

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 230

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT (continued)

“And I saw the dead, small and great, *stand before God*; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man *according to their works*” (Rev. 20:12-13).

Looking at our text we see what many have considered to be the “Final Judgment” or the “Great Assize,” although the text does not say that it is a “final judgment,” and thus, such a concept must be “read into” the scene. The scriptures indicate that there are yet “ages to come” in which God’s great judicial, redemptive, and restorative program must be carried forth to bring us to that glorious “dispensation of the fullness of times” in which He gathers together into one *all things in Christ* (Eph. 1:10). It is my deep and considered conviction that just as the “coming” of the Lord is progressive — past, present, and future — so is the unfolding of the “judgment day” past, present, and future. The question follows — When did the judgment day begin? Our Lord Jesus answers the question in the plainest of language. “For the Father judgeth no man, but *hath committed* all judgment unto the Son” (Jn. 5:22). And Jesus said, “For judgment *I am come* into this world” (Jn. 9:39). And again, “NOW is the judgment of this world: NOW shall the prince of this world be cast out” (Jn. 12:31). I dare say that not one Christian in ten thousand has connected passages like these to THE JUDGMENT DAY!

It is high time that the saints look into some of the things they have been taught. We have been told some funny stories. The preachers in the church systems love to speak loudly and preach long about what they term “the *final* judgment.” But the term “*final* judgment” never once appears anywhere within the pages of God’s blessed Book! In fact, the word “final” never appears there at all in connection with anything. It is a word that has been added to judgment and taught to the people as a divine revelation of an event that is supposed to transpire somewhere out in the future. The Word of God does not teach that there is a “final judgment day” at some future time. The pen of inspiration has blazoned with unmistakable clarity the truth: “Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the COMING OF THE LORD DRAWETH NIGH. Grudge not against one another, brethren, lest ye be condemned (judged): behold (look!), THE JUDGE STANDETH BEFORE THE DOOR” (James 5:8-9). Oh, yes, the Judge IS HERE! even now standing before the door of your mind and heart. Some of the modern translations bring out the truth so beautifully: “Be patient, ye also; establish your hearts, because THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD HATH DRAWN NIGH; do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves shall not be judged. Look! THE JUDGE IS ALREADY STANDING AT THE VERY DOOR” (Young’s Literal & Amplified Bible).

The judgments of God are first and foremost not external, but internal; not future, but on-going. The Word of God, history, and our own experience shout aloud the truth that the soul's verdict is even now being written moment by moment, not by recording angels in heavenly books on some distant shore, but by each man himself on the fleshy tables of his own heart. This present life is to each of the consecrated ones his "day of judgment" — his day of trial, testing, proving, chastening, his day of being brought to perfection in Christ. When any man anywhere at any time begins to be dealt with by God to bring him into his full salvation, the "day of judgment" will begin to function in mighty power in his life. The apostle Peter's words are in harmony with this: "Judgment must *begin* at the house of God!" (I Pet. 4:17). This passage in the Greek text speaks of the judgment of God flowing *out from* the house of God; but nothing can flow out from the house of God that hasn't first become an experiential reality *within* the house of God. Oh, yes, let all men know that all judgment *must begin* at the house of God! This does not imply a sudden visitation of catastrophes, calamities, and troubles, but it means that there will be a concentration of divine instruction and discipline, as the Father purifies each individual, until He can gather to Himself a FIRSTFRUITS.

It should be plain even to a child that the judgment day began with the coming of the Judge. The Judge is *within you* because the Christ is *within you!* It takes no extraordinary intelligence nor any exceptional spirituality to reach that conclusion. Let us stop putting the judgment out beyond the cemetery and believe what God's word *really* says about it. To all who wait for a judgment day in some future time or age I now say, as our blessed Lord has said, "NOW is the judgment of this world: NOW shall the prince of this world be cast out" (Jn. 12:31). Far too many Christians want to put it out at some final end, but either Satan is being bound and chained in your life today, and in the lives of many here and beyond, or he will never be eradicated from this planet. "Who shall give account to Him that is (now) *ready to judge the living and the dead*" (I Pet. 4:5). How different is what God *really* says about the judgment day from what the preachers tell us! NOW shall the prince of this world be cast out! NOW God is ready to judge both the living and the dead! It is happening now and shall continue to happen in God's progressive unfolding of His judgments through the ages until that wonderful consummation when God becomes ALL IN ALL!

"Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee," saith the Lord (Lk. 19:21). On that far-away Patmos, in august symbol and awesome sign John in spirit beheld "the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the *books* were opened: and *another book* was opened, which is the *book of life*: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books." As you meditate upon this significant passage, dear one, allow the Spirit of God to reveal truth to your heart. We have entertained such carnal notions when we come to the book of Revelation. The Holy Spirit must teach us the very first principles of this book — the book of Revelation is a book of *symbols* — and no symbol is ever to be taken in its literal form. It is significantly wonderful that the Lion of the tribe of Judah is not a four-legged lion with a sweeping mane, nor is the Lamb in the midst of the throne a four-legged lamb with white wool! The Lamb has seven horns — not literal horns, of course — for the horns are mere figures representing the seven-fold spirit of power and life which emanates from the mind and nature of the Lamb. I am sure my readers understand the simple truth that the various beasts in the Revelation are not literal beasts, the cities are not literal cities, nor is the great harlot a singular physical woman who sells her body to lustful men of the street. One and all are but symbols and figures of deep *spiritual realities*, positive or negative, as the case may be.

May I reverently inject another thought? The "dead" who "stand" before God and are "judged" out of the "books" are not the physically dead in the outward cemeteries, nor are the "books" such as you may have in your library. If they were, the principle of the book's symbology would utterly fail. If the Lamb who opens the "book" in chapter five is not a four-legged lamb, it should not be difficult for anyone to understand that the book is not a two-covered book! And if that "book" is one of the Revelation's wonderful symbols, does it not logically follow that the "books" in chapter twenty are likewise word-pictures in the form of symbols?

The very first key to understanding the book of Revelation is the fact that the book is, in its entirety, a book of symbols. Any other approach will leave you hopelessly lost in a sea of confusion, or limited to an array of implausible literalistic conclusions, or muttering like a mad man about things utterly ridiculous. "I saw the dead, small and great," John declared. When Jesus came this world was spiritually a cemetery. ALL were *dead!* NONE were *living!* "For to be carnally minded *is death,*" is the Spirit's own graphic and accurate definition of what it means to be dead (Rom. 7:6). "And you hath He quickened (made alive) who

were dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1). To the spiritually dead the apostle commands, “Awake thou that sleepest and *arise from the dead*, and Christ shall give thee light” (Eph. 5:14). Let us with pure minds and an understanding enlightened by the spirit of revelation from God consider these meaningful words: “And I saw the *dead...stand before God.*” I saw the DEAD — S-T-A-N-D! And immediately the “books” were opened.

Heaven keeps a record of the deeds of men, and all the thoughts and emotions under which they act. Myriads of human beings have lived and died of whom the world knows nothing; but the lives they lived, and the deeds they wrought, the thoughts and passions they indulged, still stand written where the memory of them cannot perish. Not a human being has ever breathed earth’s atmosphere whose career is not traced at full length in the books God has ordained. Yes, O man! O woman! whoever you may be, your biography is written. An unerring hand has recorded every item, with every secret thing. There is not an ill thought, a mean act, a dirty transaction, a filthiness of speech, or a base feeling that ever found entertainment in your heart, but is there described in bold letters, by its true name.

Where is the record? And what are these “books” where the secrets of your heart are meticulously inscribed? My words may come as a shock to some, but I do not hesitate to assert that they are naught but the BOOK OF YOUR OWN NATURE — THE GENETIC PATTERN OF YOUR VERY OWN **BEING!** What basis do I have for saying such a thing? The principle is laid down early in the book of Revelation itself. In chapter five John saw a “book” in the *right hand* of Him that sat upon the throne. Christ sits at the *right hand* of God, thus identifying the book with the Lamb. Only the Lamb could open the book, and when He opened it, it was found to be THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST! It was not a literal book that was opened — the opening of the book is simply **Christ being revealed to us!** **HE** is the book of the right hand! In like manner, in the sight of God you and I, and each and every man and woman on this planet, are a book; and indelibly inscribed within your mind, will, emotions, and character is everything that *you are*. What will they show, these books, when they are opened? Nothing, it seems, ever dies. The only thing that can blot anything out of this book of man’s nature is *the blood of the Lamb*. We can get out of these “books” and get into the “book of life” by the raising up of Christ in our lives, but nothing else avails. Should we die, the record is not blotted out. In some mysterious way the soulical aspect of our life accompanies us and we carry our character with us in a frame of mind and a sense of being from one realm to the other — what we have written, we have written; and the record stands.

