

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 214

SPIRITUAL WARFARE (continued)

“And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” (Rev. 19:16).

Can we not see that this remarkable vision, blazing and shining with its scintillating glory of power and truth, points directly to our Lord Jesus Christ who is King of kings and Lord of lords, ruling the universe and guiding the spheres. The reference to the solitary Rider on the white horse is clearly not to the entire Christ body, but to the Head of that body. The body of which He is the Head is characterized by the “armies which were in heaven” that “followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.” But the One on the lead horse is the Head, the KING OF KINGS AND THE LORD OF LORDS! He is King of kings because He is King of all those who rule with Him as kings! This same book of Revelation, as I have previously pointed out, distinctly and markedly identifies our Lord Jesus Christ as the King of kings. “And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten from the dead, and THE PRINCE OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH” (Rev. 1:5). The word “prince” in this verse is translated from the Greek archon which means “a first in rank or power, prince, ruler.” So Jesus is the FIRST IN RANK of the kings of the earth! He is the PRINCE of the kings of the earth! He is the RULER of the kings of the earth! Yes! He is the KING of the kings of the earth! This reference is not specifically to all the present carnal rulers of the earth-realm, but to those who are destined to be the true kings who reign with Christ. I would solemnly admonish all who read these lines, DON’T TRY TO PULL RANK ON JESUS! You can never elevate yourself by trying to diminish Him. Now and forever “HE is the Head of the body...who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things HE MIGHT HAVE THE PREEMINENCE” (Col. 1:18).

Jesus is Lord of lords because all others who rule with Him as lords have completely and lovingly submitted themselves to His supreme Lordship. No one can rule with Christ in the kingdom of God who has not, first of all, subjected himself to the Lordship of Jesus Christ — for the whole objective of the kingdom of God is to ultimately bring to pass this wonderful end: “Wherefore God hath also highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of JESUS every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that JESUS CHRIST IS LORD, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:9-11).

Jesus is the great King of kings and Lord of lords! He is not the soon coming King as the citizens of religious Babylon are trained to say, denying by the very words that Christ has any kingdom

on earth at this present time. Such ignorant statements always leave me cold! What could be further from the truth, which truth teaches us that Christ now sits with His Father in His throne in the heavens of God's Spirit and that all power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth! We are already citizens of that kingdom and have already been translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Already it has taken place, already Christ has a kingdom and is its King! From the barrenness of Patmos John wrote that he was our brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ (Rev. 1:9). And if Christ is in you this day, and if He is now King of your life, then He is not by any stretch of the imagination your "soon coming King"! Oh, yes, He shall yet come in marvelous unfoldings of Himself, but He is not coming to be your King. HE IS KING!

Christ is the great King right now, ruling all things for the well-being of His subjects and bringing absolute perfection and completion to His plans which He ordained before the foundation of the world. He is the King of the ages and invincible! Through the ages He has revealed His Kingship on different levels and through various instruments, and He shall yet arise in power and glory in a new and marvelous expression of His Kingship through the MANIFEST SONS OF GOD, revealing Himself as the great and conquering King, bringing deliverance to every man and all creation, reconciling all things unto Himself, on earth and throughout all the unbounded heavens. Every son of God is finding his place in this great Day of the Lord and the hour of manifestation is nigh at hand!

He who rides on the white horse is the King of kings. Those who follow Him on white horses are the kings that Jesus is King over. The promises of God are vast and varied. Some of them, like forgiveness of sins, the supplying of our needs, and healing, are free and unconditional and may be obtained very easily. That is why so many receive them! But if you would be a king in God's great kingdom and receive power to rule over, bless, and deliver creation; if you would learn the life, authority, and governmental power to reign with Christ, then that is a different matter altogether! You must become a follower of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. It takes patience to attain any worthy goal. It takes endurance too! No man having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of heaven. Even in this hour some do look back to the former church orders of the church systems that God has brought them through, and clinging to a lesser realm disqualify themselves for God's fullness. We do not attain sonship by a single bound. Neither do we qualify for kingship in a moment of time. It is not an experience we can receive one night at the altar, nor can it be conferred on us by the laying on of hands. We cannot claim it and seize it today by faith. We have need of patience. We must through faith and patience grow up unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ! There must be raised up within us a kingly spirit, a kingly nature, a kingly heart. As we grow up into the maturity of the Christ we become spiritually skilled ones through experience. Only such as ride the white horse of HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS AND STRENGTH, and expertly wield the sword of HIS LIVING WORD can serve as kings in the great government of God!

The following historical sketch came across my desk. It was the time of the French Revolution in 1793. They had beheaded the king and then the queen. The crown prince was left orphaned. Somebody said, "Behead the little prince." But then the devilish suggestion was made, "Don't behead him; you'll only send his soul to heaven; that's too good for royalty! I say turn him over to old Meg; she'll teach him the vile, filthy words and ways of the street. Then he'll end up going to hell." So, as the story goes, he was turned over to this wicked woman of the streets, who tried to get him to repeat these ugly, profane words and commit vile, filthy acts. But, he would stamp his feet, clench his fists, and his little golden curls would shake on his velvet shoulders, and he would say with determination, "I will not say it; I will not do it; I was born to be a king, and I will not do it!" I say to every person reading these lines today, you were born to be a prince, you were born to be a king with Christ upon His righteous throne and His Father's throne, and therefore you will be an overcomer!

