the book: the red dragon voluntarily
relinquishes his power, his throne, and his authority in favor of this beast! “And the beast
which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth
as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon GAVE HIM HIS POWER, AND HIS THRONE, AND
GREAT AUTHORITY” (Rev. 13:2). Here is another remarkable thing: the whole world of
men did not worship the beast solely; they worshipped the dragon too! “And I saw one of his
heads as it was wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world
wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto
the beast: and they worshipped the beast...” (Rev. 13:3-4). Why is this? Had not the
dragon vacated his throne in favor of the beast out of the sea? Oh, yes! But now the
dragon incarnates the beast and lives on in the beast! The voice of the beast is truly the
dragon’s voice, the power of the beast is in fact the dragon’s power, the authority of the
beast is indeed the dragon’s authority, and the throne of the beast is actually the dragon’s
throne! The dragon is thus the inward life of the beast, and the beast is the outward physical
manifestation of the dragon! Can you grasp the great truth of these words of the apostle
wherein he says, “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins:
wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the
prince of the power of the air, the SPIRIT THAT NOW WORKETH IN THE CHILDREN
OF DISOBEDIENCE” (Eph. 2:1-2). And again, “And we know that we are of God, and the
whole world lieth in the wicked one” (I Jn. 1:19). Can you not see the mystery?

Both the dragon and the beast are described with seven heads and ten horns but the main
difference is depicted in the position of their crowns which marks the place of their dominion,
for crowns signify rulership and dominion. The dragon’s seven crowns are placed upon his
seven heads, clearly showing that his power is all connected with the intellect — the mind —
in knowledge and worldly wisdom which he has fed into people’s minds from mother Eve all
the way down to you and me. This is the inward, personal, and individual working of the
dragon — Satan. “But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his
subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ” (II Cor.
11:3).

The beast, on the other hand, has his crowns upon his ten horns, identifying the place of his
rulership and dominion as by power, for horns signify power. This speaks of the works —
the institutions, organizations, systems, governments, laws, etc., which are the external
instruments of control and dominion over men’s lives. The beast’s power rests within the
transferring of the dragon’s wisdom and knowledge into the man-made world systems by
which he motivates, dominates, subjects, and controls the masses of humanity. Can we not
see by this that we have a dual enemy — we have an enemy within (spirit of the dragon)
and also an enemy without (the beast, the world system of man) — AND THE ENEMY
WITHOUT IS THE CREATION OF THE ENEMY WITHIN! And it serves his purpose! “And
the dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority...and they worshipped
the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is
like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? And all that dwell upon the earth
shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the
foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:2,4). And it is not true that all men today do pay homage
to the world system of man EXCEPT THE HOLY SONS OF GOD WHO HAVE GROWN UP
INTO THE MIND AND NATURE OF CHRIST, THE LAMB! That is the mystery!

The man whose life, ambitions, actions, and methods are controlled by the spirit of the world
has crowned the beast and given him power. The dragon in the beast solicits homage from
all who have any aspiration in this world. He had the effrontery to tell Christ Jesus, that, if
He would fall down and worship him, all the wealth and the kingdoms of the earth, and the
glory thereof, would be His. He is telling men and women that every day! If you will just
adopt the spirit, ways, means, and methods of the world (even in your ministry), you will prosper and all will be yours! Without doubt, he has told you that. Have you crowned him as king? Do you believe his statements? Are you putting his directions into practice? I have known many preachers who have resorted to psychological persuasions, carnal methods, gimmickry, false prophecies, and outright lies and fraud in order to raise finances, thereby fleecing God’s people of their hard-earned money. Others think it is alright to put a price on their tapes, CD’s, and books, selling the word of God which they have freely received of Him, thereby preventing widows, the unemployed, retired on fixed incomes, and struggling families from having access to the revelation of God. That is spiritual wickedness in high places. I do not hesitate to tell you that all such have crowned the beast and given him power! That is the way the world operates, but not the kingdom of God! Can you imagine the apostle Paul sending a notice to the Galatian believers stating that for the price of $100 he would send his epistle of the month to them? Such a notion is not only not apostolic, it’s also NOT KINGDOM! I’ve heard the lame excuse, “But brother Eby, if we send the stuff out free of charge, the people don’t respond with enough money to pay the bills. And besides, we have discovered that what people don’t pay for, they don’t appreciate.” That’s a lie of enormous proportions! If people don’t appreciate what is freely and without charge given to them, then there is not one believer in the whole world who appreciates his gift of salvation, his healing, his deliverance, his gift of the Holy Spirit, his gifts of the Spirit, or any other blessing and provision of God, for has He not “FREELY GIVEN UNTO US ALL THINGS?” I could fill the next nine pages of this article with scriptures about our Father’s FREE GIFTS! And I do appreciate every one of them, though I did not pay one copper penny for even one of His favors.

Vast multitudes of men and women have crowned Satan before the whole world. There are men in politics and business and religion and society who show that they believe that a person can get on only by subscribing to the methods and techniques of the wicked world system. They regard those who have not bowed the knee to his satanic majesty as being ridiculously blind to their own interests. Do you want money, or fame, or influence, or position, or pleasure, or power, or ease, or security? Crown the beast, and you get it, is their advice! And so that arch-deceiver, hoodwinking those smart people, whom he makes think are the superlatively smart people of the earth, until at last they overleap themselves and fall in the ditch, chuckles to himself at his success; and when he deceives those folks who think they are the very elect ones of the universe for smartness, he has some grounds for self-gratification. In theory, men repudiate the corruptness of the natural man; but in fact, in actual life, it is simply astounding to see men and women, who hold their heads high, display such low-down, groveling propensities, as to take beast-forces, and mud substances, and the very spirit of merciless fraud, and crown them with the authority of dominion over their lives.

THE BESTIAL WORLD SYSTEM

“And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea” (Rev. 13:1).

Throughout the scriptures, the word beast refers to a system, and not to a man. The beasts speak of bestial systems, organizations, institutions, movements, and governments. It can also be a state or condition. Ray Prinzing once pointed out that the description of a monster with seven heads and ten horns is not some pre-historic creature which is to plod across the earth devouring everything in view. If it was this literal, we would immediately recognize the situation as the fulfillment, and would try to find some human remedy. But being a “state or condition,” people are overtaken by it, and know it not, for there are few that understand the meaning of the signs.

This beast now under consideration is a system and evil entity that rules the world; it’s an antichrist system. It’s a wild beast, and a wild beast is a devouring, destroying animal; in the
spirit it is a devouring, destructive entity. The beast is not just one human being, rather it is a system that dominates every area of human activity and life, whether it be business, politics, medicine, art, science, education, religion, or any other. Just as the body of a beast has many members, so there are a multitude of worldly systems; but these systems are typically overseen by a powerful government with those in power making decisions that perpetrate the carnal system throughout mankind. This beastly system is rising up out of the sea of humanity, out of all the people on the earth. When John stood upon the sand of the sea, he was standing upon that which could not be numbered, among all the people of the earth. The beast is not an “end-time” event — it is a present reality and has been ascending out of the sea of humanity since the dawn of history.

When the Bible uses the word world in the sense of something that must be overcome, it is not referring to the physical planet Earth. Rather, the “world” in that sense is the present system of society and civilization. The “world” is the collective result of the activities of errant humanity over the past 6,000 years — ever since the first humans departed from their life in and by the Spirit of God. Look at it. Wars, crime, violence, suffering, greed, corruption, dishonesty, sickness, depression. And then you have all the organizations and systems created by fallen man to try to control and restrain, or to correct and improve the situation and condition. But it is itself an evil, oppressive system! It is not God’s world. It is not God’s society. It is not God’s civilization. It is not God’s government! Anyone who seeks a close relationship with the world, “makes himself an enemy of God,” declared the apostle James (James 4:4).

This beast with seven heads has long ruled over the inhabitants of the earth. The bestial system first made its appearance in the garden of Eden. Our eyes behold its presence with the understanding of these words: “Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made” (Gen. 3:1). These words tell us that there was not only a beast (the serpent) in the earth in that hour, but there was a beastly spirit and a beastly system already waiting to enforce its dominion upon Adam and his garden. Of all the bestial kingdom “the serpent (who is also the dragon) was more subtle than any beast of the field...” The serpent was called a beast, and was not dwelling alone, but was the most subtle of the whole bestial realm, even then the great dictator of the bestial kingdom! He still is. In the book of Revelation, the subtle little serpent has increased its stature to become a great red dragon who rules the world through the fearsome beast out of the sea. The first Adam, made in the image and likeness of God, given dominion in the kingdom of heaven on earth, failed the same test that later came to Jesus, the last Adam, in the wilderness, and exchanged that blessed realm for the grime and dust and filth and sorrow of the bestial kingdom.

That is why Jesus told Pilate, the Roman procurator, on the night of His trial, “My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence” (Jn. 18:36). The kingdom of God is not of this world. The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost (Rom. 14:17). Jesus said that His disciples are in the world, but not of the world (Jn. 17:11-16). The kingdom, likewise, is in the world, but not of it, not established by the world’s methods or operated by the world’s standards. It does not function by the politics of the world. The kingdom of God does not contain a Republican or Democratic platform. It is neither Conservative, Liberal, nor Libertarian. It is not Capitalist, Communist, nor any other economic system of man. It is established and maintained on a different basis from the kingdoms of this world. When we enter this kingdom we are not taken out of these earthly realms, but we are rescued from the jurisdiction of darkness, the hateful spiritual empire that energizes the governments of earth and enrathall mankind. We have been removed into that other spiritual realm whose Monarch is God’s beloved Son and our Elder Brother. We now live out our lives along the lines of the principles of God’s kingdom which are rooted in His nature, mind, life, and power.
What does Jesus mean when He says that His kingdom is not of this world? One of the key words translated “world” in our English Bibles is the Greek word kosmos. The word originated in Classical Greek where we find it denoted principally one underlying thing: a harmonious order, system, or arrangement. Out of this meaning it may be applied to the earth, the inhabitants of the earth, society, the universe, worldly affairs such as worldly goods, endowments, riches, advantages, pleasures, customs, ways, methods, organizations, systems, institutions, governments, etc. The idea of orderly arrangement or organization lies behind all the aforementioned categories. The earth, the solar system, the universe, society, government, commerce, education, social institutions, finance, entertainments — all these and many more operate by precise laws, order, arrangement, system, and method. Behind everything that exists and all that happens in the visible, material realm we meet a planned system; and in this system there is a harmonious functioning, an established order. That is THE WORLD! None of it is of the Spirit of God. None of it is established along the lines of God’s ways, God’s righteousness, God’s nature, God’s word, or God’s will. The Spirit has an altogether different standard and order out of the invisible realm. That is THE KINGDOM OF GOD! Therefore every organized system of the visible realm is the “world” in contrast to, and set apart from, the kingdom of God out of the invisible realm of God’s Spirit.

The Bible opens with God’s creation of the heavens and the earth. It does not say that God created the world at that time. God placed Adam in the garden of Eden, a place of light and beauty, and there was no “world” in relation to man. In that long ago beginning God proclaimed, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Gen. 1:26). This wonderful purpose of God to make man in His very image had been settled in the divine councils of Elohim from eternity. The carnal minds of sin-cursed men cannot even begin to imagine in their wildest dreams and hopes the ineffable glory that is determined for man in the image and likeness of God! The glory is fully seen in our Lord Jesus Christ because Jesus Christ Himself is “the outraying of God’s glory, the express image of His Person” (Heb. 3:1). Only in Jesus Christ today can be seen exactly what God had in mind when He said, “Let us make man in our image.”

Adam, the man in God’s image, walked amidst the fragrant mists of Eden in the living presence of God. He heard the voice of God in the spirit within himself and lived by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God. God Himself was his life and his every motivation and action sprang from the power of that life within. In that heaven blest realm the sounds he heard were spiritual sounds, the things he saw were spiritual things, and the things he touched, smelled, and tasted were spiritual realities. As yet there was no COSMOS, no “world,” no organized system outside of himself that he related to, subscribed to, or was influenced by. There was no outward constituted order of any kind. He did not function under any outward law or system, but functioned as a living spiritual organism, out of the life which he was. There was only God and man! It is interesting to note that the word world does not appear anywhere in the story of creation and the fall. In fact, its first mention is not until the days of the prophet Samuel!

“According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love” (Eph. 1:4). The word “foundation” translates the Greek word katabole which is a compound word made up of ballo meaning “to cast, to throw” and kata meaning “down.” When man fell from his high and holy relationship with God and was cast down into this gross material realm, the “foundation” of the world was laid in his heart. We still speak of “laying” or “putting down” a foundation. But a foundation is not the building — it is that which the building is raised up upon! The “foundation” of the world was laid in man’s heart when he obeyed the voice of the serpent and departed from the kingdom of heaven realm in which he dwelt; but the “building” of the world was the fruit of his actions. Yet — blessed be God! The apostle Paul informs us that our heavenly Father elected some sons in Christ “before the foundation of the world.” The word “before” translates the Greek word pro meaning “to go before, to precede.” Hence, the Father’s act
of choosing us in Christ preceded the fall of man and the establishment of the world system! We are not told how many days, years, or eons this choosing preceded the world, but methinks it was away back there when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy!

Since the world is in such opposition to God we must consider its origin and process of development. The world began with Cain. It is significant to note that the first action of Cain after slaying his brother Abel was this: “And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod…and he builded a city” (Gen. 4:16-17). Cain built the first city — organized society, civilization — which typifies the worldly system of independence from the SPIRIT. The world did not exist when man was created (except in abstraction), but developed gradually after the fall, as man removed himself from the anointing and walked in his own carnal way. When man was brought forth from the formative hand of God there was already the universe, the heavens and the earth, and all created things; but the world did not exist. Following Adam’s expulsion from the Garden, when carnal men began to multiply upon the earth, the serpent in man gave direction and character to the “New World Order” of man, thus the scripture speaks of the natural man walking “according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2).

There are three primary requirements for man’s existence and well-being on the earth: provision, protection, and pleasure. For a man to live an abundant, happy, and fulfilled life in the earth realm he needs the provision of food, clothing, shelter, etc., a means of defense to protect himself from adversaries, and a form of recreation and amusement for his relaxation and happiness. Prior to Adam’s transgression GOD WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING THESE THREE NEEDS OF MAN, and they were supplied abundantly right out of the spirit in the garden of Eden experience, albeit on a much higher level than the corruptible world of today. After Cain’s departure from the leading of the Spirit, the scripture describes him as “of that Wicked One” (I Jn. 3:12). The preposition “of” is from the Greek ek meaning “out of.” Cain was OUT OF that Wicked One — the seed of the serpent! Cain’s father was Adam and his mother was Eve — nothing can be plainer than that in Genesis 1:4. This is the very first evidence that the serpent is in man! Cain was born of Adam and Eve, but he was the offspring of the serpent nature, the fleshly man void of the Spirit.

Out of the descendents of Cain were produced the founders of man’s own system of supply for these three great needs of life. These direct descendents of Cain were the three sons of Lamech. Lamech was actually the great, great, great grandson of Adam. Men lived to be very old in those early days, and these generations arose rapidly in succession to one another, so Adam was not very old when his great, great, great grandson Lamech was born. As I mentioned, Lamech then had three sons, and through these sons the world system was rapidly accelerated. The first son, Jabal, was the father of tent dwellers and cattlemen (Gen. 4:20). Tents and cattle are for the supply of mortal man’s living and therefore belong to the category of provision. While Adam and Eve were in the Garden we read nothing of them making tents or building houses or raising cattle. In the beginning God revealed Himself to man as his provision, making Himself available to man in the spiritual fragrance of Eden and in the tree of life in the midst of the Garden, that in union with Him we should have all things, even the supply of God Himself as our dwelling and sustenance. Jabal represents man’s own efforts, apart from the life of God, to make provision for himself. Spiritually, this symbolizes the carnal religious systems of man with their rituals, ceremonies, ordinances, and programs designed to “feed” God to man. All religion is the invention of man in his effort to meet man’s spiritual need — apart from the life-flow of God! Alas, the multitudes of men within these systems understand not that the reality of God’s life is not contained in, nor administered through, creeds, programs, rituals, ceremonies, or ordinances. Those who live in that realm feed upon the husks of the grain but never taste of the life within the kernel. These know nothing of the wonder of the Christ within. Man’s religion is of the world, for it is outside of God, being not of the Spirit, nor by the anointing.
Another of Cain's grandsons, Jubal, was the father of all that handle the harp and organ. Playing harp and organ is for pleasure and inspiration and thus pertains to the category of relaxation and pleasure. This worldly aspect is fulfilled spiritually in the maze of social activity in religion, as well as in much of the music, programs, and sermonizing, all of which is designed to be pleasant, acceptable, and entertaining to the people. A “good preacher” is usually considered to be one who has charisma and can speak in an attention-grabbing, entertaining style. And have you ever noticed how preachers use music in a psychological way, having the musicians, for instance, playing softly in the background as they give the altar call or do personal ministry, laying on of hands, prophecy, etc., as though the soft, sentimental music adds something to the life of God by the anointing! That is not the song of the Lord, my beloved, it is the harp of Jubal!

I do not think that any spiritually-minded person could disagree with me when I say that nearly all the concerts, programs, and pulpit showmanship that constitute much of the so-called “ministry” among God’s people today are without doubt very appealing to the carnal mind which is ever wont to feed upon soulish entertainment rather than with reverential awe and holy brokenness to drink at the eternal fountains of living water that flow from the throne of God. I am convinced that our faithful Father has given the ministry of the blessed spirit of Truth, and that that spirit of Truth abides within all who receive of Him. There is abundant supply! God Himself is the portion of those who do know their God, and those who walk with God in the Spirit find their contentment, joy, and satisfaction in His pure reality! While God has given His manifest presence and true spiritual ministry for the perfecting of the saints, the worldly church system has given us a veritable smorgasbord of religious shows for the entertaining of the saints. Most solemnly do I declare unto you that all such ARE OF THE WORLD, and not of the Father, for their methods and means lie outside of the anointing of the Spirit and can never lead God’s people beyond the husks of man’s own vanity. Thank God! a people is arising who are finding their way out of Cain’s pleasure land of entertainment and sentimentality, back to the Paradise of God, back to the kingdom of heaven where they drink deeply of this sublime reality: “…in Thy presence is fullness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore!” (Ps. 16:11). Oh, yes!

The third grandson, Tubal-cain, was the instructor of every artificer in brass and iron instruments. These instruments were formed for the purpose of defense, thus referring to the category of protection. All the armaments of all the nations of the world today, all the guns, tanks, airplanes, missiles, bombs and warheads are the result of the spirit of Tubal-cain. On the personal level, all the martial arts, hand guns, mace, tasers, and every other offensive device used for self-protection pertain to this category. I quoted the following passage earlier, but let me quote it again for the instruction of all who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship to God. “Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servant FIGHT, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence” (Jn. 18:36).

I have no hesitation in telling you that on the basis of the deep truth of the principles of the kingdom of God revealed in those telling words, as well as many other teachings of the Christ, I have been a “conscientious objector” to war all my life because from a small child I could never believe that the spirit of warfare with its hatred, killing, violence, and savagery is compatible with the love of God or with the spirit of sonship. God is love, and the sons of God are the sons of Love! Love will affect every attitude and action toward men on the personal level, the corporate level, and the national level. Oh, yes, we have our excuses and a thousand reasons are given to go forth and kill and maim and destroy by warfare. “The government requires me to do it,” we say. That’s reminiscent of that other time-honored cop-out, “The devil made me do it!” “I must defend my country and our liberties,” we explain, “we have an obligation to our families, our communities, and our nation to defend ourselves.” So we wield the sword, fire machine guns, and bomb villages and cities into oblivion, blasting thousands, yea, millions of innocent men, women, and children out of
this world, and call on God to bless! What strange beings we “Christians” are who profess to follow in the footsteps of Him who said, “For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them” (Lk. 9:56). I tell you today that no son of God is sent into this world to destroy men’s lives, but every son of God is sent into the world to save them. No son of God, no brother of the lovely Jesus, is sent into this world to destroy even one life, but to become a saviour for all men!

War is not a matter of one soldier against one soldier. It is now a war of guns and bombs and germs and chemicals and landmines against soldiers and mothers and children and babes. Any way to intimidate the foe! Scare and blast loved ones out of this world into heaven or hell — that is the way to win! We little realize the awful depths into which the spirit of warfare carries us. As one wrote of a certain war: “I had to aim carefully at the straw roof and only succeeded at the third shot. The wretches who were inside, seeing their roof burning, jumped out and ran off like mad…surrounded by a circle of fire about five thousand people came to a sticky end. It was like hell, the smoke rose to incredible heights, and the flames reddened the setting sun.” Someone said, “War is hell,” and may I add, he who participates in it is therefore a minister of hell. Could it be otherwise?

War is still ruling our world and it is not spiritual; it is carnal, political, and devilish. As ambassadors of the Kingdom of Heaven we pledge allegiance to a higher kingdom than any of the kingdoms of this world. Sons of God cannot fight carnal warfare and at the same time “Love our enemies, bless them that curse us, do good to them that hate us, and pray for them which despitefully use us and persecute us; that we may be the sons of our Father which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust” (Mat. 5:44-45). We cannot fight carnal warfare because we are ambassadors for Christ! An ambassador is a representative of another country and he is not subject to the political laws of the country where he abides. He is granted diplomatic immunity! The King whom we represent has commissioned us to “love our enemies,” “bless and curse not,” and “see that none render evil for evil to any man.” We are to “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering.” “Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind.” How directly opposed are these attributes to the rules and spirit of war! Under the old covenant Yahweh required that His people Israel should go to war and fight and kill, but that covenant has been done away, and we are under the new covenant of grace whereby the law (nature) of God is written upon our hearts, and the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but are mighty through God!

If fighting and killing on carnal battlefields is right for the sons of God, then the priesthood after the order of Melchizedek, the priesthood of grace, mercy, love, reconciliation, and salvation is wrong; if the priesthood of love, even love for our enemies, is right, then for a son of God to participate in the carnal savagery of warfare is wrong. God is raising up in the earth a Kingdom of Priests — as SAVIOURS shall they come up on mount Zion! It is impossible to unconditionally and infinitely love all men while hating some men. And in the “war machine” of the nations it is impossible to go into battle with the “right frame of mind” unless your superiors have instilled into you a sense of outrage, anger, hostility, and hatred toward the enemy. It is not possible to be in preparation to deliver creation from the bondage of corruption while going out in the world’s war machine savagely blowing men to bits for whom Christ died. The irony of war is that there are in most cases soldiers who are Christians on both sides. These men, saved, perhaps baptized in the Holy Spirit, members of the body of Christ, who are to love and care for one another, and esteem one another, as Christ does us; and who are supposedly endued with a divine and heavenly love for all men, march out on the battlefield of carnal warfare at the command of their worldly governments and unregenerated politicians — and BLOW ONE ANOTHER’S BRAINS OUT! Brother shoots brother, and brother bombs brother — each sometimes in the name of Christ! Ponder the fact. In international wars over the past 2,000 years, professing Christians have
killed professing Christians by the millions! I have no hesitation in telling you that it is one of the most ridiculous contradictions in the world!

Now, we are talking about how God Himself was man’s defense in Eden. God as man’s defense is symbolized by the wall and gate that surrounded Eden, the spiritual realm of the kingdom of heaven on earth. When man departed from Eden he no longer had God as his defense and security, therefore he commenced to establish his own defense in the carnal realm. Do you think, my beloved, that today GOD CAN BE OUR DEFENSE? Can God Himself be the defense of either a man or a nation?

I first learned about the awesome power of God as our defense from my earthly father who was a good and holy man. He was a small man, only five feet, one and a half inches tall, but he was a man of courage, fearlessness, conviction, and a man of faith and power with God. He lived, breathed, and walked out what he perceived as true in God. And it worked! God was with him. He was an example of the power of the grace and love of God to overcome all evil with good. On more than one occasion he was attacked by men who had sworn to kill him because of the gospel. They came at him with bricks and two-by-fours and brute physical strength, and my father was a small man. He fearlessly stood his ground and spoke only the words, “I love you!” Their arms stopped in mid-air and they dropped their weapons. On one occasion the scene was less dramatic, but the Holy Ghost was upon my mother. As she spoke in tongues and turned the car around, my father was able to jump in and make his escape. He would never resist evil, never retaliate, never manifest any fear, antagonism, anger, or animosity. And he was never injured! God was powerfully with him at all times.

In the 1940’s my father joined himself to one of the Pentecostal denominations. When he was being examined for ordination to the ministry in this denomination he told the brethren, “There is something I must let you know. I am a conscientious objector. I do not believe a Christian has any right in the spirit of Jesus to resist any evil or go to war to fight against any enemy of our country.” He explained in detail his views on this matter. The brethren said to him, “But, brother Eby, what if a thief or rapist entered your house at night with the intent to rob you, or to molest your wife and children, or even kill you — what would you do — what would you do?” He answered, “I would call upon God and God would congeal him in the doorway and he would be unable to do us any harm. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, they are mighty through God.” “But,” the brethren pressed, “what if everyone believed as you do? What if no one would join the armed forces to defend our country? What if our enemies attacked us — what would we do?” My father responded, “My dear brethren, if everyone in this country believed as I do, there would be so much of the power of God in this nation that our enemies would not be able to attack us!” “Well, brother Eby,” the brethren said, “we don’t agree, but we do admire your faith.” They ordained him.

When men come to mount Zion they turn their weapons of destruction into instruments of blessing for their neighbors. “They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks” is not just a word for the nations in some future day; it begins with us who are being shaped to bring such a result in the world! The characteristic of the holy mountain of Zion is the Lamb — sacrificial, redeeming love! The only sword carried by the Lamb is the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Sons who stand with the Lamb on mount Zion have surrendered their right to be the aggressor, the destroyer with the sword. These are they that follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These have the mind of the Lamb, the spirit of the Lamb, the nature of the Lamb. They are rendered defenseless before their enemies, armed only with the power of redemptive love. They can no longer fight any man or any nation with words or attitudes or actions of murderous rage, let alone with weapons that maim, kill, and destroy. They come under the rule of the spirit of the defenseless Lamb who is the Saviour of the world! The sons of God belong to a spiritual Constitution. Their foes are spiritual, for they wrestle not against flesh and blood. Their armor is the armor of God and their sword is the sword of the Spirit!
Lorain and I have two sons and one daughter. We are blessed that all of them are walking with the Lord and with us in this Kingdom Walk. I tell you today that we are willing to see any or all of them offered up for our Lord Jesus Christ. We are willing to see them suffer privation, ill health, persecution, pain, or even death for the cause of Christ and His kingdom, should the Father require such of them. Lorain and I have made great sacrifices (though we did not consider them as such!) through the years in order to fulfill the call of God in our lives. And we are now willing with joy to have our children suffer that and even greater things in the walk of this Kingdom. We would not hinder one of them from following the Lord to any of the far-flung mission fields of the world — even to give their lives there for the gospel. We are willing to die, or see them die for Jesus — but we are NOT willing to see them die on any battlefield of any nation of this world. We are not willing to see them carrying guns or driving tanks or flying bombers to take the lives of men for whom Christ died. We are not willing to see them blowing to bits men to whom we have been called to bring the kingdom of Life, Light, and Love. I am willing to see my sons and my daughter pay whatever price necessary to deliver creation from the bondage of sin, sorrow, and death — but I am NOT willing to see them, at the whims of carnal-minded politicians, blow men away into hell and judgment. The sons of God must be preeminently the SONS OF LOVE. You cannot love and maim and kill at the same time! The very thought is an absurdity, a horrible blasphemy. “For God so loved the world…” And so will all who are called to sonship!

On the spiritual side, ignorant of the power and sufficiency of the indwelling spirit, with what pompousness do the religious systems construct about them their walls and implements of defense! Church history is replete with examples of revival after revival in which men were sovereignly caught up into heavenly places of revelation, glory, and power, only to have man put his hand of flesh on the workings of God, to control, protect, and preserve it as though the omnipotent Spirit needed man’s useless wisdom and regulations to preserve His mighty work! Out there in Tubal-cain’s world you must have the brass and iron instruments of man’s invention — implements of organization, denominations, fellowships, coverings, bishoprics, creeds, rules, regulations, boards, lawsuits, etc., to defend and preserve the work; but, praise God! as one moves back into Eden, back into the anointing of God’s life, back into the fragrant, manifest presence of God, the omnipotence of the indwelling spirit of life becomes our fortress and exceeding strong tower! With what deep comprehension of the ways and power of the Lord did the Psalmist pen the words of faith in the ability of God alone when he wrote, “Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance. For Thou art the glory of their strength: and in Thy favor shall our horn be exalted. For THE LORD IS OUR DEFENSE; the Holy One of Israel is our King” (Ps. 89:15-18).

Let us return now to our original thought of how Cain and his three great-grandsons founded the “world.” In these three important inventions of Cain’s progeny man found within himself the answer to his need of supply, defense, and amusement. Man found no need of God, of His presence, life, or power, for he set about to establish his own world, independent of God. This was the civilization produced after mankind departed from the presence of God — a godless life created by men. This present world system of things is patterned after the order of Cain. It is all outside of God. That does not mean that it is all evil. It simply is not of the Spirit! How clear that in this earth the politics, economics, education, entertainment, commerce, and religion are all outside of God! When we have learned how the world was formed, it is easy to define the world. Originally, man was in the family of God, lived by God, relied entirely upon Him, and had at his disposal ALL THE FULLNESS OF GOD. Now the serpent, through subtlety, sophistry, the carnal mind, the wisdom of this world, has systematized the world to replace God in being all to man. Man, having forsaken his inheritance, having departed from the presence, and having lost his life, relied upon the world and was overcome by the world. Therefore the world consists of everything that replaces God and possesses man!
The world is not for us. Its methods are not for us. Its fashions are not for us. Its institutions are not for us. Its ways are not for us. Its lifestyle is not for us. Its mentality is not for us. Its spirit is not for us. We are different. We are of God! We are called to higher things! We are led by the Spirit, the sons of God. God is saving us out of this world. Those apprehended to sonship are overcoming the world, just as they are overcoming the flesh, sin, and death. Jesus said, “I have overcome the world” (Jn. 16:33). John wrote, “For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (I Jn. 5:4). Peter admonishes, “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (II Pet. 1:4). And finally, the apostle James entreats us, “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God!” (James 4:4). And thank God! the world is passing away. Not the earth that we live on, not our solar system, but the world — the present carnal system of things. And with it, all the chaos, sin, war, crime, poverty, pain, pride, deceit, death; yea, all that is not of the Father shall pass away. We have God’s word for it!

Even now as we learn to rise up in God, to put on His mind, to walk in His ways, to know His voice, to be led by His Spirit, to be conformed to His image, the nature, glory, and authority of that NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH are being formed within us. There has been released from heaven in the past several years a great and wonderful expectancy. It is the expectancy that all heaven is about to break loose in the midst of the Lord’s people on a world-wide basis. Do you identify with that expectancy? God is raising up voices throughout the length and breadth of the land to say, “The earth is about to see the glory of God in an unprecedented way.” A host of heavenly messengers has been released to every corner of the globe bearing the message, “And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all mankind together will see it, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it” (Isa. 40:5). I have heard that message from every quarter of the earth, and it is the word of the Lord for this day!

Those who think all things are going to continue on as they are, are deceived. Even as I write, this planet is in the greatest spiritual, political, and economic change since World War II. Not too many years ago both the century and the millennium changed. History’s “odometer” turned up to 7000 — the beginning of the seventh day since Adam was banished in sorrow from Eden’s bright portals. But that means nothing to me except that I have heard the voice of the Lord announcing that He is about to do a new and wonderful thing in the earth! The manifestation of the sons of God is at hand! God is accelerating His kingdom program in the earth. We have entered an era or great change. Deliverance will come! There is no way out of the spiritual darkness of this hour, short of the manifestation of the sons of God. The “gospel” that is being preached today by the churches is powerless to alter the course of history. A mere “revival,” or more missionary outreaches, or the election of Christian politicians will not solve the immense problems of mankind, banish Islam, eradicate the man-made systems of Christianity, extinguish Buddhism and all the other isms of the world, bring peace to the warring Middle East, and bring blessing, peace, justice, righteousness, prosperity, healing, life, and immortality to the blighted masses of mankind. Nothing short of the manifestation of the sons of God can avail! Nothing! NOTHING!

With this manifestation the Day of the Lord will shine brighter and brighter. Whole nations will be impacted by the power and glory of the kingdom of God. Immortality and incorruption will begin to spring forth in a people. God shall roar out of Zion! The Lord Jesus shall come to be revealed in His people in all His glorious fullness. Mercy and judgment shall kiss each other in the midst of the earth. Great and terrible shall be the Day of the Lord! The “Day of the Lord” has nothing to do with wars, antichrists, or great vengeance and wrath poured out, as the preachers are wont to proclaim. It is the DAY of the Lord, the dawning and arising of HIS GLORY! I can assure you that a new age is on the horizon, a new dispensation of His working, and we cry out to be ready, and a partaker of that life-flow.
“I have given them Thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world” (Jn. 17:14). If Jesus was not of the world, why was He in the world? If there was no sympathy between Him and the world, why was it that He lived in it and did not remain in that high and holy and blessed realm from whence He came? The answer is, the Father sent Him into the world to redeem the world! In these two expressions, “in the world,” and “not of the world,” we find the whole secret to His work as the manifest Son of God in the earth, and the King of the Kingdom.

He was “in the world” to face the powers that rule the world, to learn obedience, and to overcome the world. He was “not of the world” to bring men the life from above, that which man lost from his consciousness in sin, that men might see it and long for it and have it quickened again within them. He was “in the world” witnessing against its sin and shame and sham, its static religion and corrupt government, its impotence to know and please God. He was “not of the world” founding a kingdom entirely spiritual in nature and heavenly in origin, entirely independent from all that the world cherishes, promotes, and imposes, with principles and laws and a spirit the very opposite of those that rule the world. He came and inaugurated a program in the earth to bring deliverance to all mankind, deliverance from “THE WORLD,” from the tyranny of the teeth and paws of the wild beast out of the sea! It has been a long and progressive working, as the Lord has come in mighty spirit-power among His people throughout the church age, gradually but surely perfecting, purifying, instructing, transforming, increasing, and preparing a people, a many-membered body, a company of manifest sons of God, to bring the full revelation of HIS SONSHIP and HIS KINGDOM and HIS POWER and HIS GLORY, to conquer the hearts of all men everywhere, to subdue the vaunted kingdoms of earth, to bring down the pride of man, to abolish the ruling of orders of the flesh, replacing the rule of the beast with the reigning of the LAMB! Aren’t you glad!
Chapter 150
The Beast Out Of The Sea
continued

“And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority” (Rev. 13:1-2).

John beholds how out of the sea there emerges a frightful monster, a beast, indeed a wild beast, as it is in the Greek, ferocious and ravenous of nature. When we compare the term “beast” with the term “dragon” and the location of each, it becomes clear that the beast out of the sea in not the same as the dragon which has been cast out from heaven into the earth. The dragon is identified in chapter twelve as that ancient serpent, which is the Devil and Satan. The beast rises up out of the sea and receives his throne, authority, and power from the dragon. Individually, the beast represents the same thing as the sea out of which he ascends, that is, the body-realm, the carnal nature of the flesh man, the natural man, the wicked man, man at the lowest level of his being, the man of sin who is motivated, dominated, and controlled by the satanic spirit. YET THIS BEAST IS SOMETHING MORE THAN THAT! The scene here is not one merely of our individual state of being, but bespeaks manifestation, expression, action, organization, proclamation, and power!

The beast doesn't remain hidden beneath the turbulent waters of the sea, but rises up into the earth-realm in visible manifestation. His description indicates a corporate expression rather than an individual one. He walks, speaks, acts, and accomplishes. The beast blasphemes God and makes war against the saints. Power is given unto him over all kindreds, tongues, and nations. This is the carnal nature, the man of sin, manifested in a visible, organized, and powerful apparatus! In meditating upon these things a strange and wonderful unfolding pervaded my spirit and the truth of this became exceedingly clear. It is my deep conviction that this beast signifies the outward expression of THE WORLD SYSTEM OF MAN. This is the beast lurking beneath the surface of the deep, which rises up from our sea (fleshly nature) having many heads (manifestations of authority), many horns (organized powers), and spewing blasphemies from its mouth. This beastly system is always, everywhere, decade after decade, century after century, generation after generation, rising up out of the sea of humanity, out of all the people on the earth. It is a ferocious and vast system originating right out of human nature! And this system relentlessly makes war against the spiritual life of God’s people!

We know that the “world” is a “cosmos,” a system. It is not a loose-knit, disconnected pile of things like the cast-offs in a junk yard. It is a highly organized, sophisticated system. It is a cohesive order organized out of the cunning and worldly wisdom of the Adamic mind. The apostle James describes two kinds of wisdom, and each of these two types of wisdom originate from a mind! “Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and
strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace” (James 3:13-18).

The wisdom which is from beneath is the wisdom from the mind of the beast that rises up out of the depths of the sea. This mind is the mind of the flesh, known as the carnal mind, and is earthly, sensual, and demonic. It is rooted in pride, lust, and vanity, and its fruit is selfish ambition, envy, jealousy, and strife. This earthly, sensual, and demonic wisdom can also daily be heard coming from the mouths of politicians, educators, psychiatrists, psychologists, newscasters, preachers, advertising, television programs, movies, plus a thousand other places. Be still, my beloved, and you may hear its whispering voice right out of your own fleshly mind! Oh, yes, it poses as “wisdom,” a way or attitude or action which seems desirable, acceptable, justifiable, logical, and needful, but it is the wisdom of the dragon.

All the wisdom of this world contains the mind (thoughts and intents) of the evil one. It is centered in selfish ambition and worldly pursuits and pleasures, and governs this world system. The carnal mind cannot receive the mind of Christ because the flesh cannot receive the things of the spirit, for they are spiritually discerned. On the other hand, the wisdom from above can only be received or known by revelation! The wisdom of heaven is full of godly discernment and divine character and purpose! The carnal mind delights in fleshly, earthly, and demonic wisdom, and it despises the heart, mind, and will of God’s Christ. The spiritual mind, which is the mind of Christ, is empowered to discern the true nature of all things and rejoices in that which is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praise-worthy (Phil. 4:8).

No phase or feature of the bestial system of the world operates independently of the whole. The entire world system of man, whether it be in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Cuba, the Gaza Strip, Europe, America, Japan, China, or elsewhere, is organized, compacted together, and so fitted together under the inspiration and direction of the great red dragon. Whether it be political, or economic, or social, or artistic, or educational, or commercial, or religious in nature, you will find the world to be one vastly organized, interrelated, and interdependent network. The world may exhibit itself in the form of wealth, fame, position, or power; or in the form of control, tyranny, ruthlessness, wrath, persecution; or in the form of beauty, entertainment, attraction, enticement, allurement, pleasure; or in the form of provision, safety, security, even religion. Whatever its form, beneath the carefully fabricated façade lurks the bestial nature of the dragon intent on swallowing you up like a wild beast! Hence we are continually being exposed to a vast and formidable array of manifestations of the world system of man as a coherent mass. And though it may express itself in many different forms and on various levels, the fact remains that all its parts are merely functional members of the one corporate body of the one great beast out of the sea!