This life of ours slips past, soundlessly for the most part. We sleep and rise, and our days glide away full of the little incidents of which their web is woven. And always our character is forming, has been forming all these passing years. More and more naturally our feet turn of themselves into the customary paths: firmer and firmer the shackles of our habits tighten around our will. For every word that we have spoken, every thought that we have harbored, every deed that we have done, have been inscribing themselves upon the fabric of our personality, and there building up the character which we choose to be. There is our record written with our own hands! “Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh” (Mat. 12:34). When your mouth speaks, the message inscribed in your inner nature is exposed and read by all who hear. Every outer action is a word, a sentence, a paragraph, a page, a chapter of your book — the book which you are — known and read by all men.

And think not, O man, that should your earthly body be laid in a silent and motionless tomb, that the Almighty must then resort to some celestial scrolls wherein heavenly angels have faithfully recorded your every thought and deed. NO! All is accurately recorded in the law of your own life, deep within the recesses of your own nature, in your spiritual and soulical condition and state of being, and to deal with you in judgment God has but to “*stand you up*” and prompt you to speak or act — and immediately you will manifest exactly what is inscribed in the constitution of your inner life and heart. At once your “book” will “open,” each line being made clear, and you will be judged by the things written in that book *which you are*. There will be no mistake *then*, because the books *will* show the truth. I do not know what your name may be. There may be ten thousand or ten million men or women of the same name as yourself, but when the Lord puts His hand upon your book and opens it, it will be your book, and that of nobody else. What you are, is *what you are*, and what will be read will be out of *your* book.

What an aid to justice it would be if our courts could open such a book instead of relying on undependable testimony! Written records, letters, photographic evidence, fingerprints, and all the minute details so dear to the detective, are far better evidence than that elicited from human witnesses. Men do not see anything alike. They color it with themselves. Even their truest testimony is tinged with their own ego and prejudices. How unreliable would be the session if sinners were to be judged by the testimony of their fellows! None of this is needed. Notice! At the great white throne **no witnesses are called to the stand.** Not one! Yet all will be confronted by the facts. The facts are written within — in the genetic code of our being. The scroll of our life will be opened. “And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, *according to their works*” (Rev. 20:12). When God, either now or in ages yet unborn, lays His mighty hand of dealing upon you, my friend, and summons you to **stand** before Him, your book will open, and you will not then manifest anything other than what you are, for “the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature (dead or alive, visible or invisible) that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and *opened unto the eyes of Him* with whom we have to do” (Heb. 4:12-13). In other words, God can *see right through you*. But when your book is opened the substance of what you believe in and are will be exposed for *all* to see! You will not be able to help yourself. God will provoke you by His omnipotent ability to open up and reveal precisely who and what you are. Your heart is the evidence brought before His court!

One preacher shared the following experience. “As I said to a man once — I was visiting a prison, there was one man found guilty of a crime and he had been sentenced. He took an appeal and his sentence was increased a few years. I saw him in the prison expressing the very spirit and the nature of that for which he was convicted, and I said, ‘When he goes before the judge again, he will be found guilty again the next time.’ I said, ‘No doubt he will get life.’ Why? It was because the spirit of that which he was convicted of was manifested in him more effectively than it was when he was first convicted. Take these thoughts into consideration. If he would have done as one of those men did among them, CONFESSED his sins and forsaken them, he may not have been found guilty. Even though he was guilty of the act, when he went before the judge he could have found mercy and grace to help. But every time he appeared before the judges in our courts he was found guilty because the spirit of the crime was still working in him. So an open confession is good for the soul. But the most important thing is to be cleansed, washed, changed, transformed; forsake your sins as well as confess them. God’s presence gives victory over sin and causes you to become a *new creation* in reality. A confession profiteth nothing unless you forsake them completely and live no longer in them. If those tendencies, fancies, pleasures, ideas, opinions, and deeds can still be found in you, they will identify you as the same unrighteous person. But if they are no longer there, there will be nothing in you to identify you as something other than Christ.”

Without doubt, God is the great “book opener.” This is God’s way of judging us, or re-writing our books, if you please. The means by which He brings His judgment into our lives is very simple, yet extremely effective. For example, the person abiding in some realm of soulish death is brought to a crisis. God arranges circumstances and places the man in situations that open his book, thus *revealing himself to himself*.