Ah, yes, my beloved, many have failed in the in-part realm and have been disqualified and fallen by the wayside, debased by the flesh, deceived by human reasoning, corrupted by the carnal methods and systems of religion, leaving heartbreak, tragedy, and disaster in the body of Christ. Ern Baxter, who worked and ministered with William Branham and the great healing revivals of the 1940's and 1950's was once asked to share how he later faced the change in his relationship with William Branham and the whole healing movement. He said, "In the ministry with William Branham, I saw a dimension of the supernatural that had in it such seeds of spiritual life and other good fruits that my excitement was hard to contain. But then I saw carnality start to invade the movement — exaggeration, misrepresentation, metaphysics, and eventually the breakdown of many of the healers in critical areas of their lives because they couldn't handle the crowds, the popularity, or the money — I had to withdraw from it. That was one of the most traumatic times in my life. I did a lot of praying at that time, a lot of groaning. In fact, I did a lot of screaming because I was close to an emotional breakdown. A tremendous move of God had been sold out so cheaply; it was difficult to handle. If I hadn't had an experience with God, if I hadn't had a consciousness of His sovereignty, if I hadn't had a relationship with God based on process, if it were not for my knowing God, I don't know what I would have done...but in the end it wasn't a matter of the healers, it was a matter of the most important person in this, and that was GOD. I knew God, and I knew where God was" — end quote. Of a certainty I know that it shall not be thus in the kingly ministry of the manifest sons of God! Oh, no! Those who come with the Christ, in righteousness judging and making war, subduing the nations, restoring all things and delivering creation from the bondage of corruption shall themselves be incorruptible, having been called, and chosen, and faithful, tested in the furnace of affliction, proven under pressure, purged, refined, purified, molded and fashioned into the very nature and character of Christ, riding white horses, and clothed in fine linen, white and clean. These shall reign with Christ over all things because they have first reigned with Him within themselves!

As I have pointed out many times before, the journey to the throne of the universe begins in that small and undistinguished place where you are. The kingdom of God is within you. The enChristed who are to reign with Christ from sea to sea, then from planet to planet, and finally from galaxy to galaxy, are being prepared. Think not in your heart, precious friend of mine, that you may pass your life here careless, indifferent to the dealings of God, suddenly to awake one fine morning to find yourself sitting with Christ governing the universe, because such a thing will not be. Begin today to prepare for kingship! This present time is but a proving ground for those who through grace will reign with their Lord over the endless vastnesses of infinity. He is raising us up to sit with Him in the higher than all heavens. And the place which He is preparing for each one is not only a world to come, and a kingdom of Life and Light, but a place IN HIM, bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, spirit of His spirit, mind of His mind, nature of His nature, heart of His heart, wisdom of His wisdom, power of His power, authority of His authority, and life of His life!

These are the days in which God is preparing a people to reign in the kingdom of God over all things. These will have to be those who are washed in the blood of the Lamb. They will be those who have been filled with all the fullness of God. They will be those who have learned to be led only and always by the Spirit. They will be those who have kept His word and walked according to His will. This company of people will be one with God in mind, heart, and purpose. They will have put on the mind of Christ and their own will shall have given way to His will in all things. The people whom God shall use to reign over the nations and the universe, bringing God's kingdom to pass in all realms, will be a strong people. They will be a holy people. They will be a compassionate and loving people. They will be those who live in the presence of God and breathe in union with Jesus Christ.

Those who reign with Christ cannot be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, nor deceived by every great sounding theory of man that poses as a good scheme of ministry or as deep

revelation. They will not be moved by smooth-tongued orators or fast-talking deceivers. They will perceive the hearts and motivations of men and understand the true nature of all things. God is not interested so much in what is going on today within the church systems of men. God does not want just anybody to go out and do signs, wonders, and miracles. He is preparing an incorruptible order of people to do these things on a level never seen before. There are many miracles and good works done in the name of Jesus by men whom the Father has not sent. But these men receive at least a portion of the glory, and use their power over men to suck them into their own little kingdom. God is very selective in this hour of those He chooses to manifest His power in the earth. Not just anybody is suitable. God trains and chooses in many ways. Moses was in the backside of the desert for forty years. David went through many years of battles and trials and testings to be eligible for the throne to which God elevated him.

God is shaping our lives with a view to the future. What is happening to each son of God today has a bearing on what his role will be in the kingdom of God throughout the ages to come. Our present travail will be easier to bear when we understand this truth. A crown prince cannot live like other people. When the crown prince of Great Britain is born, he is a marked child from the day of his birth. He is different from other children. His education, his way of dress, what he is taught in the home, his associations, his activities, where he goes and when and how, his leisure time — everything about his life is planned to prepare him to be a king! The man or woman called to sonship cannot be like other people or other of God's children any longer. God has a special plan for this one! The truth is that a son of God marches to a different tune than his contemporaries. He hears the band playing the march of victory. He stays in line with those enChristed ones who march with him. He keeps in step with his leader, Jesus Christ. He marches to the music of the celestials. He marches in the procession of Christ. His music is the music of the kingdom. Because this is a different kind of marching from that of those in the carnal church systems of man, he is often out of step with them. They are not all marching to the same place! Most Christians are marching to a place in the sky with golden streets, palm branches and harps, and spacious mansions over the hill-top, to sing and dance and play and frolic for eternity. Sons do not have time for such frivolity, for they are marching to the throne of the universe, to a position of eminence, power, authority, responsibility, and eternal glory as lords and kings and priests and creators after the likeness of their eternal Father. Their business is not dancing over the hillsides of glory, but bringing the kingdom of God to pass throughout the infinity of God's vast universe!