This beast does not have your best interests at heart! The beast is wild. The beast is predatory, ravenous, fierce, ferocious, savage, and bloodthirsty. The beast is mad. There are many species of insanity. All sin is insanity, in different degrees. The carnal mind is an insane mind given wholly to destructive delusions. It is a mind that has taken flight from reality. The natural man is mentally ill beyond comprehension. He is a beast. The carnal mind is spared from this classification in our world, only because the vast majority of the inmates in this vast asylum called “society” are the ones making the rules and writing the definitions! There is a universal insanity of the so-called wisdom of this world, but the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God — the Spirit. The mortal, sinful, sick, warring, confused, bigoted, proud, self-conceited, hateful, murderous, deceiving, coercing, sorrowing, imperfect, carnally minded children of men are counterfeits, to be laid aside for the pure reality — man in the image of God! This mortal, this deranged mind of old Adam, must be put off, and the new man, or real man, the sane man in the heavenly mind of Christ, must be
put on! “Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of Him that created him” (Col. 3:9-10).

Have you ever incurred the anger of men? It is just as unreasonable, fierce, savage, and untamed as a wild beast! And the wrath of the world system is a thousand times more ruthless than the anger of one man, for it is a very tightly organized network which has risen out of the sea of mankind’s corrupt heart, and the dragon has given this bestial system his power, and throne, and great authority! It should be evident that when the dragon gives the beast his power, his throne, and his authority, it is not a free grant to the wild beast! You can be sure that the beast is required to give the dragon something in return. We can see what the dragon requires of the wild beast when we read what the devil demanded of Jesus when trying to seduce Him with the gift of all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. The devil (dragon) said to Him, “All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine!” (Lk. 4:6-7). So the “throne of the wild beast” depended upon the worship, or the homage, that the beast would give to the dragon. There is its location, its resting-place. Can we not see by this that the location of the throne of the beast has never changed? It has always been based or made to stand upon the worship and subjection the beast pays to the dragon! The meaning is just this: if you will bow to, obey, become subservient to the dictates, desires, ambitions, ways, methods, and purposes of the Adamic mind, the carnal nature — YOU CAN GET ANY AND EVERYTHING YOU WANT! THE “WORLD” WITH ALL IT WEALTH, POWER, AND GLORY CAN BE YOURS! JUST DO THINGS THE WORLD’S WAY AND YOU WILL BE SUCCESSFUL! It is a coherent order organized under the dominion of the god of this world! That is the mystery.

Beloved brethren, would you understand the nature of this beast? Here is what the Holy Spirit has taught us concerning it. “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you” (Jn. 15:18-19). “Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you” (I Jn. 3:13). “I have given them Thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil” (Jn. 17:14-15).

As one has written, “Brethren, since we have accepted the word of God, since we have followed Christ, since we have sought Him whom it hates, therefore, the world hates us. Why? Because we do not belong to the world. The world may be attractive, the world may project an excellent facade, the world may appear refined, civilized, and cultured; but brothers and sisters, once you incur the wrath of man then you will know what the world is. If you go along with it all the time the world may seem to be very civilized and quite refined; but once its wrath is kindled, once you attempt to break away from its tradition, customs, ways, and thought, what then do you find? The real nature of this world is revealed, and it is the nature of a wild beast! The wrath of man is like a savage, uncontrollable animal. It is so covetous that it has hardly the patience to chew you, it instead wants to swallow you! It is as greedy and insatiable as hell, and as cruel as hades! In figure it is not unlike that incident in the Old Testament of the earth being opened and swallowing up all which belonged to Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Num. 16:32). Let us recognize the world for what it is: it is like a wild irrational beast: it is trying to devour you, to swallow you, to kill you — spiritually. Is it not true? Is it not true? But thank God, the Lord is on our side. Now if the Lord is for us, the world cannot swallow us! No matter how it may try, it cannot swallow us up!”

We see, then, that we're not looking for some future, coming antichrist; the beast is already here, and he is the bestial system of the world. Christians everywhere are busy looking for a mad superman like Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, Gorbachev, or some other; but men such as these are but small cogs in the great wheel of the real beast. It's not a single person we're
looking for! The beast is everywhere and we've all been contaminated by that system. People don't even realize that they're being contaminated as they give heed to the thinking of the world's political, economic, educational, media, entertainment, military, and social leaders. They're receiving the system into their minds, then doing the works of the devil because they're unknowingly adopting his values and agendas.

The beast has so deceived the world, including the church. These days, sin is just as rampant in the church as it is in the world! Whatever society is doing, that is what the church members are also doing. Whatever values Dr. Phil or Oprah Winfrey are espousing, these become the values of the Christian community. Whatever standards the government legislates or the courts mandate, the church migrates to those standards. The beastly system has invaded the church, and the ways of the world have stamped their mark upon it. The system has become such a part of us! The churches operate in the same "professionalized" manner as the world. Religion has become big business, hyped just as the world hyps their wares. If the world has its rock concerts, the church changes the words to Christian words and entertains their children with the same beat and the same appearance. The church has not influenced the world, the world has shaped the church! Christians get all involved in politics, rooting for this candidate and that, for this proposition and the other, supposing that they can somehow legislate righteousness in the land. Somehow they have failed to comprehend the awful truth that nearly all politicians are opportunists, strategists, deceivers, and liars! They say one thing to get your vote, and then do another. Nor do they understand the solemn truth that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation — NOT the power of God unto legislation! Laws do not change any man's heart, they merely bring the vengeance of the law down upon the heads of the evil-doers. THAT IS NOT THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST! THAT IS THE POWER OF THE WORLD! THE MINISTRY OF THE SON OF GOD AND THE SONS OF GOD IS TO REDEEM MEN, CHANGE MEN, TRANSFORM MEN, GIVE MEN A NEW HEART, AND MAKE THEM A NEW CREATION IN CHRIST JESUS! Oh, how the church has sold out to the world — yea, the church has been captured by the beast! “And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them” (Rev. 13:7)

Now if you join yourself to the world and its value system, and live by its spirit, you can live out a robotic existence. Someone once asked the great Indian Christian mystic, Sadhu Sundar Singh, following his trip to Europe and America, what he thought of Western civilization. He told them, “I did not see real civilization but animalism. The people do not know Christ, do not live with Him. They have learned how to dress, eat, be punctual, they are trained animals; that is not civilization. If we only know our relationship with God then our life will be a true life. ‘Man, know thyself.’ If we have real life in Jesus Christ, then we shall know many other things. In order to know it is not necessary to be a learned man. A very simple man may know real life in Christ. Learned people cannot understand.”

If you are one with the world, you will not be bothered, for the world accepts you and you fulfill its expectations. But just you try to be separated from the world, just you try to break away from its entangling spirit, ways, values, requirements, and organization and instantly you will find that the world will hate you: because now you no longer belong! Dear saint of God, if we are to attain the prize of sonship, we must heed the exhortation of the inspired apostle who has admonished us, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not” (I Jn. 2:15-17; 3:1).

Oh, how we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory that the Lord has delivered us from the world and has transferred us into another world, another realm, a new society, a higher
kingdom — the kingdom of God and His sons! Because we no longer belong to that old, disintegrating and passing order of the Adamic man, therefore the world, including the religious world, hates us; it rises up in contempt, in wrath, in fury, in persecution, trying to devour us, to overwhelm us, trying to entrap us in its snare. But blessed be God, every member of God’s called and chosen elect has been thoroughly dealt with by God and has escaped the snare of the fowler! Isn’t it wonderful!

Now we come to an amazing word which may be hard for the natural mind to interpret, but when men seek the face of the Lord He sends His Holy Spirit to dispel the darkness of the carnal mind that He may reveal the things that pertain to the kingdom of God. The promise is made, “In that day the Lord with His sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent, and He SHALL SLAY THE DRAGON THAT IS IN THE SEA” (Isa. 27:1). Truly this is the serpent that dwells within all mankind, the bestial nature within the Adamic man, the inner force which opposes the spirit and tries to bind us to earthly things, keeping us from seeking those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Oh, how I rejoice in the blessed knowledge that God has promised deliverance for all mankind as this sea-dwelling beast is slain with the mighty, strong sword of the Lord — THE WORD OF GOD! As surely as the raging sea represents multitudes of restless, clamoring, surging, sinning humanity (Rev. 17:15), so does the beast in the sea signify the nature that generates all the evil created by man. It is this mighty beast within that agitates the waters of the sea and makes them turbulent, as the prophet has said, “The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt” (Isa. 57:20). He speaks of the troubled sea of wicked men “when it cannot rest.” Is it not true that this sea of humanity cannot rest because of the beast that swims in the sea! When the beast is slain by the mighty, strong sword of the Lord, wielded by the overcoming sons of God, the waters of every sea will become calm and serene, tranquil and quiet, transformed “even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” The sea-dwelling beast will have been dealt with! The inner nature of man shall have been transformed and the sea will become a “sea of glass”! No beast will again clamber up out of this sea, for the throne of God is seen upon its shore! “And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal…” (Rev. 4:6).

The sword of the Lord is the word of God, the living and energetic word, the omnipotent word by which He slays the beast in the sea. When the bestial nature which once brought forth raging waves of the sea is conquered, the sea of man becomes peaceful and serene, expressing the peace of the kingdom of God. In the earth today there are two companies of “sea people” — those of the troubled sea and those of the sea of glass. Thank God, amidst all the trouble, distress, sorrow, problems, and pressures of the world system there is a sea of glass people, a people abiding in the peace of the kingdom of heaven on earth! But the day is coming when the whole great beast shall be slain and all the waters of earth shall become wondrously calm and tranquil before the majesty of the Lord! Oh, yes! When the beast is dead all men will be willing subjects of the Lordship of the indwelling Spirit. The whole earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord and the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea! That is the word of the Lord!

NAMES OF BLESPEHY

“I…saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy” (Rev. 13:1).

Here we are informed that this beast has upon his heads the “names of blasphemy.” The King James Bible has the singular form “name,” but in the Greek text the word is “names” — plural. It is not one name but seven names, for there are seven heads. The message is just this — upon his heads of authority are inscribed the seven-fold name of blasphemy — the nature of absolute blasphemy! 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 laid down by the Medical Association, he is labeled a malpractitioner. This gives you our modern counterpart of blasphemy.

Thus we can see that this beast rising up out of the sea symbolized 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, killed, or excommunicated! Oh, yes!

The word “world,” as I have pointed out, translates the Greek word kosmos meaning order, arrangement, system of things. The world is a negative thing in relation to God because it is a system organized outside of the anointing, life, and will of God. Many Christians have the mistaken notion that the world is the movie theater, the dance hall, ball games, stylish clothing, jewelry, makeup, and such like. Others confuse the world with the earth. But the world is the present system of things upon this earth conceived by the carnal mind and generated by the natural man. The world consists of all that man has instituted that replaces God in his life. The present political, economic, educational, and religious systems are not of God, but of the world. When people, activities, or things — whether good or bad, beautiful or ugly — enslave man and usurp God, they comprise the world. Anything that causes man to disregard the spirit, be removed from the anointing, stop making progress onward and upward, or be independent of God is the world. All that does not come from the Father, all that originates from any source other than the mind of Christ, all that man institutes by his own carnal wisdom and fleshly activity is of the world. It is not according to God’s purpose for man to be subject to any system that he himself creates! Nor is it according to God’s purpose for His people to be subject to religious systems that they themselves form! All are outside of the life, nature, word, and ways of God and are therefore of the world.

Let us return to the thought of blasphemy. 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 is 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 coming up out of the sea bearing in his heads the 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, His word, His purpose, His ways, or His will; or it can be that which supplants or usurps the true things of God!

Even some of God’s elect have been deceived into taking upon them names of blasphemy. The firstborn Son of God, when 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. But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, 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: and 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 hath 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 Master, 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 of the early 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 my dictionary defines one holding the degree of Doctor of Divinity as “a teacher of religion!” Oh, yes! It is a title of Babylon — of THE RELIGIOUS SYSTEM OF MAN! There is no denying it. I must ask, Who made my brother my brother? God made him my brother by the power of regeneration and calling to 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 night 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 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 one of the names of blasphemy borne by the beast carrying the harlot! (Rev. 17:1-5).
My heart is full today and I could passionately plead the cause of this issue, but I doubt that I, or many others, could express the penetrating truth of it more powerfully than brother Larry Hodges did some years ago in one of his Shofar Letters wherein he wrote, “There is no point in mentioning names here, but men and women you would think should know better have begun to aspire to titles, theological degrees, and recognition of men. The reasoning is, as I was told by one of them, that ‘a doctor’s degree will open doors for us that would never open otherwise, and too, it is felt that our work, over the years, should receive notice and recognition.’ I must tell you, I was almost speechless at first upon hearing this, for as I said, these are not brethren who just lately came to the kingdom. These men are very deep in revelatory knowledge and are very much in demand among the Body of Christ throughout the United States and the world.

“I definitely felt the urging of the Holy Spirit to tell them my feelings even though I detest confrontation. I said to them, ‘Brothers, I want you to know that I love you and appreciate your spirit and what I believe is an honest sincerity, but I must tell you that I believe you are missing God in this matter. Jesus, our Pattern, never sought the recognition of men or their approbation. You may indeed find that you are able to gain entrance through certain doors with these credentials that would otherwise be closed to you, but a crowbar will do as much for a burglar. What need have we to find a way to open doors that God has not opened to us? Paul didn’t return to the feet of Gamaliel for more status through recognized credentials, but rather counted all such things but dung! Never has any move of God had the acceptance of the world and the power of God at the same time. Rather, what has repeatedly happened is that in every case when men have grown weary of rejection, shame, and obscurity, and have sought the acceptance of man, it has cost in life, power, and spiritual reality. So far as I know, there has not been a single exception. I would caution you brethren to seek the Lord further about this before going on.’ I was told, ‘We are so completely identified with the Lord and His will now that we are the will of God, so whatever we do is the will of God.’ At this word the inner urging I had previously had from the Holy Spirit abruptly ceased.

“Please understand that I have no quarrel with anyone who has gone to college and has earned a doctorate, or any other degree required to do his work. Nor do I believe that God places a premium on ignorance or that a lack of knowledge is somehow a virtue. What I’m saying here is that such things are in an altogether other realm than the kingdom of God! They have absolutely nothing to do with the kingdom of heaven or its authority! What is a man to do who finds himself with access to multitudes of people, gained only with a crowbar and authority of his man-issued doctorate? Is God now somehow obligated to anoint his message with life? Or must he not now minister in the same authority by which he gained entrance — the authority of that doctorate — human authority. It seems that some have so much revelation knowledge that they are able to minister out of this great reservoir rather than to depend on the enablement and unction of the Spirit. Such is soulish and often sounds very good and goes a long way in tickling the ears and pleasing those in the soulish realm, but it is not a living word which brings change in one’s life! And brother, sister, if we are not ministering life, we are ministering death!

“While some in the ministry are succumbing to the allure of fame and recognition: to the titles, collars, and garb of man’s religion: and to the money, popularity, and acceptance of approval; many others, most of whom are not even involved in what has come to be known as pulpit ministry, are quietly going about their Father’s business in some out of the way, back-water place designed of the Lord just for them. Little do they realize that just as Moses must have his backside of the desert experience prior to setting God’s people free, so must God’s sons in the making have theirs’ prior to setting creation free! The sons will not come on the scene from an accredited institution of higher learning. They will not be thrust forth from the stained-glassed, deep-piled carpeting of the air-conditioned Cathedrals of Babylon. Nor will they burst on the scene from among the vaunted ranks of the well-known. This I declare to you without equivocation! When the sons of God step out on the world stage for
the first time, they will have nothing else to recommend them in any way whatsoever except the nature, power, and authority of the Lamb!

"I recently picked up a Christian magazine, probably one of the very best out, and began reading an article on dying to self and what it means. Please believe me when I tell you that I have no bone to pick with the author on a personal level. I don’t even know the man. I am simply speaking of facts and of a condition which prevails throughout ‘Christendom.’ As I read the article, I became aware that my spirit was Amening everything. ‘This is great!’ I thought to myself. ‘Thank God, the idea that it’s not in greatness but in nothingness is finally getting through.’ I found that as I read, I could say Amen to every paragraph, every sentence, every word. It was truly on the mark and very encouraging to me. Then, at the end of the article, the publisher or someone with the authority to do so, had footnoted the article with the man’s credentials. Indeed, every article in the magazine was validated with a similar footnote. ‘Dr._________ is an internationally known and dynamic speaker and teacher of the church government and spiritual order. Wisely esteemed as an apostle to the ministry and the church at large, he has traveled in over 50 countries and 6 continents.’

"’So what’s wrong with that?’ you may ask. IT ISN’T ACCORDING TO THE MIND OF CHRIST OR TO THE MESSAGE THE MAN HAD WRITTEN! Do you realize what this means, saints of God? It means that there is a mentality in the church in this hour, and especially in the ministry, that has all the right words, all the right phrases, understands the doctrine, has an anointing, believes what it is teaching…up to a point, but is still locked into another (Babylonian) mode of thinking and expression. I heard one famous preacher preaching that there are no famous preachers in Zion! What he was saying was true, but he was preaching one thing and living another. Jesus said of the scribes and Pharisees, ‘…do ye not after their works, for they say and do not.’ They laud and commend one another before the congregation of the Lord, giving flattering titles of credentials — Dr. So-in-so, Prophet So-in-so, Reverend So-in-so. It is a spiritual caste system! ‘…be ye not called Rabbi…Master…Father…for One is your Master…and…Father…and ye are all brethren. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant’ (Mat. 23:8-11). Why can we not say with Job, ‘Let me not, I pray you, accept any man’s person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man. For I know not to give flattering titles; in so doing my Maker would soon take me away’ (Job 32:21-22). I have said it before and will repeat it here — the only proof of what we say we believe is our life! God’s elect in this hour have come to some age and maturity. They do not need to see a man’s credentials, the hem of his garment, or his ring, in order to know whether he is true and anointed or not. We are not told to beware of false prophecy but of false prophets — meaning that the message can be true and the man false. It is quite possible to have revelation and not walk in it. What a loss!

"It is not possible to come into what God is about to do, that is, come into fullness, while still retaining the old life with its pattern, structure, and methods. There are some in ministry in this hour which see the handwriting on the wall but cannot bring themselves to actually fall into the ground and become nothing, to become hidden in obscurity and die! They cannot bring themselves to let go of the fame, the recognition, the adulation, the money, the life of an order that they know is passing away. They know it is passing away but seem to somehow believe that if they can just say the right things and present themselves in the light of present truth, that they will be able somehow to come into what they know God is now doing without loss or a real death to self. King Saul thought this also. It didn’t work then and it won’t work now.

"They know, as well as king Saul knew, that God will not establish the present order as His kingdom. They know that the command has been given by God to slay Amalek (flesh-self) utterly and spare him not, and they even preach it. If you ask them if they are making war with Amalek in utterness they will tell you, ‘Yea, I have performed the commandment of the Lord’ (I Sam. 15). If that is so, then what meaneth this bleating of the sheep in mine ears
and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? What is this odious, sickening stench which comes to our nostrils if it is not the very king of Amelek himself — the well-named Agag!

“These have spared the king alive and the best of the sheep and oxen to sacrifice to the Lord! Even though God is asking for obedience and not sacrifice, they are intent on bringing over into the kingdom of God the very best of flesh and of self: their oratorical abilities, their writing skills, their charismatic personalities, their skill in manipulating the people as they dramatically glare and glower at them in a supposed divine authority, their talent in singing and playing of musical instruments and of entertainment, their gift for gab, etc., etc. They cannot part with that life in which there has been a measure of anointing, a measure of success, a measure of blessing, a measure of victory, and drink in its place the cup of nothingness that they might come into fullness. Like king Saul, they are terrified that the people will leave them and scatter even more. The sad fact is that regardless of what they do to attempt to hold onto the kingdom they have built and continue to build, the people of God will continue to scatter from the Saul ministry as they gather more and more unto David the true king!

“There are a great many precious brethren who are laboring in obscurity and are not seeking to be seen and known of men. Some of them have at one time been well-known and have willingly let go of it or are taking steps to curtail that method of ministry. We have no axe to grind with individuals as such. It is with this corrupting method which steals from the glory of Christ and wrongly attaches the attention to man that we now take issue. This is a warning to all who have ears to hear, that Saul’s house shall continue to wax weaker and weaker as David’s house waxes stronger and stronger, and that we are to align ourselves not with Saul, but with David while David is still in obscurity. We have no malice toward those brethren who are caught in such a hateful trap as described here. We truly love them. We really do, and pray for the day of their release and know that it is certainly coming. But, love them though we surely do, and pray for them though we surely do, we cannot take part with them in that which God shall not establish. We do not take issue with the men but with that stifling system and its methods and structure which seek (unwittingly, I believe and hope) to offer through man-made Christianity, an alternative to the whole Christ. God has something much better in store for those who will truly lay their lives down than a warmed-over version of the same old thing!” — end quote.
The apostle John had been exiled to the isle of Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. As he walked the rugged shores of Patmos, he found himself caught up in spirit to behold in vision the mighty inworkings of God in His called and chosen people, and the outworkings of His great plan and purpose in the earth and in all mankind. In the vision now under consideration John beholds how out of the sea emerges a beast, indeed a wild beast, of ferocious and ravenous nature. The beast rises up out of the sea and receives his throne, authority, and power from the dragon. Individually, the beast represents the character of the sea from whence he ascends, that is, the body-realm, the carnal nature of the flesh man, the natural man, the wicked man, man at the lowest level of his being, the outward works and manifestation of the man of sin who is motivated, dominated, and controlled by the satanic spirit. On a higher level, however, this beast is something more sophisticated than that! The scene here is not one merely of our individual state of being and our personal actions, but bespeaks manifestation, expression, action, organization, proclamation, and power on the collective, communal, and societal plane.

John’s description indicates a corporate expression rather than an individual one. The beast walks, speaks, acts, controls, persecutes, and accomplishes. He blasphemes God and makes war against the saints. Worldwide power is given unto him, over all kindreds, tongues, and nations. It is my conviction that this beast signifies the outward expression of THE WORLD SYSTEM OF MAN. This is the beast lurking beneath the surface of the deep, which rises up from our sea (fleshly nature) having many heads (manifestations of authority), many horns (organized powers), and spewing blasphemies from its mouth. This bestial system is always, generation after generation, rising up out of the sea of humanity. It is a vast and ferocious system originating right out of human nature! And this system, in one way or another, relentlessly makes war against the spiritual life of God’s people!

The world system of man began with Cain and his descendants at the very dawn of human history. After the great flood in Noah’s day, the bestial system immediately ascended again from the sea of humanity at Babel. Notice how the human nature gave form to this system: “And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly...let us build a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth” (Gen. 11:2-4). When we compare these words with the call of God to Abraham, the vast difference between the SYSTEM OF MAN and the KINGDOM OF GOD becomes very, very clear. Consider these words to Abraham in the very next chapter of Genesis: “Now the LORD said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou
shall be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee…and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 12:1-3).

The primary contrast has to do with the fact that Babylon was a democracy in which the citizens made their own decisions, acting as a sovereign city-state in line with what it assumed to be its self-interest, without regard to the leadership, purpose, or will of God. The kingdom of God, on the other hand, is governed by the revealed will of God and the leadership of the Holy Spirit, in line with His great plan and purpose for mankind. Can we not see by this that all the “secular” governments of today are a self-proclaimed autonomy from the rule of the Spirit — indeed, Babylon! They are, one and all, in our day, the beast rising up out of the sea!

THE HEAD THAT WAS WOUNDED AND HEALED

“And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast” (Rev. 13:3).

The seven heads signify the completeness of the authority of the bestial system in opposition to the spirit and people of God. The word “wounded” is the same word in the Greek that is translated “slain” in reference to the Lamb: “And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne…stood a Lamb as it had been slain” (Rev. 5:6). The Greek word is sphazo meaning “slaughtered.” The head of the beast had not been merely wounded or smitten, it had been as it were “slaughtered unto death.” And it was not merely his “deadly wound,” but it was the “stroke of his death” that had been healed. It was as a death and resurrection from death — the contrast and travesty of that death and resurrection which had befallen the Lamb of God slaughtered and raised again! Truly, these are spiritual things we are dealing with! Of the bestial world system Jesus said, “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer: I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD!” (Jn. 16:33). And of the dragon who gives power unto the bestial system Jesus declared, “The prince (evil genius, ruler) of the world is coming. And he has no claim on me — he has nothing in common with me, there is nothing in me that belongs to him, he has no power over me” (Jn. 14:30, Amplified).

Jesus did not come to modify the world system; He came to destroy it. Daniel makes this very clear. “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and…it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever” (Dan. 2:44). The Redeemer of the world came, not to wound or weaken the prince of this world only, but to “bring him to naught” (Heb. 2:14). He came to subdue him, to overcome him, destroying his dominion and crushing his power. This is the work which the Lord Jesus came to perform — to destroy the kingdom of Satan in the world, and to set up another kingdom in its place, subduing all things unto Himself!

Our text doesn’t identify which of the seven heads was wounded as unto death. None of the heads are identified. Many commentators have endeavored to identify these heads as specific historical kings or kingdoms, either of the Pagan Roman Empire, the Christian Roman Empire, or some other. There are as many interpretations as there are writers! Some have speculated that the overturning of one government by another would be likened to giving a death-stroke to one of the beast’s heads; but there would finally have to be seven such slaughterings of a head to death in order to slay the beast. It is my conviction that all such speculation misses the point. The reality remains that the Holy
Spirit does not give even a clue as to what such a fulfillment would be! Seven is the perfect number, indicating the complete and absolute authority of the beast. This point is so very important! George Hawtin once wrote of the world system of man: “The world has seen six thousand years of such unrighteous government, so much unscrupulous underhandedness and double talk, so many broken promises, so much disregard for truth, so much cunning connivng, so much corrupt upholding of wickedness by a law, so much money spent to protect the imagined rights of criminals in the name of justice, until people have lost faith in governments and the largess so freely offered at election time. The righteous man droops and fades in the earth. A member of the American CIA was recently quoted as saying that, if people knew what was going on behind the scenes, many of them would commit suicide. We mention these ever increasing evils, not because we enjoy the putrid odors of earth’s sewer of corruption, but rather that we might see the contrast of the kingdom that is soon to be when righteousness will be the royal scepter and righteousness and truth the girdle of His loins.”

The wounding of one head signifies the diminishing of the beast’s authority, a partial interruption of the totality of that authority. And the “deadly wound healed” indicates that the partial disruption of the total authority of the bestial system of the world is short-lived — the beast always regains his authority! The wound is inflicted by a sword, even the sword of the Spirit which is the living word of God! Is it not true that the power of God’s word in and through His people has, throughout the church age, diminished the beastly nature, authority, and power of human government — yet the beast has never been killed, its nature has never been changed, its authority has never been abolished. In fact, after having been influenced by the word of Christ through His people to reform in certain aspects, is it not true that the deadly wound always seems to heal and the beast returns to its former corrupt, godless, and ruthless state of being.

It will be helpful to our understanding of the mystery to consider that this scene has been enacted again and again in the earth throughout the church age. Consider the early church. As another has pointed out, Jesus came into the world in the time of the Roman Empire. He was crucified on a Roman cross, pierced with a Roman spear, and sealed in His sepulcher under a Roman seal. But praise God! He burst the bands of death, shattered the seal of mighty Rome, and arose the Conquering Christ. And not only that — He ascended Victor over all the powers of darkness, having brought to naught the prince of this world within Himself, having brought in eternal redemption for a lost world and redeemed all things back unto God. He sat down at the right hand of the majesty on High and poured out upon the first few citizens of His kingdom the gift of the Holy Ghost. The kingdom of God was birthed, and soon gathered from Jew and Gentile alike a vast multitude into its bosom. What a flood of light and glory and power fell upon the world in the ministry of the humble followers of the Lamb!

And what glorious days those were! How God blessed His people! 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 had turned the world upside down! — so powerful was their message and spirit. In spite of persecution, in spite of untold thousands of saints impaled upon crosses, burnt at the stake, and fed to hungry lions to the thunderous applause of wild spectators, 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. The mighty Roman Empire shut up its idol temples, sheathed its
persecuting sword, and sat down as a disciple at the feet of Christ and His apostles. Of course many other areas of the world, China, India, and Africa, to name a few, were not as impacted as the core of the Roman Empire, but one of the heads of the world system of man was wounded unto death! The sword by which this deadly wound came was the sword of the word of God in the mouths and lives of His people. The wound to that system was so deadly that for a time it appeared it would never rise again.

But John saw the deadly wound healed, and all the world wondered after the beast! Revived, the beast became stronger than ever so that “they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?” (Rev. 13:4). My understanding of great spiritual matters is often woefully small. Nevertheless, it is my deep conviction that as human government under the succession of Roman Pontiffs degenerated into a carnal, spiritually bankrupt, superstitious, idolatrous, pompous, persecuting, and tyrannical rule, the kings of the earth spurned the sword of the Spirit which has wounded the head of the beast, and grasping the spirit of the dragon, the deadly wound was healed. It was no longer a diminished kingdom of man — it was the full seven-headed beast out of the sea! The popes ruled over the kings of Europe, setting up what kings they would and putting down whom they would, casting into prison and putting to death all who opposed them, and exalting whom they would, obliging them to prostrate themselves before him, to kiss his toe, to hold his stirrup, to wait barefooted at his gate, they became the successors to the Caesars — the healed head of the wild, ravenous beast out of the sea!

Throughout the past two millenniums there have been mighty movings of God that have brought the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the ascendancy in various cities, areas, and nations of the world, and in that area it appeared that the bestial system of man was dealt a death blow. In the days of the Reformation whole nations were brought under the sway of truth and righteousness, and in subsequent years great and powerful revivals swept through England, Wales, and Scotland, and in these places one of the heads of the beast was “as it were wounded to death.” But in every case the deadly wound was healed — love of God grew cold, apostasy set in, sin abounded, ungodly rulers again came to power, and the wound inflicted was overcome. That is the principle. On far-away Patmos the Holy Spirit revealed to the apostle John just how it would be throughout the church age. And who can deny that his vision is an accurate portrait of this reality?

In the 1500’s a man by the name of John Knox went into a garden in Scotland and knelt for hours in agonizing prayer. Someone who overheard him saw that at the end of that prayer, in great agony of spirit, he finally lifted up his hands to God and cried aloud, “Great God, give me Scotland or I die!” And that prayer was very literally answered before he died. Mary Queen of Scots said that she feared the face of John Knox more than ten thousand ships. He would come into her castle at a time when she was trying and condemning as heretics people all over Scotland and burning them at the stake. He would come right in and reprove her to her face. She was a woman of keen wit and often endeavored to argue with him. But to argue with John Knox was a task not to be lightly undertaken even by the Queen of Scotland with all of her courtiers surrounding her. They often whispered, “He is not afraid!” The Queen was not able to resist the wisdom and spirit by which he spoke. In Knox’s day all of Europe was sunk in the mire of darkness, ignorance, and corruption. Historians tell us that Scotland was the most backward nation in Europe at that time; its morals were the most degenerate; its church was the most corrupt; the political arena was one of gloomy despair. It was into this situation that John Knox was born. Carlyle tells us that no man ever succeeded in more totally transforming
the life of an entire nation than John Knox. The head was wounded as it were unto death. Yet today, who can deny that the deadly wound has healed!

Jesse Penn-Lewis has recorded the history of the great revival that swept through the country of Wales in 1902-1905. In an hour of great apostasy and degeneracy many hundreds of people began to fervently pray for God to move in that land. After many months the windows of heaven were opened and the Holy Spirit swept as an overflowing stream over a huge gathering of five thousand men and women. The presence of the Spirit was like the "wind" moving upon the people. Young people flocked to the services. Soon the churches were crowded, the valleys and the mountains ringing with the high praises of God. Lives were changed and many were the evidences of God’s power working in repentance, restitution, and transformation. Long-standing debts were paid. Stolen goods were returned. Sinners and degenerate people in all stratas of life came to Christ, and quickly the world knew the results. Magistrates were presented with white gloves in many places because there were “no cases,” so many people had been saved that the crime rate had dropped to zero! Rowdiness was changed to soberness. Cursing and swearing ceased to be heard. Dens of iniquity had to close their doors for lack of patrons. Stores were emptied of their stocks of Bibles. Far and wide the influence spread, affecting all classes. Political meetings had to be postponed, and members of Parliament were out taking part in revival meetings! The mighty tidal wave swept hither and thither — men knew not how or why. The Spirit of God found His own channels; and many districts had extraordinary manifestations of God’s power. For a while it appeared that the head of the beast was so sovereignly and powerfully wounded unto death, that it would never live again. Yet within only a few years the deadly wound began to be healed. And now, in our day, more than a century later, you can barely even see the scar where the sword struck the head!

There is no scriptural truth stated in simpler or more convincing language than that God, omnipotent and omniscient, has, from the beginning, both formed and marked out the path of destiny for every nation of men upon the face of the whole earth. Unceasingly and untiringly God has been working out His purpose, shaping all things through successive generations and ages. In the age after the Flood, beginning with Abraham, men were divided into two special groups — men in general, plus a Chosen Family. Later we recognize these two groups as Israelites and Gentiles. The Chosen Family or Israelites were selected to bear witness to a wicked and idolatrous world of the truth of the One, True and Living God. They always remembered that they were chosen, but quickly forgot what they were chosen for. Instead of bearing witness to the heathen, they only hated them! And, worse yet, copied them and became corrupted by their wicked practices and idolatrous religions.

Beginning with Pentecost another group has appeared, a group called the church, the body of Christ. Its very name denotes that it is a “called out” group, composed of both Israelites and Gentiles, chosen especially to proclaim, not only the power and wisdom and righteousness of God, but particularly His GRACE. They are to proclaim among the nations God’s solution of the problems of sin, sorrow, and death, the solution God wrought out in Christ.

The apostle James made a statement to the council at Jerusalem in which He clearly defines the outline of God’s purpose for the church in this present age, and in the age and the ages which are to follow. “Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the
prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down…and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the nations upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things” (Acts 15:14-18). Dispensationally, this is one of the most important passages in the Bible! It gives God’s great purpose for this age and the next age. James says that God’s purpose during this present age has been to visit the nations to take out of them a people for His name. I cannot emphasize too strongly that it is to the selection and training of that called and chosen group that the activities of God are now devoted. God is not dealing with the nations themselves at this time, except as it relates to the calling of a people out of the nations unto Himself and His purpose. During this present age God is dealing with this called out company.

It may come as a shock to some, but it is absolutely true that God’s plan for this present age has never been the conversion of the world! It has never been to “sweep nations into the kingdom of God” as some of the missionary enthusiasts love to say. World-wide salvation was never in God’s mind or purpose for this dispensation, and God has not been “trying” to save the world, as some ignorant souls would have us believe. If He would have been trying to do so He would have done so, for He is GOD! Wherever the gospel has gone it has always saved some, but never all. God’s purpose, then, during this church age, is to “call out” a people for His name. Out from among the billions of earth God is choosing an ELECT COMPANY to bear His name, to be formed into His nature, to reveal His glory. God has been forming His church, the body of Christ, the called out ones. That is precisely the meaning of the word church — “the called out.” Precisely this has been in progress since Pentecost! That should be plain for anyone to see.

It is here, in the true church, that Jesus Christ first establishes His government to rule and reign on the throne of men’s lives. God’s purpose in His church is not merely to save men from sin and hell and carry them away to some far-off heaven somewhere. God’s plan is to first establish His dominion in the hearts of His Elect, imbuing them with the glorious mind of Christ until they become His nature and will in the earth. Sadly, most Christians never come to this! They are too busy playing church, waiting for their mansions over the hilltop, or blundering around in the carnal programs, foolishness, and shame of a wretched, fleshly, Babylonian religious system. But just as the dispensation of the law, at its consummation, brought forth the final harvest of that which it typified and pointed to — Jesus Christ, the Son of God — so this present church age must, in the latter days, at its consummation, bring forth the final harvest of that unto which it pointed — the many-membered BODY OF THE CHRIST, the CORPORATE SON, many sons brought to glory, matured, overcoming, conformed unto the exact likeness of its glorious Head, the firstborn Son of God, filled with all the fullness of Himself!

God never intended that either Christ or His body should rule over all nations during the church age. His reign is confined entirely to that little company of footstep followers who have heard His voice, received His call, and who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These are the blessed sons of God who through dealings, trials, testings, and transformation become the very embodiment of His divine government! This may seem to be an extremely slow method and a very small and insignificant kingdom for such a great and eternal King, but I cannot over-emphasize the importance of this lowly beginning for a government whose authority is destined to “subdue ALL THINGS.” God grant us vision to see that not only is He establishing His divine government in the hearts and lives of an Elect company of believers, but through His faithful dealings with them He is actually FORMING HIS GOVERNMENT — a ruling body of sons!
Ah, yes, God is calling out a people to bear His name! But WHY? WHEN? WHERE? To bear His name merely to a small handful of people through their short life-time in the flesh during this age? NO WAY! Hear what the apostle James says! “AFTER THIS (after the Lord has completed His work of calling out and forming His special governmental people) I will return and build again the tabernacle of David...THAT THE RESIDUE OF MEN MIGHT SEEK AFTER THE LORD, AND A-L-L THE NATIONS…saith the Lord!” The “residue” of men specifies “all the rest” of men, all who were not included in the “called out” or firstfruit company. Our wise and gracious heavenly Father is even now forming His government of faithful and obedient sons whom He shall raise up as Kings and Priests in due time to bring His kingdom to pass in all realms. God, through 2,000 long years, has slowly, surely, and wisely been choosing this company, preparing them through the fiery furnaces of trials and afflictions, purgings and processings, to reign with Him in righteousness and power. “If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him” (II Tim. 2:12). “…Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us unto God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: AND WE SHALL REIGN OVER THE EARTH!” (Rev. 5:9-10). “To him that overcometh…to him will I give POWER OVER THE NATIONS: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father” (Rev. 2:26-27).

Throughout the church age salvation has been unto “as many as are ordained unto eternal life” (Acts 13:48). But in the ages to come there shall be a displaying of God’s matchless grace through His beloved sons so that “the residue of men shall seek after the Lord, and all the nations over whom my name is called.” If this is not true then “reigning with Christ” is absolutely meaningless, purposeless, and ridiculous. But, blessed be God! the word is sure: “…the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume (take into itself) ALL THESE KINGDOMS, and it shall stand for ever” (Dan. 2:44). Who can deny that this great truth explains precisely why the sword of the Spirit, which is the living word of God through His people, has during the church age wounded merely one head of the bestial system of man, and even that head has been healed again and again! God has not been in the business of slaying the beast, merely wounding him!

Have we not seen this same principle fulfilled in our own experience? In its individual, personal application the one head wounded reveals the fact that when we get victory in one area of our life, the beastly nature appears in another realm and doesn’t even appear to be wounded! Sometimes it seems to those in the process of overcoming that some lust or work of the flesh has been put to death and some head of the carnal authority in our life been brought down, but when in a moment of blessing it seems dead, like a cancer in remission, it returns with increased fury and intensified viciousness. Time and again we get a partial victory over the flesh or the world, but then once more we falter and fail, seems our victory is gone and the seven heads of the beast's authority is still ruling over us. The beast seems impossible to overcome! One of the heads wounded as unto death signifies a measure of loss of the beast's control over us because of the work of the Spirit in us. Yet, a little later the flesh nature and the pull of the world is just as alive and powerful as ever! Like Woody Woodpecker in the cartoon, flattened in the road, then he shakes himself, gets up, bounces back, and is as alive and well as ever!