I shall never forget an occasion, though it was nearly fifty years ago, when the Lord pressed this message home to my heart. In those days I was accustomed to changing the oil in my car. It never ceased to amaze me how a simple ten minute job could invariably turn into a disastrous hour-long ordeal! This certain day I had a few extra minutes, so determined to utilize them by changing the oil. I crawled under the car and proceeded to try to remove the oil plug. But it refused to cooperate. It simply would not budge. I pushed on the wrench with all my might; I grunted, groaned, and moaned as the minutes passed into an hour. The plug refused to yield and by this time was becoming damaged, making it more impossible to turn. Exasperation laid hold upon me. At that point I became exceedingly agitated and began to act very un-godlike. And just as soon as my rage reached its most explosive pitch, and what was manifested was all of *me* and none of *Him*, I saw two feet walking slowly by the car. The feet belonged to my neighbor. I knew that this neighbor was aware that I was a minister of the gospel! Suddenly I realized that my “book” had just been “opened” before God’s great white throne and my neighbor had been permitted to read a very ugly chapter!

My heart smote me. Oh God, no! How ashamed I was that this man had read such a sordid scene! Humiliated and convicted (judged), at once I laid down the wrench and breathed the earnest prayer, “Father, forgive me! Help me somehow to get this oil plug out.” No sooner were the words uttered than the Spirit whispered the words of wisdom, “Go to the other side of the car and *pull* instead of *pushing*.” I crawled out from under the car and obeyed the prompting of the Spirit. In less than a minute the plug responded and the black oil flowed out. The message is clear — I could have drawn upon the Spirit earlier and prevented all the trouble — but God wanted to put His finger on something in my life! He opened my book and for me it was “judgment day”!

The grand purpose for this “opening of our book” is so that all that is written there may be exposed, revealed, displayed, and brought to judgment, dealt with by a concentration of divine discipline and instruction, as the Father processes each individual. The procedure is simple but very effective. The person abiding in some realm of death is caused to “stand” before God — brought directly into relation to the countenance of God. As it is written, “God shall bring *every work* into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Eccl. 12:14), for, “God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ” (Rom. 2:16). Ah, you will despair and shrink before God’s judgments until you clearly understand that God does not open your book to **destroy** you, but to **deliver you!** It is a divine law — God can never deliver you, nor any man, until your heart has been revealed to be dealt with by God’s stern and tender hand. Yield yourself under the mighty hand of God that overcoming victory may be obtained in *your earth*. We must never be discouraged when the motions of the flesh and the workings of the carnal mind overwhelm us, but neither should we become complacent about it, for God will send forth judgment unto victory however long it takes and however severe the dealings. He will never terminate His judgments until every man is conformed into the image of the glorious Son of God! Aren’t you glad!

God arranges the circumstances by which every man’s book is opened — the inner condition uncovered. Some men are faced with a woman to reveal secret lust in his heart. Some men are given spiritual gifts and talents to uncover pride, arrogance, love of power, and greed that lurks within their nature. Others are given problems and difficulties to reveal anger, bitterness, or unbelief. Still others are brought to the wilderness of temptation, as was our dear Lord, just to reveal the spirit, mind, and nature of the Christ that has been formed in them! You see, Jesus was not driven by the Spirit into the wilderness to see whether or not He **would sin**; the encounter with the adversary was designed to show that in the crucible of testing, because He was the Son of the Father with whom the Father was well pleased — HE WOULD NOT FAIL THE TEST! The book that was opened there in the wilderness of Judea proved to be THE BOOK OF LIFE and Jesus’ name (nature) was written in *that book!* You do remember, do you not, that when John beheld the great white throne he saw the books being opened; and then another book was opened, which is the book of life. Oh, yes! All of these books are brought before His judgment throne. Jesus was judged out of *the book of life* (nothing was found in any of the other books) and the result was His sonship ministry and the redemption of the world!

IN THE VOLUME OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN...

I feel a great urgency about this message because the vision tells us that not only are the “books” opened, but also the other book, THE BOOK OF LIFE. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire — for further purging and purification. I want to help you grasp why you are here — you are being prepared to reveal the invisible God to the visible creation! Dear reader of these lines, you are not just *anybody*. You came out from God. There is a strange and wonderful statement in Hebrews 10:7. “Lo, I come (in the VOLUME OF THE BOOK it is written of me) to do Thy will, O God.” These words are attributed to Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God. This is, however, a quotation from Psalm 40:7. Therefore, the “volume of the book” referred to was written before the Psalms! 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” (Ex. 32:32). These words speak of a book written by God Himself which was older than Genesis or any of the other books of Moses. 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 the 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. Do you not get the connection between *the Word* and *the Volume of the Book*? That's what a book is — it is a word! And it is the Book of Life, for of the Word John says, "In Him was *Life*; and the life was the light of men" (Jn. 1:1,4). And then John tells us that "THE WORD was *made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory...*" (Jn. 1:14). By revelation of the Spirit John is telling us that the Word was made manifest FOR ALL THE WORLD TO READ. This Word, this Holy Record of the Life of God, was not written upon stone, nor papyrus, nor golden parchment, but THE WORD was MADE FLESH TO DWELL AMONG MEN AND BE READ BY THEM! Unlike any other book in the world, this "Book" was alive and the title of this Book was JESUS!