The great artist, Sir Joshua Reynolds, once painted a picture of Lord Holland, a prominent Englishman. The artist asked a large sum for his work, which he had completed in only a few hours' time. Lord Holland said to him, "You get money very quickly. It did not take you much time. How long were you in painting this picture?" Reynolds replied, "All my life." The artist meant that the talents which had been developing all his life had entered into the picture and had made possible its production in a few hours. And he was correct. No great picture is painted in an hour! Life with its years of toil and experience in back of it. And kings are not made in the day of their coronation. Oh, no! The willingness to submit to God's dealings and the work of conformation into the image of God's Christ is not reached in a moment. It is the outcome of an upward process by which we are transformed from glory to glory into the likeness of God. Kingship is the outcome of breakings, purgings, experience, growth, and development in the spirit throughout long years. God gives us a lifetime to build the character of a king, and that is generally how long it takes! It is the flowering out of the Life which has been nurtured in our experience and testings day after day after day. It is not attained by one grand leap into a spiritual experience!

The sons of God are reality. This company of divine-human beings is even now reaching completion. These will become what Jesus is and have what He has as their very own reality. God will be in them and through them in all His unutterable plenitude. What He is they will be also. They are the express image of their Father in Jesus Christ. This is the revelation of God and the staggering message of

the Bible! The sons of God are destined to inherit all things on earth and throughout all the vastnesses of infinity, for they are heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus, who is the heir of all things (Heb. 1:1-2). Few Christians comprehend the immensity and implications of our inheritance and destiny in Christ Jesus! The sons of God are destined to be the blessers, deliverers, quickeners, and transformers of all the created realms. Thus creation groans with expectant birth pangs, longing for their arrival!

From the lowest darkness of demons and devils to the inhabitants of the farthest galaxy of light, the universe stretches in anticipation of the glorious unveiling of God's sons (Rom. 8:18-25). They will be the full and complete expression of God in all the attributes of His deity. Like a super-nova the sons will burst into everlasting splendor, streaming glory and power for all creation to behold. These noble beings will conquer and restore all things to God on earth and throughout all worlds of the unbounded heavens. As priestly shepherd-kings they will lead the creation, dispensing judgment unto righteousness. As saviours they will loose the bands of Adam's curse from this world, and the darkness from all worlds in all realms. The sinful will be redeemed and changed, the ignorant will be taught of God, those in the man-made church systems will be delivered from their delusions and guided into the pure truth of God. The angelic realms will behold the birth of God's manchild and arrive to honor God's sons. All creation will marvel at the splendor of a race of beings who are the offspring of God matured up into the fullness of all He is. The reins of creation will be surrendered to them, and all created beings everywhere will be committed to their loving and skillful care. These divine sons of the omnipotent and loving heavenly Father are the only answer to creation's lack and problems. They have been ordained of God as the power that shall deliver creation from the bondage of corruption.

These sons are the anointed sovereigns, the appointed rulers of all things. Today they stand in the wings, at this very moment they fine-tune the instruments which they are, but suddenly shall they enter upon the stage of history, strike their majestic chord, and all flesh shall hear the word of the Lord and see the salvation of God. Then a mighty power shall arise from the earth, as a stream of expanding light it will race through the galaxies, spreading out and penetrating all things with the life of God. Every creature on earth and in distant worlds will see the wonder of God. Every kingdom will be subdued, changed, instructed, and brought into harmony with the Father of lights. Throughout the endless eons to come, the sons of God will govern the creation in righteousness, infusing all things with the dynamic of His life.

In closing this thought of the "kings" who ride with the "King," let us notice where this illustrious name — KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS — is written. "And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (Rev. 19:20). All John's first readers, Jewish, Greek, or Roman, would have readily understood the signification — the thigh was the place where the sword hung (Ex. 32:27; Judges 3:16, 21; Ps. 45:3; S. of S. 3:8). Generals carried their swords upon their thighs; it was their badge of authority. Here, in place of a sword, is a name, and this name is the badge of His authority and carries the might of heaven with it, for it is by the conquest of His mighty sword that He becomes King of kings and Lord of lords! But why was the title written also upon His garment? Surely for exactly the same reason — the garment, soaked as it was in blood, is the symbol of that victory which He had already won within the lives of His Conquerors, His Overcoming Company, the many-membered body of sons who accompany Him in this great warfare, the armies of the heavenlies who now ride with Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean! He comes as King of kings and Lord of lords and the kings and the lords over whom He reigns come with Him in His very own power and glory! They are clothed in fine linen white and clean, for by His conquest of them they have been purified. His garment, on the other hand, is stained with blood, the symbol of their Adamic lives which He has slain within them. Therefore, on His blood-soaked garment is the name He has won for Himself: KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS! Oh, the wonder of it! Oh, the mystery of it!