Thank God! that is not the end of the matter. There always comes a time when God will deal with this beast. It is HIS work! John later beheld the final end of the bestial system and the bestial nature within us. “And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet...these both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Rev.
(Rev. 13:4,8). All the inclinations, desires, and works of the flesh and the carnal mind continue to be renewed until the WHOLE BEAST IS CAST ALIVE INTO THE PURIFYING FIRE OF GOD! It is there that the whole nature is cleansed, purified, and purged — completely and forever! Using the sword isn’t sufficient — claiming the word, standing on the promises, pleading the blood — none of this will avail beyond a partial victory. Who can deny it! “And the beast was taken…cast into…” War must be made on the beast with a sword sharper than any two-edged sword. God Himself is the one who comes on the scene and “takes” the beast and casts him into fire, divine fire, that will burn up every inherent altar of Baal, and lick up the very dust around. Make no mistake! OUR GOD is a consuming fire! The fire of God will burn until it has consumed all of Adam’s nature and self has died in the unquenchable flame! Fear not the burnings, my beloved, but yield unto them; for only the fire can purify God’s man!

THOSE WHO WORSHIP THE BEAST

“And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him” (Rev. 13:4,8).

The question of worship is one which runs very deeply through the book of Revelation. Heaven and earth stand opposed to each other. The four living creatures and the twenty-four elders worship God and the Lamb. Those who dwell on the earth worship the dragon and the beast. John worships an angel, and is reproved. He does it twice. The true worship is first set before us, then the false worship in its various forms. Heaven and earth are set in sharp contrast. Those who dwell in the heavenlies worship God and the Lamb. Those who dwell in the earthlies worship the dragon and the wild beast. Those in the heavenlies joy over the Lamb taking the book and opening the seals. Those who dwell in the earthlies wonder and fear and therefore pay homage to the beast, giving honor unto the beast by saying, “Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?” These words are similar to the Old Testament words of Israel and the prophets who said, “Who is like the Lord?” (Ex. 15:11; Mic. 7:18). Their exclamation indicates their belief that the beast is invincible. Can we not see by this that these not only worship the beast, they make him their god!

Ray Prinzing wrote, “The very subtleness of this bestial system is that it deceives men into thinking they will have life only if they yield to its spirit and do things its way. If you want to get ahead in this world, you must play the game, you must conform. And so they ‘worship the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him.’ Put in present day language, ‘who can fight city hall?’ Day by day allegiance is paid ‘to the system.’ Yet if we are motivated by this SPIRIT OF THE WORLD, we will surely bring forth after its kind.”

THE BLASPHEMIES OF THE BEAST

“And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies…and he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven” (Rev. 13:5-6).

The beast that ascends out of the sea has seven heads, hence seven mouths, and yet it is said, “a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies was given it.” This indicates that the ability to mouth great things and blasphemies would be allowed to it and that all seven heads would combine to speak these things, doing so as with one mouth. Whether the
mouth of science, or the mouth of government, or the mouth of religion, or any other, one and all speak the same kinds of great, boastful things and blasphemies. He actually opens his mouth to blaspheme the name of God, and of his tabernacle, namely, those who dwell in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. To blaspheme the name of God is to act contrary to His nature, to deny His sovereignty, His power, and all His virtues. Ah, yes, this world system of man does have a mouth! And it does speak great things! "A mouth speaking great things" means eloquence and authority. What is this voice of the beast? A simple example would be the media. Note also the great swelling words that continually pour forth from the institutions of education, science, politics, government, the courts, medicine, and religion. Each of these has an agenda, a sphere of influence, and they demand to be *heard, embraced, and obeyed!* All the way down to some of the smaller church systems, the voice proclaims that you must be "under their authority," "under their covering," and you must march to the beat of their drums. But it is the dragon that gives this wild animal his great voice and his authority!

The blasphemies are toward God, His name (nature, character), and His tabernacle (His body, His temple, the people in whom He dwells). It is evident that the agenda of this beast is in opposition to the nature of God, the will of God, the ways of God, the word of God, the government of God, and the people of God. It is the spirit of the world, the spirit of the times which speaks out of the mouth of the beast. His mouth becomes the organ through which the spirit of the times speaks to us, making itself be heard. And behold, he speaks great things and blasphemes the holy things of the Lord!

Indeed, this widely opened, loud speaking, blasphemous mouth of the beast can be seen and heard everywhere! As we look into our daily newspapers, watch the television programs, listen to the radio, read the worldly writings and books on art, science, industry, legislation, news, morality, sex education, and religion, we have in them that organ, that mouth out of which the spirit of the world, the spirit of the times speaks to us, speaking great things. What powerful speeches, proclamations, and teachings are heard, what mighty, dignified human bragging and boasting goes on, telling what science has determined to be true, what government will do, what laws will control the conduct of the citizens, what aberrant behavior must be tolerated and condoned, what *norms* of society reflect the moral values which should be acceptable, how to *get ahead* in this world, how to invest to gain wealth, swaggering, as though the material, the temporal were the greatest thing of importance, but at the same time the most horrible blasphemy, scorn, and ridicule toward the word of God, the ways of God, and the people of God! Wherever the government speaks, God must be silent. Whatever the state, social services, planned parenthood, the school board, or the courts allow is right and is no longer considered as unrighteousness. When science has spoken and given its decision, God’s truth no longer counts; scholarship and science has disproved it! Wherever the spirit of commerce manifests itself, there everything is grand, there everything must bow and be subservient, there everything is sacrificed. Think of the exactness with which the courts of justice, the federal banks, and the executive branch of government negotiate in questions pertaining to matters of business, finance, and the economy, as though these were the most important and sacred things, while on the other hand, they banish God and His word from government, the courts, and the classroom, and sanction all kinds of moral abomination. Yes, they blaspheme with mighty phrases! And opposite this mouth of blasphemy the holy apostles and prophets and the humble followers of the Lamb are considered worthless. In our day even the preachers and religious leaders have generally fallen victim to the beast and the spirit of the times!
THE TIME OF HIS REIGN

“And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months” (Rev. 13:5).

Forty-two months. What does this cryptic term mean? It means simply that his allotted time is limited and his time is short. This is the language of symbols and has nothing to do with literal months and nothing to do with the number forty-two. Forty-two months is three and a half years — one half of seven. Seven is the number of fullness and completion. Forty-two months speaks of that which will not and never can come to the fullness of itself, it can continue for a season but not forever, it cannot ultimately triumph, for it is cut off — absolute imperfection. And contrary to much so-called fundamentalist and dispensational teaching it has no relationship whatever with either the first half or the second half of Daniel’s seventieth week. I dare not digress from our present subject to present the evidence for what I now say, but both scripture and history confirm the truth that Daniel’s seventieth week ended three and a half years after the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus — long before John received his visions on Patmos. There can be no doubt about that!

The problem is that so few of the Lord’s people truly know the scriptures. Consequently, the thing we base our eschatological views on, our “end-time thinking,” is a seven year tribulation period which we suppose to be somewhere out in the future. So people ask us, “Are you post-trib, mid-trib, or pre-trib?” What they mean is, “Is Jesus coming back before the tribulation, during the tribulation, or after the tribulation?” And all of this they ask with great earnestness and with a straight face — as if any of those issues are even presented in the book of Revelation! Lynn Hiles once said, “What we need to do is take the tribulation away from you, then you won’t have a ‘post’ to hang on!” We have all these ideas, notions, concepts, suppositions, and theories borrowed right out of the old-order religious systems, which we take for granted still should have some validity. And when we come to the Revelation usually the big fight is over the “seven year tribulation” and how everything else fits with it!

E. Weeks wrote an editorial some years ago that astutely identifies one of the great errors made by many Bible students. The article was entitled EISEGESIS OR EXEGESIS and he said, in part, “The above two Greek words, in the title of this article, describe the profound effect they have had on others in both a proper and improper understanding of scripture. One has a bad connotation and the other a good one. Eisegesis is the process of reading into God’s word something that is not there. It is inserting a thought that the writer never intended to convey. Most times this happens when the context surrounding the passage of scripture is ignored or when one approaches a passage of the Bible with their own bias and tries to change the meaning of God’s words to fit their preconceived ideas.

“Exegesis, on the other hand, means drawing from the passage of scripture what the words were intended to convey. It considers the context and seeks to understand the true meaning without bias, personal agenda, or preconceived ideas. Thus, it allows God’s word to speak for itself as the Holy Spirit supplies enlightenment as to a proper understanding of what is written. Eisegesis is easy to fall into, especially when one has not approached God’s word with an open mind. It is quite fearful for some to think about reconsidering what they have believed to be truth for so long with the thought that it might be wrong. Instead, they find comfort in their long-held beliefs and defend them to the end.
To venture into the Bible without any bias and consider other possible views of God’s word is something they are not willing to do. They prefer to rest in their comfortable creedal bed, finding it easier to accept another person’s teachings without carefully checking out the Biblical context and the intent of the author” — end quote.

Let us prayerfully consider all the references in the book of Revelation where the period of forty-two months is mentioned. What many people do is select certain of these and then arbitrarily attribute them to either the first half or the second half of Daniel’s seventieth week, making the assertion that that is what is under consideration. Yet there is no reference at all in the Revelation to Daniel’s seventieth week! The book is not even written about the fleshly Israel — it is sent to the church to reveal God’s outworking through His spiritual people! Surely, to attribute the book to events surrounding and involving the natural Israel is a classic example of Eisegesis! It defies the context of the book as sent to, and written about, the saints, those who bear the testimony of Jesus Christ. This “time period” is referred to in three different ways. In some passages it is called “forty-two months.” In other passages it is termed “a thousand two hundred and threescore (1260) days.” In yet others it is spoken of as “a time, and times, and half a time.” In Greek, however, all of these refer to the same duration of time — a period of three and a half years.

“But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months” (Rev. 11:2).

“And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months” (Rev. 13:5).

And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent” (Rev. 12:14).

“And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth” (Rev. 11:3).

“And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand three hundred and threescore days” (Rev. 12:6).

There you have every reference in the whole book of revelation to the period of three and a half years! If these passages denote a literal time period of three and a half years, how are we to understand them? How could we ever conclude that they have anything at all to do with a “seven year tribulation”? No matter how you add them up you can’t tell whether these five run consecutively, giving you five different periods of three and a half years, whether everything mentioned in each setting takes place concurrently, at the same time, giving you only one period of three and a half years, or whether you must add two groupings together to make a period of seven years; and if so, which events belong to the first half of the seven years and which events pertain to the second half of the seven years! You see, my beloved, all such teachings are pure speculation with no foundation at all in reality! How much more blessed is the understanding that three and a half is simply one half of seven — signifying the broken seven — absolute imperfection and limitation. Nothing of the broken seven can ever endure beyond its allotted time. It is destined to pass. It can never be the perfect, eternal order. The bestial system of man and the
beastly nature of man are doomed! They shall be destroyed, they shall pass away. That is the message. And that is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth!

Many Bible students have tried to determine the “time” of the various events in the book of Revelation, especially when it relates to the two beasts in chapter thirteen. I doubt that the truth about this could be better stated than it has been by C. E. Colton when he wrote: “Let us try to forget the time element. We creatures of this earth are plagued with the tendency to try to fit everything into an exacting time schedule. Especially is this true when we approach the study of the book of Revelation. We insist that everything in it must be timed. We live in a time-conscious age. We live by the second hand on the watch, and the question which looms large in the discussion of any subject is ‘When?’ This proclivity, however, is not exactly new to our generation. Men have always been interested to some degree in the time element. When Jesus talked about His coming kingdom His disciples asked, ‘When shall these things be?’ (Mat. 24:3). And when the resurrected Christ stood before His disciples to charge them with the responsibility of witnessing and to assure them of the infilling of His Holy Spirit, they responded by asking, ‘Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?’ (Acts 1:6). Thus has it been through the centuries. We are often far more concerned about when an event is to take place than we are with the true significance of that event!

“Actually we cannot completely ignore the time element, for we live in a time age; however, we do stand in danger of missing the primary significance of principles and events by giving too much attention to the time element. This is the mistake that many have made in their interpretation of the Apocalypse. The complete and glorious program of redemption is unfolded before our eyes in this book. It is unfolded in seven dramatic scenes or episodes. It is the drama of redemption. Each episode magnifies a certain aspect of redemption. These are not events which follow one another in chronological order; they are manifestations of certain features or factors in the redemptive program of our Lord. They are given to us in logical order, but not necessarily in chronological order. From the standpoint of time there is much overlapping.

“While we cannot completely ignore the time element, it should at least be kept in the background. We know that the pictures of consummation and eternal destiny are still future from the standpoint of time; yet we must remember that the Lord is not giving to us in this Apocalypse a program which can be conformed to any kind of rigid time schedule. After all, God does not count time as we count time! More and more as I study this Apocalypse, I am convinced that God is seeking to reveal to us His triumphant redemptive program from the standpoint of the great factors involved in it — facts which make possible and lead to its ultimate and glorious consummation. Let us not miss the main issue by becoming involved in a maze of time-tables or time speculations. Let us push the time element into the background and open our hearts to these great underlying principles of our redemption in Christ” — end quote.

If you want to understand the book of Revelation you must understand its symbols and numerology by comparison. It is a revelation, an unveiling! You find the old and the new — things that pass away, and new things that appear; from the old man to the new man, from the old mind to the new mind, from an old mark to a new mark, from the old name to the new name, from the old nature to the new nature, from the old song to the new song, from the old heavens to the new heavens, from the old earth to the new earth, and from the old Jerusalem to the new Jerusalem. All the negative events of the book, tribulations, judgments, etc., reveal the great judgmental processes and dealings by which the Lord
destroys and brings an end to all the *old* within us and in our world; all the positive events, songs, celebrations, glory, etc., reveal the ushering in the *new*! It is indeed wonderful!
“And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations” (Rev. 13:7).

As we consider this thought of the beast making war with the saints and overcoming them, we do well to recall the message of Christ to the church in Sardis. It is evident in the letter to the church at Sardis (Rev. 3:1-6) that the world was invading the church. The church became very much like the city around it. Society should be influenced by the people of God; God has designed that the body of Christ be filled with His power and holiness, to change and transform the world! But the sad truth is that often the church becomes influenced by the world and sometimes the whole church world has for decades and even centuries been brought under an almost total domination by the world. Amid all the fiery admonitions found in the epistle of James is the counsel that worldliness is the enemy of God (James 4:4). The blessed Holy Spirit warns every saint who treasures the beautiful hope of sonship to flee worldliness. Some have mistakenly thought that meant to flee the world, so they hide themselves away in wilderness retreats, remote areas, jungle farms, or mountain monasteries, in physical separation from the world system.

It is not the world we must flee from, but worldliness. Our Lord Himself has taught us that we are in the world, but not of the world, and in the loving embrace of His final earnest prayer for His own He petitioned the heavenly Father, “I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world” (Jn. 17:15-16). How our glad hearts rejoice in the sacred knowledge that “greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.” Oh, let us always remember that the people of God are to influence the world, not the other way around. The saddest event of all is when it is not a saint, or a number of saints, that is influenced by the world, but a whole church is captivated by the world and its light goes out. This is indeed the present condition of all the church systems of man!

Let me call your attention to another feature. The beast makes war with the saints! This cannot be during the so-called “great tribulation” as we have been told, following the so-called “rapture” of the saints, for the saints are right here on earth when the beast makes war on them and overcomes them! This is not a fight with the sword nor do the saints rise in political rebellion — it is the spiritual warfare between the bestial system of man and the people of God. The called and chosen elect of God refuse to worship the beast, as the Holy Spirit makes plain in these significant words: “And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb” (Rev. 13:8). The earth-dwellers, the carnal Christians, all worship the beast, for the life of the Lamb has not been formed in their minds nor inscribed in their hearts. The clear implication is that those saints in whom the life of the Lamb has been raised up as the power of their being do not worship the beast!

Individually, the beast is the mystery of sin dwelling inside of every human being alive today, evidenced by most people living a totally fleshly life without regard for God, His will, His
ways, or His judgment. Either we overcome this beast or it overcomes us, and in fact, it has overcome all of us somewhere in our spiritual journey! God has allowed the flesh and its bestial system to make war against us for His greater purpose: to cause us to seek Him for His VICTORY to be raised up in us! This interplay between flesh and spirit is what eventually makes us strong in God!

Ray Prinzing hit the nail squarely on the head when he wrote: “No doubt about it, there is a real warfare going on — and to this bestial system is given ‘to make war with the saints, and to overcome them.’ But it is a momentary victory, ‘For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again’ (Prov. 24:16). Therefore, ‘Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall; I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me’ (Mic. 7:8). The ultimate victory belongs to our Lord and those who put their trust in Him. And that there shall arise those who OVERCOME this whole bestial system, is sure, for later on John writes, ‘I saw...them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over the number of his name’ (Rev. 15:2). In spirit the prophet Daniel beheld the same: ‘I beheld, and the same horn (beast system) made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; UNTIL the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. The saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever...’ (Dan. 7:21-22,18). We need not become too expansive concerning this ‘war with the saints’ by the bestial system of Babylon. We are all IN IT! The pressures steadily increase. And seemingly the system prevails against us. We are beaten down, and the only way we currently overcome the system is by our SUBMISSION TO CHRIST. We bow to Christ, with ‘these things’ being merely the tools to help bend our knees. We do not surrender to the evil, but we surrender to the Christ who controls the interplay of good and evil. This is more than a technical difference in words — for while it might appear sometimes that we have bowed to the system, the fact is what we have really done is BOWED TO CHRIST who was using this very system in our disciplines. And then HE gives the victory over the beast!

“While we have learned, yea, become surrendered and submissive to HIM, one with His will, this is an active state of being, not a passive one. Passivity is the law whereby evil-forces work. You have to give your self to them — the mind goes blank, the faculties dormant, the will ‘let go,’ and even the body relaxed and passive, then the familiar spirits do their thing. This is likewise the bestial system’s mode of operation! The usurped powers say in effect, ‘We will think for you, will for you, create the right emotional responses in you, etc.’ They would control your life in all its action and thinking, and all of their brain-washing operation is towards this end. The news is controlled so that your thoughts are channeled as they want them to be. The most insidious devices ever used to destroy the mind of man are now being used in increasing numbers, called subliminal persuasion. The innocent looking sales ads, the rock music and the movies, etc., all designed to cause men to rebel against God, parents, home, authority, decency. It works below the threshold of consciousness, to brain-wash the subconscious mind, and thus motivates the actions accordingly. And in this way the beast makes war even with the saints! BUT GOD’S LAW IS THAT OF ACTIVE CO-OPERATION. He does not always work instead of us, though He certainly can, for He is sovereign, but He would work WITH, IN, AND THROUGH YOUR ACTIVE OBEDIENCE. God’s elect are not automatons — behaving mechanically without active intelligence, but they have truly ‘put on the mind of Christ,’ to function with His mind, one in His will, one with His purpose. And thus they overcome the beast!” — end quote.

According to God’s purpose the beast may battle with the saints; yes, it may even overcome the saints. How overcome them? Is it possible to overcome the saints? Does not the Lord tell us for our comfort that no one will be able to tear us out of His hand and that no weapon formed against us shall prosper? Yes, indeed this is true! But “overcome" here does not mean that we are torn out of Christ’s hand or that the war is lost. In the heat of the battle when we are smitten and fall, we are secure in His hand, He sees exactly where we are, He is in control of our destiny, and though the battle may be lost the war is not over! At this
moment it seems the beast has the ruling power; but the invincible body of Christ shall finally, after much warfare and battling, arise and appear in triumph over all their enemies, though in the meantime we, like our glorious Head when He walked here in the flesh, walk about under the cross, bearing contempt and scorn, bearing about in our body the marks of the Lord Jesus, having no power nor regard, for the Lord says, “My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight” (Jn. 18:36). Therefore the little group of God’s elect is scattered among all kindreds and tongues and nations, a very small group indeed, compared with the large horde belonging to the power-holding beast. Therefore they are overcome, yet not overcome — for the true saints bend only outwardly, they do not resist the evil, but they possess their souls in patience; however, they do not worship the beast, this is done by those whose names are not written in the book of the life of the Lamb!

In His kingdom parable of the soils the Lord Jesus revealed various weapons of the bestial system with which it makes war with the saints. He spoke of seed that fell among the thorns and that kingdom seed sprouted up but was then choked out by the thorns, bringing no fruit to perfection. He identified the thorns as “the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches” (Mat. 13:22). The word “cares” is from the Greek merimna meaning literally “divisions, distractions.” Jesus gave another solemn warning about these “distractions” in Luke 21:34-36, “And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things…and to stand before the Son of man.”

The first mention in scripture of thorns and thistles is just this side of the garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve sinned, God sent them forth from the garden and said, “Cursed is the ground (earth, outer man, outer world) for thy sake…thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee.” Ever since that fateful day man has contended with weeds. The thorns and thistles become the symbol of the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the pleasures and pressures which grow rampant in the lives of men and women today, choking the spiritual life of the kingdom. Our temptations, fleshly desires, carnal appetites, worldly pursuits, jobs, education, taxes, bills, government requirements, needs, and pressures of all kinds can be symbolized by the bramble patch. Forever clinging, grabbing, tearing, choking, pressing, hurting, the realm of the carnal mind and the world system reach out to ensnare and entangle us in a hopeless jungle of no release. The roots run deep and wild, springing up in unsuspected places with a harvest of pain.

The cares of this world have turned many peoples’ lives into a pressure cooker. The strain of everyday living is steadily growing worse because of financial problems, higher taxes, inflation, government policies, demands on the job, the disturbing world situation, added responsibilities, sickness, hospital bills, rebellion in the home, unemployment, etc., etc. The divisions and distractions of “this world” are too numerous to mention, we are all faced with them every day. There are those seemingly needful involvements in the activities of this world’s order, but when they so OVERWHELM US that we find ourselves so fragmented and so divided that we are not able to gather ourselves together to walk out the presence, nature, purpose, and glory of the Lord in our lives — then we need to be LOOSED from these things both by divine wisdom to prioritize our involvements and by a supernatural infusion of peace, strength, and joy that comes down from the Father above. Praise God, we find in Him a realm of freedom from all “these things,” so that what He provides we can enjoy, but we are not bound by them or to them. There is an escaping from the cares of this life if we yield to the mighty hand of the husbandman of the vineyard — the manifest presence and power of the Father within us! As we yield, HE will take care of the weeds in our earth! God has a way out of the briar patch! When everything starts to fall apart HIS LIFE WITHIN gives the strength and faith to ride out each crisis, to PASS THROUGH all these things, and to stand victorious before the Son of man, praise His name!
There is another area of division and distraction by which the bestial system makes war against our soul — that is the “religious realm” which can cause one to be so caught up in its programs and lifeless works that it literally becomes destructive to spiritual life. Well do I remember former years of pastoring churches when every weekend was crowded with such a whirlwind of feverish activity that come Monday morning I needed another “Sabbath” to rest and recuperate from the one I had just been through! I suppose I will make some enemies, but I must tell you the truth nonetheless. How much eager-beaver religious work is done out of a carnal desire to make good, appear successful, win friends and influence people, to build a kingdom and increase the cash flow! How many hours of prayer are wasted beseeching God to bless programs that He has never ordained and which are geared to the glorification of men! How much hard-earned money is poured out upon men who, in spite of their tear-in-the-voice appeals, nevertheless seek only to make a fair show in the flesh! I have no hesitation in saying that a charismatic personality and a shrewd knowledge of human nature is ALL that any man needs to be successful in religious circles today, including the “spirit-filled” ones. The shallowness of the average believer’s inner experience, the superficiality of his worship, the emptiness of his words, and that servile imitation of the world which marks the religious system’s promotional methods all testify that the whole program, instead of being a divine out-raying of the Christ life, is naught but part and parcel of “the cares of this world.” The growth of the Lord’s people is so stunted by the control of man, fleshly programs, lying prophets, and a false gospel — there is no doubt at all that the bestial system has made war with the saints and has overcome them!

Oh! to escape religiosity that we might learn to worship God in spirit and in truth. And we rejoice to see how God is causing His elect to flee this care. To remain in the midst of all this activity and not become caught in its snare, is an escape which only God can work in us and maintain for us. Dear man of God; dear woman of God! Let us pull up by the roots the noxious, choking weeds of religious excitement and pseudo devotion and mis-guided service and seek the face of the Lord in deep humility until He comes and breaks up our fallow ground and rains righteousness upon us!

**THOSE WHO DO NOT WORSHIP THE BEAST**

“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8).

The beloved John informs us that “all the world wondered after the beast…and they worshipped the beast…and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.” Surely this would lead us to suppose that every living person upon earth does or shall worship the beast. But that is not quite true. There is one class of people who refuse to put their trust in this great power and to pay homage to the beast. And that class of people is especially described as those whose names have been written in the book of life of the Lamb. The called and chosen elect of God refuse to worship the beast! Oh, let us hear it! If our names are written in the Lamb’s book of life we will not worship the beast, because we worship our Redeemer who has redeemed us to God by His blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign over the earth!

It is interesting to note that in the genealogies of the Bible there are only two books which are identified: (1) “the book of the generations of Adam” (Gen. 5:1) — all mankind is in that book, but it is a book of death — and (2) “the book of the generation of Jesus Christ” (Mat. 1:1). The phrase, “the book of the generation,” is an unusual expression. It occurs only in connection with Adam and then in connection with Christ. The book of the generation of Jesus Christ is THE BOOK OF LIFE! It speaks of the life of Christ being generated, raised up and reproduced in us until we are fully like Him!
Every man’s name is written either in the book of the life of the Lamb, or in the book of the life of the dragon. When we see the “life” of the dragon manifested we recognize it by the fact that we have been there, we recognize the dragon in his identity, name, and nature. We experience this in our lives as we are growing in the things of God. Line upon line and precept upon precept the deceitfulness and wickedness of our own carnal mind, our own heart, our own fleshly Adamic nature, is revealed to us by the teaching of the word of God and the illumination of the Holy Spirit. The depravity of the flesh, the corruption that is in the world, and the folly of religion are fully revealed to us and we come to know what is in man and what are the depths of Satan. Oh, yes!

Our Father faithfully teaches each of His sons the difference between the precious and the vile, the holy and the unholy, the pure and the defiled, the truth and the error, and between life and death. I know, as no one on earth knows, including my wife, what darkness lurked in my own heart and what a monster I could have become except for the grace of God and the sovereign choosing of my heavenly Father. Thus, as the sons of God are being invested with the seven-fold spirit of sonship, which is the completeness of the mind and nature of Christ, to bring forth the kingdom of God in the earth, the dragon is reproducing the beast nature in the earth with its seven heads and ten horns. Only those whose names are written in the book of the life of the Lamb refuse to wonder after and worship the beast. The message is just this: only by the life of the Lamb, the life of God in our spirit, the new creation in Christ Jesus — only by this life do we have deliverance from the bestial nature and system of the world! Thank God, it holds nothing for us anymore!

Let us look a little further at this Lamb’s book of life. It comes to us out of antiquity. Long millenniums ago Moses knew about the book and his place in it. After Israel had sinned by worshipping before the golden calf that Aaron had made, Moses said to the people, “Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written” (Ex. 32:30-32). The five books of Moses were written before any others, except, perhaps, the book of Job; and in these earliest books of the Bible Moses pled for God to have mercy upon the children of Israel, “and if not, blot me out of THY BOOK which Thou hast written.” These words speak of a Book written by God Himself which was older than Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, or Deuteronomy!

Notice — Moses didn’t say, “…blot my name out of Thy book,” but “…blot ME out of Thy book.” Moses understood the deep things of the Lord well enough to know that God has a Book, and that he himself was a part of that Book! The prophet David also had knowledge of God’s Book, for he intoned these significant words in his Psalm, “Thou tellest my wanderings: put Thou my tears into Thy bottle: are they not in Thy book?” (Ps. 56:8). And again, “Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous” (Ps. 69:28). A book of the living — that is, a book composed not of paper or parchment, but a book whose pages are people! Notice now how clearly the sweet singer of Israel confirms this beautiful truth in another of his inspired songs, “Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in Thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them” (Ps. 139:16). Can we not see that it was David himself, together with all the members, faculties, and attributes of his spirit, soul, and body, that was an integral part of God’s wonderful Book!

This same David prophesied of Christ, using his own experience as a shadow and type of the coming One. “Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is written in my heart” (Ps. 40:6-7). Since David penned these words it is obvious that this “volume of the book” referred to was written before the Psalms! God wrote the law of His life in His Christ (Head and body) long before the Bible was written! The scripture indicates that the revelation Jesus was sent to bring to
pass on earth was fully recorded in the “Volume of the Book” long before Jesus ever started
to walk out His script in the earth realm. The nature of God written in Christ, the Logos, the
Word, which was in the beginning with God, was the heavenly reality of that Book of Life that
would be written and opened on earth. As Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature with His
heavenly Father, He discovered who He was — He received a revelation by the Holy Spirit
out of God’s Book and saw Himself there in the Book. The Volume of the Book revealed His
identity and destiny! Truly Christ was a chapter in God’s Book!

With all emphasis I must declare that every man and woman of God who reads these lines
is also to be found in God’s Book. Each elect member of the Christ body has a ministry to
fulfill which was fully recorded in the “Volume of the Book” a long, long time ago. In that long
ago your spirit rejoiced in celestial realms with your heavenly Father. Obviously you did not
exist there in your present physical form in that early time when “the morning stars sang
together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy” (Job 38:7). And yet you were there — in
spirit — because you are a son of God! The very genetics of your being are written there,
your nature, who you really are, your true identity, calling, purpose, attainment, and destiny
— the whole beautiful story is inscribed and recounted in golden hues there in God’s Book,
not in words of any tongue of men or of angels, but the very reality of your being is the page
of God’s Living Book. Oh, yes!

When Jesus read the Book which He was by the spirit of the revelation of the Father within,
He proclaimed, “Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I
delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is written in my heart.” He said, “I’m in
there, in the Volume of the Book.” And the Book declared of Him that He delighted to do
God’s will and that God’s law was written in His heart! When the Father revealed the Book
to Jesus, that is what Jesus was permitted to read of Himself in the Book. And it was a sure
word, for it was the Lord Himself, His very being, that was the page of the Book! And I do
not hesitate to tell you, my beloved, you are in there, too! In the Volume of the Book it is
written of you! And that which is revealed unto you of your Father concerning His will, plan,
and purpose in your life is what is written in the Book, and it was written there of all your
members when as yet there was none of them! Isn’t it wonderful!

The wise man said, “…of the making of many books there is no end…” (Eccl. 12:12). The
bookstores are filled to overflowing today with all types of books dealing with every aspect of
earthly life. Even in the church world there are books setting forth every kind of viewpoint
relating to God, the Bible, doctrine, Christian experience, and church order. However the
subject material of most of these books largely contains a message of religious tradition,
false doctrines, and spiritual death. But God is also producing a Book — a Book containing
a message of life! For the past two millennia God, by His Holy Spirit, has been unveiling
the contents of this Book in the minds and hearts of His people!

There is a branch of literature known as biography. Biographies are the histories of
individual lives, an account of a person’s life, written or told by another. If the author of the
book is the person about whom it is written it is called an autobiography — the story of one’s
own life written by oneself. The Book of Life is called in John’s vision, “The Book of The Life
of The Lamb.” That is how it is in the Greek text. If I were to give you a book titled THE
BOOK OF THE LIFE OF GEORGE WASHINGTON, you would understand at once that it is
a biography or an autobiography of the life of the first president of the United States, George
Washington. That book should contain everything you always wanted to know about
George Washington! Each and every detail of his life would be there: where he was born,
who his parents were, where he was raised, the schools he attended, the girls he dated,
who he married, how he became general of the army, and finally president of our great
nation. In the same way, THE BOOK OF THE LIFE OF THE LAMB is the autobiography of
God’s Lamb, the record of who He is, what He is like, and what He does. Everything you
always wanted to know about the Son of God is contained in this wonderful Book of the Life
of the Lamb! It is not a literal book, of course; it is not a parchment in some far-off heaven
somewhere. Oh, no! The sons and daughters of the most High are themselves the LIVING RECORD AND REVELATION of the life of the indwelling Lamb. It was to the apostle Paul that the revelation was given that the Book of Life, the Book of the Lamb, the Book of the Generation of the Son of God is a people. “Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life” (II Cor. 3:3,6).

Let us now return to our text. “And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” That is the way it reads in the King James Bible, but that is not how it is in the Greek text. The word “names” is not plural, it is not “whose names are not written in the book of life” but “whose name has not been written…” It is a singular name! As we read these words of truth, surely we must realize that name in scripture signifies a nature. There is only one name or nature which is not written in the Book of the Life of the Lamb, and that name or nature is Adam. All who conceive of themselves as “just human” — that human nature has never been written in the Book of the Life of the Lamb! That is the name or nature of the first man who is of the earth, earthy. That nature and that identity of old Adam has never been written in the book of life. Rather, it is found written in “the book of the generations of Adam” (Gen. 5:1). That is the natural man who receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned (I Cor. 2:14). Adam’s mind is the carnal mind, which is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be (Rom. 8:7). That is not the Christ man, but the man who is put to death by Christ! It is not a name of life, but a name of death.

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The only thing that can happen to those who live out of human nature is to be purified by the fire, and our God is a consuming fire! “And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:15). Those who realize that they are spiritual beings begin to live out of a spiritual consciousness and the Christ-life within is the name or nature that is written in the Book of the Life of the Lamb! Oh! that men would awaken to the truth that they might see where reality dwells; that their eyes might be opened to see the truth that the nature of the new man, Christ, is the nature of the life of the Lamb! Those who reveal out of their being the life of the Lamb are themselves the Book of the Life of the Lamb, the epistle of Christ known and read of all men, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. Aren’t you glad!

The revelation of Jesus Christ — that’s what the book of Revelation is all about! It tells you of the revelation of HIM. The breaking of the seals, the galloping of the horses, the blast of the trumpets, the sealing of the saints, the beasts, the heads and horns, the blood flowing, the battle of Armageddon, the vials, the judgments, the city coming down — all that is written in this book relates to the unveiling, the uncovering, the revelation of Jesus Christ in the lives of His elect in this great day of the Lord. This revelation has been taking place in measure throughout the church age, but we have now come to that time unto which all the ages have been converging — the dispensation of the fullness of times! It is my deep conviction that
we are standing at the consummation of the old age of the church, the completion of all things that pertain to the church age. All the sages and all the prophets of all the ages have prophesied of this grace and this glory that should come unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. We are now living in a new age, a new day of the revelation of the fullness of the glory of the Lord before the face of all nations!

The Book of the Lamb’s Life tells a complete story. Each member of the Christ-body is like a page or chapter in this blessed Book. Each one tells a portion of the story. Each contains only a measure of the revelation of God in His Christ, Head and body. The wonderful thing about it is, that while God revealed Himself in so many ways, in so many forms, through so many people down through the ages, He is now gathering together (compiling) the revelation that came forth and the experience of every one of them. It is all becoming focused in this glorious company of God’s sons. The complete revelation of God is divided into hundreds and thousands, yea, millions of little pieces and fragments which were revealed through the lives of men and women by their experience of God on the earth. But now, at the transition of the ages, God is taking all the experience and wisdom and knowledge and grace and glory and power that men have received and is forming it in a company of sons and is about to stand this company up as the full and complete and total revelation of His personality in the earth. This company is the finished product, the Book fully written, published, and released into the world. THESE ARE THOSE WHOSE NATURE IS FOUND WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LIFE OF THE LAMB

Your calling, the reason Christ quickened you, was to make you consciously a part of Himself, to bring you into a calling unto glory, to a place where God by His Spirit could express Himself through you, so that you could bring the revelation of God into the earth. The multitudes of earth have read many books, even many religious books of a thousand different kinds, but few have read even one page of THE LAMB’S BOOK. Oh, how mankind needs this Book released in their midst! Your life and everything that is happening to you is designed to train you for a royal position in God. The only reason God sent you here from the realm of spirit, lowered into the bondage of corruption, was to process you that in your visible, physical, material form you might become the image of God, the revelation of the invisible God to the material world.

The Lamb’s Book of Life, God’s New Covenant — seek it not in the starry skies, nor in the sweet by and by — seek it in a life transformed. This is His monument — not in cold stone, nor in chiseled marble, nor in plaques of bronze, not in ancient parchments, not in weighty documents, but given by the very finger of God upon human hearts and in human lives. Here is the covenant that will last when time is obsolete, when the sands of the ages have run out, when the elements have melted with fervent heat. Andrew Murray once asked, What does it mean to have a law in the heart? It means this: to have the knowledge and the will and the nature and the power of God inspired into us. For example, when I speak of an acorn, how do I know it will grow up into a mighty oak tree that may stand for a hundred years? Because the law of the oak tree has been written in the heart of the acorn. The acorn may be small, and the oak tree may be spreading its branches for a hundred years to come, but it was in the acorn. Even so with Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant, the One on whom I can depend to make the covenant true. Christ Jesus is to see that the Spirit of the Lord God shall be and live in me, rule in me, conquer in me, and work out all His blessed purposes in me. Christ, the High Priest, is Mediator of the Covenant for this blessing too — a life that lives out the law written in the heart. And may I add — as the Lord Jesus is the Surety for us of the Covenant, so we in Him are the Surety for the rest of creation. Thus, the New Covenant is not a document nor a decree — it is a people! The Book of Life people are the Covenant for all men to see, read, and receive. Great is the mystery!

“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” Again, read those words with care for they are taken from the King James Bible. The Greek text, however, reads a
little differently. Actually, the Greek text is a little tricky to properly interpret, but I personally am convinced that the Emphatic Diaglott does give the correct rendering when it says, "And all who dwell on the earth shall worship him, 

**whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the scroll of the life of that Lamb who was killed.**" You will notice, precious friend of mine, that it is not the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world as we have previously supposed, but rather it was the writing of our name in the Lamb’s Book of Life which took place before the foundation of the world! In the light of this truth it will be instructive to consider all the scripture passages which make reference to that which transpired away back there before or from the foundation of the world. They will either confirm or deny the statement made above. All that is revealed in the New Testament concerning that which was ordained and accomplished from "before the foundation of the world" is found in the following passages.

“All these things spake Jesus unto the multitudes in parables...that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will **utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world**” (Mat. 13:34-35).

“Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, **inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world**” (Mat. 25:34).

“Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which Thou hast given me: **for Thou lovest me before the foundation of the world**” (Jn. 17:24).

“According as He hath **chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love**” (Eph. 1:4).

“For we which have believed do enter into rest...the works were finished from the foundation of the world” (Heb. 4:3).

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold...but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was **foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you**” (I Pet. 1:18-20). Note that the spotless Lamb was **foreordained**, that is, selected, chosen, set aside, appointed to become the sacrifice, and this selection and appointment was made before the foundation of the world. But it does not say that the Lamb was **slain** before the foundation of the world. Obviously, that was reserved for when he was **manifest for us** when He came to earth.

“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**” (Rev. 17:8).

Ah, in that final passage even the King James Bible states that it was **our names** that were written in the book of life **before the foundation of the world**! Can any doubt that this is also the correct rendering of the passage in Revelation 13:8? That would certainly make the two statements agree!

Never doubt this reality for a moment — the only way God could have loved you, chose you in Christ, and picked you out for His own **before the foundation of the world** is that you truly existed in Him and with Him before the appearing of the worlds. Nothing can be plainer than that! Yet we have supposed that we were just recently, in this life, apprehended of God to sonship. I thought the work of God began in my life nearly eighty years ago. Now I find that the thing God is doing in humanity began in eternity! It didn’t begin in time. It began before the ages were framed. That is when the Father loved Jesus and foreordained Him as the
Lamb of God, and that is also when the Father loved us and predestinated us unto placement as His sons (Eph. 1:4-5). God knew me, loved me, chose me, counseled with me, and picked me out for His unique purpose before the foundation of the world. My origin was in God! God begat me of Himself as spirit before He exhaled me as spirit into a very unique body upon earth. And He knew you! He loved you! He chose you! And He has sent you! Clarity is coming to the sons of God. Understanding, perception, consciousness, expression, purpose, destiny, God is awakening all of this in us. He is awakening within us that reality we knew with the Father from before the foundation of the world, when our name, our nature, was written in God’s Book. And you are here by divine appointment. Isn’t it wonderful!