Throughout the march of the ages men and women have recorded an innumerable multitude of life-stories of the mighty men who have trodden this earth and influenced the events of history and the destinies of men, movements, nations, and empires. Each and all of those biographies were meaningful to someone, often to many, but never in all the history of the world was a life lived out before the universe of mankind that was so overwhelmingly important, so all-embracing, so transcendental in its nature and so far-reaching in its results as the life of Jesus Christ. Our Lord Jesus Himself, in His earthly life and ministry, in His death, resurrection, and ascension IS THE FIRST CHAPTER OF THIS GLORIOUS BOOK OF THE LIFE OF THE LAMB! Following His examination in the wilderness, this "Book of Life" was offered to the public. Ah, Jesus never carried around a copy of the Old Testament when He taught the multitudes. I have in my library many Bibles including the Literal Bible, the Comparative Bible, the Analytical Bible, the Emphasized Bible, and the Amplified Bible. But Jesus Himself is the EXEMPLIFIED BIBLE! He is the PERSONIFIED BIBLE! He is the true picture of His Father, the Living Word of His Father. He is the full and complete revelation of His Father. He is the full and abundant Life of His Father unto all who partake of Him. He is the Book of the Life of the Lamb — the autobiography of God — everything you always wanted to know about God and didn't know who to ask can be seen and read in the Book of the Life of the Lamb — JESUS!

"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will *put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts:* and I will be to them a God, and they shall be my people. In that He saith, A new covenant, He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away" (Heb. 8:10,13).

Herein is an arrangement that will work — the old covenant was written and engraven in stone and the people were unable to keep it. Israel began well, accepted the covenant, and promised obedience. But there was no power to continue, to fulfill it; no power to conquer temptation, or overcome the evil heart; to remain faithful. Just as the old covenant was the law written and engraven in stone, and one could hold high this stone tablet and say, "Here is the covenant of our God," so the new covenant is the law (nature) of God inscribed in the minds and hearts of a people — not merely a law, but that law *written, inscribed in a people* — so that you can point to that people and say, "There is the covenant of our God!" The people with the law of God written in their hearts IS THE COVENANT, THE BOOK OF GOD'S LAW OF LIFE. I heard of a man who collects presidential signatures. The autographs are valuable, some of them priceless — not because of the ink or paper that was used, but because of the person who wrote them. These presidential signatures are all appropriately framed and hung with dignity and honor. God has made a covenant with mankind that has been written by His finger and signed in blood. This is not a mere document but an agreement — signed in our Lord's own blood. His *blood* is His *life* and it is His life *formed in His people* which constitutes His signature with His blood. YOU ARE THE COVENANT. Never forget that!

We speak of "signing on the dotted line" and there's something awesome about it. Watch a head of government sign a bill into law; watch a bride and groom sign a marriage license; watch an executive sign a 100-million dollar contract — each time you will notice the solemnity, the weightiness, the finality. When I sign on the dotted line, that's it. The hospital may now proceed with my surgery; the army has me for four years; my spouse is now endowed with all my earthly wealth; I will pay \$1,000 a month for the house. They've got it in writing! God has graciously allowed His covenant with man to be put into writing and signed with His signature — within a people. That is an awesome thing for God to do, for now His covenant can be known and read by all men. In the integrity of His holy heart He is bound to keep all His

word, fulfill all His purpose, develop all His life, display all His wisdom, nature, and glory in and through this people who are His covenant written upon the fleshy tablets of their hearts. Now He can be held to His word, for He has invested His signature onto the document. Jesus said, "In the *volume of the book* it is written of me: Lo, I come to do Thy will O God." Jesus Himself was the WORD OF GOD, the VOLUME OF THE BOOK. It was IN HIM that God's will was written! And now the Lamb of God is living out His Life in *us* as the completion of that Book! God's called and chosen elect are thus THE BOOK OF THE LIFE OF THE LAMB! Through that blessed company conformed to His image the world shall now, at last, read "the rest of the story"!