In chapter nineteen of the Revelation the Lord Jesus is revealed with seven distinct names — Faithful, True, Righteous, Judge, Word of God, Almighty, King of kings, and Lord of lords. Concerning His names there are two striking things — He has an inner name and an outer name. This is a significant point which many students of the book overlook. Notice that in verse twelve He has a name that no man knows but He Himself — that is His inner name. Then in verse sixteen we are told that He has on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KING, AND LORD OF LORDS. That is His outer name. The inner name no one knows but he that has it. The Word of God is His inner name — this the world does not see, hear, comprehend, or believe. He is the logos, the Living Word of God by which all things were created, are redeemed, and shall be restored. It has three elements in it. It is a creative word, a redeeming word, and a restoring word! The world will see and know Him by the outer name; it is on the banner, it is on the thigh, indicating the sheath of His sword, and on His vesture in the sight of all — but His many brethren who ride with Him know Him chiefly by His inner name!

Those who recognize His inner name are overcomers and to these are given “a little white stone, and on the stone a new name written, which no one knoweth save he who receiveth it” (Rev. 2:17). That is the hidden name of Christ, The Word of God! They kept the Word and, by it they were kept. The Psalmist put it right, “Thy Word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against Thee.” It is a Living Word, a Living Power, that transforms you into His image and reveals to you your true heritage in Christ! It is simply DIVINE REVELATION! That is the inner name within yourself! The Lord Jesus has an outer name, and so will His overcoming ones have an outer name, and it will be in harmony with His inner one just as His is. Revelation 3:12 reveals much about the names of the overcomer!

THE GREAT SUPPER OF GOD

“And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come, and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great” (Rev. 19:17-18).

There are two scenes in the chapter and they are strikingly contrasted. It is a painting on a single canvas of two suppers, the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, and the Great Supper of God. A heavenly light, wonderful, mystic, shines on the former; the latter is deeply shadowed in gloom and grotesqueness. The attendants at the former are the four living creatures, the twenty-four elders, and a great multitude robed in garments of white; the guests at the latter are all the carrion-eating and scavenger birds that fly in the lower heaven. There is music at the first supper, the singing of the heavenly choir, hallelujah songs with the power of harmony like the sound of many waters; at the second there is no music, no choir, no singing, only wails and groanings with the sounds of tearing flesh and crunching bones.

Songs are appreciated most when the words of the song are heard and understood. Listen to the words of the wedding song they sing at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb: “Hallelujah! salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God! For true and righteous are His judgments: for He hath judged the great harlot, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand! Hallelujah! Amen! For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth! Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready!” Three major notes of joy are struck in the song. One exalts the Lord God, ascribing to Him worthiness, honor, and praise. Another is inspired by the triumph of the bride who has been chosen, and has made herself ready for union with the Bridegroom. And the other is prompted by the righteous

judgments that have fallen on religious Babylon, avenging the blood of the saints on the corrupted harlot of uncleanness.

The second scene, in contrast to the first, is the Great Supper of God. Nothing is said about a marriage or any rejoicing. It is a strange, weird feast that follows the great war initiated by the Rider on the white horse and His armies that follow Him. Be very careful as you view the scene, do not hurry past. There is something here for every child of God and, indeed, for every man to consider and meditate upon! The guests at this supper are carrion-eating, scavenger birds. There is no gourmet meal prepared by master chefs at this supper! Rather, the guests gorge themselves with the dead flesh of despotic kings, military captains, mighty warriors, army horses, armored riders; and finally they are shown picking the bones of all men, small and great! Need we pause to interpret the vision? I will only add, God has prepared a feast for the fowls of the air and that feast is the flesh of ALL MEN, both small and great. God is saying that ALL FLESH must go! Those who understand the Revelation in the Spirit and by the Spirit, will readily “get” what the Spirit is saying!

John sees heaven opened, and the Christ of God and His armies riding forth. These are certainly scenes set at the consummation of the church age, when God’s purpose in His elect is fully formed, matured, and consummated. Christ and His armies of overcomers ride forth; the sword out of His mouth searches out individuals and nations, and cuts to the center of all the institutions, organizations, governments, military establishments, educational systems, business enterprises, and all the pride, wealth, and power of fleshly men. He wears not the colors of any nation of earth. His uniform is white, pure white, sprinkled with blood. An innumerable host of white-clad soldiers follow Him on white horses. These are the armies of heaven!

Much play has been made by commentators who use the term “Armageddon” to describe this battle against the two agents, the beast and the false prophet, but in fact the name “Armageddon” does not occur in this chapter at all. Indeed, the only place in the whole Bible where the name “Armageddon” occurs is in Revelation 16:16 where it is a part of the events related to the pouring out of the sixth vial. There are probably few subjects in Bible prophecy which have been subjected to such maltreatment as that of the so-called “Battle of Armageddon.” The simple truth is, first of all, that it has nothing to do with the vision of chapter nineteen; and secondly, few Christians realize that “Armageddon” is mentioned only once in all of scripture — the much speaking about it and the graphic explanations concerning it would lead one to believe that it is surely one of the major themes of the prophetic portions of the Bible! Frightful descriptions have been offered on every hand to show the involvement of the Jewish people in this “battle” supposed to take place in the plain of Esdraelon to the north of Palestine where Deborah and Barak overthrew the army of Sisera, and, centuries later, where good king Josiah lost his life warring against Pharaoh Necho of Egypt.