**CAPTIVITY TAKEN CAPTIVE**

“And he that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and faith of the saints” (Rev. 13:10).

INDIVIDUALLY, it is the flesh, the old Adamic nature, that leads us into captivity. It is the beast of the carnal nature that makes war with the saints and overcomes them. It is the bestial nature of the natural man that is given power over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. Furthermore, he that killed us, or that which brought death to us, now must be slain in us. The natural man, and the spirit of the world generated from that man, is the one who leads us into captivity and slays our spiritual life. The natural man is the one who is being brought to death. There are two swords — the sword by which the beast makes war against the saints, which is the word of the beast, his mouth speaking great things and blasphemies — and the sword of the spirit which is the word of God, the sharp two-edged sword which comes from the mouth of God’s Christ, Head and body. The beast is slain by the sword of the spirit, and the spirit of the world is brought into captivity by the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. That is the mystery.

CORPORATELY, God’s kingdom is a body politic. And there are two parties: God’s righteous government and the opposition. The opposition, deceived and deluded by its own nature of darkness and rebellion, has been trying throughout the ages, by any and every means, to gain control of the government. But it has been a disheartening battle. The decree of the Almighty is, “And the government shall be upon HIS shoulders, and of the increase of His government…there shall be no end…to order it, and to establish it with judgment and justice from henceforth even for ever” ( Isa. 9:6-7). Because this rule can never cease, every apparent victory of the adversary, in the end, has turned out to be a defeat! The human race fell to the deception of the opposition at the very beginning. But instead of that being a victory for the adversary, it turned out to be a blessing for the human race. For now, not only will men be restored to what was lost by the fall (Acts 3:21; I Tim. 4:10; I Jn. 2:2; Heb. 2:9; Rom. 5:18), but those who are called and chosen are translated in Christ to the heavenly realm, to a position as far removed from the perfect Edenic state as the east is from the west.

The opposition even went so far as to crucify the King, the Prince of Peace. But that seeming defeat for Christ’s cause was a signal victory, for on the third day the crucified One arose from the tomb to a higher and more glorious dimension of life in the power of resurrection, thus breaking the sway of death and delivering all who were in bondage from its clutches. Because He arose, so shall every son of Adam arise! Because He conquered sin, sorrow, death, and hell, ultimately every man shall receive the blessing and benefit of that triumph! “The hour is coming, in which ALL that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth” (Jn. 5:28-29). The whole creation is awaiting the ultimate triumph of this victory! Truly, “All creation is yearning, longing to see the manifestation of God’s sons. For the creation was made subject to futility, not of its own choice, but by the will of him who so subjected it; yet with the hope that at last the creation itself would be set
free from the thralldom of decay to enjoy the liberty that comes with the glory of the children of God” (Rom. 8:19-20).

The kingdom of the righteous One has not been established in its fullness and perfection over the whole world of mankind. We are yet passing through a period of preparation in which those who prove themselves faithful to the rightful King, are being prepared and sealed, and now expectantly await the day when, upon the full manifestation of the kingdom, they will be raised to great honor and power and majesty, to reign as heavenly kings and priests over the earth, to bring life and light and liberty and blessing and glory to all peoples!

The message is clear and the word is sure — He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. HERE IS THE PATIENCE AND THE FAITH OF THE SAINTS! Hallelujah!
Chapter 153
The Beast Out Of The Earth

“And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon” (Rev. 13:11).

We have discussed the first of two beasts, the beast which came up out of the sea. By the spirit of truth we understand that that beast which combined within itself the appearance of a leopard, a bear, and a lion, which had seven heads and ten horns, is the symbol of the BESTIAL WORLD SYSTEM OF MAN. Now we are presented with a second beast! And to prevent any misunderstanding at all, let me say from the outset that there is a definite relation between the first beast and the second beast. The full picture is just this. The second beast rises up out of the earth. He is less formidable in appearance. First of all, his origin is not in the depths of the stormy sea, but from the more quiet and more stable earth. He strikes you as looking like a lamb, for he has two horns like lambs’ horns, yet when he speaks, he sounds like the awful red dragon. And there is a very definite connection between these two beasts. Repeatedly this is indicated in the description John gives us. He exercises all his authority in the sight of, in the presence of, and even in behalf of the first beast. All that he does he does both in the presence of, and with the approval of, the first beast. Therefore, one of the functions of this second beast is to collaborate with and augment the agenda of the first beast. And this soon becomes apparent! For the second beast causes the inhabitants of the earth-realm to wonder after the first beast, to admire him, and to pay respect and homage (worship) to him. This second beast inspires men to construct an image of the first beast, in order to pay homage to the first beast through his image. The second beast causes all the admirers of the first beast to receive a mark which distinguishes them from those who refuse to worship this beast and his image, in order that they may be killed.

THE ANTICHRIST

Nearly all Fundamentalist, Evangelical, Pentecostal, and Charismatic teachers have one thing in common when they approach this beast out of the earth; with one voice they identify this beast as the odious, fearful, universally-touted, and long-awaited ANTICHRIST!

Innumerable works have been written, countless sermons have been preached, and myriad tracts have been circulated on the subject of the antichrist. The one outstanding feature, however, which attracts one’s attention and which must be very perplexing to the average individual, is the confusion which exists, and which characterizes all such efforts. Generally speaking, every scholar has a different doctrine, and every teacher a different understanding of who the antichrist is or will be. And hence, as all the theories cannot be correct, all therefore must be wrong, perhaps with the exception of one.

For years teachers of the Word have been speculating upon the identity of antichrist and the date of his appearance on the world scene. Unfortunately, all these speculations have turned out to be mistakes, which mistakes have to be changed and revised continually to
meet changing conditions. It is very humiliating to have world events continually follow a
course exactly opposite to that which has been mapped out by one’s prophetic teaching,
and to have one’s predictions proven false almost before the ink is dry on his paper. The
church today is full of energetic and sincere preachers and teachers who are just full and
bubbling over concerning things that are going to happen. They tell us that sometime,
after certain events have transpired, or before certain other events will happen, there will
be a super-deceiver who will arise to show great signs and wonders, gaining political
power over all the nations of earth, and ushering in a reign of terror and a time of
tribulation unprecedented in the history of the world.

Those of my readers who are well advanced in age remember when the world staggered
beneath the weight of the great depression of the 1930’s. The planet and all things on it
seemed to suddenly fall apart. Thousands of earnest and well-meaning saints believed
that this was the certain herald of the end of the age. In 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt
introduced the famous ill-fated N.R.A. (National Recovery Administration) and immediately
preachers all over the country got up in their pulpits and preached spellbinding sermons
that had their congregations bulging at the eyes in astonishment about the N.R.A. being
the Mark of the Beast. Then the Supreme Court tossed the N.R.A. into the scrap basket
as unconstitutional, and preachers all over America had to toss their sermons into the
waste basket as unscriptural. In the years that followed, as the Second World War heated
up, preachers became busy picking men such as Mussolini, Hitler, and Stalin as the great
antichrist; and indeed they were antichrists, but these tyrants, like so many before them,
perished and the world continued on its tremulous course. And preachers all over America
had to make trip after trip to the waste basket!

In the days of my youth, one of the first books I seriously studied on prophetic subjects
was one setting forth “indisputable proof” that Benito Mussolini was the antichrist! The
only problem was that the book came into my hands in the year 1948, and lo, Mussolini
had already died a violent death in the streets of Milan, his name was held in disrepute
throughout Italy and the world, and his “empire” was dissolved. Years before this, during
the First World War, preachers were telling how the Kaiser was the antichrist and was
going to upset the world. Then when that failed to materialize, they frittered away much
time and wasted much good paper and printer’s ink telling us that Mussolini was the one.
Then the false prophets declared that Adolph Hitler was surely the man of sin who would
come riding into world power on the back of a ten-horned revived Roman Empire. But
Hitler’s day ended too, a suicide in his bunker beneath the ruins of Berlin. Of course some
of these teachers, too ashamed to admit their error, invented all kinds of ingenuous tales to
keep the delusion alive, saying that Hitler’s death was a “hoax,” that he was still alive
somewhere in South America, and in due time would reappear on the scene to the
astonishment of the whole world, his “deadly wound healed.” One thing is certain. He
never did reappear, and there is no doubt that he is no longer alive today!

Some students of prophecy, for lack of anything else to speculate on following the Second
World War, took up the story of a famous Arabian prince who was represented as having
supernatural powers, and who the ignorant and deceived were parading before the
perennially gullible as the coming superman. This prince was reported by one well-known
evangelist to have created a fabulous golden celestial city in the middle of the desert
merely by his spoken word, to have called down fire from heaven, and to have performed a
number of other such phenomenal feats. According to the prince’s own word, as quoted
by this evangelist, he would reveal himself to the world as God and Ruler sometime during
the 1960’s. He failed to make his appearance. But a friend of mine shared with me how
certain saints in California, upon investigation, found that the man who invented the tall tale concerning this Arabian prince was working as a humble clerk in San Francisco, California during the time he was supposed to have been in Arabia as a guest of this prince.

In more recent years we have heard some teaching that Henry Kissinger was the antichrist, or David Rockefeller, or Anwar Sadat, or Mikhail Gorbachev because he had that little birthmark on his head, or Ronald Reagan because he had six letters in his name, or Saddam Hussein because he was from Iraq which is ancient Babylon. They change the antichrist with each political election, with every war, or with the rise of every ruthless dictator who appears to have a global following or threatens our Western way of life. And yet another person stated that she expected him to come from outer space at any minute! One popular writer writes a series of books, which have brought to him an enormous reputation and (be it said) an equally handsome monetary reward, by telling us, almost as though reading the morning newspapers, exactly what is going to happen at any moment now, yet assuring us in the same sentence, and with the same impression of infallibility, that it really does not concern the church anyway — we shall be safely away in heaven before the events of his books begin to come to pass! “O, my people, they which lead thee cause thee cause thee to err” (Isa. 3:12; 9:16). But we now know the answer to all these predictions. They were nothing more than the presumptuous guesses of idle shepherds who were destitute of truth. And the unbelievable reality is that many Christians are so gullible and so susceptible to this kind of sensational trash, that they have no better sense than to glory in it, even though the statements are proven false, one after another, by the actual events then transpiring before their very eyes!

All who have truly received the call to sonship and have received a revelation of the present truth of God have forever ceased listening to all the drivel pouring forth from the lips and pens of these carnal-minded deceivers. Apart from the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God anyone with one eye and half sense should be able to figure out that their track record is not very convincing! Every time there is movement in the Middle East they get a new antichrist! The problem with putting the antichrist in the White House, or in Europe, or in Iraq, or in Russia, or in Israel, or some other place, is that as long as you keep him out there in the external realm of world events you never have to deal with him. You see, once you realize that there really are only two men in the earth — Adam and Christ — the first man and the second man, the earthly man and the heavenly man, it shouldn’t be too difficult to determine which of these two men is the antichrist! That gives you only two men to choose from, and that certainly narrows down the odds, doesn’t it! In reality, the full truth runs much deeper than that, but that is certainly a very good starting point!

Suppose I were a pursued fugitive. Now, if I could get my pursuers sidetracked and get them to fire on a stuffed dummy made to represent myself, they would thus, by diverting their fire from me, aid in my escape. Satan has a dummy antichrist set up, a horrible creature who will never appear. And the Christian Church is busily engaged in wasting their time and ammunition on this dummy! They are telling what a terrible creature he will be, all the while ignorant of the fact that the true criminal is in their very midst! If the adversary can get the people of God to look for some imaginary man of sin yet to appear, some fictitious son of perdition to come, then he has won a victory, because then WE WILL NEVER DISCOVER THE MAN OF SIN WHERE HE ACTUALLY IS ABIDING!
The detrimental and deceiving effect of the notion of antichrist being some world leader past or present or future, is, that while people have their eyes focused on world events, they are not alert to discern his presence now — and that gives him opportunity to do a great deceptive work right in their midst. The old serpent is still very crafty, my beloved, and if he can keep us peering out into the mists of either the past or the future, we will overlook the reality in our own generation and time, and within our very own lives. “Little children, it is the very last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time” (I Jn. 2:18). Ah, my brother, my sister, the Christian Church, for the past two thousand years, has been literally filled with antichrists! And the present-day crop is busily engaged in pointing the finger of accusation at some poor defenseless and fictitious person who is supposed to appear at some indefinite period in the future. That is the adversary’s trick to keep men’s eyes off of the real culprit! Satan is the sole author of the doctrines which keep men looking ahead to some character who will never appear, thus aiding his present-day emissaries to carry on his work without interruption. It is high time for God’s people to awake, and learn what they are playing with. There is poison in the pot! Ah, beloved, it is high time for all the preachers and teachers and would-be prophets to leave their ignorance of God and His majestic purposes and acknowledge their desperate lack, forsaking forever the delusions of their dead letter-of-the-word interpretations of prophecy, and turn to the Lord for true SPIRITUAL WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING. Thank God! He is delivering every one of His chosen elect from all this carnal-minded tom-foolery and replacing it all with the glorious mind of Christ! The transformation is taking place in some even as they read these lines!

In this connection I like the story about a cluster of small boys, obviously without the price of admission, who milled about near one of the entrance gates to a football stadium. An observer said to the ticket-taker in a voice resonant with authority, “Let these kids in and tell me how many there are.” The boys filed in and scampered delightedly into the crowd. As the last one entered the ticket-taker said to the observer, “Thirty-four.” The man nodded. “Right you are,” he said, as he disappeared in the crowd outside the gate. Oh, how good it would be if God’s dear people could understand that just as the ticket-taker mis-interpreted the intent of the man in this story, so have the Bible teachers in the popular churches mis-interpreted the intent of the man in this story, so have the Bible teachers in the popular churches mis-interpreted the message conveyed in John’s vision of the beast out of the sea and the beast out of the earth!

The beast out of the earth, however, is not the so-called antichrist! In fact, the word antichrist is not even found in the book of Revelation! There is no evidence to support the practice of taking certain events in the Revelation and connecting them with what the scriptures say about “antichrist.” Quoting verses from one book of the Bible and claiming that they correspond to statements in another book of the Bible does not constitute truth. As we will see, the modern doctrine of antichrist is an amalgamation of biblical concepts and events that either are unrelated or find their fulfillment historically or spiritually. This is why confusion persists! Modern antichrist hunters are pursuing a figure who does not exist. The description they give of him is taken from passages other than those which actually speak of antichrist. Keep in mind that most modern-day Bible teachers mistakenly use the words antichrist and beast interchangeably, although there is absolutely no evidence for such a use anywhere in the Bible! So generally, when a Christian hears the word antichrist he thinks of the beast in the book of Revelation. This is a mistaken and an absurd notion! People hear things taught as gospel truth and though they don’t know where the scriptural proof for them is they assume they must be so.
Do you know what the Bible really says about the antichrist? You may be surprised! As much as we have heard preachers speak on the subject of antichrist, one would be led to believe that the term is mentioned a thousand times in the Bible. The fact is, the antichrist is mentioned only five times in the whole Bible and not one of these four mentions of the antichrist is in any of the Bible’s prophetic books. Not one of them is in either the book of Daniel or the book of Revelation! The word “antichrist” is not found in the teachings of Jesus, neither do we find the word in the Old Testament. What can we show from scripture, and what is mere speculation? To find out, let’s think about all we have heard. All those things that Christians supposedly “know” about “the antichrist.” According to what the preachers and teachers proclaim, antichrist is supposed to:

1. Appear at the end of the age.
2. Rule the world for three and a half years as a good leader and three and a half years as an evil leader.
3. Make a covenant with the Jews.
4. Rebuild the temple in Jerusalem.
5. Reinstitute temple sacrifices (first three and a half years).
6. Turn against the state of Israel, breaking his covenant (second three and a half years).
7. Stop temple sacrifices (middle of the seven years).
8. Set up an image of himself and cause all to worship it.
9. Put a mark (666) on everyone in the world.
10. Start the battle of Armageddon.
11. Persecute the “Great Tribulation” saints.
12. Other misc. legends, depending on the school of thought.

If you can accept it, not one of these ideas can in any way be associated with anything said in the four verses where “antichrist” is mentioned in scripture! Not a single one! And most are total fabrications! It reminds me of the story of King Charles II of England, that he once puzzled the Royal Society (a society of scientists) by propounding the question, Why is a dead fish heavier than a live one? The men of science debated this question with much acumen, and offered various solutions to it. It however occurred to one of them to make sure by experiment that the dead fish was in fact the heavier; and it was found that it was not. Now this trick of the Jesting Monarch is often played upon us by our own minds. We assume, because the preachers and teachers play the incessant drumbeat, that there IS an “end-time” tyrannical antichrist. But when one carefully examines “the alleged fact” of the one-man antichrist he is led to the astounding discovery that in fact there isn’t even any such thing!

A German Prince was once visiting a certain city. When greeted by a deputation from the Town Counsel he expressed great surprise that his arrival had not been heralded by salvoes of cannon. The Burgomaster, who had a sense of humor, replied that there were a hundred reasons for the omission. Asked by the prince what they were, he began: “In the first place we have no cannon; in the second we —” “Now,” broke in the prince, “your first reason is so good that I don’t want to hear the other ninety-nine.” That answer comes to mind as one reflects on the theory of the end-time one-man antichrist and all the stupendous things attributed to him. We wait in vain for one strong argument that simply compels us to consider their view. Take a searchlight. Take all the suns and moons and stars, break the rim of the Milky Way and pour the compacted brilliance of its infinite depths of light into every crevice of the good old Book; search every page and chapter and verse and line, from Genesis 1:1 through Revelation 22:21, and you can find no trace of it in teaching, in prophecy, in parable, or in symbol. The “super-man antichrist” is simply not
found in the Bible! That one reason is so good that we have no need to consider any others!

When we begin to see truth as revealed by the Spirit of Truth it is so dramatically different from what we have been taught that sometimes our first response is to think it is a heresy, a lie. The preaching of concepts like the rapture, seven-year tribulation, superman antichrist, one-world government, rebuilt Jewish temple, eternal hell and damnation, etc., has had such impact upon the Lord’s people that they actually think those things are true. And I can tell you unequivocally that such teachings scripturally have not a leg to stand upon! I know that the vast majority of those reading these lines have long ago been delivered from such delusions, but there is a whole church-world out there that still subscribes to those doctrines of men. Christians have heard such a drum-beat of teachings about the wrath and judgment of God being poured out upon sinners and upon the whole world, that when one begins to share with them the glad tidings of God’s gracious redemptive and restorative plan for all mankind it’s just too foreign for their minds to grasp.

There was a time — only some 400 years ago — when the people of the world believed that the earth was the center of the universe. The scientists Copernicus and Galileo observed the movements of the heavenly bodies and reached the conclusion, and Galileo was finally able to demonstrate, that the earth and other planets revolve around the sun, and not the sun around the earth as people believed. This was a daring thing to say in that day, it seemed completely illogical and absolutely contradictory to all external appearances, and was at first considered a dangerous and heretical teaching. Galileo was forced by the Roman Catholic Church to stop publishing his discoveries for many years. While today it is difficult for you and me to comprehend how deep and dark that ignorance was, it was the accepted scientific opinion for thousands of years! Five hundred years ago the whole world believed the earth was flat — until Columbus proved that it is round. It is so hard for man to change his mind! And God’s people are no different! The carnal mind is still enmity against God and “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned” (I Cor. 2:14). It is extremely difficult for carnal-minded Christians to receive spiritual revelation — so hard, in fact, that it takes a miracle! The people esteem their ministers, trust their teachers, and accept everything they say as gospel truth without any personal examination. What an awakening it is when through the dealings of the Holy Spirit they come to see that much of what they have been taught simply isn’t true!

Popular religion always has been wrong. It still is. And it is so busy! Oh, that we all might now leave our delusions and press on toward the full revelation of Jesus Christ. My God, lead us onward and upward to “be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ” (Eph. 4:14-15). Mature spiritual perfection alone will win the prize incomparable at the end of the race. And that perfection can be obtained only by leaving the popular crowd: by seeking the Lord who is our life, and by just asking Him to take us all the way into His glorious fullness of life and light and glory. He is faithful!

Now, let’s look at every verse in the Bible which mentions antichrist by name. Don’t worry, it is a very short list. If you think there are others, get your concordance out and find them. Or read the whole book of Daniel and the entire book of Revelation and watch closely for
the term antichrist. Though I have searched the scriptures diligently I have not been able to find another single verse!

“Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time” (I Jn. 2:18).

“Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist,, that denieth the Father and the Son” (I Jn. 2:22).

“Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world” (I Jn. 4:2-3).

“For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist” (II Jn. 7).

Hard as it may be to believe, that’s all of them! There are only four verses in the whole Bible which mention the antichrist by name. That doesn’t fit with what we have heard about the antichrist at all, does it? Sorry, that is still all the references there are! That is every verse which mentions the antichrist! And everything the Bible has to say about the antichrist is found in those four verses. Everything else we have heard is pure speculation and hyperbole! Do these verses say anything about a beast? Do they say anything about a Great Tribulation? Do they say anything about a world government? Do they say anything about a mark or a number? Do they say anything about a temple? Do they say anything about an image or about worship? Do they say anything about a battle of Armageddon? If they do, I really missed it! It is obvious from reading these passages that John had no conception of some great individual at the end of the age rising up to a position of great power and all the world worshipping him. His concept is clearly that there were many antichrists already in the world, just as they had been told that this was coming, and that whoever does not confess Jesus Christ coming in the flesh IS ANTICHRIST. And that’s all there is!

God’s penman, nearly two millenniums ago wrote, that as the coming of the antichrist heralds the last hour, therefore, since there were at that time “many antichrists,” this fact proved that he himself was living even then in the “last hour.” And if he, John the beloved, saw many antichrists in his day, after only a few decades of progression into the church age, how much more may we today say that there are “many antichrists” after two thousand years of apostasy and shame, during which time the Holy Spirit also witnessed that “evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived” (II Tim. 3:13). How much more should we today expect to find the church full of these antichrists, since God also promised that in this same age “there will be a time when they will not endure wholesome instruction, but, having itching ears, will accumulate teachers for themselves, according to their own lusts; and they shall indeed turn away from the hearing of the truth, and be turned aside to fables” (II Tim. 4:3-4).

John saw many antichrists in his day. The number has been increasing steadily, all through the years, decades, and centuries, until we now find ourselves surrounded with these men. But who are they, what are they, and how do we recognize them?

First, let us consider the meaning of the word. It comes from a compound Greek word made up of the preposition anti and the Greek word for Christ which is christos. Anti is a
Greek word meaning “opposed to” or “instead of” or both of these meanings. The Greek word christos means “anointed.” When anti is compounded with a noun signifying an agent of any kind, or functionary, the compound signifies a vice-functionary, or a functionary of the same kind opposing, or usurping the place of, or sometimes both. Some apply only the first meaning — a person “against” Christ. The Jews, pagans, communists, and members of non-Christian religions of all kinds have always been “against” Christ. But such a broad application of the word could not be what was meant by John. His description is far more specific than this!

When John spoke of certain people which were of the spirit of antichrist, he did not refer to all opposers of Christ. Instead, he referred to a certain class of people — apostates who were teaching things contrary to the reality that is in Christ. These were not openly against Christ, they were professing believers and apparent ministers of Christ! These were no longer in accord with those who abode in the truth as it is in Jesus, for John says of these antichrists, “…even now there are many antichrists… they went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be manifest that they were not all of us” (I Jn. 2:18-19). Therefore we find that John’s use of the word “antichrist” signifies not merely one who opposes Christ, but one who sets himself up in the place of Christ, appropriating some of the attributes of Christ, but substituting error in the place of truth, and form in the place of reality. Anything that is placed instead of Christ is literally antichrist. Have we not embraced and practiced a lot of religious attitudes, ideas, beliefs, doctrines, rituals, ceremonies, sacraments, ordinances, traditions, forms, means, and methods which have TAKEN THE PLACE OF TRUTH AND REALITY in our lives! These certainly contained bits and shades of truth and life, but they were NOT THE LIVING REALITY OF CHRIST WITHIN AT ALL! They were shadow, but not substance; form, but not essence; works, but not power. Any little form of substitution that detracts from His indwelling life is indeed ANTICHRIST!

If at any time we accept an “instead of” rather than HIS WORD AND WILL AND LIFE WORKING WITHIN US, we have embraced that which is “antichrist.” It is not merely that which is in direct opposition to Christ, but also includes anything which of itself might be good, but is used or relied upon instead of the inward life of the Spirit. And, beloved saints, the battle is not so much an outward one, but an inner conflict, until we are so cleansed by His refining fire, so purged of Babylon’s spirit and ways, that Christ in us becomes our only hope of glory! Praise God, the illuminating light of truth and the mighty dealings and processings of God in our lives are removing all these “substitutes” and “counterfeits,” reducing us to the true and only reality found in the living Christ. Aren’t you glad!

I do not believe there is any way to adequately explain, imagine, or even understand the many ways this spirit of antichrist works. Even before the apostles had passed from this life, a spirit and system had set in among the saints of the Lord and many people were wearing the Babylonish garment. They were instituting rules and regulations, laying down laws, formulating creeds, observing days, establishing sacraments and ordinances, elevating personalities and human government, becoming disciples of Paul, Apollos, Cephas, and of many others. The babble had begun and the mysterious antichrist was raising his ugly head.

Before too many years had passed men began to set themselves up as “lords” over God’s people in place of the headship of Christ. 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, the presence of God in the morning-time church began to be eclipsed, and the power of carnal-minded men and outward works and forms gradually took the place of the awesome power of the Christ within. 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 reality. When one does not possess reality then something else will be used to fill the void — to take the place — instead of — an ANTICHRIST!

The powerful, mighty, glorious presence of the indwelling Christ was supplanted by endless ritual and ceremony, outward observances of feasts, holy days, communions, holy water, incense, sacraments, ordinances, shrines, relics, cathedrals, holy orders, seminaries, catechisms, robes, etc., etc. The ministry could only teach and practice these things because they had lost the consciousness and presence of HIM. As the blind led the blind the visions of the people were in error and darkness, the pure vision and experience of CHRIST LIVING AND REIGNING IN HIS PEOPLE BY THE SPIRIT was lost to them!

Some people tell me that nowhere in the New Testament is the expression “the antichrist” used. That, however, is a great error. It is true that the King James Bible does not refer to “the” antichrist — it speaks of antichrist, antichrists, and an antichrist. But the Greek text does not read that way at all. Out of the five appearances of the word antichrist two of them do have the definite article and should correctly be translated as “the antichrist.” This being the case, the apostle John tells us plainly, unambiguously, accurately, exactly, precisely, explicitly, and unmistakably just who the antichrist is! The notion that his identity is not known or cannot be known is ludicrous. It’s right there in the Book!

Now let us read the correct translation from the interlinear word for word rendering from the Greek. “Because many deceivers entered into the world, who not confessing Jesus Anointed coming in flesh, this is the deceiver and the antichrist” (II Jn. 7, Emphatic Diaglott). There you have it! Let me ask — Who is the antichrist? The many deceivers who have gone out into the world, who do not confess Jesus Christ coming in the flesh — these very deceivers ARE THE ANTICHRIST! Can anything be simpler or plainer than that? As clear as this testimony is, John has given us yet another identification of the antichrist just as clear, certain, and powerful as the above. In I John 2:22 the Greek text reads, “Who is the liar, if not the one denying that Jesus is the Anointed one? This is the antichrist, the one denying the Father and the Son.” Who is it, precious friend of mine, that denies the Father and the Son? Is it not first of all that old “natural man” or that religious “soulical man” who receives not the things of the Spirit of God, does not know them, and cannot know them?

Yet — what does John really mean when he speaks of denying the Father and the Son? Let us make no mistake about this! Fortunately, a little further on John himself enlarges on this statement so that we need not be left in the dark. “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: EVERY SPIRIT THAT CONFESSETH THAT JESUS CHRIST IS COME IN THE FLESH IS OF GOD: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and THIS IS THAT SPIRIT OF ANTICHRIST, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is in the world” (I Jn. 4:1-3).
Now let us get these statements clear in our minds. John declares an antichrist to be one who denies that Jesus is the Christ, which is denying the Father and the Son. But how does he do this? BY NOT CONFESSING JESUS CHRIST COMING IN THE FLESH! But what does this mean? It states that we know the Spirit of God by His confessing Jesus Christ coming in flesh. Does this mean that Roman Catholicism is the Spirit of God? It confesses that Jesus Christ was a man, born of a virgin. It confesses that He came in the flesh as a babe in Bethlehem. They even parade Him before the world hanging on a cross, crucified. Millions of others around the world, representing every kind of religion and cult existing, including the religion of Islam, admit the same historical facts. Do all of these represent the Spirit of God?

These verses obviously have a deeper meaning! They are not considering the fact of Jesus Christ having lived on earth as a man. Any Christian will admit that Jesus Christ came as a man and lived on this earth. Can we not see that it is not a matter of confessing the existence of the Father and the Son? The words of Paul to Titus demonstrate vividly the truth we are dealing with. “They profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him…being in every good work reprobate” (Titus 1:16). Here we learn that men can deny God without denying His existence. “In works they deny Him.” “Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself…” I am certain that all will agree that Jesus did not mean that a man should deny his own existence! “But if any man provide not for his own, and especially those of his own house, he hath denied the faith.” It is inconceivable to imagine that a lazy brother has repudiated and turned his back on the faith of Jesus simply because he is not providing for his family! You see, my beloved, denying means acting contrary to. The lazy brother has acted contrary to the truth he professes. The following verse illustrates this truth so beautifully, “Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Titus 2:12). Thus, denying ungodliness means living a Godly life, acting contrary to our former lifestyle!

The antichrist denies that Christ is come in the flesh. And the profound truth which all of popular religion has missed, is the fact of the Christ actually coming into this flesh, my flesh, your flesh, and becoming an eternal and inseparable part of us! Referring to the expression “is come” one Greek scholar points out that it is the Greek perfect, which implies not a mere historical fact, as would be the case if another tense were used, but a blessed continuance of the fact and its blessed effects. Hear it! “And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ IS (now) COME in the flesh is not of God: and THIS is that spirit of antichrist…YE are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is HE THAT IS I-N Y-O-U, than he that IS IN THE WORLD” (I Jn. 4:3-4). These words reveal to us the great truth that John, when speaking of confessing that Jesus Christ IS COME in the flesh, is referring to His coming in the members of His body on earth — and not in the historical man Jesus who walked the shores of blue Galilee so long ago. Every spirit that confesses not Jesus Christ now coming in flesh is antichrist, for it relies upon something other than the Christ within in the practice of its religion. All the religious self-righteousness, human good works, static creeds, lifeless ceremonies, fleshly organization, methods, and programs — do not all of them deny the Father and the Son, denying the Christ within, by substituting the wisdom and the ability of the flesh for the living word and divine power of the Christ within? Oh, yes!

“Christ liveth IN ME,” Paul wrote to the Galatians. In the same book he says, “But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by His grace, to REVEAL HIS SON IN ME…” And again in the same book he affirms, “And because ye are
sons, God hath SENT FORTH THE SPIRIT OF HIS SON INTO YOUR HEARTS.”  To these same saints he further wrote, “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until CHRIST be formed IN YOU.”  Then to the saints in Colosse he wrote, “Christ IN YOU, the hope of glory.”  To the Corinthians he testified, “But this treasure (Christ) WE HAVE IN EARTHEN VESSELS.”  It cannot be denied — this is the Christ that is come in the flesh! Isn’t it wonderful!

Oh, that men might believe it!  Truly, Christ in us is our only hope of glory!  HE IS the glory!  But antichrist will hear of no such hope of glory.  His hope does not rest wholly in the Christ within, but in his own ability and works, his own faithfulness and endurance.  He is cluttered about with myriads of religious exercises and works, all of which are designed to assure his right standing with God.  He is thus denying the Father and the Son, for the living Christ alone is not his life!  Anything that adds something to the Christ-life within, to fill some place or function in our lives that is not filled by THE LIFE OF CHRIST ALONE — is antichrist!  Those who have truly received the call to sonship have now learned, and learned well, that there is no need for any of the religious trappings in the walk of sonship, for CHRIST WITHIN abundantly supplies everything they can possibly ever need!  In order for Christ to be “all in all” He must first become ALL!  God was in Christ, and God in Christ is in us!  From the moment that the Father declared Christ’s sonship the spirit of sonship moved in and through Him and His whole life became the revelation of His Father.  The nature, mind, will, and power of His Father manifested through Him, and it was the same power of the Father in Him that raised Him from the dead!  And now a vast family of His “many brethren” have received that same spirit of sonship, even the same spirit that raised Christ from the dead dwells within us and shall also quicken our mortal bodies by that spirit which dwells in us!

Let us bow in holy reverence to worship and adore, and to live and walk in the blessed reality of such an high and holy calling!  Stop seeking anything at all from or through the myriad substitutes pawned by the countless modern day antichrists of the church systems of man.  These external religious observances will not suffice for those destined for the throne, neither will any of it satisfy the deepest cravings of your heart after God!  CHRIST HIMSELF IS SUFFICIENT!  This is the confession of every son of God, the confession that Jesus Christ Himself has come in our flesh.  In the name of Jesus Christ, divorce yourself completely and forever from all the substitutes, the realm of the instead of — CHRIST WITHIN YOU IS ALL YOU NEED!  This is the Christ who was Jesus of Nazareth, but who now is the many sons of God in the earth!  God is bringing many sons to glory and we are being conformed to the image of God’s firstborn Son.

Only the formation of Christ within us can bring us into our true stature and relationship to our Father.  Sonship is Christ formed in each member of God’s elect!  This spirit of sonship is both ageless and deathless, the actual son of the Father in heaven.  He abides eternally in this human identity, even as he abides eternally in Jesus to perform His mighty works.  And it is a union which is becoming a glorious and eternal reality within God’s sons in this great day of the Lord!  But — “many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.  This is the deceiver and the antichrist” (II Jn. 7).  These deceivers acknowledge the historical Christ of two thousand years ago, but they recognize Him not as having returned in mighty spirit power within the CHRIST BODY.  These deceivers speak much of sweet Jesus in some far-off heaven somewhere, but they reject the manifestation of Him through the members of His body upon earth!
Antichrist is not some demon possessed ruler, but the spirit that is in thousands of preachers and messages today, in that they deny the Christ that has now come in the flesh. Yet they sing with great fervor that they would like to be like Jesus. How in the world could we be conformed to the image of God's Son if the very spirit of sonship is not activating in our body of flesh, to bring us into conformity with His likeness. We know of no other way to live like Jesus, speak like Jesus, and do the works of Jesus, except that Jesus Christ dwells, speaks, and acts within us. Because Satan has people looking for an antichrist who will reign from a Jewish temple in Jerusalem, they are missing the fact that the spirit of antichrist is operating in their own preaching. Therefore we find that most of the candidates for antichrist promoted by the preachers haven't even come close to being antichrists!

Not only do we not deny that the Christ is come in the flesh, but every spirit that confesses His indwelling life is of God. There is a wonderful depth to this subject we are now considering, confessing the Christ within. A dear friend, Connie Asbill, explored this depth in a letter she wrote to me nearly thirty years ago, and I now quote. “In conjunction with this, I see a passage that has come to hold great meaning for me in recent years — the one in which Jesus says, ‘Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven’ (Mat. 10:22), and another much like it but with an added thought, ‘Also I say unto you (that) whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God’ (Lk. 12:8). At the surface, the link between these passages is not immediately apparent. Delving into the Greek, however, I have found my heart set aflame many times as I have pondered the depth of what Jesus is saying here. The Greek word for ‘confess’ here is a compound word that joins homos, which means ‘the same’ or ‘at the same place or time,’ with logos, which, as you well know, means ‘the word’ or ‘what is said.’

“Thus a transliteration of this Greek word into the English would be this: same-word. What Jesus is saying here, then, in a most literal translation of the Greek is this, what is to me a most glorious thought: ‘Whosoever therefore shall same-word me before men, him will I also same-word before my Father which is in heaven.’ And, in an expansion of that which I consider most significant — even critical — to our full understanding of this, it would go on to read in the Luke passage: ‘Also I say unto you (that) whosoever shall same-word me before men, him shall the Son of man same-word before the angels of God.’

“I cannot write these words without hearing a word Dick Leland ministered in which he said, ‘Jesus was the word when He was speaking, and He was the word when He was not speaking!’ Every act that Jesus performed, every word that Jesus spoke, every silence (as when He refused to answer the Pharisees who brought the woman taken in adultery) and every inaction (as when He deliberately delayed a response to the news that Lazarus had died), every public appearance and every hiding from the multitudes — all this was all that He saw the Father do in the heavens, replicated in the earth to be witnessed by men. He same-worded the Father, and because He same-worded the Father, the Father same-worded Him by putting the stamp of approval upon the life He lived in the flesh. ‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him.’” — end quote.

May I add — as I see it, Jesus said and did only what He heard His Father say and saw His Father do in heaven, and the Father honored that same-wording by causing every word Jesus spoke and every action He took to be validated on earth. And now, blessed be God, when the younger brethren of our Lord same-word Him on earth, He same-words
them before His Father, thus releasing the life and the power and the glory to bring forth the manifestation of the sons of God in the earth! That is the mystery!
Chapter 154

The Beast Out Of The Earth

continued

“And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon” (Rev. 13:11).

The Greek text indicates that this is “another” of the same kind as the first beast, or a “beast” in another form. In our last message we pointed out that the “antichrist” is not the same as the “beast” in the book of Revelation. There is indeed a relationship, but there is also an important difference. “Antichrist” refers to a spirit and to the people possessed by that spirit. Notice the language: “Ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now there are many antichrists…they went out from us, but they were not of us…every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not…is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist…for many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.” On the other hand, throughout the scriptures, the word beast refers to a system, and not to a man. The beasts speak of bestial systems, organizations, institutions, movements, and governments. The antichrist people may be found in the bestial system, but the bestial system is something beyond the people themselves.

This second beast is an earth-born beast. There is no possibility of confusing him with the first beast. They are utterly different. The first is a composite wild jungle beast, the second resembles a lamb, but inwardly bears the nature of a dragon. Outwardly he looks like a kinder, gentler, harmless beast, having only two horns, and those of a harmless kind — like the horns of a lamb. Also, he has no crowns on his horns, indicating that he has no political sovereignty. When he speaks, however, he speaks like a dragon; and for all his harmless appearance he is a true therion, a savage, fierce, and cruel brute. When we look at his character and pretensions we find that, bad as the other beast was, there is something here yet more dreadful. The second beast does not accomplish his agenda by brute force; he works deception through signs, wonders, and miracles. The first gives his authority to the second, and the second persuades men everywhere to give respect and pay homage to an image of the first. They are in league and covenant, each aiding and abetting the other.

I would now draw your attention to the fact that the expression “I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth” is literally in the Greek, “I saw another wild beast ascending out of the earth.” John did not say, “I saw a beast come up or ascend as a limited, one-time event, but coming up or ascending — denoting a continuous action. It is on-going. It is constantly being fulfilled. It cannot be bound by, nor does it predict or specify, any actual historical or future event. Instead, the beast is ascending, he is always ascending out of the earth-realm of the soul of man. 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 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. Their lives are lived out of the earthly realm of the soul.