Paul asked the Corinthians, "Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you?" (II Cor. 3:1). He refers to ministers who had arrived in Corinth bearing letters of recommendation to them from the churches in Judea. Various teachers at Corinth had been originally introduced there by commendatory letters from abroad. These were letters of introduction, and were common among the Greeks, the Romans, and the Jews, as they are now. They were usually given to persons who were about to travel. So these teachers came to Corinth with letters of recommendation from other churches; and when leaving that city obtained similar letters from the Corinthians to approve them and introduce them to other churches. Acts 18:27 confirms the existence of the custom here alluded to by Paul: "When Apollos was disposed to pass into Achaia (Corinth) the brethren (of Ephesus) wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him." This was about two years before Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians, and is probably one of the instances to which Paul refers, as many at Corinth boasted of their being followers of Apollos (I Cor. 1:12).

But Paul says that he needs no such external recommendation to anyone for "YE are our epistle (letter), written in our hearts, known and read of all men" (II Cor. 3:2). His testimonial was the saints themselves! This he says was written on his heart. It was not a cold letter of recommendation, but the *living proof* of his ministry and the authority, power, and life of the Christ who sent him. "Forasmuch as YE are manifestly declared to be the **EPISTLE OF CHRIST** ministered (written) 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." I want to introduce you to a book that everyone reads. No, it is not the Bible, nor will you find it on the *New York Times* bestseller list. The book I am referring to is the lives of people who have been quickened and transformed by Jesus Christ. Many men, women, and children who will never pick up a Bible or sit in a church service will read carefully what the saints' lives are saying about God and reality!

There is not so powerful a letter or sermon in the world, as a transformed life. The proof of Christ the wisdom of God and the power of God is not the Bible — it is the lives of those in whom He lives and walks and talks. The lives of God's redeemed people are the **only spiritual book** the world reads. The nature and character of God revealed in us is the form of language God uses to speak to creation. When God writes on the fleshy tables of our heart the very essence of His love, His mercy, His goodness, His wisdom, His power — His letter to mankind is written so legibly that it can be "read by all men." It is not written with ink, by letters drawn on lifeless substance, and in lines that easily fade, or that can be read by only one or a few persons at a time. Every trace of the Spirit's influence on the heart indelibly inscribes within our character the Word of the living God — God's message, God's revelation, God's life — truly it is THE BOOK OF THE LIFE OF THE LAMB!

Ah, no hand but that of God can reach the heart, and inscribe His truth there. So, I am not the central figure in my life, although it is called mine. There is Another, and far greater, who does and says all the things in it that matter. Leave Him out of the story, and the whole grows lusterless and indeed, incomprehensible. For, rightly viewed, the life of every overcoming saint of God is but another chapter in the life of Jesus Christ. Look for yourselves and see! How, here and here and here and everywhere, it is His acts, not mine, or yours, that really count and speak. It is not a dead letter, it will not molder or decay, for it is the incorruptible Word of God that liveth and abideth forever. Though worms should destroy this body, this book of the heart will abide to other ages, to other worlds, and will stand in the day of judgment as God's Book of Life opened for all to read. It is the influence that shall be seen and felt throughout vast ages yet unborn until God becomes All-in-all, everything to everyone, everywhere!

Here, I would share some blessed insights from the nineteenth century sermons of R. J. Campbell. “Now what do we think about the Lamb’s Book of Life today? Well, I will tell you what it is not. It is not a list of those whom God has agreed to admit to heaven because they firmly believe that someone else has done all that was necessary to get them there. It is God’s roll of honor. It is the glorious company of those who have suffered with Christ. It includes all whose lives have been willingly and cheerfully offered on the altar of Love. The very phrases, ‘the Lamb’s Book of Life,’ and ‘the Book of the Life of the Lamb *slain from the foundation of the world*,’ are a declaration of this, and distinguish it from every other list of names that was ever written. Those whose names are in the Book of Life are life-givers. They are the brethren of Jesus, working in the Spirit of Jesus who is The Life to minister more abundant life to the world. When we speak of the Lamb’s Book of Life we must never forget this! It is not merely the roll of those who have escaped something; it is the designation of those who have achieved something. The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world is still being slain on the altar of human hearts, and wherever that divine sacrifice is offered new power and hope stream into this dark and sorrowful world.