The fantasies woven around this “battle” by Biblical theorists were a number of years ago brought to the last degree of absurdity by a pamphlet, emanating I believe from Canada, telling us that at that time there had appeared in the valley of Megiddo in Palestine “a new breed of vultures, a breed never seen before, multiplying at three times the normal rate.” They then quote an authority who said that buzzards normally lay one egg at a time, but these apocalyptic buzzards are laying four eggs at a time, and that swarms of them are surprising the people in northern Israel. Then they go on and on promoting their idea that these vultures have been created by God in preparation for this Great Supper of God, so there will be enough birds to take care of the vast number of corpses slain in this great battle. How trivial are these wild guesses (in recent years we have not heard anything more about the increase of vultures in Israel) compared with the deep spiritual meaning of the Revelation! Had the writer of this pamphlet only looked at the preceding chapter he would have found feathered fowl enough to expose the folly of his literal

interpretation and his wild guesses to boot. He would have read these meaningful words: “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird” (Rev. 18:2). There the unclean, scavenger birds are related to devils and unclean spirits, signifying the false doctrines and religious spirits within the religious systems of Babylon the Great! Our Canadian friend therefore errs on two primary facts of John’s vision. First, he concludes that the birds in the vision are one new breed of vulture, whereas he overlooks the plain statement of the passage that not one variety of predatory birds assembles for the feast on the battlefield, but “all the fowls which fly in the midst of heaven.” Second, he fails to see the connection between the “unclean birds” of chapter eighteen, which are spiritual entities, and the deep spiritual meaning of the spiritual warfare which slays and consumes the “flesh” of the carnal man!

The fallacious nature of these far-fetched and sensational expectations concerning the conflict on this fearful field, is exposed immediately by the verses we have studied already from chapter nineteen, which almost all Bible students overlook. The battle is not an earthly battle at all! It is a spiritual battle fought with the spiritual weapon of the Living Word of God! The horses are symbols, the white garments are symbols, the blood splattered on Christ’s garment is a symbol, the sword out of Christ’s mouth is a symbol, the winepress is a symbol — therefore, can we not see that the angel standing in the sun is likewise a symbol, the scavenger birds of heaven are symbols, and the flesh of all the men they consume is also a symbol!

So how does the battle end? With the wings of vision John leaps across the centuries — how fast he has traveled down the vistas of time and the unfolding purposes of God, he does not know — but standing at the consummation of the age, he sees “The Great Supper of God,” where the beast, the beast “out of the sea,” the whole world system of man, and the false prophet, the “beast out of the earth,” the entire religious systems of man, are brought to their final end. The very “flesh,” that is, the “flesh nature” of the old Adamic man, the carnal mind, with all his inventions, pride, and power, is totally consumed. The last battle for the deliverance and transformation of humanity has been fought. The struggle is over. The victory is won. Just across the hill is the dawn of a new and glorious day for the whole world! There are a few more scenes, in chapter twenty, elaborating on this destruction of the old, and then the glorious city of God shines its glory for all the nations to walk in light, and all things are made new! This, my beloved, IS the revelation of Jesus Christ!

Another thought about this great supper. When God prepares a supper He always invites guests. “Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.” An angel from heaven voices that, and an angel standing in the scorching sun issues this: “Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God.” Every man is accepting one or the other of these invitations! So is every church, every community, every state or province, and every nation! All will be guests at one or the other of these two suppers. Those who respond to the invitation to the “Marriage Supper of the Lamb” will be blessed and will be glad and rejoice, and will give honor unto Him. Those who reject it go ultimately to the “Great Supper of God” and are saved “though as by fire” (I Cor. 3:15). For you see, the “supper” of the Lamb is the result of a union, whereas the “supper” of the great God is the result of a deadly warfare!

In scripture, the word flesh has more than one meaning. For example, in Genesis 6:12 it denotes humanity; in Job 19:25 and Ephesians 5:28-29 it refers to the physical body; and in I Corinthians 3:1-3 it refers to the self-life along with all the desires, passions, and lusts of the carnal nature. When we speak of the flesh in this message, it is used in this last sense. The distinction between the self-life (flesh) and the life of the spirit can be found in the epistle to the Romans where Paul writes, “Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the spirit set their minds on the things of the spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the

spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot; and those who live in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:5-8). Let us note that the mind of the flesh not only refuses to submit to God but it also opposes Him. The flesh is both self-willed and self-centered. It has to have its own way! And that way is the way of sin and death!