It is impossible to understand this truth of the two beasts unless we can distinguish between the sea, the earth, and the two beasts themselves. The first beast is not the sea-realm itself, but comes up out of the sea of humanity. The second beast is not the earth-realm itself, but comes up out of the earth, out of the soulical nature of man. So we are dealing neither with the wicked, surging masses of humanity nor the moral and religious people who bring a sense of stability to civilization. The beasts are something “out of.” Each is an entity, a form, a structure, an organism possessing the attributes of the sea and the earth, but exercising a sphere of activity, influence, authority, and power above and beyond the underlying nature of man. It is that which comes forth from man and takes on a life, form, identity, and activity of its own. We have seen that the first beast represents the BESTIAL WORLD SYSTEM OF MAN — human government, rising out of the sea of human corruption. Armed with this understanding the identity of the second beast is not difficult to ascertain! The second beast, rising out of the earth, out of the religious soulical nature of man, is therefore the representation of the CARNAL RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS OF MAN! Can you not see the mystery?

The world system of man — government, economics, commerce, military, education, art, science, entertainment, medicine — these and many more are at all times and in all places arising out of the heart and will of the natural man. It never ceases! In like manner, the religious systems of earth are at all times and in all places arising out of the intuitive, intellectual, emotional, soulical nature of mankind! Let us see how this is so. I will now quote from an old article that has come into my hands, written many years ago by a lady by the name of Beatrice Barnard Redwine. While she does not distinguish between soul and spirit, it is still deeply insightful and reveals precisely how religion is the offspring of the human soul.

“In the beginning of our thinking together let us make four interesting observations. First, All men are Religious. Great scholars who have made a study of this fact have joined in one great chorus to announce that ‘man is incurably religious.’ There are no dates to fix the time when religion first came into the world. It is generally conceded that it came with the first human foot-print. Why? Because religion was born in the human soul. All tribes, even the lowest, observe that a human being is made up of two parts, the body of flesh and bone, and an intangible something that lives within. This something, or soul, is called by various names, but belief in it, is universal.

“Secondly, God seeks man and man seeks God. Belief in a soul implies belief in a creator. All men are seeking for a creator of this soul. God has put into man’s soul a feeling of need that he cannot supply. He has put into that soul a belief in some superior, invisible Power which can supply his needs and a desire to commune with that Power. This is proof of the statement in Acts 14:17 that ‘God hath not left Himself without witness’ in all the world. This is ‘The light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.’ All have enough light to make them seek more light! ‘The light shines (to some extent) even in the darkness.’ This is God’s initiative in seeking man! ‘God who hath made the world and all things therein hath determined that they should seek the Lord if haply they might feel after Him and find Him, though He be not far away from every one of us’ (Acts 17:27).
“Thirdly, Man seeks God through methods known to him. Man’s inborn instincts coupled with the fact that he has not always been rightly guided has led him to seek through false means, and it has led him to substitute all sorts of spirits and gods for that unknown force which is ‘God.’ It seems only natural that man in his search has tried to find deity in the things which experience teaches him are powerful — the sun, moon, stars, lightning, wind, rivers, mountains, great men, and so forth. Some have felt the need of this greater power with them constantly, and they have made idols or images in which the supreme spirits may dwell. The beliefs and practices of the uncivilized, unguided heathen are revolting and not conceivable to us, but in each case, the spirit of the god or gods represents to the worshipper some conception of the Supreme being. He is not only ignorant of the One whom he would worship and of the right method of approach, but he is also ignorant of why he seeks, except that he seeks soul-satisfaction. Paul said to the men of Athens, ‘Him whom ye ignorantly worship, Him do I declare unto you.’ Him whom the heathen everywhere worship ignorantly is God! The utterance of the wise men two thousand years ago is the unconscious utterance of the millions today who would worship Him: ‘Where is He, born King of the Jews?’ Hearts everywhere yearn for a consciousness of the love of God.

“As we study together we shall realize more keenly that while all men everywhere are religious, having a religion is very different from having Christ. As we study the religious practices of the peoples of the world and see the means employed in their search for God...as we see the effects of the gospel upon men of all nations and races, may we realize that knowing Christ makes all the difference; that His Light truly does displace images; that His Love does banish all fear; that His Truth does overcome error; that His Cross does conquer unbelief and that His Spirit does triumph over religion” — end quote.

While the world is full of religions, and always has been, and they all spring from the soulic nature of man, it is clear to me that the beast which John sees ascending out of the earth signifies that carnal religious system which relates to John’s spiritual world, the church of Jesus Christ. This beast out of the earth-realm had “two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.” “Horns” in prophecy denote dominion, power, authority, or kingship, so this unholy power has a two-fold dominion, both a spiritual administration and ecclesiastical or governmental authority. This beast is called later on “the false prophet” (Rev. 19:20; 20:10), by which we understand that it is made up of false teachers as well as earthly rulers, for a false prophet in the scriptures refers to an erroneous teaching influence in spiritual matters. John then reveals that this false teaching influence represents itself “as a lamb.” The “two horns like unto a lamb” are unquestionably a travesty of the “seven horns” of THE LAMB who sits in the midst of the throne. This beast sets itself up as the representation of Christ in the earth, professing to be the very anointed of God, but is actually a usurper who is opposed to the headship of Christ and the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

So this beast with the “two horns like a lamb” denotes a two-fold religious power which professes to be the true representative of the Lamb of God in the world! It pretends to be harmless, meek, mild, loving, inoffensive, non aggressive like a lamb and has many professions of cleanliness, purity, holiness, sanctity, and godliness, but notwithstanding all of these, “he spake as a dragon” — just like the “great dragon” — the arch deceiver — the devil! Now, I am well aware that the highest meaning of these symbols does not indicate the external, organized systems, but is, rather, a condition in the mind and heart of man, which means that we have all, at one time or another, and perhaps even until now, been partakers of that which is symbolized by the “beast,” “horns,” etc. But the Spirit of the Lord quickens to me that within the framework of these visions, the beast is, undoubtedly, the OUTWARD REPRESENTATION of the inner spiritual realities, and that this beast is indeed the ORGANIZED CHURCH SYSTEMS OF MAN as they have existed through the age and as we now see them.
The Lord foresaw that Christianity would spread over the world and that, becoming popular, it would be embraced by many who would appreciate the form without entering into its spirit. He foresaw that as multitudes of this sort would identify themselves with the church, the worldly spirit, which is the opposite of the spirit of the Lamb, would come in with them; that selfishness, carnality, intellectualism, formalism, and a desire to be great and rule, thus coming in, would not have long to wait, but in due time the church would seize the opportunity to seek to dominate the world by means OTHER THAN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD!

I have no hesitation whatever in telling you that “Christianity” is the name of this false kingdom! And it was built upon a mis-applied truth — the truth that the body of Christ is called to be kings and priests unto God and to reign over the earth. How pitiful it is that for centuries Christians have not understood that the power of the kingdom of God is NOT POLITICAL POWER! Even some who profess to be sons of God have not yet learned that one important truth! They still get all involved with various organizations, political parties, and political action groups and support candidates and trot to the polls trying to legislate righteousness through the ballot box. But the Lord Jesus says, “My kingdom is not of this world,” and the Holy Ghost testifies that “the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power” (I Cor. 4:20). If the kingdom of God comes by power, what kind of power would that be? It would have to be GOD POWER! What kind of power is GOD POWER? It’s certainly not the power of laws, even good laws, passed in Washington D.C. or in any other ruling government of earth! The Bible says that God is a spirit. Therefore, the kingdom of God would be SPIRIT POWER! Oh, yes! The Lord knew that once the worldly element entered the church, the church would forsake the mighty weapons of the Spirit and, turning to carnal weapons, would make its influence felt, and in the name of Christ would grasp or seek to use even the civil power of earth!

The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost! Is there power in peace? I would say there is power in the peace of God! Is there power in joy? There is power in the joy of the Lord! It is contagious. There is power in faith, for by faith all things are possible! There is power in righteousness! There is power in the name of Jesus Christ! There is power in the good news of God in Christ, for the gospel is the power of God unto salvation! There is power in the word of God, for the word of God is living and energetic! God is love. Is there power in love? Truly God’s love is the more excellent way! You see, my beloved, the kingdom of God is SPIRITUAL POWER — power to change men’s minds, power to transform lives, power to break the hold of sin, power to deliver from addictions and cruel bondages, power to heal the sick and raise the dead, power to redeem, power to subdue men under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, power to raise men up into the image of God! Oh, yes!

The power of the kingdom of God does not reside in political offices, nor on judicial benches, nor in the legislative halls of government, nor in armies or military might, nor in church boards, nor in organization, nor in any programs devised by men, nor in ecclesiastical pronouncements, nor in councils, conventions, or conferences, nor in creeds, sacraments, ordinances, ceremonies, vestments, rules, or regulations. Beloved brethren, I can assure you by the word of the Lord that we shall yet see a manifestation of the fullness of the POWER OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD through the ministry of the glorious body of Jesus Christ, the manifest sons of God, which shall “break to shivers” all the vaunted pride and power of all the nations and institutions of the world and cause them to walk in the light of the Lord! That very fact is the closing scene in the final chapters of THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST! “Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him: all nations shall serve Him. All nations shall come and worship before Thee, O Lord; and shall glorify Thy name” (Ps. 72:11; 86:9). “And the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea” (Rev. 21:24,1).
I am indebted to a number of books and authors for much of the historical background in the following pages.

And thus it actually transpired: the nominal church began to fall away from its walk in the spirit as it increased in numbers under the teaching and example of ambitious men whose soulical ideas grew more and more favorable to the power and worldly influence which numbers, education, refinement, culture, pomp, and wealth brought with them. Gradually the spirit of the church became worldly, and the things and ways of the world were coveted. The suggestion of ambition was — “If the mighty Roman Empire, with all its power and influence, its armies and wealth, were only to support the church, how honorable and noble it would then be to be a Christian! How speedily then would heathen persecutions cease! Then it would be in our power not only to overawe the pagans, but to compel their adherence to the church and the name of Christ! Obviously,” they reasoned, “it is not God’s purpose that the church should forever be subject to the world and persecuted by it: the apostle’s words, ‘Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?’ as well as our Lord’s promises that we shall reign with Him and be given power over the nations, and the many prophecies that all nations shall be subdued to God’s Christ and come and worship before Him, indicate clearly that such is God’s plan. To us it seems clear that we can and should use every means to obtain a hold upon the civil government and conquer the world for the Lord!”

Thus gradually by a slow process of reasoning covering centuries, the real hope of the church for exaltation to rule and bless the world by the fullness of the power of the Spirit — namely, the manifestation of the sons of God — was lost sight of, and a new hope took its place: the hope of success without the fullness of God, without the mind of Christ, without the full stature of sonship — by the power of the carnal weapons of the flesh. And thus, by collusion, intrigue, and exchange of favors with the world, the hope of the church became a false hope, a delusive snare by which the dragon-spirit led God’s people from one error and evil to another, until finally the church exercised the worldly power of human government, the persecuted became the persecutors, the lamb-like appearance took on the character of a beast, the voice became that of a dragon, and the church came to rule the world alright, but alas! the world was two-fold more the child of hell than before!

The beast out of the earth is far more than the historic Roman Catholic Church, Eastern Orthodox Church, Protestant Church, or any one denomination or religious system. Yet we cannot deny that this beast assumed its most monstrous form in the days following Constantine the Great. When Imperial Rome fell, Papal Rome rose. In the selection of Rome as the seat of its empire, the church secured enormous prestige. Sitting in the seat which the masters of the world had so long occupied, the church appeared the rightful heir to their power. The bishops of Rome were perpetually reminding the world that they were the successors of the Caesars, that church and government were linked by an inseparable bond, and that to Rome Christian had descended the heritage of glory and dominion acquired by Rome Pagan. In due time the bishop of Rome claimed to be the successor of both Caesar and Peter. The one made him a king, the other made him king of kings; the one gave him the power of the sword, the other invested him with the still more sacred keys to the kingdom of God! And by these two “horns” of power he was pronounced the father of princes, the king and ruler of the world!

When the church was allied with the state; when Christianity became the religion of the court and of the fashionable classes, the church was not only impregnated with the errors of pagan philosophy, but it adopted many of the ceremonies and rituals of the pagan worship. The pagan practices were “Christianized” as an accommodation to the heathen, making it easier for them to adapt to the new religion. The church buildings became as imposing as the old temples of idolatry. Festivals became frequent and imposing. Veneration of martyrs ripened into the introduction of images, a future source of popular idolatry. Christianity was emblazoned with pompous ceremonies. Superstition exalted the mother of our Lord to
practical deification, an object of veneration. Corruptions, heresies, abominable practices abounded. The teachings of Christ were forgotten, and the paganized teachings of the church put in their place. It became a sin to believe the truth, serve the living God, and walk in the spirit, yea, it was soon esteemed the worst of crimes to follow the Lord only and wholly. The humble and true saints were persecuted. In streams, yeal in rivers, their blood was shed, till the professing church became a ravenous, devouring beast “drunk” on the blood of His true disciples. Millions of martyrs fell under the sword, and even in the later days of the Protestant Reformation, at the word of men like Martin Luther and John Calvin, the sword still shed the blood of all who failed to submit to the beastly rule and were esteemed to be “heretics.” The Reformation Churches were one and all “State Churches” wielding not only the sword of the Spirit but also the carnal sword of human government. From that day to this, again and again, when autocratic government has realized that religion can be either an intransigent foe or a powerful ally, that government has almost always coveted the control of organized religion for the accomplishment of its sordid purposes. Even today, in the United States of America, where we supposedly have a separation of church and state, religion is to some degree bridled and controlled by government charters and tax exemptions.

Christ, the Lamb of God, contrary to popular opinion, is not a Person, but a great body of persons, a corporate man. In fact the word “Christ” is itself not a true translation of the original. It is not a proper name, but should be rendered as “the anointed.” And in I Corinthians 12:12 we find just what “the anointed” really is. It tells us, that just as our natural body is but one body composed of many members, “SO ALSO IS THE ANOINTED.” Christ, or the anointed then, is a huge company composed of anointed sons of God “for by one spirit are we all baptized into one body” (I Cor. 12:13). And this body or company which IS CHRIST, has a Head, the chief Christ, our Lord and Saviour. He is the Head of the body and we are members in particular! We all are “the anointed” of the Lord! A man must have a blind soul, indeed, if he cannot see that just as Christ, the true Lamb of God, is a corporate body composed of many members, so the “beast” like unto a lamb is also a corporate body composed of many members! The company which is Christ is the true church; the beast is the false church, that which appears as a lamb, but has a wild nature and a dragon voice!

In our day the vast multitudes of Christians, carried away by the false pretensions, erroneous doctrines, carnal organization, and worldly spirit of the bestial church systems of man, have missed it all! They know nothing of the day in which we live, the great purposes of God for this hour, and the glory to be revealed, for they are imbued with the spirit of the beast. In more ways than one they have taken upon themselves the mark of the beast by believing and propagating its doctrines, observing its forms and ceremonies, celebrating its holy days, functioning by its system, and glorying in its shame. And above all, multitudes of Christians today are one with the bestial system in pointing the finger of accusation at some fictitious person who is supposed to appear at some yet future time to be the beast!

The overcoming sons of God who are sealed with the mind of Christ have discerned in their spirit the ominous and destructive spirit of the bestial church systems of man, and have departed from its precincts. They knew from the moment they received their call to sonship that the whole program of the beast was earthly and soulical, and that its creeds and doctrines were impure mixtures, that its voice had the sound of the dragon, and that its spirit was savage and its control deadly. And these overcome the beast and they don’t belong to the earth anymore! They belong in the heavens where they dwell! They are looking after the things their Father is doing, they mind heavenly things! What is happening in the heavens is all that pertains to these victorious ones! They belong to the heavens where they walk with God in the Spirit! It is the mind of Christ that will govern the world in the kingdom of God! Every son is being imbued with the mind of Christ and from those holy omniscient minds the life and light and love and authority and glory of the Lord will flow forth with a power that will encompass the earth with transforming grace and fill it to overflowing with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord!
Some years ago a dear friend shared the following. “In the 11th chapter of Luke, there is recorded (verses 24-26) the account of a man out of whom the evil spirit had been cast. Now, I had always thought that Jesus was talking about an individual man until just a short time ago when He showed me otherwise. The account in Matthew 12:43-45 goes just a step further than Luke’s account and identifies the man. ‘When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places seeking rest and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out…and the last state of that man is worse than the first. EVEN SO SHALL IT BE UNTO THIS WICKED GENERATION.’ The ‘man’ about whom Jesus was speaking was a WICKED GENERATION — a whole ‘body’ of people! He, furthermore, identifies who that wicked generation is in the verses that precede the story. Verses 38 and 39 say: ‘Then certain of the scribes and Pharisees (the religious order) answered saying, Master, we would see a sign from Thee. But He answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous GENERATION seeketh after a sign.’ He was, then, identifying the wicked and adulterous generation as the RELIGIOUS ORDER OF HIS DAY!

“Now the unclean spirit that was cast out of the ‘man’ was that RELIGIOUS SPIRIT: the false spirit of prophecy, or, the spirit of Jezebel. That spirit, however, cannot exist long in a godless (secular) world, for it needs water — the Word of God — in order to find a lodging place! Finding no rest in the world, he says, ‘I will return to my house,’ but when he returns he finds that it has changed appearance. Now it is empty, swept, and garnished. Now that all sounds well and good — but it is not that the house is clean, for if the house were clean and righteous before God, that false spirit would find no lodging place therein. The new condition of the house is what made it receptive to the unclean spirit of the false prophet, which the Greek reveals. The word translated “garnished” is from the word kosmos which speaks of the present world system. Thus he returned and found the religious system (popular church) partaking of the spirit of the world — using her methods, expanding its programs through these methods, worldly in her approach to spiritual things.

“Not only that, he found it swept. And the Lord said, ‘I will sweep you with the besem (broom) of destruction.’ He found the religious system, then, UNDER JUDGMENT! But the most enlightening word of all is the word empty. What a shock that was when I discovered it! It is from the Greek word scholastikos, which is our word for scholar and intellectual. He found the religious system reasoning about the scripture — intellectually pursuing her revelation — making scholars in the Word of God and offering degrees for the same! A perfect lodging place for the spirit of the false prophet! So he goes and takes seven devils worse than himself and, entering in, they make the last condition of that ‘man’ worse than the first!

“The seven devils are the devils that entered into each church age. That first unclean spirit started in Israel, in the apostate religious system of Jesus’ day. But when it was cast out in His crucifixion and a new day began with an expansion of Israel into the church, it wasn’t long until that same spirit came back, and gave in each succeeding church age a devil just a little worse than the preceding one, until now, in the end of this age, the Lord tells us that things are worse than in the days when He walked on the earth — the days of the scribes and Pharisees! That was an anti-Christ spirit in Judaism — but it has multiplied seven-fold since then, so...the cup of wickedness is being filled to the brim — and what we must realize more than anything else is this: Anti-Christ is not in the world! Anti-Christ is in the CHURCH!” — end quote.

TWO HORNS LIKE A LAMB

“And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon” (Rev. 13:11).
Horns are a symbol in scripture for power and dominion. They speak of a realm of authority. Long millenniums ago King David uttered these inspired words, “The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the HORN of my salvation…” In the Old Testament horns were used to denote kings and kingdoms in their strength and dominion. So David says, “The Lord is the strength, the power, the authority, the KING of my salvation!” How many who read these lines ever tried to save yourself? At the dawn of the New Year millions of people make New Year Resolutions. They resolve to make changes in their lives and to “turn over a new leaf.” The truth is that very few people who determine by resolution to turn over a new leaf are able to keep the leaf turned over very long! It just doesn’t work. The simple fact is that we cannot change ourselves! We are hopelessly impotent to either deliver ourselves or to perfect ourselves. David recognized that in the frailty of human nature it is impossible to fight our own battles and gain our own victories within ourselves. By the eye of the spirit David saw a revelation and declared, “The Lord is the horn of my salvation!” Is it not a great fact that every good thing that has been inworked into our lives has been wrought by the almighty hand of God!

At the time of the birth of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, his father, Zacharias, was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, ‘Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David” (Lk. 1:68-69). God has raised up a horn of salvation, and it is plain that the horn is our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom Zacharias prophesied. I tell you today that just as surely as any kingdom on earth has ever had authority, power, and dominion, the mighty Christ within each of us has authority, power, and dominion! HE is the horn of our salvation! In Him there is strength. In Him there is might. In Him there is sufficiency. In Him there is divine omnipotence. In Him there is the power of resurrection. No matter your circumstance, no matter your difficulty, regardless of your problems, temptations, weaknesses, failures, tests, trials, or tribulations, there is within you today, my dear brother, my precious sister, A MIGHTY HORN OF SALVATION! It is right there within you, closer to you than the air you breathe. Christ in your spirit is your almighty horn of salvation!

No man on earth is more keenly aware of his own lack and inability than I. I have discovered through long years of painful experience that I am utterly helpless to either deliver or perfect myself. I am powerless to change myself. I am absolutely unable to transform myself. Though I embrace, and rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, in the beautiful hope of sonship, I know for certainty in my deepest heart that I cannot manifest myself. As the years rush onward I see more signs of weakness, impairness, ageing, and dissolution in my mortal body and I have learned the valuable lesson that I can in no way immortalize my flesh. I cannot pull rain down from the heavens nor transfigure myself on the holy mount. Yet — I live in expectation of the glory of God! Oh, yes! He that dwelleth within me is my horn of salvation, and He is mighty! Christ in us is our hope of glory and truly He is our only hope of glory. Not Christ in heaven, my friend; not Christ with you, not Christ “passing this way” and “touching you,” but Christ IN YOU!

Just after writing the above words I made my daily trip to the Post Office and received the following words in the mail from a dear sister. She writes, “How I want to gird up the loins of my mind and be rid of all the carnal thinking. There are times when after reading your paper I feel like you’ve laid it all out for me and it seems such an easy thing just to live it out; and then the enemy (God-sent) comes in and throws a huge annoyance in my path and I am reminded of how utterly dependent I am upon the Lord to change me. I am so very thankful that the seed has been sown and that it is growing and maturing into the likeness of Christ. It cannot be choked out and the thing that fights against my growth and development is actually exercising me and causing me to want to change more each day. It is truly a terrible struggle at times, and it gets so old fighting and trying to change over and over, year after year after year! But when the time comes and I am filled with the victory and glory of the
Lord — what a transformation! What a miracle! What an absolutely loving God He is to impart His exact nature and image to His sons and ultimately to all creation!”

Gary Sigler stated it so well when he said, “The very moment that you try to be godly, you are in the wrong mind. The moment you try to improve yourself by effort, the moment it enters your mind that you must do something to be righteous, you’re in the wrong mind, because the mind of Christ knows nothing but perfection, loveliness, and beauty. The mind of Christ does not look at you according to the flesh. I remember one day when I was so miserable before I came out of all the bondage I was in. God spoke to me so clearly and said, ‘Gary, you are my idea — I brought you forth. If I don’t perfect that in you which I desire to do, then I would be an irresponsible parent. It’s not about you trying to pull yourself up out of the gutter, it’s about what I’ve done for you. I look far past your natural mind, I look deep on the inside of you and I see the very essence, the very substance of all that I am that’s imprisoned within your being. And Gary, I’m going to speak to you, I’m going to water you, I’m going to nourish you until that seed within you begins to grow and flourish!” — end quote.

“You see, the seed of God in you is predestinated, pre-programmed to be everything that God is in your being. It cannot do anything else! But because we nurture the seed of the serpent which is the natural mind; because we focus on what we are in the flesh instead of what we are in the spirit, the tare grows in us at the same time as the wheat. Now listen to this: Don’t try to remove the tare. You have to minister to Christ! Let them grow together until the harvest. Then the tares are taken in bundles and burned!” — end quote.

There we have the reality — God has raised up within us a “horn of salvation” and that horn is Christ in us, the hope of glory. The horn of our salvation is the fullness of the seven horns of the Lamb, which are the seven spirits of God, the seven-fold fullness of the spirit of the Lamb within us! The raising up of this horn within us is the secret to our victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil!” As we give ourselves to nurturing the seed of Christ within us instead of struggling with the outward flesh man, in due time the power of the Lamb will overcome. The promise is sure: “And these shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings” (Rev. 17:14). That is the secret. Oh, the wonder of it!

But now we see a beast rising up out of the earth having two horns like a lamb! May God give us understanding!

A brother has written, “A fascinating issue must be raised. John gives no description of this beast other than it having two horns like the lamb. That’s right. In the Greek, the noun for lamb in verse 11 has no article such as ‘a’ or ‘the.’ In English there is a big difference between saying a lamb and the lamb. Often the Greek language will omit the article if the noun is obviously known or previously identified. In other words, the Greek syntax supports the idea that John is really saying, ‘I saw a beast rise up out of the earth and it looked like the lamb of God, but it only had two horns, whereas the lamb of God had seven.’ Even if the reader disagrees with this grammatical point, consider this. Why would John ignore the entire appearance of this beast and just notice that its two horns look like a lamb? A literal translation of the Greek says, ‘And I saw another beast rising up out of the earth, and it had two horns like a lamb, and it spoke as dragon.’ Again, notice the missing article before the word dragon. This writer believes the contrast in Revelation 13:11 between Jesus, as ‘The Lamb,’ and this beast, having two horns like The Lamb, is obvious and intentional. John says this beast ‘looked lamb-like, but spoke like dragon!’ Again, we see the contrast because John has already introduced and identified the dragon. Its harmless appearance and its dragon-like speech are direct opposites. Thus he looks like The Lamb but he speaks as The Dragon!” — Larry Wilson.
He appears as the Lamb, meaning that he symbolizes false religious systems, false prophets, false teachings and concepts, and that which appears godly but does not exalt the Christ within. These have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof! This is not a future event, my beloved, for the church today is full of this deception! Horns, as we have shown, represent power. This beast has two horns, bespeaking duality. Duality is double-mindedness. “A double minded man is unstable in all his ways. Let not that man think that he shall receive anything from the Lord” (James 1:8,7). John sees this beast come up out of the earth, out from the soulical religious nature of man; he has the two horns of duality and they have an appearance like the Lamb. This is supposed to be the very wisdom and power of Christ, but at once we discover that the sound of his words is like the voice of the great red dragon! There is the duality again — horns like the Lamb, voice like the dragon. He has the confession of Christ in his life, but also the power of Satan. What a paradox! Let us understand now that all these impressive symbols point manifestly to the fact that this is indeed a religious beast! Thank God, the beast is doomed. Religion is a failure. It always has been. It failed to meet the needs of Adam and Eve, of Cain, of Saul of Tarsus, and it has failed to meet the needs of every man who has ever had religion. Only CHRIST is the answer!

The beast that is more deceptive is not the first beast, the great big ugly, fierce monster out of the sea, but the one that is more deceptive is the one that has horns like a cute, wooly little lamb. It guises itself in such an adorning that it looks like the little Lamb of God but it is betrayed by its speech—it talks like the dragon. It’s a religious guise, it’s old Adam in a religious costume! We immediately think of little Red Riding hood and the wolf impersonating the grandmother. While he appears a lot like grandmother, his objective is to eat you up! Yet—it was his voice which betrayed him! All who shall rule and reign with Christ as king and priests sooner or later become thoroughly undeceived by the carnal church system and flee from it as a plague. The vast majority of the confusion of the Babylonian religious system has come from messengers who look like lambs but talk like dragons! Who can deny it? More than three hundred years ago Madame Guyon wrote of this beast, “This beast is not any less dangerous than the other; on the contrary, the danger of this beast is less apparent, and this is why it is more harmful. Why? This one retains goodness. Its appearance is very beautiful. It is full of its own righteousness, but in such a hidden way that it cannot be discerned because it has two horns like a lamb. The horns of the true Lamb are righteousness and divine strength. This beast’s horns are self-righteousness and self-strength. This is why he comes out of the earth — because he comes from the corrupt nature where as the true Lamb comes from above.”
“And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon” (Rev. 13:11).

In the nineteenth chapter of the book of Revelation we find that this same beast is referred to. And there we read, “And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire that burneth with brimstone” (Rev. 19:20). And in Revelation 20:10 we find mention of him once more: “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are.” There is no difficulty in identifying these two, the beast and the false prophet. The beast is obviously the first beast, the one out of the sea; and the false prophet is none other than the second beast, the one out of the earth, having two horns like a lamb, and a voice speaking as a dragon, who deceives them that dwell in the earth-realm. Therefore we understand that the second beast is also called — the false prophet!

What is a prophet? We must banish from our minds the popular conception that a prophet is chiefly a person who foretells the future. True, a prophet also foretells the future; but the prophetic ministry is broader than that. A prophet is, according to scripture, one who speaks for someone else. Aaron is called the “prophet” of Moses when they two go together before Pharaoh, and Aaron delivers the message to Pharaoh on behalf of Moses the stutterer. And that is why all the prophets of God have prefaced their prophecies with the phrase, “Thus saith the Lord!” They are men who speak for God, delivering His message to His people, appealing to the minds and hearts of men on behalf of God and His purposes. They teach and speak and reveal the will of God and draw men to embrace that which is the mind of the Lord.

So this second beast is also a prophet! He speaks for someone else. His purpose is to influence the minds of men, to persuade them, to rally them to the cause on behalf of which he speaks. But he is a false prophet! That does not mean that everything he says is a lie — not all that the serpent told mother Eve in the garden was a lie — but it was truth laced with just enough error to deceive. That is the purpose of the words of a false prophet — deception! And if we consider this in relation to the beast now under consideration, we shall find that this is in reality his character. In the first place, his very appearance is deceiving. He looks like a lamb; and one would receive the impression, therefore, that every word he speaks is the word of The Lamb of God! But he speaks like the dragon, that is, the message he bears is not in the final analysis the gospel, the good news of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, but is liberally laced with bad news of threats, intimidation, fear, coercion, control, judgment, hell and damnation.
What beast is this? Ah, this refers to the false church, one that outwardly looks like the church of Christ, but he speaks as a dragon. Today in the church systems of man the dragon’s voice can be heard from multitudes of pastors, evangelists, and church leaders of all kinds. They sing songs of worship, they preach of Jesus and the gospel, they have “church” written on their signs and their buildings, they perform religious ceremonies, they do good works — it looks like the Lamb. Yet as one listens there is discernible another sound, it is “another voice,” the dragon’s voice, and it leads millions into man-made rules and regulations, false ideas about God, distorted understanding of His will and word, fear, condemnation, and horrible religious bondage and slavery.

The dragon-voice speaks as loudly now as at any time in all history. If you do not belong to, or submit to, or bow down to this two-horned beast that now dominates the lives of dead and living alike, you will find yourself more and more misunderstood, more and more ostracized, more and more cut off, loudly called a fanatic, a schismatic, a heretic, a lone ranger, a fool, a false prophet, in error and under the condemnation and judgment of God. And if you are in the system and seek to follow on to know the Lord, if you do not heed the counsel of the Holy Spirit to come out from among them and be separate and touch not the unclean thing, you will eventually be ignored or rejected, rebuked, denounced, anathematized, and unceremoniously excommunicated under the deafening roar of the dragon’s mouth!

When we understand this, it is not difficult to comprehend the action of the second beast. Further on in chapter thirteen of the Revelation we find that he does great things, signs and wonders, and that it is exactly through these that he succeeds in drawing men to his cause and thoroughly deceiving them. Naturally, a prophet must do signs and wonders! These are used to establish his prophetic authority, to convince men of the truth of the things he speaks. You see this principle all through the Bible. The mighty works wrought by Moses and Aaron before Pharaoh were for the express purpose of impressing the ruler with the authority by which they spoke. Thus it was with Elijah on mount Carmel, with Jesus as a prophet, and with the ministry of the apostles of Christ in the pagan world. They all performed signs and wonders in order that these might validate the truth of their message. But it is no less true of the false prophets! So Jesus Himself prophesied, “For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect” (Mat. 24:24).

Through the deception of the false prophet the world has been led to believe in a false Christ — a counterfeit, cleverly and subtly foisted off on an unsuspecting “Christian” civilization. Endlessly, evangelists speak of “Jesus,” they praise His name; they talk of “sweet Jesus,” and sing lyrical, worshipful-sounding songs about Him. They wax emotional, crying real tears, as they tell of “loving the Lord” and how much Jesus “loves everybody” — yet the picture of the Christ they present is a horrible caricature of the REAL CHRIST! The “Jesus” of whom they speak is not the one in whom God came reconciling the world unto Himself. The “Jesus” they preach is not the one who has been lifted up and will now draw all men unto Himself. The “Jesus” they teach about is not the one who is the Saviour of all men and the Saviour of the world. The “Jesus” they proclaim is not the one unto whom every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess. No, it is a totally different “Jesus” of men’s imagination; of historical fantasy; of myth, legend, folklore, superstition, and fairy tales!

The God of the false prophet is an angry God, an exacting God, a harsh and vindictive God. He is the God who has designed eternal punishment and damnation in hell-fire for
the vast billions of mankind who lived and died without the knowledge of God and His Son. In considering the issue of eternal punishment of the lost, many Christians can only visualize this punishment as vindictive. In other words, sin and sinners are afflicted by God because of God’s hatred of sin and His intolerable disposition towards them in their sin. And this is the impression one certainly receives from Calvinistic descriptions such as the following: “The damned shall be packed like brick into a kiln, and be so bound that they cannot move a limb, nor even an eyelid; and while thus fixed, the Almighty shall blow the fires of hell through them forever.”

G. H. Lang, commenting of Revelation 14:10-11 in The Last Assize, states basically the same thought, though perhaps in less barbaric language: “Mingled unmixed; every ingredient compounded that shall make the punishment fit the crime; but no element of mercy or alleviation shall be mixed with this dread draught of the wine of the wrath of God. If the Lamb can look on their torments, shall His saints be unable to do so?” And on this same passage yet another further shockingly comments: “Should this eternal punishment and this fire be extinguished, it would in a great measure obscure the light of heaven, and put an end to a great part of the happiness and glory of the blessed!”

I do not hesitate to tell you that these statements come from men who profess to represent the Lamb of God — but who can deny that IT IS THE VOICE OF THE DRAGON!

Of all the blasphemous absurdities of the bestial church systems, this is probably the worst, a lie intended to scare poor souls into her clutches in order to rob them of their dollars, a lie which makes our God of love to be a hideous monster, an insane and sadistic monstrosity who takes delight in tormenting and torturing His creatures made in His own image, a lie which makes our Saviour to be nothing but a lunatic, a deceiver, and a rascal of the first magnitude. It makes Adolph Hitler look like a Sunday School teacher, and it makes Calvary to be the most awful burlesque ever enacted on earth.

Now this leads us to another point of immense importance, and it is another clue in the identification of the false prophet. We often hear it said that “the death of Christ was necessary in order to reconcile God to man.” Now this is a pious stupidity, arising from inattention to the language of the Holy Spirit, and indeed to the plain meaning of the word “reconcile.” God never changed — never stepped out of His normal and true position. He changeth not! He abideth faithful! It was not because of His anger at sin and sinners that He sent Jesus. Oh, no! “For God so LOVED the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.” That, my friend, is the truth! There was, and could be, no derangement, no disappointment, no confusion, no alienation, so far as He was concerned; and hence there could be no need of reconciling Him to us. In fact, it was exactly the contrary. Man had gone astray; he was the enemy, and needed to be reconciled. Hear it! “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son…” (Rom. 5:10). And again, “And you, who were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath HE reconciled” (Col. 1:21). Wherefore, then, as might be expected, the scriptures never speak of reconciling God to man. Never! There is no such expression to be found within the covers of the New Testament! “God was in Christ reconciling THE WORLD UNTO HIMSELF, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” And again, “All things are of God, who hath reconciled US to Himself by Jesus Christ” (II Cor. 5:18-19). In a word, it is God, in His infinite mercy and grace, through the cross of Christ, bringing us back unto Himself. But that is not what the dragon-voice has to tell us about our God!
“Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ; whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Rom. 3:24-26).

The following words penned by George Hawtin are true and graphic on this point. “The word propitiate means to appease, to sooth, to cause to be favorably disposed, and to conciliate. When Paul says, therefore, that God has set forth Christ to be a propitiation, the great question that must be answered is this: Whom is Christ propitiating? Whom is He appeasing? Whom is He soothing? Whom is He causing to be favorably disposed? Whom is He conciliating? Is this propitiation for His benefit? Or is it for the sinner’s benefit? Is God trying to conciliate Himself or is He conciliating the sinner? You know as well as I do that the church system has always erroneously taught that it is God who must be propitiated, conciliated, and soothed, but I want you to know that such teaching is utter rubbish and the brashest sort of nonsense. It springs from that Romish tradition that likens God the Father to a fearful and offended depot, spoiling for the blood of the offenders, and it makes Christ to be the one who pleads with God on behalf of the victim until the Father is consoled and conciliated.

“The church all down through the ages, including all evangelicals of the past and present, have taught that Jesus came to propitiate God and to endeavor to dispose Him to be kind toward His fallen race. If you search in a thousand places, I doubt that you will find one man who does not make this incorrect assertion. How often I have listened to preachers describe Jesus Christ as a lawyer who stands up before God to plead our cause and beg for our lives on the grounds that He, being innocent, died for us and God is propitiated by Him and we are forgiven. This gross misunderstanding of the truth of propitiation is everywhere evident in sermons, in writing and in hymns. Notice how this error is brought out in the words of the following hymn:

Five bleeding wounds He bears,
    Received on Calvary.
They pour effectual prayers;
    They strongly plead for me.
Forgive him, O forgive, they cry,
    Nor let the ransomed sinner die!
The Father hears Him pray,
    His dear anointed One;
He cannot turn away
    The presence of His Son.
    My God is reconciled:
    His pardoning voice I hear.

“This is church tradition, but it is not the truth. The Father did not send Christ to appease Himself. The idea that God would send forth His Son to propitiate and appease Himself is exceedingly absurd. The truth is that Christ came to propitiate you and me that we might repent of our rebellion and iniquity against Him, believe and be reconciled to God, who has always loved us and been our friend and not our enemy. We might also take notice that in referring to the scripture, ‘There is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus,’ the preachers have also turned this backwards and made Christ to be our mediator with the Father, but that is not what Paul said. He said that the mediator was
between God and man, not between man and God. So Christ was sent as a propitiation, a propitiator, or one sent by God the Father to dispose man to repentance and kindness, love and faith toward God” — end quote.

What a hideous affront it is to the God of our salvation to wickedly accuse Him of needing to give His own Son as a propitiation TO APPEASE HIS OWN WRATH, though this is the inexcusable lie we hear continually from the pulpit and over the air waves! God is portrayed by the preachers as so mad at sin and sinners, so violently angry and beside Himself that He is metaphorically foaming at the mouth with uncontrollable rage which can only be appeased by looking upon the bloody sweat and cruel, ugly death of His Son upon a Roman cross. All sermons and songs that picture God as a God of rage who must be “appeased” like a pagan deity and “soothed” by blood are heathenish and should be piled on a bonfire and burned. Such may appear on the surface to be out of the heart of God, but my ear clearly discerns THE VOICE OF THE DRAGON!

Appeasement is the basis of the offerings and sacrifices of all pagan religions. In the late 1800’s John Alexander Dowie wrote: The religions of the world are worldly, are sensual, and are devilish for the most part. No one will doubt that is true in China. No one will doubt it, notwithstanding the clever philosophies and moral axioms of the Chinese Analects, or the works of Mencius and Confucius or the commentators upon these. No one will doubt that the worship of the Chinese is essentially a Devil Worship. I remember once going into a very fine Chinese joss-house (temple) in Australia, where offerings of the costliest kind hung upon the walls, where many interesting things were to be found. I was talking with the chief priest, and said to him, “Tell me how you worship,” and he told me. “Why,” I said, after I had heard attentively, “My dear fellow, it seems to me that you are worshipping bad divinities.” “Oh,” he said, “of course we do. The good ones we do not need to worship. They will do us no harm. To protect ourselves we have to get right with the bad ones, so we make it right with the devils.” I thought to myself that there were some other people like that in America and Europe, who are not Chinese! (End quote).