“You may be feeling that this explanation of the Lamb’s Book of Life is not so sweet and beautiful as the one to which you have been accustomed, and which you greatly value. You may be saying to yourself, ‘I do not like this.’ We have got to see that the sacrifice of Jesus is of no use unless it makes us like Jesus. It has to be *repeated in us*. As Paul has it, we have to become willing to be delivered up to death for Jesus’ sake that the Life of Jesus may become manifest in us. There is no salvation that is not this, and the gratitude and reverence that we really owe to Jesus are gratitude and reverence for having made this possible. **THE LIFE HAS GOT TO BE MANIFESTED IN US!** I put it to you again: which is worthier of Jesus, to believe that He has got us into heaven — a heaven from which all others are shut out — or to rejoice that He has shown us wherein true life consists? I do not care three straws whether I go to heaven or not — using the word for the moment in its conventional sense. But I do rejoice and thank God for that great Master and Redeemer of mankind who has shown me at an unspeakable cost what it is to ***live out His life among men***. I wish I could live it, but I am frail and earthly, whereas He was divinely strong, and the light of God shown in all He said and did. And yet, no sooner have I realized this than my heart rises in loving thanks to Him once more for the assurance that human weakness and imperfection can and shall be transformed into divine strength and holiness by the power of the indwelling Spirit of God” — end quote.

Brother Bennie Skinner said in a message some years ago, “The scripture says that the saints will **judge the world** (I Cor. 6:2). God is preparing a mighty company of judges to judge the world in righteousness! ‘And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and **judgment was given** unto them...’ (Rev. 20:4,6). You say, ‘But I thought God was going to judge the world!’ He is — but in and by His saints. You say, ‘But I thought all judgment has been committed unto the Son.’ That’s right — in and through His body, His people in whom He dwells and through whom He moves and acts. ‘I beheld...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**’ (Dan. 7:21-22).

“Yes, the saints are going to judge the world! And how? By voting against evil? By demonstrating against wickedness? By marching, carrying placards, writing our congressmen, pleading issues before the courts? NO! The thing that is going to judge the world is what is **true** in them and in you and in me. Our very lives will be a judgment to this world. That is why in the judgment *their books* are opened and *our book* (of life) is also opened! The time will come when the ‘books’ will be fully opened. God is writing His life in us now. He is inscribing His nature, His knowledge, His wisdom, His will, His power, and authority on the fleshy tables of our hearts. Each one of us is a page in the eloquent book of the Lamb’s Life. The life that is being fashioned and formed within our nature is the Book of Life. God is writing in us every day! Paul speaks of it when he says, ‘You are the epistles of Christ — **ministered** (written) **by us**’ (II Cor. 3:2-3). Paul’s purpose was, as my purpose is, to serve God’s elect, to teach, to instruct, to encourage, to bless, to strengthen by precept and example, so that the Lord’s people can be written in by the finger of God. God wants to write in your life!

“Furthermore, God uses every experience of life to write the life of the Lamb in our book. God uses my wife to write in my book. God uses my children to write in my book. God uses my neighbors to write in my book. God uses my fortunes and my misfortunes to write in my book. God uses my enemies to write in my book. God uses circumstances to write in my book. God uses trials and testings to write in my

book. God is writing in you, dear one, in everything that touches your life. That is why Romans 8:28 is so real, ‘And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.’ You say, ‘Man, I wish I hadn’t had that experience.’ Don’t say that! God arranged that experience. It seemed a horrible thing, a terrible thing you went through, and you wouldn’t choose to go through such a thing in a thousand years. You would never have chosen that path, but God chose it for you, because God is writing in your book. **God is writing in your book!** He’s not writing for nothing — one day your book is going to be opened! And there is only one who is worthy to take the book and open it and loose the seals thereof, and that is the Lamb in the midst of the throne. The Lamb! Oh, the wonder of it! The book is the book of the life of the Lamb. The opening of this book is the unveiling of the life of the Lamb, the revelation of His life written and engraven upon the minds and hearts of those who share His nature. He is the One who is worthy to take each one of us and open us up. And it is only through Jesus Christ our Lord that we can be opened up as the Book of the Life of the Lamb!

“Most of us would rather remain a closed book. We wish to stay closed because of our unique personality, we are shy, reticent, humble, immature, or inexperienced. But I declare to you, beloved, that when God has finished writing in you, when He makes you a living epistle that He knows is capable of being read and known of all men, then HE WILL OPEN YOU UP. When God begins to break and remove the seals from off of us things will begin to happen in the outer world. Why is there such darkness over the earth, and gross darkness over the people? Because the very light of God is **concealed** within us. Although we are the light of the world, the light is shut up. God must work mightily in us to release the light of our lives that His glory may arise upon His people and be seen upon them. And when that hour arrives nothing can stop God’s judgments from coming in the earth. And when His judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. Blessed be His wonderful name!” — end quote.