You will understand a great mystery when you understand that many have already attended one or the other of these suppers! You see, beloved, these are spiritual realities, spiritual experiences — not merely dates on the calendar! But what does it say to us? First, that Christ is continually judging and making war in righteousness. He repeatedly does this as His dealings come into men's lives. And secondly, we can see the result of His judgment and warfare — DEAD FLESH! And He then calls in the flesh-eaters of the heavens, out of a spiritual dimension where they always fly, and they come to pick the bones clean until there is NO MORE FLESH! We know from the Old Testament, to give one's flesh to the birds of heaven for meat is expressive of the most complete defeat and shameful subjection of the enemy possible. So here, the Lord is to have the victory, complete and final victory! The "flesh" of the Adamic man will be done away, and only the man of "spirit" in the image of God will remain! The flesh of all men will be consumed! These birds, these vultures will keep eating away at your fleshliness. In everything that creeps up in your life, these vultures will keep after you and will never leave you alone until there is no more flesh left upon your spiritual bones. That is both the worse thing and the best thing! Oh, what a wonder — what a victory! And we are told in verse twenty-one that "all the fowls were filled with their flesh," implying that there will come an end to the need for these flesh-consumers.

Let us see how this is! There was a man in the church at Corinth in the days of the early apostles who was a fornicator, not an ordinary fornicator, but was living in open sin by carrying on an incestuous relationship with his unbelieving step-mother, and justifying himself in it. He was puffed up in his sin and would not repent, but sought to contaminate all the saints with his uncleanness in the flesh. After rebuking the Corinthians for tolerating this man's flagrant behavior, the apostle Paul sent this man to the Great Supper of God! Oh, yes, he did! He commanded the saints, "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved..." (I Cor. 5:1-5). Ah, when this man got onto Satan's territory the unclean fowls, the carrion-eating birds consumed his flesh so that the Spirit of the Lord could then deal with his spirit unto salvation! That is the mystery.

Satan, taking advantage of the weakness of the flesh, had enticed this man to sin. So God would now use Satan for the salvation or release of his spirit by allowing Satan to destroy his flesh! Since God's love is a love that seeks the salvation of all men, divine judgment is never vindictive, but always remedial. Paul spoke of it this way, "The grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world" (Titus 2:11-12). The apostle Peter, informed by Jesus that Satan had desired him in order to sift him as wheat, the Lord added, "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Peter refused to heed the warning by insisting, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death!" But he was told, "Peter, the cock will not crow this day, until you three times deny that you even know me." Let us note that Jesus did not pray that Peter be spared, but that his faith would not fail. Handed over to Satan, he was tried, but as a result of that sifting the arrogance and self-confidence of his flesh was destroyed, after which he was used by the Lord in greater and greater measures for the blessing of multitudes. As one who had experienced the destruction of his flesh and the salvation or release of his spirit, Peter writes, "Whoever has suffered in the flesh (self-life) has ceased from sin, so as to live the rest of his time in the flesh (body) no longer in the lusts of men but by the will of God" (I Pet. 4:1-2).

Jesus declared, “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (Jn. 10:10). Out of God’s own mouth proceeds the assertion, “I have created the waster to destroy” (Isa. 54:16). We gather from this passage that Satan is a created entity with a definite purpose. That purpose is revealed in the opening words of the above quoted verse: “I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work.” That instrument is for the work of destruction, for the waster was created to destroy! The “smith” that “bloweth upon the fire” is also the one that heats the furnace seven times hotter! “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing had happened unto you” (I Pet. 4:12). Our trials and testings are associated in the word of God with the ministry of Satan. You never thought of Satan having a ministry? “Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness 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 to have 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 (sparring partner, opponent) 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 God created Satan; He created him for a purpose; and that God is involved when Satan desires to have us to test us, and it is God Himself who turns us over into Satan’s hands for that testing; and the result of the testing and the furnace of affliction is our strengthening, maturity, and victory! That, my beloved, is the God-ordained work or ministry of Satan!

Armed with this understanding, in the light that the Spirit brings we can discern the true meaning of the momentary processing of God in our lives, and the glory that follows. As our friend, Connie Asbill, has written, “God is constructing a temple, made of living stones, through which to manifest Himself throughout the ages to come, and Satan was created as a chisel and hammer to be used in the construction of this building. The living stones that are even now being placed in this temple have been chosen, says the Lord, in the ‘furnace of affliction’ (Isa. 48:10). God, however, is mercy; God is love; God is compassion. He is a healer, not a destroyer. It was, nonetheless, necessary that an oven be heated in which to purify the gold — a furnace in which the wood, the hay, and the stubble were to be burned — but God, in His nature of love, could not Himself perform the necessary affliction. It was for this reason that He created an instrument that was capable of performing this essential action in the lives of men, for in Satan God literally created a chastening rod. If we can realize that behind the acts of Satan is the mighty hand of God working to bring forth gold from these earthen vessels, we can rejoice, as David, in our afflictions and trials and exclaim with him, ‘It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes’ (Ps. 119:7). Praise God! When we begin to see the good that comes from the assaults of Satan on our lives, we are able to appreciate all the more the greatness of our God and the depth of the wisdom of His great mind. He is truly a God of might and power, and all things are in His hand — even the adversary whom we call the devil!”

Did you notice how strangely both Matthew and Mark speak of Christ’s temptation? “And immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.” What a strange statement! The Holy Spirit of God literally drives the sinless Son of God into the wilderness for the express purpose of being tempted or tested by Satan, the arch enemy of all righteousness, a murderer from the beginning, and the father of lies! Ah, but it was necessary for the firstborn Son to be proven, to be strong, to demonstrate His ability to overcome in these realms before entering into His glorious ministry and before facing the death of the cross. Truly God creates evil and uses it, too, for His purpose

and glory! “I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil. I the Lord do all these things” (Isa. 45:7).