Can we not see by this that the Christians have copied the heathen and have made a fiendish devil of their God, and have then used the sacrifice of Jesus to “appease” this God who is more like a malicious devil than a loving and gracious Creator and Redeemer? Most Christians know, by hearing at least, that “God is Love,” but the sense of condemnation from His Presence beclouds the vision of the heart, so that The Face which He has revealed in Christ Jesus cannot be seen. Often this is because of the continual preaching which describes God as a destroyer, a vindictive punisher. Even as a child many were taught to fear Him, to think of Him as an avenger of every little thing they did wrong. Parents have said, “Now don’t you do that because GOD will punish you! He will punish you!” And even much stronger things are told to little children. I know from painful experience that as a child I was led to believe that if I went to sleep at night with even one little secret unconfessed sin in my life, should I die during the night with that sin not “under the blood,” I would burst hell wide open. I was told that Jesus might come splitting the eastern sky at any moment to rapture His people to heaven, and should I have even one evil thought in my mind I would be left behind to suffer the torments of the antichrist and the great tribulation. For many years I lived under a cloud of condemnation and fear of God, knowing that God would judge me harshly for the weaknesses and failures I constantly saw in my life. In the Pentecostal Church in those days they sang a song which said, “There’s an all-seeing eye watching you!” Even the words of that song struck terror in my childish heart. You see, beloved, it is one thing to describe God has a loving Father, and all the relations of the little child to a loving Father who corrects in order to
bless. It is quite another thing to darken the heart of a little child with threats of the certain vengeance of a Being who is in constant terror over the life. It is a false and terrible thing to leave upon the heart of a little child, as their first impression of God, that He is always waiting, lurking around, to punish them. The preachers may think it is the gospel, but it is not the gospel because it is not Good News. Can any deny that it is THE VOICE OF THE DRAGON?

Think of it! That little child whose whole being is susceptible to LOVE; who is always looking for and wanting LOVE; who is capable of the purest and fullest simplicity of response to LOVE — think of it! marked and stamped with the impression that "God" is one to be constantly scared of. As though He is waiting everywhere with a punishing whip of large dimensions! Such impressions remain through a whole lifetime as an actual foundation of belief and action. That Wonderful Father! That Gracious Redeemer! That most Loving of all Beings! Oh, how I love Him! He revealed Himself to me as He really is! He turned my heart back again and restored me into His life. God, the Father, the Most High, sent Jesus — the very fullness of His own heart — sent Him into the world to die on Calvary's cross. But the real grasp of what that love and mercy actually is, may often be nearly destroyed by the impression of the wrath deeply ingrained in the mind. If our basic understanding of "God" is that He is a Destroyer, that impression can discolor and influence our thought and our prayer life and our faith so that we can with great difficulty SEE HIM AS HE IS. How wonderfully He changes that when we come to Him repenting (changing our mind about Him) and believing in His loving Word. We cry out with an almost inexpressible joy that we love Him. It is love, His Love, which does it! He flows into our lives in what He is, and we no longer think of Him as a great force out there somewhere or a great destroyer, but as the LIFE GIVER.

The dragon-voice proclaims that once a person dies, his or her fate is sealed forever. If anyone has been fortunate enough to have repeated the "sinner's prayer" one moment before death stole the spirit away, he is guaranteed, according to the "orthodox" teaching, that he will go straight to heaven. Matters not whether he was truly drawn to the Son by the Holy Spirit, or whether someone convinced him of a convenient "fire-escape;" as long as he muttered the correct words before the final beat of his heart yielded to the stillness and silence of death, his salvation is eternally secured. But if he has the misfortune of being a single minute too late in learning about this "sinner's prayer" his doom is sealed in everlasting flames of hell! I ask you, dear reader of these lines, does such a teaching sound more like the tender voice of the Lamb of God or does it resonate as the voice of the dragon!

The question is, does physical death end the availability of God's grace? The death that came to Adam was first and foremost a spiritual death, and all men enter this world "dead in trespasses and sins." Does physical death render our moral character changeless? Does it irrevocably fix our eternal destiny? Are the grace and mercy of God tied to our heartbeat? Here is a young man driving along the road on his way to an evangelistic meeting where he will hear an anointed message of salvation. Someone has been witnessing to him about God's salvation and conditions are such that he may be saved this very night. His heart is tender. His mother is praying. The Holy Spirit will be mightily dealing. But — enroute to the meeting there is a terrible accident. The brakes are slammed on, the car skids wildly, spins uncontrollably off the highway, rolls down the embankment, crashing violently into a tree. Death is instant. Abruptly the young man is gone "out into eternity" without having finally embraced the Lord's salvation. The question follows — was the mercy and redemption of God tied to his physical heartbeat? Was there
mercy for him IF HE WOULD HAVE MADE IT TO THE MEETING, BUT ETERNAL DAMNATION INSTEAD BECAUSE A DRUNKEN FOOL PULLED OUT IN FRONT OF HIM IN THE DARKNESS? These are issues that I dare say those ensnared by the bestial church system of man never contemplate!

I do not hesitate to say that there is not one passage of scripture in the whole Bible that indicates that the grace of God is limited to physical life, or that the mercy of God is tied to one’s heartbeat. I am sure that my readers recognize that it is the spirit of man that is of the greatest importance to God. Why should there be salvation provided so long as the mortal body remains animate, but no salvation for the much more valuable spirit of the same man or woman as soon as the last mortal breath is drawn? Oh, I know that the writer to the Hebrews states, “It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27), but that proves nothing relative to the question now under consideration. It merely establishes the fact of judgment — not the process of judgment, the duration of judgment, the outcome of judgment, or what may transpire following the judgment! There is neither time nor space in this writing to consider the true meaning of the words of that beautiful passage, but let me hastily add, the passage is conspicuous for what it does not say! It does not say, “It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this ETERNAL DAMANATION.” But that is how the dragon-voice quotes it! Yet, the whole theory of eternal torment rests upon a faulty translation of a couple of Greek words, and actual distortions and perversions of what the scriptures say.

So the church system concludes that God has both the will and the power to save a mortally breathing man, but neither the will nor the power to save a non-breathing man. It teaches that God has both the will and the power to regenerate a spirit which has a mortal body of dust, but no will nor power to regenerate the same spirit apart from its corruptible body. God’s mercy and power limited to the temporary function of certain animal organs! Good heartbeat, good mercy. No heartbeat, no mercy!

If, instead of bringing every sin into judgment — punishing that sin and correcting the sinner — we imagine the poor sinner suffering the eternal torments of hell with its unbearable anguish, the agony of unquenchable fire, the pangs of conscience, the taunts of fiendish demons, one hour of which is more than all his earthly sorrows rolled into one — lengthen this out to endlessness and season it with hopeless despair — and its horrors will be absolutely inconceivable. Though our lips may be afraid to frame the words, our hearts will whisper, “Can such be the final fruit of God’s great love and His glorious plan?” Is this the result for which He hungered when He purposed that sin should estrange His creatures from Himself? But this is far from all! Multiply this single case by scores of billions of human beings, who age after age, have been hurled into this hopeless hell — all tortured and tormented while the ages roll, and roll, and roll…without mercy and without remedy!

If the above scenario be true then something horrid must have happened to both God and His saints in heaven! Before the death of these people God loved them all, and in many instances they loved each other, saved and unsaved alike, and would have performed a great number of kindnesses for one another. Many of these had Christian friends and loved ones who were very concerned about them and prayed earnestly for them. But now that both saint and sinner are out in “eternity,” God and all the saints in heaven have either lost their love and compassion for their lost loved ones, or else God has brainwashed all the saints so that they have erased from their memory the fact that their beloved mothers and fathers, their lovely sisters and brothers, their precious daughters and sons, and their
good friends and neighbors are suffering the most terrible pain and hideous torture for all eternity. So we see this: there is more love and compassion in the natural world in God and the saved ones, than there is in the spirit world. Furthermore, there is more love for sinners while they have mortal bodies than there is for sinners without corruptible bodies!

What has happened to cause God and the saints to turn from love and pity for the lost, to a feeling that the lost are now getting what they deserve and should suffer the torments of the damned for all eternity? What, I ask, has happened to God and the saints to cause them to love and seek the lost as long as their frail, mortal bodies endure, but to turn from that love for the precious unclothed spirit of the very same man or woman? Can we believe that God, having created all things for His pleasure, having so loved His creation that He freely gave heaven’s most precious gift, after a few paltry years, the brief span of a man’s mortal existence, throws up His hands in futility and disgust, saying that He has done all He can and men would not respond, so He must cease all effort, seat Himself upon His golden throne, and consign His creation to everlasting hell? Yet this is exactly what we are told today! Methinks I detect THE VOICE OF THE DRAGON! The so-called “message of salvation” as preached by the church systems today has the outward appearance of the Lamb of God, but it speaks as the fire-breathing dragon! God is not that fickle, my friend, and God does not give up that easily! In fact, God does not give up! Neither is He defeated in any of His plans and purposes! HE started the whole program of creation, redemption, and restoration, and, blessed be His wonderful name! He will not cease His work until He is Victor — “All in All” throughout all the vastnesses of infinity for evermore!

How often we have heard preachers warn people that “the day of grace will soon be over forever.” Now nothing could be further from the truth, for as long as God exists the grace of God will be with us. The end of the grace of God, were it possible, would mean the destruction of God Himself, for He is the God of all grace, and grace is one of His eternal, immutable attributes. Please notice that Paul shows that the grace of God is going to be displayed and made known in the AGES TO COME through those who have received it here and now in this dispensation. “And hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ, that in the ages to come He might show (exhibit, put on display for all to see) the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:7-8). Not only does this passage tell us of the great revelation of God’s grace in the AGES TO COME, but it also shows us that it is for this very reason that God is saving a firstfruit company now. The unveiling of the grace of God to the whole creation is the true reason for the manifestation of the sons of God. God has no intention of bringing all the world into the fold now. If that were His purpose He surely would bring it to pass, for He is the omnipotent God who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.

The whole purpose of this age is to gather out a people to display His grace in the coming age and ages. James also declared this great truth when at Jerusalem he said, “Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out a people for His name...that the residue (rest, remainder) of men might seek after the Lord and ALL THE GENTILES upon whom my name is called...known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world” (Acts 15:14,17,18). This so-called “age of grace” is coming to an end, but grace will be more manifest in the future than in previous times! This age which is presently coming to a close should more properly be called “the church age,” for grace will not end. In the age to come God will move from calling out a body from among the nations, to the saving of the nations themselves. “And the nations of them that
are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it” (Rev. 21:24). In ages beyond that God shall deal with the residue of men and all the reaches of His vast creation!

The limitation of God’s mercy, if it were possible, would be the condemnation of God Himself. If there are limits to His mercy, the Word of God, which says that “His mercy endureth forever (all ages),” is a lie. The limitation of God’s mercy is a trick of the dragon, to discredit God and defeat His gospel. The limitation of God’s mercy makes the disobedience of Adam more powerful and more enduring than the obedience of Christ. I am glad for a gospel that is coextensive with, and greater than, the devil’s work in spirit, soul, and body. I am glad for a gospel that is not limited to one age, or to the threescore-and-ten years of man’s frail existence, but reaches out into the ages to come until GOD IS ALL IN ALL. I am glad for a gospel which tells me that God has made a way by which even His banished may return. How gloriously true, then, the words of the chorus:

“His love has no limit, His grace has no measure,
His power has no boundaries known unto man;
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus
He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again!”

EXERCISING THE POWER OF THE FIRST BEAST

“And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed” (Rev. 13:12).

The first beast is the bestial world system of man — human government and institutions of all kinds. The second beast is the carnal church system of man — religious Babylon. The “power” of the first beast is many-faceted, but first and foremost it is political power, the right and ability to rule and control men’s lives. In many countries there is a religious system that still has much authority, even politically. The church power is ruling along with the government power. In many other countries the church does not possess that degree of power, yet the principle of organization, hierarchy, laws, and control over men’s lives is just as real. The church systems as we know them today, even the so-called “non-denominational” denominations, exercise all the power of the first beast as they usurp control over men’s lives, enslaving millions of worshippers, binding the professing Christians with the hideous chains of church laws and traditions, threatening excommunication if the church’s demands are not obeyed, thus separating the offender from the grace of Christ, from the only source of salvation (the church), essentially consigning him to eternal damnation in hell.

Under New Testament economy the Christ of God was to be the one and only Head of His church. In the days of the apostles, men were made the children of God by new birth, by the operation of God alone, and thereby taken out of the nations as a people for His name. The church was a living organism composed of spiritual members who by one spirit were baptized into one body. It was the operation of God by the Spirit! There was no organization and nothing to join. The ministries in the body of Christ were sovereignly raised up and anointed by the Holy Spirit. With what power, signs, and wonders did they witness to the living presence of Christ! They were not lords over God’s heritage, rather
they were servants of the body of Christ. Their authority was not that of legislated authority, but spiritual authority. Their vocation was not to rule and dominate the Lord’s people, but to encourage, admonish, instruct, bless, and build up the saints in the life of Christ. There was no man-made structure, no carnal church boards, no dominating hierarchy, only the dynamic presence and power of Christ manifested in and through the living members of His body!

Today, however, the beastly system of man-made religion operates on the political level rather than the spiritual plane. By fleshly domination the false prophet exercises all the power of the first beast, causing men to pay homage to the system rather than to the leadership of the Spirit!

**FIRE FROM HEAVEN**

“And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast…” (Rev. 13:13-14).

My heart’s desire and prayer to God is that He will give the spirit of understanding to all who read these lines. There are commentators who are of the opinion that we should not think of the beast performing genuine signs, but fake signs produced either by trickery or by the power of Satan. Some who interpret the book of Revelation historically tell of Roman priests who, with the aid of fireworks, made flames burst forth from images of the emperors, or who, by means of ventriloquism, made it seem as if these images spoke. Others appeal to what the apostle refers to as “lying signs and wonders,” and tell of the stigmata that appeared on certain Roman Catholic Priests, bleeding icons, weeping statues, appearances of the Virgin Mary, and many other marvelous things that have been reported through the centuries of Christianity.

Such deceit may have been practiced. The text, however, does not say that the beast fakes great signs, but that it does great signs. That gives the impression that genuine signs are meant. This explanation is supported by the words of the Lord Jesus, wherein He said that “false Christs and false prophets shall rise and shall show great signs and wonders” (Mat. 24:24). According to the apostle John the precise purpose of these great signs and wonders is to deceive the earth-dwellers! They are for the purpose of deceiving the carnal Christians! What a word that is! Because of the signs “which” — as the original Greek text says — “were given it to do in the sight of the beast,” the earth-dwellers are deceived. Here and in verse fifteen the word “given,” which we find repeatedly in the first part of this chapter, is again used in the Greek text. It reveals that the beast is not doing these wonders by its own volition or power. The ability comes from another source. It does not say that the first beast gives him this power, nor does it say that the dragon gives him the power. It is my conviction that none other than GOD grants to the beast the ability to perform these miracles! They are real miracles. They are called miracles! And the power to do them is “given” him! Rather than supposing that the power comes from trickery or from demons, I rather believe the power is from God, but they abuse the powers granted to them, usurping the gifts and powers of God for their own ends, to deceive the people, to keep them in the system, to gain a following, to build a kingdom, and for financial gain. I have seen this in the church systems a thousand times! Oh, yes!
This is better understood once we see that the Lord’s people are in Babylon. When John was being shown that mighty city of Religious Babylon he also heard a voice from heaven, saying, “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues” (Rev. 18:4). In the Old Testament it was God’s people Israel that was led away captive into the Babylon of that day. The captives there were the Lord’s people! And the Lord’s people were not themselves Babylon, but they were in captivity in Babylon. It is here that we must distinguish between the Lord’s people and the system so many are involved in. The leading of the Lord in our lives has been two-fold. First, we seek fellowship with all the Lord’s precious people, regardless of their level of growth and development in Christ. They are HIS and I do not hesitate to call them my brothers and sisters, and I am mature enough to relate to them right where they are. Just as I can play with my grandchildren without looking down my nose at them or denigrating them for their immaturity, so I can fellowship with any believer without putting on an air of superiority. At the same time, we cannot, DARE NOT fellowship the Babylon System! We can and will fellowship anyone — but we will not fellowship their system! This means that much of our fellowship is confined to a “one on one” basis, after we get past those who won’t fellowship us at all because they perceive us to be heretics, separatists from the body of Christ, or something worse!

Let us now notice that even in Babylon God honors His people! God always honors the seeking heart and faith — even in spite of their weakness, failures, immaturity, carnality, and the fleshly system they may be bound in. On far away Patmos John beheld in vision seven golden candlesticks. He also saw in the midst of the candlesticks one like unto the Son of man (Rev. 1:12-13). These are wonderfully significant words! The candlestick realm is the church realm! The One John saw was not seated on a golden throne in heaven, He was not standing in a rainbow before a waterfall, He wasn’t standing on a mountain top, He wasn’t standing before the altar in a great cathedral. Oh, no! He was standing in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks! He is standing in the midst of the churches! Now, we also know that there were serious problems in the seven churches of Asia in the book of Revelation! There was sin, carnality, error, pride, the Jezebel spirit (spiritual harlotry, Babylon), the Nicolaitane spirit (hierarchy, elevation of the clergy, man’s control), the doctrine of Balaam (compromise), lukewarmness, and so on. The Lord admonished and rebuked the churches for these conditions!

My beloved brethren, I am as much opposed to religion and man-made, organized, carnal minded, fleshly religious systems as any man alive today. This has been my passion since that blessed day when the voice of Christ bade me, “Come out of her.” At the same time I recognize that the redeemed people of God constitute the church, and I recognize the church as being made up of those who are the Lord’s people. I thank God for the church, the seven golden candlesticks! It will greatly aid our understanding to see how the Lord Jesus, the Son of man clothed in the garment of His priesthood, with eyes of discernment like flames of fire, with burning feet of judgment like unto brass heated red-hot in a furnace, and the two-edged sword of His living word flashing out of His mouth, walks IN THE MIDST OF EACH OF US AND ALL OF US whom He has redeemed! Isn’t it true that nearly all of us were in the church systems when first we heard the Voice? Was not the Lord walking in our midst even then, even in the midst of all the wretchedness of that harlot system? Who can deny it!

In chapters two and three of the Revelation we see the seven conditions within the seven churches, good and bad, positive and negative, spiritual and carnal, commendable and reproachable. The Lord is in the midst of every one of these conditions! He walks in the
midst of the churches, in the midst of their love, strength, patience, righteousness, truth, and faithfulness, and also in the midst of their weakness, faults, failures, carnality, false doctrine, nakedness, rebellion, and shame. The Lord is there in the midst of every condition! In the midst of images, crucifixes, candles, incense, holy water, ritual and ceremony, the Lord walks! In the midst of man-centered, flesh oriented programs and promotions, the Lord walks! In the midst of a distorted gospel, false teaching — the prophetess Jezebel — the Lord walks! In the midst of organization, man-made structures, and grasping after men to draw them into the system and hold them in its clutches, the Lord walks! He condescends to come down into the midst of all this religious foolishness and live and walk and move in their midst to bless men right where they are. What love! What matchless love! We cannot deny that He is there, touching men, saving men, delivering men, quickening men, healing, responding to heart-cries, answering prayers, doing wonders! I have witnessed “evangelistic crusades” where men were dangled over the flames of hell as a means of scaring them into the loving arms of Jesus, and yet people ran to the altars crying out to God for mercy, and He was merciful, for He was there and He met them there on that level and brought salvation into their lives. What love! What humility! What condescension! What goodness! What compassion! Even the Psalmist recognized the great tenderness and faithfulness of the Lord to walk wherever we walk when he cried out, “If I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there!” (Ps. 139:8).

Here is the beast out of the earth, the caricature of the Lamb of God, the beast with the dragon-voice, the enemy of all that is pure, the enemy of the anointing, the bondage of the captives, and yet Jesus Christ’s love is such that He will walk in the midst of it, ministering to the captives! He will touch its ministries, move by His Spirit among the people, bless their feeble efforts, fill with His Spirit, impart gifts and graces, show signs and wonders and miracles, manifesting His presence and His power there — in Life! As a friend of ours once said, “What a God you are to allow yourself to be brought down so low IN ORDER TO SERVE! The church system has some truth — but it is truth twisted, perverted, tangled, garbled, grotesquely represented, but truth all the same. How willing He is to start where we are, to condescend to stoop to our depths and meet us there, only to raise us from that to a higher realm!”

Many, however, are not ready to be raised to a higher realm. Yet we behold the loving kindness of the Lord! Can we not see that the church systems use the blessing of God, they use the anointing of the Spirit, they use and abuse the gifts, anointing, and power of God, in order to bring men under their domination, build their movement, and establish their own kingdom. Fire from heaven! Can it be that the fire the beast calls down from heaven in the sight of men is truly heavenly fire? Our text does not deny it! It says plainly that he doeth great wonders, that he makes fire come down from heaven, and that he had power (Greek: was given) to do miracles! It is not a question of whether this beast actually is given heavenly fire, divine fire, to do great signs and wonders, but what does he do with this power? How does he use it? What is his motivation, his purpose, his intent?

The answer is not long in coming! “And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he was given to do.” Can we not see by this that he uses or mis-uses this power in order to DECEIVE! All through the scriptures miracles and blessings were esteemed to be the vindication, validation, and proof of the truthfulness of the prophet’s message. God confirmed the word of Elijah by sending down fire from heaven and consuming the sacrifice, the altar, and even the dust! The ministry of Aaron the high priest was validated by fire from heaven consuming the burnt sacrifice upon the altar! But here in our text the fire is used to validate a lie, to seduce men and lead them
into errors, into false worship — the paying of homage and obedience to the beastly system! Have you not heard the gospel preached, seen men blessed, even miracles performed, and though men responded to the truth and anointing that was present, they were also thereby sucked into submission to men, slavery in a religious system, and into the false doctrines and carnal programs of that system. They are the Lord’s people in captivity in Babylon — yet brought there by the very manifestation of the power of God! Oh, yes! Fire from heaven — to deceive! That is the mystery.

Well did George Hawtin admonish: “Set not your heart on miracles or signs or wonders. You will be deceived if you do. Refuse to fellowship with the harlot system on the basis that some of her cardinals or bishops speak in tongues. Many thousands are being deceived by this and are already falling into the clutches of a world church system. Personally I am extremely skeptical about all the movements of this present hour — the World Council of Churches, The Ecumenical Movement, the Charismatic Movement, and the mass meetings of world renowned evangelists. They are all heading in one direction. They are moving with increasing momentum toward a world church — a super body that will dictate to and completely dominate everyone on earth. They are merely different arms of the Babylon octopus. If they do not grasp you in one arm, they will grasp you in another. If they do not hook you on one lure, they will catch you on another. It is all a very deceitful and false thing, and the only safety for a Christian in our day is to be obedient to the voice of Christ and come out from among them, and abandon every phase and form of them, and be separate unto Christ, refusing to touch the unclean thing” — end quote.

It has been my experience that God is thoroughly “pruning” His sons in this hour that they may be able to bear and bring forth an abundant harvest of kingdom fruit. He not only prunes away from us the sins and works of the flesh, but a great deal of religiousness and religious activities and those involved therein as well. There was a time when we made the circuit, speaking for the Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship and various churches in the Pentecostal and Charismatic circles. Our desire was pure— to share the present truth of sonship and deeper life of the Christ within, to inspire them and bless and challenge any and all possible. Here and there we found an elect few who had ears to hear, but for the most part it became evident that we were “spinning our wheels.” Then one day it dawned on me! Our word was not producing results on the “kingdom” level in those places. Oh, they were delighted to have Brother Eby come by and share his testimony, even minister a revelatory word and prophesy over some people, 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 going on to higher realms in God. These merely took the word we ministered, diluted it with their shallow church program, and used it to further their own kingdom. 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! The beast was “using” the word and the power of God to deceive and enslave the people in the bestial religious system of man. Suddenly the voice of the Lord thundered authoritatively in my ear, “ENOUGH!” And the celestial husbandman did a work of pruning in the garden of my life. He pruned away from my walk a religious realm that will draw life, but will not bear fruit of that life. No longer would the mighty work of God in me be “used” to cause men to pay homage to the beast! May God make the truth of this real to all who read these lines.
Chapter 156
The Beast Out Of The Earth
continued

“And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth…and he deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed” (Rev. 13:14-15).

The sole and ultimate purpose of the signs and wonders done by the beast out of the earth is that men may believe and follow the beast — the false prophet. For we read in the words of our text that by these he so deceives men that dwell on the earth, the earth dwellers, that is, the carnal Christians, that they do whatever the beast tells them to do. And who can deny that it is the manifest blessing of God in salvation, deliverances, healings, etc. which enables the church systems of man to deceive the people into truly believing that those very systems are ordained of God — His church in the earth!

And what does the beast instruct them to do? This is where we approach one of the most flagrant popular misconceptions and misrepresentations of this chapter — the mistaken notion that the false prophet makes an image either of himself, or of the first beast, and then commands men everywhere to worship that image. Nearly all commentators make this erroneous assertion, which is the result of an inexcusably careless reading of the text! Nowhere does it say that the beast made or set up an image! What it does say is, “He deceiveth them that dwell on the earth…saying to them that dwell on the earth, that THEY should make an image to the beast…” Notice that the false prophet does not make the image, but that under his influence, as he speaks for the beast (human government, world system, worldly order), he entices the earth dwellers, the carnal Christians, to make such an image! Thus, it is the worldly, carnal-minded Christians who make the image, and the false prophet causes them to worship or pay homage to this image!

This image is everywhere in the earth today, and it is an indisputable fact that untold millions of earthly-minded, carnal Christians pay homage to this image. But let us look at how it all began. One historian has pointed out that in the early centuries of this age, as the church grew in numbers and wealth, the anointing and the anointed ministries were shoved aside, and startling developments began to take place. Bishops became influential, not as humble servants of the flock, but as powerful, authoritarian men. Dioceses and parishes were established. Ecclesiastical centralization commenced. The weapons of excommunication were forged. The festivals of the church (Easter, Christmas, etc.) were created, along the lines of pagan celebrations. Catechetical schools were created to teach the faith systematically. The formulas of baptism and the sacraments became of great importance. Costly and ornate edifices were constructed for worship. The services became ceremonialized and elaborate. Sculpture and painting were enlisted in the work of providing aids to devotion. Relics of saints and martyrs were cherished as sacred possessions. Religious observances were multiplied. The church, with its array of gaudily bedecked clergy and of imposing ceremonies, assumed much of the stateliness and visible...
organization and worldly splendor that belonged to the heathen governmental-religious system which it had supplanted. The church as a spiritual organism, the living body of Christ, was lost sight of as its degrading role as a powerful, controlling, state-sponsored political organization took form. Christianity was now a pageant, a ritualism, a vain philosophy, a superstition, a formula, a powerful, dominating organization fashioned after the pagan governments of earth!

And thus, precious friend of mine, the IMAGE of the beast of the world system of man was complete! The church had become a human institution with human government, worldly wisdom, and political power — just like Rome! The divine order of God by the Spirit, could not be tolerated. What is said concerning this image of the beast applies to sectarianism as a whole and the human organization and carnal structures and programs and methods of all her so-called “churches.” They may differ as widely as the various systems of human governments and religions symbolized by the first beast, yet they can be represented by the single symbol of an image to the first beast, because they are all built upon the same general principles — are but human organizations, institutions, and systems, with sectarian names, unscriptural organization and government (boards, secretaries, presidents, committees, etc), static creeds, and unspiritual methods and practices, all contrary to the ways of the Spirit of God!

And is not this the same picture of every organized church in the world — including the so-called “non-denominational” denominations? Are they not all “incorporated” and “chartered” by the State (first beast)? Do they not all have a system of government patterned after the other denominations of Babylon and the business corporations of the world system? Do they not all have a “board,” “majority vote,” and an organizational structure mandated by the worldly government of man? Are their ministers not registered with the government, acting as civil servants of the government by carrying an “approved card” issued by a “state-chartered” organization so they can marry the living and bury the dead? Even if they are not, how often their lives are still tied to the beast system which controls their methods of operation. How the multitudes pay homage to the IMAGE of the beast! It is a sad fact that untold millions of Christians are more devoted to their church systems than they are to the Lord Jesus Christ. They can witness open rejection of God’s precious Word, blatant resistance to His Spirit, and the vilest profanation of His holy Name, without uttering a word of protest; but let anyone say a word against their church, and instantly they are aroused to the highest pitch of excitement — beast worshippers! To exalt such earth-born, man-made, carnally-controlled, unscriptural, unspiritual institutions and lead people to adore and submit to them is but a species of idolatry and rankest deception. Those who construct the “image” are deceived, as it is written, “And he deceived them that dwell on the earth…saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast.” Can you not see the mystery?

May we all be found faithful in fulfilling the ministry our Father has prepared to flow through us, whether it be teaching, preaching, gifts of the Spirit, administration, intercession, helps, or giving. These are all spiritual ministries that flow through those who dwell in union with Christ in the heavens of the Spirit. But let us never encapsulate these in a form or organization whose authority is conferred by the government of man. We are not a for-profit business, nor are we a non-profit organization. You will not receive a tax exemption from Caesar if you support us. Many years ago the Lord dealt with us powerfully that we should never form any kind of government-chartered religious organization, as that is but the first step into religious Babylon. The authority of all man-made, government-chartered organizations is derived from the State, as is evidenced when a minister says at a wedding, “By the authority vested in me as a minister of the gospel and by the state of Texas (or any other) — I pronounce you man and wife.” That preacher is able to perform a wedding as an agent of human government because of the ministerial credential he carries in his wallet. The Lord Jesus did not issue that credential! The government gave the authority to the state-chartered organization to issue that card! It’s authority is not God — it is the
government! The authority is from the wild beast out of the sea, the bestial world system of man! God doesn’t channel His spiritual authority through the government!

Every organized church and non-profit religious corporation is in contract with the State when they become “non-profit,” making the government a partner in, and grantor of, each religious corporation. It is our conviction that the kingdom of God must not be wedded to the carnal government of man, nor willfully subjected to any control of the State, for that is the spirit of the harlot. I am not a constitutional lawyer, but my knowledge both of the spiritual ways of God and the principles of human government lead me to the belief that the “chartering” by the State of a church entity is not only an abomination to God, but is patently unconstitutional in the United States of America, and a blatant violation of the basic constitutional principle of the separation of Church and State. How can the Church and the State be separated when the Church is chartered by the State? And never forget — with the power to charter comes also the power to control, as some religious organizations have learned by bitter and costly experience. Cross that beast of human government and his vicious, wild nature will come out!

I cannot express this truth more powerfully than George Hawtin has done in his message on Repentance Toward God And Faith Toward Jesus Christ. He wrote, “Yesterday a minister sat in our parlor with whom we spoke freely of the ways of God. Before he left, he apologetically informed us that he was a member of a certain denomination, but he said with noticeable chagrin, ‘You almost have to belong to a denomination to be properly recognized by the government, to get income tax deductions, to perform marriages, and to obtain half fare on trains and buses.’ How interesting that is! Is there really something very special in the word incorporated, which is so proudly displayed on the official documents of every sect in the land? Have you ever considered that the word incorporated you so proudly display on your letterhead signifies that the system you think to be the church is in fact incorporated with the world system? Could Christ be a part of a thing like that since He openly declared, ‘I am not of this world?’ Was He not saying, ‘I am not of this world system?’ But you proudly display the fact that both you and your sect are openly incorporated with it when you should be as your Master who said, ‘I am not of this world.’ You should not partake of its systems nor in any way fall under its dominion. The true church is no more a part of this world system than Christ is a part of it. Well did He say to those about Him, ‘Ye are from beneath; I am from above. Ye are of this world; I am not of this world’ (Jn. 8:23). Let all who long for sonship, all who would be peculiarly His, turn from all these vanities that men have devised. Let us break our connections with all that is from beneath and let us walk with Christ as pilgrims who have no continuing city in this world but who seek one to come, whose builder and maker is God.

“Let the heart of every faithful pilgrim be assured of this: Though the world is full of religious sects and denominations of every kind which blind men to truth and obscure that holy virgin thing which Christ called ‘My church,’ yet His church is in the earth, untouched, unsullied, and undefiled, a pure virgin church to be presented to Him without spot and without blemish. That church is not and never was a denomination, nor is it a sect of any kind. His church is as pure a virgin as Christ Himself. As Christ was born of a virgin undefiled and untouched by the powers of human organization or procreation, so also is the virgin church. His church is not incorporated with the world system. It cannot possibly be. The names of its members are written only in heaven, even in the Lamb’s book of life, founded long before the foundation of this world” — end quote.

We have endeavored to be faithful to the word of the Lord in our lives and stay clear of all Babylonish entanglements. Some precious brethren still entertain the notion that if they are not incorporated under the government they cannot function, and that without tax-exempt status the people of God will not support their ministry. That is a lie of enormous proportions! Is it the government that determines what we do in the kingdom of God, or is it the leadership of the Holy Spirit? The word of the Lord to us in this regard has been so
powerful that we have been constrained to obey regardless of the cost. And it does cost, beloved, as I am sure there are those who will not give if they are unable to get tax deductions, and we ourselves must pay our taxes. But that is neither here nor there, for ultimately God is our source and if our work is His work He will see that it prospers unto that for which He has ordained it. Therefore, for the past forty-five or more years we have endeavored to “render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s” (Matt. 22:15-22). In my opinion taxes are Caesar’s — and the ministry is God’s! And I here and now bear record that great is HIS FAITHFULNESS!

In our former days in the religious systems of man, in both thinking and actions we bore the image of the bestial system of this world. In all our religious promotions did we not think like the world, plan like the world, advertise like the world, organize like the world, promote like the world, and act like the world? Who would deny that the religious systems’ whole vision, methodology, and attitude is in accordance with the world’s system. Just as the church, following the time of Constantine, “paganized” Christianity by mingling with the worship of Christ pagan practices of idols, images, altars, incense, candles, vestments, saints (bearing the characteristics and virtues of the deposed pagan gods), Christmas, Easter, and a thousand other things, so in our day the church systems’ planning and program is all in harmony with the “spirit of this age” as they continually adapt themselves to what ever the world is doing!

Let the devil hatch rock music out of the cesspool of the demented culture of drugs and sex, and the church will immediately “Christianize” it by giving the harmonic dissonance “Christian words.” They call it “Christian rock.” It is not! You cannot have Christian rock any more than you can have Christian drug lords, Christian harlots, Christian thieves, or Christian liars! It is not even Christianized demonism — it is demonized Christianity! And now we have another Christianized perversion — “Christian” hip hop. The church systems are always trying to keep step with the world, appropriate to themselves the world’s program, and somehow make it “Christian.” It is the image of the beast! Let a worldly book come off the press about near-death experiences, and soon “Christian” books on near-death experiences will line the bookshelves. Let diet books become the big money maker, and immediately “Christian” diet books and programs will flood the market. What great imitators are those earth-dwellers, those carnal Christians who construct their “image” of the beast!

You see, my beloved, those who make an “image” of the bestial system of the world are not leaders, setting the standards for mankind, but followers, mimicking and adapting the world’s standards and ways under the pretense of following Christ. If television talk shows is what the world is doing, then let us entertain the saints with “Christian” talk shows! These image-builders are always followers and imitators, and the “image” they construct — how much like the beast it looks!

God is not well pleased with the world of believers who are all too willing to proclaim the praise of God with their lips and raise their hands in seeming consecration, while they pay homage to the image of the worldly system they have created, prostituting the holy truths of God with the unholy program and methods of the world. God is well pleased with those who seek only His will, His ways, and His glory. God is well pleased with those who reject the fleeting pleasures of sin and the worthless glitter of the prestige and position of this world. God is well pleased with those who forsake the excitement and noise of the crowd, who abandon listening to all manner of fantastic oratory, who in their hearts are no longer entertained by man-made programs, soulish concerts, so-called Christian television shows, and carnal schemes of a church system that has forsaken the leading of the Spirit of God.

If the people of God today would stop following after preachers and personalities, turning a deaf ear to the slick advertising of unscrupulous men who love to promote themselves, if they would forget about revivals and crusades and supposed signs and wonders and begin
to turn the knob of their prayer closet door, seeking not to run here and there, and do this and that, but seeking to enter into harmony with the mind of Him who worketh all things after the counsels of His own will, to do only those things they see the Father doing, to speak only those things they hear of the Father, then all the world would know that the Father is glorified in His sons even as He is glorified in His Son. Let us seek God that He might fashion our lives according to His eternal wisdom, conforming us into the image of His Son, so that the glorious image of God may be seen in us instead of the image of the beast!

“And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should... speak...” (Rev. 13:15).

This verse reads literally, “And it was given him to give spirit to the image of the beast." “To give spirit” is the same as to give life. The Greek word is pneuma meaning “breath” or “spirit.” With only one exception, in every other place in the book of Revelation where this word is used the reference is to the Holy Spirit. For instance, “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day” (Rev. 1:10). “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches” (Rev. 2:7; 2:29; 3:6). “And immediately I was in the Spirit” (Rev. 4:2). “The spirit of life from God entered into them” (Rev. 11:11). “Yea, saith the Spirit” (Rev. 14:13). “So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness...” (Rev. 17:3). “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev. 19:10). “And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain...” (Rev. 21:19). “The Spirit and the bride say, Come...” (Rev. 22:17)

Imparting “life” or “spirit” to the image of the beast signifies that now the life-giving ministry of the Spirit is being administrated through the image — the organization. “He had power” to give this life is in the Greek “it was given him” to give life to the image. It is something that God cedes to him, that which he would have no power at all to do of himself. Every living body is animated by a spirit. “The body without the spirit is dead” (James 2:26).

There are many organizations, including religious ones, that are dead, having no spiritual life in them at all. Political organizations, business organizations, charitable organizations, and the list goes on and on. Then there are religious organizations — Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and a thousand others that contain no spiritual life whatever, for HE who IS the LIFE has no place in them. But this image, this “Christian” image, in spite of being fashioned like unto the systems of the world, does possess a show of life! What many of us missed in times past is the mixture in this Christian beastly system. We thought this beast was only evil, entirely a monster, totally non-Christian, and that its appearance as “the lamb” was entirely contrived. We could not believe that he could perform any miracle that wasn’t a trick, or have any life that wasn’t demonic, or speak any word that wasn’t vile. But multitudes of the Lord’s people are in this beastly system, and there is still One who walks in the midst of the candlesticks! And the image speaks — proclaiming a measure of the word of the Lord. What a paradox this is! What a mystery is this!

Yet, this is not the true way of the Lord, nor is it sanctioned by the Lord. He truly condescends to meet with and bless those who call upon His name in spite of all the corruption surrounding them, but what a mixture it is! Only the Holy Spirit can teach us these things. Only the sharp two-edged sword of the Spirit can divide it, separating between soul and spirit. How we praise God that the consuming fire of His dealings and processings in the lives of all who have received the call to sonship has been kindled to THOROUGHLY PURGE AND CLEANSE OUR HEARTS from the spirit and ways and image of the beast, until once and for all we forsake all the apostasy and shame, giving ourselves wholly and only unto Christ, that He may teach us how to walk and worship and minister in spirit and in truth. When our minds are one with Him and all earthly tradition and program and system has vanished away and He takes His royal seat upon the throne of our hearts, then we are truly able to walk as the sons of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. Then are we led by His Spirit and can grow up into Him in all things, putting on His mind, conformed to HIS IMAGE, to be His sons and His daughters indeed! Aren’t you glad!
"And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed" (Rev. 13:15).