The following precious gems from the pen of the late Ray Prinzing are edifying here. “We are persuaded that God has a company, A PEOPLE WHOSE NAMES WERE WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD. They are a predestinated people, laid hold of by the grace of God for a specific purpose of **becoming His firstfruits** channel through which shall flow quickening streams of divine life to conquer death, and bring new life to all His creation. ‘And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened...*and another book was opened, which is the book of life:* and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.’ There will be ‘**books**’ that are opened out of which men shall be judged ‘by what they have done, their whole way of feeling and acting, their aims and endeavors, in accordance with what was recorded in the books’ (Rev. 20:12, Amplified). And whatever purging and purifying is needed, whatever correctional processings must be applied, they shall be, for righteousness must be established. But it reads on, THERE IS ANOTHER BOOK THAT SHALL BE OPENED, and it is ‘another book’ that has our heart rejoicing, for it is the BOOK OF LIFE. It is a ministry of righteousness, not condemnation. It is an outflow of love. The BOOK OF LIFE awaits all the actions of the judgments of God to balance them with hope, victory, and a complete restoration of all that is fallen. What a tragedy were only ‘the books’ opened and there was not ‘another book.’ But the ‘books’ are opened first, and men are judged; then the ‘another book,’ the ‘book of life’ is opened — the revelation of HIS LIFE follows the judgment! When this ‘another book’ is brought forth, and opened, the message which has been sealed up in our deep shall be released, and it will flow out *a river of life...*” — end quote.

Paul Mueller has shared some precious insights into this wonderful book of life. He wrote, “There is a wonderful truth that is about to break in upon the minds and hearts of the Lord’s elect, and that is the blessed truth that it is God’s intention to write His complete word upon the tables of our hearts. The entire scripture, including the Gospel of Christ and the inspired word of truth divinely ordained for our growth unto perfection, the manifestation of the sons of God, and the propagation and administration of the kingdom of God, is all to be written upon the tables of our hearts. The fact is, the Bible as we now know it will one day become obsolete. The blessed Book that we carry around, study and sometimes memorize, is to be *imparted into our lives* so that we are truly ‘epistles of Christ...known and read of all men.’ This is not to downgrade the Bible or to denigrate its inspiration, effectiveness, and authority. The book we call the Bible is, for the most part, the inspired word of God, and we are truly and deeply grateful for all it means to us. However, our respect for the Bible will not alter the great truth that it is God’s intention that ***we become His living word!*** Every truth that has been given by the Spirit will eventually become a part of our lives, so

that we will not need to turn to chapter and verse to speak truth, but rather, that truth will be so written and engraved upon our lives that **we do by nature and express and manifest out of our state of being** all the truth and life the Bible contains to the glory of God. It will not be a dead letter read from the pages of a book, but the living, anointed truth of God coming forth from lives that have been transformed by the power of that word” — end quote.

How pitiful that the people of earth for the most part have never read this beautiful *epistle of Christ*, this glorious *Book of the Life of the Lamb*. They have poured over the books of religion, the books of man’s theology, the books of hypocrisy, the books of fleshly wisdom, forms of godliness, dead doctrines, static creeds, empty rituals, powerless ceremonies, and man-made rules and regulations. But precious few have ever laid eyes upon THE BOOK OF THE LIFE OF THE LAMB! Oh! What a wonderful Gospel shall fill the earth beneath and the celestial realms above when God opens His holy Book of Life! The Book of Life is that blessed company of the sons of God, elect, chosen, and transformed into the image of Christ throughout the ages. This Book is being carefully written word by word, sentence by sentence, paragraph by paragraph, page by page, and chapter by chapter in the nitty-gritty of our daily experience with God until the full revelation of the Christ-life shall be set forth therein. Time’s clock is striking the hour and the time is drawing wonderfully nigh for the manifestation of the sons of God, the opening of God’s Book of Life Company, and what a manifestation it shall be! All creation from time immemorial has groaned and travailed for the manifestation of God’s sons, to deliver creation at last from the bondage of corruption.

God has a MESSAGE for the world — the revelation of Jesus Christ! This message is being written in flaming words of glory upon the pages of the minds and hearts and lives of men and women who are dying to that impudent and death-dealing devil of Self, in order to walk and live by the spirit and power of HIS LIFE. I am terribly at a loss for words to express the glory and wonder of God’s BOOK OF LIFE COMPANY, but I can assure you that once it is fully ready, prepared, and published it shall become the world’s “best seller” throughout the ages to come! As the pen is mightier than the sword, so this Book, above any that has ever been written by the finger of man, shall alter the course of history, and the dark covering that has been cast over the minds and hearts of all people for ages and dispensations will be completely destroyed by the flood of transforming light and wisdom and knowledge and glory and power shining forth from the pages of God’s eternal and incorruptible BOOK OF LIFE! Isn’t it wonderful!

To be continued...

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