The apostle Paul fully understood this great truth and practiced it himself. We have already noted how he instructed the saints in Corinth to gather in the power of the Holy Spirit and turn a certain one over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved. He also declares in his letter to the evangelist Timothy that he himself had delivered certain brethren unto Satan “that they may learn not to blaspheme” (I Tim. 1:20). But the apostle had experienced something of this kind of discipline in his own life also, for he says, “Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure” (II Cor. 12:7). I don’t think the average Christian today is even aware that such passages are in the Bible! All this clearly shows that Satan is a force created by God, and controlled by God, for a specific purpose and work, and even that work shall result in blessing for God’s children and redound to the glory of God!

Using typical, mystical language, John is describing the end of all flesh. This is not a vision of the savage destruction of all the rebellious sinners in the world, as the carnal-minded “theologians” would have us believe! This is a description of the destruction of the Adamic flesh with all its propensity for sin and its powers of death. It is the flesh, or the carnal, sinful, Adamic nature, the “natural man” within all of us that is being destroyed here! This is not a prophecy of the destruction of all the evil men in the world, for God has already promised the salvation of all mankind! Therefore, all wicked people will not be destroyed, but all flesh, that is, all the evil, all the wickedness, and all the carnality in every man will be destroyed! That is the event John saw in symbol in his vision of the Christ’s warfare. Each one of us are two people within ourselves. We are flesh and we are spirit! One “man” in us is flesh, a natural man, the son of Adam. The other “Man” in us is spirit, a spiritual man, the offspring of God! Throughout the scriptures we find many typical representations of the destruction of the man of flesh, or the fleshly part of every man that is under judgment.

Those who now come to Christ and walk in the spirit are enabled to “put off” the old man with His deeds. We reckon ourselves indeed to be “dead” unto sin and “alive” unto God! The sword of the Spirit works a mighty deliverance in us by faith! As we saw above in the experience of the fornicator in the Corinthian church, not all believers yield to the control of the life of Christ within. The question follows — what happens to the believer who persists in walking after the flesh? This is a most natural question and one which can be answered easily both from scripture and from experience. If a believer refuses to yield to the Christ life within, the two-edged sword of the Lord cuts deep. It is a sharp sword and leaves the soul sore when it cuts. There is a chastisement that the scripture speaks of, and a chastisement we are all familiar with because of refusing to yield to His regal authority! He rebukes and chastens because He loves, and because He has chosen us for higher things in Him. He will proceed to the most desperate actions against body and soul in order to raise up the spirit. It is better that our flesh should smart than that our spirit should never be released to live its life! He does these things not to destroy but to save, and to bring the one whom He loves to the highest and holiest place. It is true that we do not always look at chastisement in that way. But it is blessed when we do! Like the Psalmist we shall find that even the rod is a comforting instrument!

Some years ago a brother shared a vision the Lord gave him and I will quote only the latter part of it. He wrote, “And then, not the very last, but one of the last things that I saw was a HUGE DOOR. It was high; I could not tell how high it reached. It was a huge door and the door was overlaid with gold. And in the door it had a design; and I thought that the design was like a vine; and on the vine I thought there were grapes or some kind of fruit growing, and these were gold.

“The door wasn’t closed, but was opened only a little. Out of the opening were coming beams or rays of light — I knew that it was Heaven. I knew it was God’s glory, and I could hear the angels, at least I thought it was the angels I heard singing. It could have been the saints and the angels both singing, but I could hear the most beautiful music that was coming through that door. At first it was awesome to see something so marvelous and glorious! You know, I just rejoiced in my heart after seeing all the other things that I saw, and I thought, ‘Well, this is marvelous!’ But suddenly it hit me! I said, ‘Why is the door only opened that far? A body can’t get through the opening. The only way to get through that would be in the spirit!’ Then it dawned on me! ‘Why is the door opened only that much (about eight or ten inches)? How would I get through? How could anyone get through?’ You cannot! Flesh and blood cannot enter the kingdom of God! This is the day of ‘the end of all flesh’ (Gen. 6:13). The flesh is not going to be spared! Nothing about the natural man is going to be spared! ‘No flesh shall glory in His presence.’ So we will not be able to enter in through that door, friends, except in the spirit. We have to be CHANGED!” — end quote.

But the rest of mankind, the “sinners” of the world, who have not through the spirit “put off” the old man, nor have they experienced the chastisements of the Lord, will have that old man of flesh slain through Christ’s mighty warfare, and their flesh will be consumed away from them on the battlefield of God! Whether through “putting off” or by “warfare,” one day we shall all — every man — be eternally FREE of this sinful “man” of the flesh that lurks within us working all unrighteousness. Then, all will live a New Life, which is the fullness of the Life of Christ, in the new earth, and under the new heavens, which are to come! Isn’t it wonderful!