Taken literally this certainly sounds ominous, and it is true that the earth has been stained by the blood of the martyrs who have been slain as “heretics” by the church systems of man, from the days of the Papacy, the Inquisitions, the Reformation, and in many lands then and now throughout the earth. Yet millions more have been slain metaphorically, that is, denounced, cast out, ostracized, excommunicated, anathematized, and cut off. The deeper meaning of “killed” is to be killed spiritually, that is, to be condemned. And because being condemned is signified by being killed, it speaks of all who pronounce damnation upon those who do not acknowledge the doctrine of their faith as the divine truth of God, and who condemn all who do not think as they do, and as far as they dare, they deny that they are brothers and sisters in Christ. And all this is done simply because men refuse to worship their image of the beast!

Consider both the image of the beast and the image of Christ. Which do you bear in your body, in your attitudes, words, actions, worship, and ministry? Ah, yes, God is forming the image, the very likeness of His Son in the lives of His called and chosen elect! We all understand that Christ is the image of God, the express image of His person; and we also understand that God is forming within us the very image of His Son. We know that this image of Christ is not a literal statue of wood, stone, or gold. Likewise, the image of the beast is not a literal statue as men suppose, but a likeness of the first beast, the beast out of the sea, the likeness of the bestial world system of man. “Saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.” It is not a natural, literal image that the earth-dwellers, the carnal Christians make, but a lifestyle, means and methods, structure, organization — and entire system of religion! And it is fashioned after the system of the world!

THE MARK OF THE BEAST

“And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads…” (Rev. 13:16).

For many decades and centuries God’s people have been speculating about the strange phenomenon John refers to as the “mark of the beast.” There has been an immense increase is such speculation over the past few decades as man has moved swiftly into the computer age. There has been much confusion surrounding this mark as people cast apprehensive eyes toward various events that arise — social security numbers, credit card numbers, account numbers, identification numbers, “bar code” marking systems, microchips, smaller than a grain of rice, that can now be implanted under the skin for tracking, health, or economic information, hand imaging systems, etc. — wondering if these developments portend some future hour which shall climax with a fearful “beast” or “antichrist” demanding that they take a mark, without which they cannot buy or sell, which might forever seal their doom, or else cause them to give their life in martyrdom as the price for remaining true to God.

It is a shocking marvel to see how easily Christians are deceived by the dead letter of the Word! There is nothing more carnal than the message men have preached about the antichrist and the mark of the beast. I say that it is carnal because it genders fear, not perfection! It has created a whole world full of Christians who are cowards waiting to be evacuated off to some far-off heaven somewhere instead of becoming overcomers right here upon the earth. Above all, it stresses a natural, physical concept rather than a SPIRITUAL REALITY! Most folks have the idea that the mark of the beast is the number “666” and that it will be laser tattooed or otherwise applied to, or inserted in, the right hand or
the forehead. Now, it is true that there is technology available to encode a personal number for every person for tracking purposes, identification, health information, or to protect our security in financial transactions; but don’t you think that if we all get the same number, 666, it will be a bit confusing to figure out who is who and whose account is whose? Not only do people not have revelation — they simply don’t think! There have been multitudes of people who have lived their entire lives in fear of the mark of the beast. They died believing and fearing that some day this would come. I ask, my dear brother, my precious sister, what good did it do them to believe that? It did not bring life, deliverance, peace, joy, love, victory, overcoming power, nor any of the things men so desperately need. Without any hesitation whatever I must reiterate that this kind of literal interpretation and fear tactics has not added anything to our spiritual understanding, but has rather caused the Lord’s people to continue groping about in the dense darkness of spiritual ignorance and superstition.

It seems to me that the key to the thirteenth chapter of the Revelation is found in verse nine: “If any man have an hear to hear, let him hear.” Throughout the scriptures these words always accompany statements of profound spiritual significance. “It says what it means, and it means what it says!” a Bible-thumping literalist preacher will shout from his pulpit. But I beg to differ. It says what the Spirit of God says it says, and it means what the Spirit of God says it means! If the beast and his mark are to be fulfilled literally then one has but to read the words with natural eyes, understand them with a natural mind, interpret them with natural reason, and watch the panorama of world events to see the natural fulfillment. Any carnal-minded theologian or even an atheist, for that matter, could figure it out on that basis! But if the message is deeply spiritual, it will be understood only by “he that hath an ear to hear!” And so it is with this truth in mind that we have sought the Lord for an understanding of the spiritual nature of the mark, and would share with you that which has now been quickened to us. May the spirit of truth make it personally real to every heart!

The preachers have everyone looking outwardly for the mark of the beast and that’s exactly what the dragon inspires — get people to look away from the true source, from the spiritual realm, to fear inanimate objects of man’s invention. That’s the craftiness of the carnal mind — every new advance in technology, each new card, laser, or computer chip — surely one of these will be the mark of the beast imposed upon mankind! The spiritual mind understands that the mark of the beast is the mark of the second beast, the one that comes up out of the earth, out of the soulical religious dimension of man’s life. It should not be difficult to understand by this that it is, therefore, first and foremost, a spiritual mark — not an economic or political mark. The mark of the beast identifies those who have subscribed to the authority, doctrines, structure, practices, and spirit of the bestial religious orders of man. Practically every Christian living is in some way associated with, or submitted to, this wanton religious harlot who calls herself “the church.” The message of chapter thirteen of the Revelation is not, “You’d better watch out, be very careful or you will get branded with the mark of the beast.” The message is, instead, that because of carnal-minded religion almost every believer already bears the mark of the beast and we must get rid of the mark of the beast! We must be transformed in the way we think, in the way we worship, in the way we serve, in the way we act. It’s not a matter of someone stamping, tattooing, burning, or inserting 666 on the forehead. Should the government arrest me today, knock me out with an injection, and somehow apply the numbers 666 on my forehead, there is no way under heaven that it could affect my relationship with my Father, because it would not change one iota the way I think, act, or my heart condition before God! Therefore, it cannot be an outward, physical thing! We are dealing with spiritual realities! You cannot examine any man or any woman physically to determine whether they have received the mark of the beast. It is impressed in the forehead or in the hand — signifying one’s thinking and one’s actions!

“Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six” (Rev. 13:18).
The number of the beast denotes the nature and character of the beast. The beastly system is ingrained in the minds of God’s people and they are so saturated with it in their very natures that they can neither think nor function apart from it. God’s name is not in their foreheads. They do not have the mind of Christ, but rather the distorted mind of the beast of religion. They are incapable of either thinking or acting outside the “box” of “going to church,” “being religious,” and “doing things” according to the carnal order of the religious systems. Someone has well said that numbers may not have the appeal of a modern “thriller,” nevertheless they constitute an integral part of God’s language unto man. The number of the beast is not a Greek number. It is not written with numbers as we have in English, but with Greek letters, just like Roman numerals. Each letter in the Greek alphabet has a numerical value — here the numerical value of the Greek letters given is 666. All the words in the New Testament have a numerical value. If you study Biblical numerics you will discover the perfection of the mind and wisdom of our God! The Bible is not an accident. It transcends every other book that has ever been written. No human genius could make it so finely devised!

Of all the words in the Greek New Testament there are only five words that have a numerical value of 666. There is neither time nor space to study all of these words at this time, but it is interesting to note that the very first one is used thirteen times — and that first word with the numerical value of 666 is the word tradition. Isn’t that fascinating! (The other four words are perish, side, wealth, and scattered). Jesus used this word “tradition” when He upbraided the scribes and Pharisees, saying, “Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition” (Mat. 15:6). While we’re waiting for the police to arrest us and tattoo a number on our forehead, or while we’re afraid it might be the bar code on our groceries, the credit card in our wallet, or a microchip under our skin, millions of the Lord’s people are willing to fight you for their religious traditions and will excommunicate you and declare you a dangerous heretic if you dare to question their time-honored traditions, dogmas, and religious myths, fables, legends, folklore, superstitions, and fairy tales! The church systems are heavy-laden with the traditions of men which have made the word of God meaningless, ineffective, and powerless. When you dare to attack their man-made traditions is when you witness the spirit of the beast rising up out of the earth! We not only want to be free from the beast, but our desire is to have erased from our minds the imagery we have of him, all the traditions in our thought processes that can only be consumed by the blazing light of HIS UNVEILING!

Another erroneous idea is that the beast forcibly inscribes or implants this mark up those who dwell upon the earth. Yet that is plainly not the testimony of scripture! The Greek here is quite different from the idea given in the English as to the application of this mark. Our English version says that the beast “causeth” all to “receive” a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads. This might lead us to think that the mark was forced upon unwilling men. If you check the margins of most Bibles, or a Greek Interlinear, you will find that the original states that the false prophet “causeth all...that they should give themselves a mark...” The picture behind these words is that of masses of people cutting or burning the mark upon themselves as a result of the influence of the false prophet upon their minds and hearts. Oh, yes! The people take upon themselves this mark! This is the result of exposing themselves day after day, Sunday after Sunday, year after year, to the influence of the false prophets of the religious systems! Attending all the services, participating in all the functions, joining all the seminars, reading all the books, listening to the tapes and CD’s, watching hours of “Christian” television, like sheep led to the slaughter we yielded ourselves to the teaching, the program, the traditions, and the system, until we got all “committed” and so saturated with its dogma, program, and ways that we could neither think nor function except in terms of established orders, denominations, non-profit corporations, boards, creeds, church buildings, programs, activities, meetings, seminaries, rituals, sacraments, ordinances, etc., etc. We took upon ourselves the mark, the number, the nature, the character of the bestial system!
This is what happens to all under the influence of the beast. John saw that he “causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, that they should give themselves a mark.” What a word that is! It signifies classes of believers, all in the church, of whatever condition, stature, status, learning, or degree of growth and development in Christ, ALL under the influence of the beast take upon themselves his mark. Small and great — those who are babes in Christ, and those who have reached positions of ministry and power — ALL alike receive the mark! Rich and poor — those who are rich in word, gifts, abilities, and those who possess little of spiritual attainments — ALL alike receive the mark! Free and bond — those enslaved in the great and most powerful of religious systems, as well as those who are “free,” those in less controlling systems, the “comeouters” and the “independents,” though they come out of Babylon, yet Babylon is still in their hearts and they at once commence to construct their own system — ALL alike bear the mark!

The particular Greek word which has been translated as “mark” in our text, is the word charagma. Eight times in the book of Revelation it is translated as “mark.” Its meaning is “an engraving, an impressed mark.” It is significant to note that this Greek word is from the same root from which we get the Greek word charakter, from which in turn comes our English word “character.” This unfolds to our understanding the true essence and quality of that which is engraved or impressed upon men — the inward thinking and outward actions which bring forth an expression of the CHARACTER formed in the image of the very source from which the mark comes. Either we will find ourselves expressing the character of God, or else the character of the beast! It signifies bearing in the manifestation of our life the very imprint and likeness either of the Spirit of God or of the bestial religious system of man. We all know how the “character of the beast” is stamped upon all the adherents of the religious systems of the world by one of the greatest brainwashing operations the world has ever known! Often by the style of their church building, by people’s dress, their ornamentation, the way a woman wears her hair, their mannerisms, speech, prayers, worship, in the unique way they pronounce certain words, or even in the way they carry their Bible one can discern which system’s mark they have taken upon themselves!

God has so dealt by His Spirit in the lives of His called and chosen elect until we have come to loathe and despise this confused and grotesque bestial religious system of man — yet we discover from time to time that even unto this day this little lamb-like beast is so subtle that it still seeks to seduce us into bearing its stamp upon our thoughts and actions. Ray Prinzing has pointed out in one of his booklets that the practices and handiwork of the carnal system, and the thinking thereof, are not overcome in one grand leap. There is a daily and continual “dying” to all the old as we take upon us the new. There is the constant hating of, and turning our backs upon the bestial system, and every phase of our soulish life, as we in turn “put on” the mind of Christ.

I want to know the Christ, the Lamb of God, not the beast with two horns like a lamb, who speaks as a dragon. I want to know not just about Him, I want to intimately and fully KNOW HIM. I want the Holy Spirit to take the things of Christ and make them real to me. Therefore I am more interested in THE FATHER’S NAME UPON MY FOREHEAD than I am in anything which belongs to the bestial system, since to bear the mark of God insures one against coming under the other (Rev. 13:8). Now Jesus came to IMPRINT OR IMPRESS HIMSELF UPON MEN! Even from the time of His first appearance He sought to have His character impressed upon those who followed Him. When Peter and John had healed the lame man at the gate of the temple, and addressed the multitude gathered, it is written, “Now when they saw this boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13). Jesus came not to be just a great teacher or prophet. He came not to just forgive sins and take people to heaven. He came to IMPRINT OR IMPRESS HIS CHARACTER UPON US! Just as the influence of the beast causes men to take upon themselves his mark, so those who abide under the influence of the manifest
presence of Christ take upon themselves the marks of His identity. “PUT YE ON the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Can we not see by this that God is acting to SUPERIMPOSE Himself upon us, completely saturating us, by the instrumentality of Jesus Christ. That is the glory of sonship! Both the Father’s name and the mark of the beast are superimposed upon men. The word “superimpose” carries with it the idea of the fusion of metals, or even of unrelated elements. In some instances in this fusion, there is no definite line of demarcation left, for both the elements have completely mixed, while in other instances the fusion is there, but the elements do not mix. Today we have various alloys which are metals which have actually mixed together. But this does not always happen. We have an illustration of it in the tabernacle in the wilderness. Different elements were brought together but there was no fusion. The planks in it were all covered with gold, as were various other items and furnishings. The gold was superimposed upon the wood until only gold could be seen. The wood was completely hidden but was not mixed with the gold.

This hiding is what we are being brought to by the sealing of God, but in the end there will be the TOTAL FUSION OF GOD AND MAN. We are from both God and man, our spirit has come from the bosom of the Father, our body and soul from Adam. We are a combination of God and man! Once we were spirits superimposed upon by the life of Adam. Through redemption we are now men with God superimposed upon us through the putting on of Jesus Christ! We have not yet experienced this in its fullness, for when we do we shall have disappeared from sight and only GOD will ever be seen! “Now he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.” All through the ages God will so combine Himself with us through Jesus Christ that we will be ONE with Him, but only HE shall be seen!

God superimposed Himself upon us by measure when He first sealed us with the “earnest,” which is the “firstfruits” of the Spirit. “And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:3-4). “While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word” (Acts 10:44). Here the words “upon” and “on” denote SUPERIMPOSITION — upon, over. While the saints tarried, while Peter spoke the word, the Holy Spirit SUPERIMPOSED THE CHRIST upon all who were present. And now we continue on from glory to glory! Praise God, to some degree God has STAMPED THE IMPRESSION OF HIMSELF UPON US! Daily growing in grace, knowledge, wisdom, love, peace, joy, righteousness, and power we are constantly being changed by the Spirit to bear in our lives the mark, the image, the character of God! The end of the work is that “we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” The deep cry of our heart is so wonderfully expressed in the words of the hymn:

“Oh to be like Thee, Oh to be like Thee,
Precious Redeemer, Pure as Thou art;
Come in Thy sweetness, Come in Thy fullness,
STAMP Thine own image — deep on my heart!”

I am blessed by the following words from the pen of John Macbeath. “Christ’s influence is attractive; it is authoritative, and it is assimilative. In the days of his strenuous apostleship Paul declined the counsels of his friends and claimed the right to tread the appointed road: ‘From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.’” What these marks were we cannot precisely tell. It is certain that he bore traces of weariness and suffering for Christ’s sake. Imprisonment, persecution, torture, left their marks upon a life prematurely old. All sorts of marks are branded on our lives; worry and care carve their wrinkles on the brow; poverty, toil, dissipation stamp their seal upon our nature; self-indulgence and evil passion leave their mark somewhere, and the mark will not always hide. Purity, refinement, high-mindedness inscribe their form upon our lives. The thing that masters us, in some inscrutable way discloses its mastery to the world. Paul was
attested by the marks of Christ. They were possibly the scars a cruel world had inflicted, but to him they affirmed the ownership of Christ, and the fellowship of His sufferings. “But there are other marks, the marks of likeness, traces of resemblance, evidence that we are being ‘changed into the same image.’ Divine dream and human hope meet here! God’s high purpose is that His people should be ‘conformed to the image of His Son.’ This is sure evidence that human hopes are justified and destined to fulfillment. ‘I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness,’ urges one who, waking morning by morning, endeavored every day to bring his life nearer to the Divine likeness and yearned for the satisfaction that could only come with perfect resemblance” — end quote.
Chapter 157

The Beast Out Of The Earth

continued

“And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads” (Rev. 13:16).

A comparison of various scripture passages shows that the words “token,” “sign,” “seal,” “name,” and “mark” are used in the Bible as synonymous terms. Thus, “the SEAL of God in the forehead” (Rev. 7:3), “the Father’s NAME in the forehead” (Rev. 14:1), and “the MARK of the beast in the forehead” (Rev. 13:16) all indicate the same principle at work. In this case it is not some literal mark to be made in the flesh, but a state of being in mind and nature which serves as a “mark of distinction” between those who are GOD’S and those who are of the bestial religious system of man.

When God gave Moses instructions for the keeping of the Passover feast, He said, “And thou shalt show thy son in that day, saying, This is done because of that which the Lord did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt. And it shall be for a sign upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the Lord’s law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath the Lord brought thee out of Egypt (the beastly world system)” (Ex. 13:9). The keeping of the Passover was like a sign on the hand and forehead, a mark, a reminder that the law — the ways and nature of the Lord — should always be upon their lips and in their hearts and lived out in the conduct of their daily lives.

The deep and hidden mysteries of God are never discovered by the investigations or probings of the natural mind because they pertain to a realm beyond the reach of the natural. Only by the spirit of wisdom and revelation from on high can we perceive the depth of meaning contained in the counsel of the Lord to Moses as He continued to instruct him respecting the observance of the Passover. “And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the Lord brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage: and it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the Lord slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt…and it shall be for a token upon thine hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes: for by strength of hand the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt” (Ex. 13:14-16). Again, the mark upon the hand and the forehead; not a little plastic card, nor a brand or a tattoo upon their flesh, nor a computer chip under their skin, but a taking into their MIND of the law of the Lord and a binding upon their hand — the OUTER ACTIONS — bespeaking the fulfilling of His law in all their doings.

Who among us would not willingly have our hand cut off or our forehead stripped of skin if anything so obvious and simple as that separated us from the glory of God? Thus, in the book of Revelation two ways are revealed: the way of the SEAL OF GOD and the way of the MARK OF THE BEAST! And each finds its reality in two areas — on the one hand, the seal of God in the “forehead” signifies the mind of Christ, and the seal of God upon the “hand” signifies the godly and spiritual way of doing things, in all outward actions. On the other hand, the mark of the beast in the “forehead” signifies the carnal mind, the beastly way of
thinking, and the mark of the beast upon the “right hand” signifies the fleshly way of doing things, in all outward actions, especially religious actions.

Except in the case of left-handed persons, the “right hand” is the one generally used. Certainly if one pays homage to the bestial religious system of man, he will lend a hand of assistance to that organization. He will promote its programs, cooperate in its activities, be faithful in attendance to its gatherings, and support it with his money. By doing this he receives the symbolic “mark” in his “right hand,” which is the hand of service. By this course of action he reveals what sort of religious personality he is, and betrays thereby that he is not committed to a pure walk in the Spirit of God nor to service in the spiritual kingdom of God. The underlying principle is that if you want the religious system to “do business” with you, you must “do business” with it! You must lend your best hand to its aid and maintenance, and make an open-face appearance, detectable in your personality, to show that you belong to it as your owner and master.

How well I remember sitting on the platform of a large Charismatic meeting many years ago. I had been attending a weekly luncheon with some of the pastors in the city, and we were cooperating with this meeting in the hope that through fellowship with these people we might be able to reach some of them with the word of reconciliation, sonship, and the kingdom. A well known minister from a large Charismatic church on the west coast was the guest speaker. After giving his testimony, he called those with needs to the platform for prayer. With great flourish he entered into his “word of knowledge” routine by which he revealed to various ones what their problems were. I had sensed, all through the ministry that night, something strange. Like a lightning bolt from the sky, the Spirit spoke from within myself, “This is not of me — this man is operating in a psychic gift, not by the mind of the Spirit of God!” Then followed this piercing inquiry, “What are YOU doing here?” At that moment I would have welcomed a trap door to open beneath me, permitting me to just quickly and silently disappear! At that rebuke from the Lord I learned a valuable lesson — we do not make people pure by mingling with their mixture! We do not overcome the beast, by sitting at his table, partaking with him!

Therefore, we desire the seal of God upon our lives rather than the mark of the carnal, beastly nature of religion! When one insists on living after the carnal guidance of the bestial system, he takes upon himself the mark of the beastly mind, which is spiritual death. If one then lives in his outward actions out of that carnal religious mind-set and not after the revelation and leadership of the Spirit, he takes upon himself the mark of the beast in his right hand. No man by carnal wisdom or soulical strength can do the works of God! But to be spiritually minded and strong in the power of HIS MIGHT reveals the glory of the Lord in the land of the living!

Oh, how beautiful is the mark of the Father’s name upon the forehead! And let me tell you something. Everyone who has that mark has overcome the other mark! John the beloved makes this plain when he says, “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” (Rev. 15:2). Beyond any doubt this group standing upon the sea of glass is the same 144,000 that John previously saw standing with the Lamb upon mount Zion, for they, too, had the harps of God and had the Father’s name written in their foreheads!

Oh, how grotesque is the mark of the beast upon the lives of men! It has a thousand different expressions, but I was greatly impressed by reading a little article by Bob Robin in which he shared this observation and experience: “Most religions are eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in every service. A young girl was brought to the nurse in the compound where I was staying. After a night of suffering as the fetus was breached, and the nurse could not turn it, the next morning I preached the parents and the young
husband a sermon. According to their religion, they thought it was a sin to ride in a car. I told them God wasn’t killing the girl; the devil wasn’t killing her, but their religion was. I had to use an interpreter because the family spoke only German. I finally got them into the car and took them to Durango to the hospital. They were extremely frightened, thinking that lightning or something terrible would happen to them because they were riding in a car. But, in a very few minutes after we arrived at the hospital, the baby was delivered and the mother lived. Religion would have killed her!

“Many are raised in a religion where it is a terrible sin to go to a movie. I was raised with that kind of thinking. I asked my parents to go with me to see ‘The Ten Commandments.’ My father replied, ‘Why son, we haven’t attended a movie since we have been saved.’ I told them that it was time they did. My folks reluctantly went with me. My father entered the theatre looking like he had just robbed the First National Bank. But, when we got inside the lights were still on, and dad saw many people from their church there. The picture changed his whole attitude.

“Many times I have seen sincere people crawling on their hands and knees to the Church of the Virgin of Guadalupe, blood flowing from their skinned knees. How terrible is that TREE OF RELIGION! Martin Luther was on the steps of Pilate (which had been imported from Jerusalem to Saint Peter’s in Rome). Going up the steps which had all kinds of sharp rocks on each step, on his knees, he heard, ‘Martin Luther, the just shall live by faith!’ He went back to Germany, and started the Reformation” — end quote.

BUYING AND SELLING

“And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name” (Rev. 13:17).

Our good friends of the “futurist” interpretation of Bible prophecy, with their fascinating and best-selling books, persist in their horror stories of days now supposed to be impending when for a very brief period of time (say three and a half years at most) the saints, who refuse to bear in their foreheads the number 666, will be prohibited from engaging in commercial transactions! Sensationalism is always preferred to true spiritual understanding. The fact that many godly men are already in prison, or are prohibited from preaching the gospel in many parts of the world, means nothing at all to writers who either cannot or will not be persuaded that the book of Revelation is a symbolical and SPIRITUAL BOOK, intended to be SPIRITUALLY UNDERSTOOD; and that buying and selling, in the prophetic and spiritual sense, has a much more significant meaning than that of supermarket shopping!

Buying and selling in the spiritual sense has naught to do with the business of commercial trade. The prophet Isaiah faithfully exhorted the Lord’s people, “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price” (Isa. 55:1). The prophet made it plain that he was not talking about worldly commerce or physical food, but about paying the price spiritually for the “milk” of God’s Word and the “wine” of His unspeakable joy and abounding Life. The wise man counseled: “Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding” (Prov. 23:23). Literally speaking, we can neither buy nor sell the truth. Yet truth costs! While salvation is the gift of grace, attainment in the kingdom of God has a price tag attached to it. To “buy” the truth, or to “buy” wisdom, instruction, or understanding, means to pay the price to embrace and walk in the truth, and I have learned through many years of experience that the “price” of truth is oft times to simply be willing to “give up” or “sell” an error! Carnal nature must be “given up” or “sold,” exchanged for divine nature! I have also learned that, on another level, the “tuition” in God’s school of experience where one learns wisdom, instruction, and understanding, is sometimes very
expensive! To the church at Laodicea, which prided herself that she was rich and increased with goods and had need of nothing, but knew not that she was wretched, poor, blind, and naked, the Lord admonished, “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich” (Rev. 3:18).

“Buy of me gold” means to pay the price for the divine nature of our Father to be brought forth in our lives! “Tried in the fire” means that His nature has become an experiential reality within us through the processings of God. It speaks of an intimate, direct encounter with God that causes all that is contrary to His nature to be consumed by the all-consuming fire of His Spirit, resulting in our transformation into the likeness of Christ. Our Lord has called upon His elect, the overcoming sons of God, to buy of Him this gold tried in the fire, that we may be rich! Now there’s a “prosperity message” worth preaching! Now we know what the true riches are! The riches of which He speaks are not the riches of the world, either of money, material things, or of stature, position, fame, or self-glory. All those things are mere tinsel that the baby Christians seek after, the earth dwellers, who mind earthly things, and who worship the beast and his image! The riches of this world corrupt the spiritual man and prevent a manifestation of the true Life of God. The gold that we are to buy of Him represents a life that has been tried and tested, even as gold is refined, to bring forth the qualities of the Christ-life within all who are His called and chosen ones. The gold of which our Lord speaks is symbolic of the divine nature and the divine life of those who put on the Lord Jesus Christ. The gold of the realm of the spirit represents the spiritual riches of the saints, for Christ said that we should buy this gold tried in the fire, “that thou mayest be rich.” Therefore gold represents our true wealth! Jesus pointed out to the multitude gathered at His teaching, “A man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth” (Lk. 12:15). Oh, how men seek after things! The man, however who lives and walks in the attributes of God is a rich man indeed! And he has paid a price to obtain his true wealth!

There is a pattern in the book of Revelation that shows that the first use of a word establishes the use and meaning of that word throughout the book. In this case, the first use of the word “buy” is with a spiritual application. To “buy and sell” means, naturally, to engage in the ordinary pursuits of life, and to exchange one item of value for another. If the purpose of the whole vision in the thirteenth chapter of the Revelation is spiritual, then applying this as a symbol on the spiritual plane reveals that those without the distinctive mark of the bestial system have no more recognized standing in the carnal church systems than men who are not allowed to buy or sell have in a community. If one in a particular business has his license revoked, he then has no authority to buy or sell in that industry. In like manner, if the church systems of man do not put their “stamp of approval” upon your life and ministry, you have no authority or standing to “deal” in spiritual things within their precincts! Thus, “selling” as a symbol, spiritually indicates the dealing out of truth, the ministering of the things of the Spirit of God, while “buying” typifies the acceptance of truth, the receiving of the things of God, regardless of the personal cost!

And is it not true that a man of God walking in the Spirit of the Lord and in the blazing light of heaven’s revelation, independent of all the man-made organizations, creeds, methods, and programs of religious Babylon, WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO LABOR AMONG THE CHURCH SYSTEMS, after the truth for which he stands becomes known, or until he should take their mark upon him by joining himself to them? And if he holds meetings in the community, the members of the churches are often warned by their leaders against “buying” — receiving — from this ministry because of his not having the mark or name of the beast. Their ministers are specially marked, for they come trained out of their theological seminaries with the stamp of their respective doctrine and traditions upon them and a license from the sect to engage in its ministry; and those not thus marked or designated HAVE NO PLACE AMONG THEM! Even if there is not much difference in their beliefs and practices, still, a Methodist minister cannot pastor a Baptist Church, nor can an Anglican priest say mass at the Roman Catholic Church! You must bear their mark! Whether a man
is a man of God with a heaven-sent message matters nothing at all — you must bear the mark! Some of the Lord’s people bring a few of the old concepts and ways over into this kingdom walk, keeping just enough of it alive so that it enables them to still buy and sell with the folks in the religious systems. Then some of us are just radical enough to make a clean sweep of it all! This also reveals the manner in which the beast causes those who will not worship the image to be killed — an analogous killing; namely, an ecclesiastical cutting off, an excommunication or a repudiation — the absolute refusal to either “buy” or “sell” the things of God with you unless you take upon you THEIR MARK!

Elaine Cook related in one of her writings how John Bunyon, author of Pilgrim’s Progress, was jailed for many years for refusing to obtain a “license” to preach. He refused to take the mark or pay homage to the image of the beastly systems of man, so he was forbidden to deal out the truth and people were kept from obtaining it from him!

How many of my readers would be permitted to “take communion” in most of the churches in your city on Sunday morning? How many could teach a Sunday School class in one of those churches? Ah, matters not whether you are a saint of God, filled with His Spirit, and bearing His Word — you cannot “buy or sell” with them unless you take the mark and pay homage to the image! You see, dear ones, there is not the slightest possibility that I will be invited to say mass at Saint Benedict’s Catholic Church next Sunday. There is absolutely no chance that I will be called to be the “pastor” at First Methodist Church, First Baptist Church, or the Assemblies of God! I do not stay awake nights wondering what I will share next week at the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah’s Witnesses. You see, I don’t bear their mark, neither will I worship their image! And no man can “buy or sell” the spiritual things of God within those man-made institutions save he that has the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. That is the mystery.

The facts just stated are well illustrated by the following circumstances which I borrow from another brother. A number of years ago a precious brother in the ministry went into a certain town to find a place to conduct a series of meetings. He was directed by a Presbyterian lady to their pastor, who, she said, sometimes rented their church facilities for various functions. When he called on the minister and made known his errand, the first question asked him was this, “Are you a member of the Presbyterian Church?” The brother answered in the negative. He did not have the name of the beast. The next question that greeted him was this, “Do you believe the Westminster Confession of Faith to be orthodox?” He answered, “No, sir.” He did not have the mark of the beast. The last question asked was, “Do you belong to any of the various orthodox Protestant denominations?” The brother said, “No.” He did not have the number of his name. The answer was, “You cannot use our building.” You can neither buy nor sell!

Furthermore, organized religion, both Catholic and Protestant, is big business! The Charismatic movement is big business, too! Religion, in fact, is the biggest business in the world today! You and I, if we refuse to subscribe to its mockery, are excluded from carrying on the Father’s business with it. All who refuse to subscribe to the traditions, dogmas, and defilements of the religious systems are ostracized, accused of being heretics, and anathematized in as true a sense as were the martyrs of past ages who refused to bow down to the bestial system of this world!

I have been encouraged and emboldened through many years by the writings of brother Ray Prinzing. In connection with our present subject he wrote, “We would not in any way try to fit another into those dealings which God has with us. But just by the way of example and illustration: When God dealt with us concerning the leaving of religious organized systems, He also made it clear to our own heart that we were never to become involved in a personal kingdom-building program which would involve our being organized as a ‘tax deductible non-profit organization’ so as to appeal to the finances of others for our support. This has been
our position over these past years, and while God has led us to send out a lot of literature, it is with our trust in Him alone to provide. True, were we duly organized as non-profit there would be tax benefits for contributors — but it would mean bowing to the system as recognized by the world. By no means do we infer any condemnation for those so organized, for we are in a transition time, and many have been set up for years in a government recognized deductible status, which God has so used. But, as we said, God dealt with us, and 'if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor' (Gal. 2:18)."

HERE IS WISDOM...

"Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred three score and six” (Rev. 13:18).

Here is wisdom: Let him that hath understanding count. The wise king Solomon said, "Wisdom is the principal thing," but, in the same verse he hastily added, "and with all thy getting get understanding" (Prov. 4:7). Paul prayed for the saints in Ephesus, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ...may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation...the eyes of your understanding being enlightened" (Eph. 1:17-18). This beautiful prayer of the apostle demonstrates vividly the truth that wisdom is a state of being. We could say it has a "passive" quality — this wisdom comes only from the inworkings of God! Understanding and revelation are spiritual synonyms. Understanding has an "active" quality. The person who has understanding in our text above does something — he COUNTS! The mystery yields only to the understanding, that is spiritual understanding, for Paul prays that our understanding be enlightened by the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, and thus the enlightened understanding equals divine revelation! HERE IS WISDOM: Let him that hath revelation count the number of the beast. It should be evident to all who read these lines that this, too, is wisdom: Let not him who has no revelation attempt to count (decipher the meaning of) the number of the beast! What a word that is!

The key is this beautiful expression: “Here is wisdom.” If it’s wisdom we’re talking about, then it’s not philosophy, it’s not intellect, it’s not seminary training, it’s not mathematics. Notice that our text does not say, “Here is a riddle; let him that is bright solve it,” but plainly states: “Here is wisdom.” Therefore we must have something different! Though one might study and search forever, plying endlessly through mountains of musty volumes, trying to figure out the enigma of this number, he would never come to the correct conclusion, for the carnal man sees through carnal eyes, and having eyes, he sees not, neither does he understand. There is therefore only one word of advice that I can give. Do not try to figure out by much study the marvelous mysteries of God’s word, but CONCENTRATE ON CHRIST. Christ Himself is the truth and beside Him there is no truth. Christ is also the wisdom of God and the apostle tells us that HE is made unto us wisdom. Oh, yes! Wisdom is a Person, and wisdom is a state of being. It is the state of being of the Christ-man. Our knowledge of God and our understanding of the things of God depend entirely upon where we look. Paul penned these significant words to the saints in Colosse, “IN HIM are HID all the treasures of WISDOM and KNOWLEDGE" (Col. 2:3). If you are looking anywhere else beside Christ Himself to understand the mysteries, you are surely looking in the wrong place. Christ Himself is the great treasure house where all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are concealed and garnered up. In Him, and in Him alone, are to be found all the rich blessings which wisdom and knowledge bestow!

The more intimate and vital your relationship with Him, my beloved, the more the truth of the deep things of God will unfold within your heart. But like a choir of bewildered voices, ascending in pitiful petition to God, so those who try to understand the mysteries of God with human reasoning come to cry at last, “Lord, how can we know the truth? Which among this confusion of voices can we believe? Which among this conglomeration of interpretations is
right?" There is, thank God! one answer and one only. It is the answer given by Jesus centuries ago. "I AM...the truth!" Seek not the truth from the learnings of men. Seek Christ, for He is the truth! If the Christ Himself does not bear witness within you of the things written even in this message, then lay it aside, put it on the shelf, or file it in file thirteen. As you live in blessed communion with HIM, there will come that inward sense of knowing; the words of life and light that then cross your path from God’s anointed prophets and teachers will strike a responsive chord in the deepest recesses of your spirit, bursting forth with the harmonious melody of understanding! Here is wisdom: Let him that hath understanding, let him that hath revelation — COUNT! It is clear, the mystery has a spiritual meaning. If we have spiritual understanding, we will be able to count (discern the meaning of) the number of the beast. Let us trust the Holy Spirit to make it real to our hearts!

Understanding is an ability and faculty of the mind. Without mind there can be no understanding. A man’s understanding corresponds precisely to the condition, development, or quality of his mind. Every created life form possesses mind, and the understanding of the creature is limited by the quality of its mind. Quality of mind is, basically, an inherited characteristic. For instance, a cat thinks like a cat, knows as a cat, understands as a cat, and acts like a cat because it was born a cat — therefore possessing the brain and mind of a cat. We have a cat in our home. I have noticed that this cat will come and sit in the bedroom while I watch the evening news on the television. While I am very interested in the news, the cat has positively no interest at all! She couldn’t care less! Oh, yes, she often sits on the corner of the bed and stares straight into the television screen. It is not that she doesn’t see the pictures flashing across the screen. She sees them, alright, but she doesn’t understand them — so eventually she curls up on the bed and goes to sleep! It is simply impossible for cats to understand things human. Humans are of a different and higher order than are cats. Cats may see men, and may observe their movements, yet there is no common ground of knowledge. The cat has no comprehension of what it sees. It discerns only things pertaining to its own realm. It has positively no understanding of the ways of man, or of the meaning of his movements, or words, or habits. Cat minds function on the level of cat nature, while human minds function of the level of human nature.

Likewise, God is of a different and higher order of life and nature than are humans. The mind of man functions on the level of human nature, whereas the mind of God functions on the level of divine nature. There is no common ground of knowledge or understanding between the two. Therefore, the natural man is totally incapable of comprehending that which pertains to the realm of God! For natural minds to comprehend things spiritual is equally as impossible as for cats to comprehend things human. And so, until humans receive of God’s Spirit — the Spirit that knows and understands the things that pertain to God — it is impossible for them to have any understanding, either of God, or of His word, or of His ways. With what truth did Paul write to the Corinthians: “For who could really understand a man’s inmost thoughts except the spirit of man himself? How much less could anyone understand the thoughts of God except the very Spirit of God? We have now received not the spirit of the world but the Spirit of God Himself, so that we can understand something of God’s generosity towards us” (I Cor. 2:11-12, Moffatt Translation). And then after men receive from God, the depth of their knowledge and understanding on the divine plane is wholly in proportion to the measure of the indwelling Spirit!

All understanding is in the mind, therefore, the understanding of God is in the mind of God, which is also the mind of the Spirit, the mind of Christ, and the mind of the new creation Man! We do not understand the spiritual realities of God with our natural minds. It is not the same mind that understands how to drive your car that also understands the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Not at all! It is the new mind, the mind of Christ within, that understands things spiritual! When the Lord Jesus received the seven spirits of God He received the Spirit of Understanding (Isa. 11:2-3). This was not the same understanding of
the same mind by which He built furniture in Joseph’s carpenter shop! Oh, no! This Spirit of Understanding is one aspect of the fullness of THE MIND OF GOD — to understand the true nature of all things as God understands!

It has always, from the very beginning, been the serpent-dragon’s policy to misrepresent the truth, to distort and carnalize the word of God, in order to hinder mankind from beholding the great beauty and majesty of the eternal purposes of God. The more absurdities the dragon-spirit can get interwoven into man’s doctrines and concepts respecting God, the church, the divine plan and purpose, eternity, the destiny of man, etc., the better he will succeed in alienating men from Truth and Reality. Thus for centuries the great adversary has been working most successfully and has covered and hidden some of the most precious and wonderful truths under the most specious and repulsive errors, and the progress of the Lord’s people has been correspondingly slow. But, thank God! we are now living in the time when the veil of ignorance is being dissolved, and when the Lord’s people are being drawn by the Spirit to look away from the creeds, traditions, superstitions, and systems formed for their enslavement during ages past, and to look away to CHRIST HIMSELF WHO IS THE TRUTH AND THE WISDOM OF GOD! Therefore lean no longer upon thine own understanding! Judge neither by the sight of the eyes, the hearing of the ears, or the reasoning of the mind, but seek that living SPIRIT OF UNDERSTANDING that comes from God alone!

This Spirit of Understanding is one of the seven spirits of sonship that shall rest like a cloud upon the manifest sons of God. “And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding…with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod (spirit) of his mouth, and with the breath (spirit) of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins…the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Isa. 11:2-9). By these shall the glory and order of God’s kingdom be established throughout the whole earth! Any man who reigns in that glorious kingdom must, first, be a partaker of the reality of these seven spirits! Let us pray for the Spirit of Understanding!

May that deep and fervent cry expressed from the heart of the Psalmist become even the cry of God’s called and chosen elect in this great hour: “Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding that I may learn Thy commandments” (Ps. 119:73). How readily did the Lord incline His ear unto the Psalmist’s earnest petition, and with what speed did He send forth the answer, for in verses 102-104 we read: “I have not departed from Thy judgments: for Thou hast taught me. How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through Thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.”

Now we know the deep meaning of the words: “Here is wisdom: Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast!”

Even so, let it be unto us, our Father!
Chapter 158
The Beast Out Of The Earth
continued

“And he causeth all...to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads...Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred three score and six” (Rev. 13:18).

The first key to unlocking the “mark of the beast” is this beautiful expression: “Here is wisdom.” If it’s wisdom we’re talking about, then it’s not philosophy, it’s not intellect, it’s not seminary training, it’s not mathematics. Notice that our text does not say, “Here is a riddle; let him that is bright solve it,” but plainly states, “Here is wisdom.” Clearly, we must have something different!

The second key to unlocking this great mystery is this admonition: “Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast.” The person who has understanding does something — he COUNTS! The mystery yields only to the understanding, that is spiritual understanding, for Paul prays that our understanding be enlightened by the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, and thus the enlightened understanding equals divine revelation! HERE IS WISDOM: Let him that hath revelation count (calculate) the number of the beast. It should be evident to all who read these lines that this, too, is wisdom: Let not him who has no revelation attempt to count (decipher the meaning of) the number of the beast! It is clear, the mystery has a spiritual meaning. If we have spiritual understanding we will be able to count or calculate the meaning of the number of the beast. Let us trust the Holy Spirit to make it real to our hearts!

Here is wisdom — Count the number of the beast. Why would that be wisdom? The word “number” means a fixed or definite amount. It is also a limited amount, not more and not less than what is given. What is the significance of that? God has not placed upon His people a number! The scriptures reveal that God has placed a token, a sign, a seal, a mark, and a name upon His elect people — but never a number! A mark, yes, but not a number. A name, yes, but not a number. “To him that overcometh...will I give a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it” (Rev. 2:17). “Him that overcometh...I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God...and I will write upon him my new name” (Rev. 3:12). “And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father’s name written in their foreheads” (Rev. 14:1). But the beast has a number, and we are admonished to count the number of the beast! And what is his number? We all know that the number is six hundred sixty six — 666!

No one who reads the book of Revelation with a spiritual mind can have failed to notice that the word “name” is far more than an appellative. It expresses the inner nature and state of being of the person to whom it is applied. Thus, the “beast” represents something wild and ravenous in nature, the “whore” denotes something unfaithful and impure, and the “Lamb” is one who is meek, pure, and self-sacrificing. The “name” of the Father expresses the character of Fatherhood, the “name” of the Son reveals the character of sonship, the “name”
of the city of God which comes down from God out of heaven bespeaks the implantation of the divine nature and character into the life of the man or woman who is born from above.

Let me say again, as I have said so often in this series, one can never understand correctly the book of Revelation so long as his eyes are fastened on events in the outer world. The understanding of “the beast” and “his image” and “his mark” comes only by the inner illumination that the Spirit brings. That is, they are revealed by the flooding light radiating forth from the indwelling Christ! In that true light of God all that is not born of God appears as it truly is, that it may be duly brought to judgment, dealt with and eradicated from our lives. The fiercest beast I have encountered in my years upon this earth is the beast of old Adam’s nature, the carnal mind, the human consciousness, the seed of the serpent slithering about within my very own bosom. Yes, there is a beastly system which arises right out of this earthiness, yet the heart of our natural life is still deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? How I praise God with joy unspeakable and full of glory for the penetrating light of God’s Christ which uncovers the subtleness and deceitfulness of this wild beast, the bestial nature lumbering about in, and rising up out of, OUR EARTH!

Thousands of God’s elect who read these lines today have been illuminated by the Holy Spirit to see the carnal church system of man for what it is — the beast out of the earth having two horns like a lamb, but speaking as a dragon. They see it also as the harlot, Mystery Babylon the Great. In truth it is an unholy trinity — a wild beast, an unclean harlot, and a corrupt city. Truly we have come to loathe the carnality, shame, self-righteousness, spiritual fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, deception, and tyranny of this corrupt system! Was it not the light of the mind of Christ arising within our lives that caused us to see it as it is? And oh, what struggles and dealings and strippings we passed through as God purged our hearts from the love of Babylon and our lives from its fleshly ways!

Now let us return to the number, 666. A lot of weird and varied explanations have been given for the number 666. It is because the numbers of the Greek alphabet have each a numerical value, that endless attempts have been made to find some man’s name the total value of whose letters make up 666, under the erroneous idea that the beast is “a man,” and 666 the numerical value of that man’s name. Scarcely has anyone noticed that the apostle John does not say, “interpret the number of the beast,” as he surely would have done had it concealed a man’s name, but “count the number of the beast,” thus signifying that it is in the correct understanding of the nature of the number itself that wisdom will be displayed! One brother has pointed out that the least probable of all interpretations are the attempts of many interpreters to find in the cipher 666 the name of one or another of the conspicuous characters of modern history. All such are merely guesses and speculations, and somewhat wild ones at that!

The truth is, we can never fully comprehend the reality to which the spirit of inspiration points until we compare this mark, this number in the forehead, with the very next verse — Revelation 14:1. Remember, in the original there are no chapter or verse divisions. It is a continuous flow, and no sooner does John finish with this mark, this number in the forehead of those who worship the beast and his image, than he says, “And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with Him an hundred and forty-four thousand, having His father’s name written in their foreheads.” The contrast is between 666 and 144,000. That is the mystery! Yet, the number 144,000 is not written in their foreheads, only the Father’s name is written in the forehead! Six is the number of the natural man, and we will speak more of this later. 144,000 is the number of divine government. In reality, twelve is the number of divine government, and twelve squared by itself and multiplied by one thousand is divine government brought to its absolute fullest, totality, and perfection!
As I have mentioned, six is the number of the natural man. The natural man is a beastly man, his power is the power of the flesh, his intelligence is that of the dust realm, his thinking is earthly, his nature is beastly, his ability and authority are limited, and all this describes not only the natural man but also the character of that religious system which rises up out of the soulical nature of this man. Six is the number of toil, works, self-effort, sweat, and fatigue. In that long-ago covenant of God with His earthly people He commanded them, “Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work.” Even earlier the Lord had told the sinful Adam, “Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee…in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the ground” (Gen. 3:17-19). The full week is not expressed in the six, but in the number seven. The seventh day is the day of man’s rest, when he rests as God rested, when he enters into God’s rest and rests with Him, thus experiencing ultimate unity, union, and oneness with God in the fullness of HIS LIFE. The seventh day was hallowed, made sacred. In it man realizes his divinity, his divine nature, the new creation man — Christ. But the seven is lacking in the six! Therefore six speaks of the fullness of man, man in all his powers, but without God, apart from God! Have you ever wondered who it was that taught the world that every grave should be dug six feet deep? A common expression for stating that a man is dead is to say that “he is six feet under.” It is impossible to over-emphasize the importance of this fundamental truth: The natural man is a dead man — dead to God, dead to truth, dead to reality, dead to spiritual and heavenly life. In Adam he has descended into the classification of the lower creatures — the beasts. And natural men, educated natural men, natural men with high degrees from prestigious universities behind their names — anthropologists, biologists, and scientists of various disciplines — are often only able to see the animalistic life of the natural man, and therefore espouse the unenlightened theory of evolution! From the day of Adam’s fall until now his thoughts, his works, his inventions have only been beastly.

Six being the number of the natural man, and also the number denoting the toil, work, effort, sweat, and fatigue of that man, can we not see that 666 is the more than one-hundredfold accumulation of the number six, representing nothing other than the never-ending, never rest-attaining labor and toil of man’s own working, those self-consuming, self-destroying but non-attaining WORKS OF SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS which are the hallmark of all of man’s religion! The number 666 is therefore the symbolical number of all the false churches, all the self-driving, all the flesh-oriented programs, running, working, organizing, doing, doing, doing, but never coming under the leadership of the Spirit or the divine government of the mind of Christ!

We are marking out the character of wisdom, because wisdom is what directs one to spiritual understanding, which in turn gives the ability to calculate, discern, understand — count the number of the beast! To count the number means to know the quality or nature of that which the number stands for. The man who is unable to count, discover, or understand the nature of the beast as revealed by his number is not a wise man! He is devoid of understanding, and is, therefore, a foolish man. Wisdom sees all things as they really are! There are no illusions and no delusions with wisdom!

As I stated previously, for many decades and centuries God’s people have been speculating about this strange phenomenon John describes as the “mark of the beast.” Yet there is a depth in this that goes far beyond what many of us have imagined! Revelation 13:17 lists three alternatives, two in addition to what most Christians have heard of. Let us see! “…that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.” Notice the three alternatives. (1) the mark of the beast (2) the name of the beast (3) the number of his name. It is indeed remarkable that the Holy Spirit speaks of “the number” of the name of the beast; that is, the number representing and standing for the name. Why not be content with the name itself? John might have been satisfied with the knowledge that the “name” of the beast, whatever it be, must be a name which expresses the inner nature of the beast; and he may have said no more. But the Holy Spirit
revealed a further detail — not the name alone, but the number of the name — a most profound depth of insight into the nature of the beast!

No man could “know” the name written upon the white stone given to him that overcometh “save he that receiveth it.” In other words, no one but an overcomer can have that experience which enables him to truly comprehend the “new name” — the nature of God wrought within. The world can never understand the man who has received the call to sonship. Much less the new nature itself! What strange mysterious element is there in the nature of the new creation man that keeps him pressing relentlessly onward toward an invisible goal when friend and foe alike tell him that he is a fool to continue pursuing a vision which brings him nothing but misunderstanding, separation, persecution, tribulation, loneliness, and friendlessness? The inner command to completely and forever forsake the corrupted courts of Mystery Babylon to put on the mind of Christ, to be conformed to the image of the Son, and to know the wonder and glory of sonship to God, makes him endure the cross, despise the shame, incur the scorn of fellow Christians and the wrath of the church systems, scoff at tribulation, and count every loss to himself as a gain for Christ. Ah, such a walk can never be understood by any save “he that receiveth it!” Oh, yes! The glory of sonship to God is worthy to be written on pages of gold with the ink of silver, but none of earth’s vaunting philosophers and theologians can ever comprehend such truth and character and divine purpose as lies within the Christ-nature!

In contrast to this, those who are partakers of the nature of the beast do not “know the name” stamped upon them, do not discern the character they bear, and have no idea of the carnality and deceitfulness of the nature and system in which they walk, for they are deceived. “And he doeth great wonders…and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth…” So many people today are worrying about what the mark of the beast is going to be. They themselves have taken that mark! The very fact of their not knowing what that mark is proves they have taken it, for only deceived people receive it! History reveals how that during the inquisitions and persecutions by the Roman Church in past centuries, many believers who would recant to escape torture or death were branded on either the hand or forehead, or both, with a cross, even as cattle are branded to denote ownership. But that visible mark, which allowed those who took it to live and carry on ordinary business pursuits, was merely an outward mark to denote that they now subscribed to and upheld the doctrines of Rome and the deceptions of the wild, ravenous beast. Bearing a more subtle form of the mark, the whole realm of organized Christianity today subscribes to those same kinds of doctrines, traditions, rituals, and deceptions in varying degrees.

Those who walk in carnal minds and dead-letter-of-the-word understanding of the things of God can never understand what the mark is! Those imbued with the spirit and nature of the bestial religious system of man bear the mark of the beast but are completely devoid of understanding of what it is! But HERE IS WISDOM: Let him that hath understanding COUNT the number of the beast! Such understanding comes alone by revelation! There are two marks — the mark of the Father’s name and the mark of the beast — and it takes a revelation to know either! As it takes revelation from on high to know the “new name” of the Christ, so it takes revelation from God to count the “number of the name of the beast!”

One of the earliest occurrences of the symbolic use of this mysterious number — 666 — is in the primitive case of the giant who defied the armies of the Lord in the days of David — Goliath of Gath. This man symbolized the bestial system of the world. Goliath was six cubits (and a span) tall (more than nine feet). His spearhead weighed 600 shekels of iron. “Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?” asked David (I Sam. 17:26). David’s glorious victory over Goliath beautifully typifies the victory of Christ and His body over the bestial system. The persistence of the number six in the family as well as the stature and equipment of Goliath is one of the keys to the understanding of the “number” of the beast. Goliath had a brother of great stature who significantly had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot! (II Sam. 21:20-22).
Such information is by no means coincidental, but the events were planned and orchestrated by the Spirit of God and are written for our instruction, learning, and admonition upon whom are come the ends of the ages!

The full significance of the number 666 however, is disclosed in the book of Daniel in the account of King Nebuchadnezzar’s great image set up in the plain of Dura, of dimensions sixty by six cubits. “Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold whose height was three-score cubits and the breadth thereof six cubits” (Dan. 3:1) Goliath grows in dimensions and in importance the nearer we get to New Testament times. The image on the plain of Dura is ten times the dimensions of Goliath, and the number of the beast in Revelation, chapter thirteen, is ten times that of the image of Nebuchadnezzar! The connection in history and prophecy is clear and certain.

Prior to the erection of this golden image King Nebuchadnezzar dreamed of a great image and was told by Daniel that the dream was a revelation from God of the course of human history from that time all the way down to the day when the kingdom of God should be established in the earth. The image Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream had a head of gold, and according to Daniel’s interpretation that head of gold was the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar himself! “Thou art this head of gold” (Dan. 2:38). The dream-image traced the rise and fall of the four great empires of Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome, which dominated the civilized world, in succession, right down to the day when Christ came into the world and forever changed the course of history, establishing a kingdom among men which is eternal and heavenly and which therefore could not pass away, but must grow, develop, increase, and ultimately conquer and destroy all worldly power in the course of its redemptive, reconstructive, and transformative purpose.

History reveals the accuracy of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream and Daniel’s interpretation. The image of world empire with all its power and pride was brought down to nothing by the power of the WORD OF GOD! All this was clearly made known to Nebuchadnezzar, but rather than bowing before the majesty of the God of heaven who gave even him his authority and kingdom, his importance as the “head of gold” went to his head and he was blinded by his own importance and glory. Deceived by the false heart he sought to grasp after the worldly glory that was his, and filled with delusions of grandeur he began construction of an immense image of gold which he set up in the plain of Dura. Its precise measurements — sixty by six cubits — showed the impressive dimensions of his pride, as he modeled the image after the one in his dream, but instead of making the head alone of gold, he made the whole image of gold, usurping all the power and pride of all kingdoms UNTO HIMSELF! He forgot the prophet’s warning — “Thou art this head of gold…the God of heaven HATH GIVEN THEE a kingdom, power, strength, and glory…” and lifted up his heart in self-pride, usurping the glory of God, taking that which was given by God and using it to his own ends and for the glorification of HIMSELF, requiring that all mankind should worship HIS IMAGE whenever they heard the music of his pretentious orchestra. The worship of the image meant in fact the worship of himself, who designed and built the image.

It is a horrible blasphemy against God to exalt the flesh and the world of man, in the place of God, and to take the high and holy things of God and use them for the promotion of SELF. And do not think for one moment, precious friend of mine, that the error of Nebuchadnezzar has not been repeated again and again throughout church history, and especially in this our day! Hear now these sobering and anointed words which some years ago came across my desk and are just as true today (if not more) as they were then:

“There is a great and damning fault among Christians which seems to be past explanation. It is a fault that has developed and grown more grotesque as the years have come and gone. Men and women have come to desire and covet spiritual things, not for the glory of
God and the honor of His eternal purpose, but that they themselves might become great men in the earth. Many a man has spent long periods in fasting that he might attain a great spiritual gift, yet all the time he is supposedly seeking the gift, his talk shows that his mind is full of hope that he will become a great and powerful minister to whom people will look with awe and pride. This is wrong seeking and a very great evil. Many a man has sought after the gift of healing — not because he was burdened for the sick, but because the gift would bring him honor among the people. He expected that it would bring him crowds and fame and money. Oh, let men search their hearts before they ask God lest they ask amiss to consume it upon their own lusts (James 4:3).

“Man is not satisfied by possessing earthly things. He secretly wants to possess the things of God as well and that for himself apart from God. Why did Nadab and Abihu wickedly offer strange fire before the Lord? Did they not want to possess for themselves what only God possessed? Why did Simon, the sorcerer, offer money for the gift that Peter had? He cared nothing for God, but in the gall of his bitterness and the bond of his rebellion he wanted to possess for himself something that belonged only to God and must not be had apart from Him. Do you not think that this strange desire exists today? Do men desire the gifts of God to bring all glory to God, or do they covet them as a means of self-promotion and self-exaltation? How is it that so many men who seem to have gifts from God soon become the center of a little universe of their own where all roads lead to them and all fingers point in their direction? Let us face it. Men not only want to gather temporal things about themselves, but they also crave to have eternal things for themselves and to possess them in themselves and for the benefit and glory of themselves. The carnal mind is an eternal enemy of God! It is a beastly mind! It refuses to become subject to the law of God, and indeed it is powerless to do so. But it secretly desires the things of God, wisdom, righteousness, and power, so that it may be AS GOD.

“The whole church system itself is not one whit different. At the present time the existing church system appears to be making significant gains all over the world. Probably more people go to church than ever before in history, but, while numbers increase and costly buildings are erected in ever increasing and lavish profusion, while world-wide efforts costing billions are the thing of the day, the people for the most part have lost their sense of the majesty of God. Gaudily clad worldlings talk glibly about being born again; they speak with tongues, honor the pope, and even join their voices with those who hail Mary as the mother of God. Full well do they fulfill the words of Jesus spoken to the church of Laodicea, ‘Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing: and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked’ (Rev. 3:17). God’s counsel to all who are joy-riding with the system is: ‘Buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see’ (Rev. 3:18). The gains of the church system have practically all been external gains and the fearful loss has been internal. The beauty of the life in the Spirit has been exchanged for the luxury of fine temples with comfortable pews. The songs which once swelled from hearts filled with God’s Spirit and holiness are now on the hit parade, being popularized by unsanctified professionals from Hollywood or Las Vegas. It is an enormous, degenerating calamity! It is an abomination that maketh desolate!” — The Page.

To Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, Daniel said, “Thou art this head of gold.” But Nebuchadnezzar took the glory conferred by God and used it to deify himself! He built his own image and commanded men to worship it. His image was all of gold, the gold of the great city of Babylon. All its wealth was the wealth of the world, mined and fashioned by the hands of men. And was this not what the devil offered Jesus when he showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, saying, “All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me” (Mat. 4:8-9). Ah — the same voice heard centuries before on the plain of Dura! And it is heard still. It is reckoned with today BY ALL WHO WOULD FOLLOW ON TO KNOW THE LORD. Oh, yes!
An image has been erected on the modern plain of Dura, by the modern king of Babylon, the *image of the beast*, and just as in Daniel’s day, the beast causes all who will not bow the knee and pay homage to this image of the beast should be killed — cut off. Thank God! There is in our day a remnant, a Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego company who **refuse to bend the knee or to pay any homage to the beast or his image!** The ultimate test for every son of God is just this: What will he do with what he receives from the Lord? Will he use it to his own ends, for his own profit and exaltation, or will he, like Abraham of old, offer it as a sacrifice upon the altar of full obedience to God? Every man and woman who has received the call to sonship will sooner or later face this test, and how he or she deals with it will determine whether he or she stands in his or her place among the *manifest sons of God* or whether he or she becomes just another one of the *many antichrists*.

The self-exalting spirit is not the Spirit of God — it is the spirit of the golden-gilded monstrosity of Babylon. By it millions are deceived to flock to the charisma of covetous men. If you will listen to these modern-day Nebuchadnezzars, these self-appointed kings of Babylon, you will seldom see the humility of God’s Christ, but the showmanship and arrogance of one who purports to be the very power of God. It is given them to give life unto the image of the beast and cause the image of the beast to *speak*. This image *speaks great swelling words*, professing to be some specially chosen vessel, commissioned to bring the gospel to the whole world in these last days. To listen to their glowing reports and exaggerated testimonies one would be led to believe that just about the whole world is turning to God and marching to Zion. Yet, I do not hesitate to tell you that if their human effort, their public relations companies, their monthly fund-raising letters, their begging for money, their lavish fund-raising seminars in the world’s plushest resort hotels, and their abominable gimmicks were taken away, their programs would collapse before year’s end!

Now let us return to our previous thought of the “**number of his name**” — 666. On that distant day upon the plain of Dura Nebuchadnezzar’s image of gold was *sixty cubits* high and *six cubits* wide. Throughout the book of Revelation the number *seven* is prominent as the sacred number of completeness and perfection. The contents of the book opened by the Lamb is contained under seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials — a *trinity of sevens*. It is in this book that the “number” of the beast is also represented as a *trinity of sixes*, and the contrast, as well as the intrinsic meaning of the number, intimates, that whatever else it may be, it is a perfect number of imperfection, or rather a number denoting *perfect or absolute imperfection*. In the Bible the number six refers to man — is uniquely a human number. Man was created on the sixth day, man’s appointed days of labor and toil are six, the Hebrew slave was to serve for six years, and for six years the land was to be sown. Six is the number of man’s unredeemed nature, old Adam — THE FLESH! The 666 is then, as it were, the number *six* swollen, blown up — in its greatest potency — and yet, when increased to the uttermost, it is still no more than *six* — FLESH! Human nature, that is, the natural man, old Adam, always falls short of the sacred number *seven*, the fullness of divine power, glory, and perfection. And try as it may, it can never be more than the lesser *six* — which is also the broken *twelve* — the broken government of God! It is therefore the *rule of the flesh*!

The *number* then is important, not the name. We are never actually given the “name” of the beast, but we understand the name by the number of the name. We listen to the words, “His number is six hundred sixty six,” and we have enough to make us tremble. It is *flesh* raised to an exceedingly high level of manifestation! In this number there is a depth of perverseness, pride, presumption, self-righteousness, religiosity, deceit, carnality, and shame which no one can “know” except him to whom it is revealed by the blazing light and deep searching of the Spirit of God. David, understanding something of the awful depth of the wickedness of the human heart cried out, “*Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting*” (Ps. 139:23-24).
Perhaps now the enlightened mind can understand how it is that from the very beginning, when Adam was banished from the blessed garden of God, six has been the number of man's labor apart from God's rest! And oh! how man labors! The carnal mind is always contriving new ways to work “for” God. In this hour we are continually being admonished to “get involved,” get involved in politics, get involved in the church programs, get involved in community activities, or in a hundred different things. “Christians should be involved!” they say. The church system is crying for people to become involved in her activities, and her programs are legion, but in all this cry for involvement I hear very little being said about GETTING INVOLVED WITH GOD! The Lord’s command to the apostles was, “Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.” In simple language this means to do nothing until you are so yielded to God that He can work THROUGH YOU! The firstborn Son of God said that He did only those things He saw His Father do, and spoke only those words He heard from His Father. Does that not explain why He spent thirty years in Nazareth, the place of no good thing, doing nothing so far as His sonship ministry was concerned? Ah, He was not really doing nothing, for He was growing in stature, and in wisdom, and in favor with God and man. He was becoming! The Father was not showing Him any great works or speaking to Him words to be uttered in the hearing of men. He waited for the “time” of His showing to Israel, and until that day His only “involvement” was with His Father!

As one has written, “Come near to the holy men and women of the past and you will soon feel the heat of their desire after God. They mourned for Him, they prayed and wrestled and sought for Him day and night, in season and out, and when they had found Him the finding was all the sweeter for the long seeking.” But the beast will have none of this! He is busily engaged in his own human effort and grandiose program and has no time to seek God, no time to wait upon God, and no time to become that son that the Father’s heart is yearning for. Even if he holds a Wednesday night “prayer meeting” it never seems to be a prayer meeting, but becomes a teaching session, testimony service, planning discussion, or something else. Other than a formal opening and dismissing prayer, there is nothing there that will transform men or move the heart of God.

Let anyone reading this who has had experience on a church board in the organized church systems try to recall the times when the board waited upon God and truly consulted the Lord until He revealed His will in the matters under discussion! Or try to remember the times when any chairman suggested that the brethren should fast and pray and wait in holy brokenness before God to see what instructions the Holy Ghost had for them on a particular question. Board meetings are habitually opened with a formal prayer or a brief “season of prayer,” after which the Head of the church is respectfully silent while the real rulers take over!

What church committee goes to the Holy Spirit for direction? Do not the members invariably assume that they already know what they are supposed to do and that their only problem is to find effective means to get it done? Plans, rules, literature, visitation, fund-raising dinners and projects, guest speakers, entertainment, concerts, dramas, advertising, music, and all kinds of inventive methodological techniques to promote the “work” of God absorb all their time and attention. The prayer at the beginning of the meeting is for divine help to carry out their plans! Apparently the idea that the Lord might have some instructions for them never so much as enters their heads. After all — who ever heard of “waiting on the Lord” or expecting to “hear from God” in a committee meeting!

What foreign mission board actually seeks to obtain and follow the guidance of the Lord? They all think they do, certainly, but what they do in fact is to assume the scripturalness of their ends and then ask the Lord for help to find ways to achieve them. They may pray all night (not likely!) for God to give success to their enterprises, but Christ is desired as their helper, not their Lord. Human means are devised to achieve ends assumed to be divine. These then crystallize into “policy,” and thereafter the Lord doesn’t even have a vote!
In the conduct of meetings where is the Lordship of Christ to be found? The truth is that today the Lord rarely controls a service, and the influence He exerts is very small. We sing of Him, clap to Him, and preach about Him, but He must not interfere; we will worship our way, and go through our time-honored forms, rituals, and ceremonies, and it must be right because we have always done it that way, as have the other churches in our sect. And those in the so-called “move of the Spirit” and “sonship” and “kingdom” walk are generally not much further advanced. Doesn’t everyone know that a meeting must begin with a few choruses, followed by singing in the spirit and a brief season of worship, and then is the time for a prophecy or two? A few more choruses, a little more worship, prayer, announcements, offering, and the sermon, following which the pastor or guest minister gives an “altar call” and/or operates in his “gift.” Don’t be deceived, brethren, we have created our very own little pattern, our unique little form, our “Spirit-led” SYSTEM! Surely, beloved, you cannot miss the obvious “number of his name” in all of this — 666 — flesh, FLESH, F-L-E-S-H! Oh, yes, even in the high places of God the flesh grasps after the things of the Spirit for the promotion of SELF. The carnal mind is always desirous of spiritual gifts. It likes to appear honored of God and accepted. That is why there are so many false prophets, false teachers, false healers, and false miracle workers in the world. Men who love people to think they are the great power of God will, in spite of all their apparent wonders, hear God tell them on that day, “I never knew you!” “I was never intimately acquainted with you!”

The beast out of the earth is the religious system that arises out of the soulical nature of man. While we once looked about for a laser-tattooed identification number, or a microchip in the forehead to be the “mark of the beast” — was it not truly there for us to see all along, for John plainly told us, “HERE IS WISDOM. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast; for it is the NUMBER OF MAN AND HIS NUMBER IS SIX HUNDRED, THREE SCORE AND SIX.” Now, I am aware that the King James Bible says that “it is the number of a man,” but the indefinite article “a” is supplied by the translators and is not necessarily included in the Greek, since that language has no indefinite article. It can quite well be translated without an article at all, as in Psalm 8:4, “What is man (not a man), that thou art mindful of him?” In our text the word for “man” is not Adam, but anthropos, meaning “a human being; humanity; human-kind.” It denotes the human race as against any other species of being. The Concordant New Testament correctly translates it, “for it is the number of mankind.” Anthropos is the word used in II Timothy 3:17 wherein we read, “That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” “Man of God” is not referring to a particular man, or one single man, but rather to every man of God. It is a corporate expression denoting a company of men. Likewise, the number of the beast is not referring to one man; it’s every man who possesses a soulical nature capable of spawning religious attitudes, actions, traditions, and systems! Thus we see that the number of the beast that is called the number of a “man” is the number or nature of a “corporate man” or set of men and not one man we are to look for. This “man” is already here and has been here from the dawn of history! He has found a unique expression since Christ birthed His church in the earth, bringing forth in the midst of the Lord’s people another system, a beastly religious system calling itself “the church” and which bears a striking resemblance to the Lamb of God but speaks words which sound like the voice of the dragon!

In the case where a number is used to denote the characteristics or the nature of a thing, the article is unnecessary. With this understanding the statement, instead of being an insoluble puzzle, becomes perfectly clear. The number of the beast is the nature of the beast, and the number 666 is shown to be the NATURE OF MAN! Not “a” man, but MANKIND — ALL NATURAL MEN! It signifies the measure of man, that is, his inward state of being manifested by his outward actions, and how these are perceived by those about him. As the wise man wrote, “I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, that they might see that they themselves are beasts” (Eccl. 3:18). “Here is wisdom — let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast.” The one who is wise is the one who within himself has this living understanding that the nature of the
beast is also the *nature of man*. Therefore, the nature or character of "religion" and the carnal church system is — FLESHLY!

The power that initiates this marking of all mankind with the bestial nature is the dragon — that ancient serpent who is the devil and Satan. Can we not see by this that it was in Eden that the mark was first impressed upon mankind! The terrible truth is that a man with no God-consciousness, having never been quickened by the washing of regeneration, walking only in his own carnal understanding and perceptions, obeying the animal instincts that lurk in his members, that man, I say, in the quality of his life is no better than a beast! If you don’t believe that, then you have not come to an understanding of the truth. Remember this — not all beasts are wild! Some beasts are domesticated. Some of these domesticated beasts have degrees behind their names and teach in our schools, universities, and seminaries. Others of these likeable, loveable, domesticated beasts run for political office and hold positions in our government! Others have attained to positions in the church systems of man and are called “Father” or “Reverend.” There are good beasts, smart beasts, cute beasts, entertaining beasts, cunning beasts, wise beasts, hard working beasts, faithful beasts, but they are still beasts. I do not hesitate to say that we are living in a world of beasts! That’s the mark of the natural man, of the human nature, of the Adamic consciousness. A man apart from union with God, for better or for worse, is no better than a beast.

The mark of the beast is not the myth fabricated by the church systems, it is not something imposed by government from some scientific world of computers and computer chips. In the 1960’s computers were the new, nightmarish things, and when people talked about computers they would whisper, “Ah, have you heard about the beast?” There was supposedly a huge computer in Brussels that had everybody’s name and number in the whole world! The wild speculations of religious deceivers went from there to the universal product code. “Why, that code is of the antichrist,” they chortled. “You see these two black lines here, those two black lines there — that is 666, the mark of the beast!”

I can hardly wait for that new identity chip because, you see, the joke will be on them — it will represent a mistaken identity, for they don’t know my true identity, because I have been born of God, God is my Father, and I am a son of God, a new creation species of Christ! A chip in old Adam’s forehead can in no way affect my true identity of the Christ-life that I am! I’ve already had my identity change. For me to live *is Christ*, for Christ is *my life*. You can put all the chips you want to in my fleshly forehead, or tattoo, or laser any mark you choose and it will not change one iota who I really am. The mark of the beast is already in the forehead of the old natural human identity. The moment we fall back into the old carnal, earthly, natural, human, Adamic way of thinking about ourselves and the world, and act out of that mind-set, the nature (mark) of the beast is manifest. Does this not show that any literal mark applied by man has no power whatever to either add to, or take away from, that which is already there?

In dealing with issues so vast and extensive as those we have considered in these messages on THE BEAST OUT OF THE EARTH, I am well aware that I have passed over many wonderful truths of overwhelming importance. As the beastly spirit has been uncovered, and the beastly religious system unmasked, my great concern has been that beyond it all men might truly, as never before, SEE THE LORD! My deepest desire is to know Christ, not antichrist. I want to know not just about Him, I want to intimately and fully KNOW HIM! The deepest cry of my heart is that the Holy Spirit will take the things of Christ and make them real to me. Therefore I am more interested in CHRIST than I am in the beast, and I am more concerned about the MARK OF GOD than I am with anything that pertains to the mark of the beast!
We stand before God in truth as did the queen of Sheba before Solomon as we read in I
Kings 10:4-5, “And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon’s wisdom, and the
house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the
attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which
he went up unto the house of the Lord; there was no more spirit in her.” There is no more
of our own spirit within us as we are melted before the revelation of the glory of the Lord in
this great day of the Lord! For those who have received the call to sonship, incomplete as
the present revelation is, yet we find that God is beginning to cause us to realize something
of the magnitude and wonder of the work He is doing within our own beings as He brings His
many sons to glory.

No man who ever lived walked more faithfully with God than our Lord Jesus Christ, and
none was ever endued with so great an anointing as He. Mighty were the signs and
wonders that followed the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, yet even that bountiful
outpouring was given by measure, the mere “earnest” of the Spirit; but of Jesus Christ, the
firstborn Son of God, it is written, “God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him” (Jn.
3:34). Time and again I have marveled at the wisdom with which He spoke, the nature in
which He walked, and the power with which He ministered!

In the Gospel of John, chapter five, Jesus has come up to Jerusalem to attend the feast. As
He reaches the city He comes to the Pool of Bethesda and looks into the pool. There are
five porches around that pool. He passes through the porches, and at last comes to a poor
man, sick for thirty-eight years, who has been pushed away from the sacred spring. The
man is lying there miserable and weary and we can imagine the unutterable cry of his heart,
“Oh, Yahweh Rophekha! Yahweh my healer! Hast Thou come to earth? Is it true that Thou
hast come to save us? Oh, Yahweh Rophekha! Hast Thou come to open the eyes of the
blind, to give hearing to the deaf, and to make the lame to walk? Oh, Christ of God! Hast
Thou no hope for me?” He pauses as he hears the Voice. “Wilt thou be made whole?” And
he looks up into the face of a Man who is looking down at him, asking that strange question,
“Wilt thou be made whole?”

Now you can imagine a man in this condition, who has been carried there for over thirty
years, turning around and saying, “What is the use of asking me such a question? My
mother carried me here to this pool when I was a baby, my father brought me here when he
could. The hands of those who loved me best are moldering in the grave, and I have only a
few friends to carry me here now. But others push me back and when the water is moved I
cannot get down to the pool. But I still hope. I have been thirty-eight years sick. Of course
I am willing to be made whole! Why would you ask me such a question?” That’s what a
man today probably would have answered. “Why of course I am willing!” But he doesn’t talk
like that. The Man that is speaking to him has said, “Wilt thou be made whole?” and there
goes right down into his heart a strange sensation, his whole being vibrates like a harp when
eyery string is touched by a master hand. That Voice is unlike anything he ever heard. “Wilt
thou be made whole?” Gently he explains that he has no man to help put him into the pool,
but that others when he is coming, step down before him. Then he waits with his eyes fixed
on the Man who has so strangely appealed to his will, for perhaps this Stranger is a good
man who will tarry with him and help him into the water. He gets ready — but the very next
moment he hears the Voice of Him who is the Resurrection and the Life, of Him who is the
Lord of lords and King of kings say, “Rise, take up thy bed and walk!” And in a moment
there comes into his body with that Word, power; and he rises, takes up that bedroll, rolls it
up and walks home, set free from the bonds of Satan who has bound him for thirty-eight
years.

Precious friend of mine, ponder if you will, this solemn inquiry: Have you truly seen and met
Jesus the Christ? Has the Holy Spirit ever revealed to you that Jesus is the Christ, the Son
of the living God? Has He come to you, not as a man in the streets of ancient Jerusalem,
but in mighty spirit-power to deal a death-blow to the works of the flesh and of the devil in
your life, to renew your mind, transform your nature, and completely and forever make you whole in the image of God? If you have seen Him even through a glass darkly, you will be as Isaiah who wrote, “In the year that king Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: and one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.” If we see Him in this way, we will cry as Isaiah did, “Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.”

Thank God that is not the end of the story! I earnestly pray that God will give a spirit of true humility to all who read these lines, for we recognize the weakness and uncleanness of our outer man, the flesh. I know, as all honest hearts know, that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. But our Father has the remedy! Not only does He heal the lame by the Pool of Bethesda, causing him to stand tall and walk in the strength of manhood, but He heals every member of His body from all the impotency, blemishes, and corruption of the Adamic consciousness and raises up within us the image of God and the glory of Christ that we may walk tall and confident as God-men in the earth. Any man who sees the glory of God and longs to be rid of the filth of his flesh and the wretched defilement of the bestial system of the world will certainly cry with the Psalmist, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Ps. 139:23-24). The same Isaiah who made the humble and honest confession quoted above went on to reveal God’s goodness and greatness to usward. “Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me!” Thus has the Lord revealed that when His purging process is complete in His apprehended sons, the hour of their sending forth will quickly follow. Even in the darkness of this dread day all creation is standing on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of God’s sons coming into their own! And truly we ourselves do groan within ourselves, waiting for the hour of unveiling, the manifestation of the sons of God!

Years later Isaiah revealed the faithfulness of the Lord unto His called and chosen elect. “He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”

Do you see the Christ high and lifted up upon the throne in your temple? What part does He have in your life? “Oh,” you say, “I am a member of the church. I attend its services, I take its communion, I participate in its outreaches, I sing psalms, I have had hands laid on me, I have gifts of the Spirit, I prophesy, and I believe in miracles!” You can have all these things and never see Christ! When we see Christ, my friend, neither heaven above nor earth beneath can find terms grand enough to express the wonder of His presence, or the miracle of His transforming power that comes into our lives with His Word, or the hope of His sonship revealed within us, for in seeing Him we are eternally changed into His very own image in ever increasing splendor and from one degree of glory to another! Oh, the wonder of it!
About The Author

J. Preston Eby was born into a Mennonite family in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. While still a toddler his parents received the baptism in the Holy Spirit through the witness of some Pentecostal brethren in the area. They were led of the Lord to sell their business and move to Alabama to do missionary work. In his twelfth year Preston was filled with the Spirit – and in that same year the Holy Spirit sovereignly unfolded to his understanding the wonderful truth of the reconciliation of all things and all men unto God. No one else around him – in family or church associations – embraced this revelation. Through those early years he kept this truth to himself and pondered it in his heart. Later he came into contact with, and was touched by, a mighty move of the Spirit known as the "Latter Rain", with emphasis on the body of Christ, gifts of the Spirit, laying on of hands, impartation, five-fold ministry, prophetic ministry, spiritual worship, the kingdom of God, and going on to perfection, unto fullness of sonship to God.

The Lord pressed him into a deeper walk with Him, intensifying within his heart the truths of sonship and the kingdom of God, already planted within as seed through the visitation of the Lord as Latter Rain. Along the way he became associated with brother Gerald Derstine and The Gospel Crusade in Sarasota, Florida, serving as an associate minister with him for eight years, first co-pastoring and later pastoring the Revival Tabernacle in that city. His wife Lorain and he, with their family, were on the mission field in Latin America for a total of five years, with ministry in several other areas as well. For seven years, following this, he was an elder in a fellowship of believers in El Paso, Texas where they witnessed a precious move of the Spirit and a body of saints flowing together in the liberty and life of the Spirit.

Eventually the Lord changed even that order, and in 1976 led him into a full-time writing ministry directed to those who are called and chosen as elect of God to grow up into the full stature of Jesus Christ as sons of God. The writing ministry includes a monthly message titled KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES as well as a number of booklets on various subjects. This ministry is greatly expanding throughout the world and our sincere hope and earnest prayer is that this course shall redound to HIS GLORY in encouragement, strengthening, edification and blessing to unnumbered thousands of God’s elect sons everywhere – that creation may at last witness the true manifestation of the sons of God, setting all creation free from the bondage of corruption, restoring all things to God, and bringing to pass the glory of the kingdom of God throughout the whole earth and unto the unbounded heavens.