The banquet to which the fowls are called is indeed a banquet of flesh. The word “flesh” is repeated five times in the eighteenth verse! This repetition of the word flesh occurring five times over — flesh, flesh, flesh, FLESH, F-L-E-S-H — is truly revealing and instructive! All men have walked in carnal enmity against God, living and walking after the flesh, and now the day of God’s dealing is at hand. The Holy Spirit included this vision of John in the last book of written scripture to remind us how revolting and nauseating to Him are the deeds of the flesh! Dead, rotting, stinking meat! Men who live in the flesh will have their flesh destroyed! This is an invitation to the carrion-eating fowls to a banquet on earth where they will have blue ribbon flesh to eat!

All this is the glorious result of the great battle when the Corporate Christ rides out of the heavens of the Spirit of the Lord upon the white horses of spiritual conquest! A similar scene is seen in the prophecies of Zechariah where he describes the Lord coming to fight against the nations and His feet stand upon the mount of Olives. There are many precious and beautiful truths here, but no time to explore them at present. There is never time nor space to consider these blessed truths as we would love to consider them! But it may be clearly seen that when the Lord’s “feet” (the “feet company” of His body) stand upon the symbolic “mount of Olives” (the Anointed Kingdom), it is also a day of battle, for in the same hour WAR BREAKS OUT! “Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives...and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints (holy ones, sons of God) with Thee” (Zech. 14:3-5).

The apocalyptic description of the Christ setting His feet on the mount of Olives and engaging in fierce warfare with all the nations that have come against Jerusalem, portrays no literal conflict with carnal weapons. How utterly uncharacteristic of our precious Saviour that would be! “And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord shall smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth” (Zech. 14:12). Sounds ominous, doesn’t it? Atomic war, perhaps? NO! There are deep mysteries and profound realities in these significant words which the

veil of the carnal mind has hidden from our eyes. When the Spirit of God draws aside the curtain of human tradition and carnal-minded interpretation and shines His light of inspiration and revelation into the dark recesses of the understanding, all is made clear.

Three beautiful spiritual principles emerge from the letter of the Word: (1) their flesh shall consume away (2) their eyes shall consume away (3) their tongues shall consume away. When the truth of this dawns like a ray of sunlight in the heart, it is a life-changing concept and we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory that shall come to every man who is the enemy of God that blessed experience in which HIS FLESH (self-life, carnal nature) consumes away before the blazing countenance of God's Christ; his EYES (human understanding, carnal vision) dissolve away as he leaps for wonder at the revelation that bursts upon his consciousness from the presence of the Lord; and his TONGUE (speech, confession, outward expression of the inner nature and religious belief) melts within him as the Living Word is implanted in his heart by the regenerating power of the Spirit, and from that moment grows and develops until its life consumes his old self completely and he can literally say in absolute truth, "It is not I, but Christ." Thus does God's Christ do battle! Aren't you glad!

"And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain...this shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord will smite the nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles" (Zech. 14:17-18). There should be no question in the mind of anyone as to what the "rain" signifies. The prophet Hosea declared, "Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord: His going forth is prepared as the morning; and HE shall come unto us as THE RAIN, as the latter and the former rain unto the earth" (Hos. 6:3). There is a strange and foolish tendency in man to interpret the words of God with the carnal understanding. If you will take time to meditate upon this with the spiritual mind it will become clear that the "rain" in both passages quoted above is the VERY SAME RAIN. It is not the natural rain from the sky that is withheld from those nations or peoples which fail to follow on to know the Lord in His fullness in the feast of Tabernacles, but the glorious RAIN OF HIS SPIRIT — the blessings and benefits of the kingdom of God! And in this new order of the kingdom the rain of God is no longer found in the feast of Passover, nor in the feast of Pentecost, but only in the feast of Tabernacles! In that day no one will take pride in being a "Fundamentalist," or an "Evangelical," or a "Pentecostal," or a "Charismatic"! Those who will not enter on in to this feast, the feast of Tabernacles — upon them shall be NO RAIN, for the blessings and benefits of the kingdom realm of God can only be experienced in this final feast of HIS FULLNESS! What a word that is!

You will never know the full import of this prophecy until you know that the Jerusalem to which the nations are called is not the natural and earthly Jerusalem over in the nation of Israel, but the Jerusalem which is above, even that NEW JERUSALEM that descends out of God from heaven. The earthly Jerusalem is done away. All the prophets prophesied that God would raise up in the earth a New Jerusalem, a city of praise, a fully redeemed people for the Lord. We are looking forward with great anticipation to God's kingdom dealings with all the nations and peoples of earth! Humanity is thirsting for that rain which He is, for these living waters from heaven! Let us not sell creation short. The rain of the kingdom can come only from the feast of Tabernacles and from the New Jerusalem! God is calling a people in this day to move into this new place in Him, to be His feast and His city. Arise, saints of God, and come away with the enChristed to the holy Mount of God, the Kingdom of the Anointing, the FULLNESS OF GOD! The glorious gospel of Christ shall be proclaimed by this overcoming company. Sin, sickness, limitation, and death shall have no more claim on them. They shall be even as their Lord and Master when He walked the earth and ministered among men. Only more! For they shall arise in the power of His resurrection! We can easily understand, therefore, how the glorious gospel of Christ shall be proclaimed in power and great glory throughout the whole earth. There will not be a

country, city, village, or hamlet anywhere on earth that will be closed to the manifest sons of God or to this gospel of the kingdom. Aren't you glad!

To be continued...

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