

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 254

THE EPILOGUE (continued)

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last" (Rev. 22:13).

I am certain that most of the readers of these lines are aware that *Alpha* is the first letter of the Greek alphabet and *Omega* is the last letter in the Greek alphabet. Since the book of Revelation was translated from the Greek language, the translators brought over into English the names of the Greek letters. If the book would have originally been written in English Jesus would have said, "I am the A and the Z, the beginning and the ending (of the alphabet), the first and the last." What He's saying is just this — "I am THE WORD — I am the totality of the alphabet, I am everything the alphabet can express, I am the full and complete and total revelation of God!" Think of all these titles as verbs — not nouns. We think of the "word" of God as a noun, and the word itself is indeed a noun, but there is *activity* expressed from it. "For the word of God is *quick* and *powerful*, and sharper than any two-edged sword" (Heb. 4:12). The literal translation of the phrase "quick and powerful" is *living* and *energetic*. This denotes action — it is *moving* and *working!* The Lord wants us to know Him as living; that He is action, which really just comes down to who He is. He is Love! Love is never static, it is living and active. Just as you can know a man's faith by his works, so you will know love by its actions. Let me say it this way: If we could approach every title of our Lord as if it is a verb, it would give us a wonderful and transcendent revelation of His nature!

It is my conviction that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the firstborn among many brethren, when He walked on earth, was the Alpha — the first expression of the Word of God in man. I also know and am sure that the Christ perfectly and fully formed in a many-membered body, the manifest sons of God, is the Omega, the Word again made flesh and glorified in man. "I am Alpha *and* Omega." "I am the beginning *and* the end." "I am the first *and* the last." It is all HIM! We have now come to the day when the Lord Jesus Christ is coming to be glorified *in* His saints and to be admired *in* all them that believe *in that day* (II Thes. 1:10). The day of which the apostle spoke by inspiration had not yet arrived at the time he penned these blessed words of truth, for he projected it into the future. It should not be difficult for any to understand that Pentecost with its baptism in the Spirit did not bring this glorious revelation of Christ in all His fullness *in His saints*. A future time was appointed of God for Christ to be glorified on earth again, not this time to be glorified as the Son of God with power in the body of one manifest Son called Jesus of

Nazareth, but glorified on earth through the ministry of manifest sonship in and through a vast company of sons who are one and all His brethren, sons of God as He is the Son of God, all perfected in His image and grown up into the maturity and fullness of His life, nature, wisdom, and power. “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be *called* the *sons* of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, *now* are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear *what we shall be (when our full maturity and manifestation has come)*; but we know that when HE SHALL APPEAR (in us), **WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM...**” (I Jn. 3:1-2).

“*Called* the sons of God!” The truth is, my friend, that very few of the Lord’s people are routinely *called* “the sons of God.” They are called Christians, believers, saints, church members, Baptists, Methodists, Catholics, and many other things, but not “the sons of God.” This is due to the fact that very few of God’s people have any knowledge or revelation of *sonship*. The unique thing about this manifestation of *sonship* is that we will still appear as men. But men will confess of us as they did of the firstborn Son, “Truly these *are* the sons of God!” “Thou art the Christ, the *sons* of the living God!” A great number of people confessed Jesus’ sonship and we today proclaim Him as the Son of God. But we wouldn’t dare say it of anybody else we know — we might confess that they are in some “reckoned” or “honorary” sense considered sons of God but we would not call them sons of God on the basis of the almighty power, the divine wisdom, the surpassing glory, and the infinite knowledge they demonstrate clearly and without measure. Yet, when He shall appear to be glorified in us we shall be *like Him, exactly* like Him, *fully* like Him, and we shall be *called* “the sons of God.” We will not be called Baptists! We will not be called Pentecostals! Neither will we be called Christians! What kind of work must be wrought in us to so change and transform us until men looking upon us will with recognition and wonder exclaim, “Truly *these are* the sons of God!”

THE BEGINNING AND THE END

“I am Alpha and Omega, *the beginning and the end...*” (Rev. 22:13).

Not only is Christ the *beginning*, He is the *end* of all things! Mankind is yet groping about in the dense darkness of the carnal mind, knowing not that HE is standing right there in the shadows, were their eyes opened to see. Yet He hath appointed a day — O glorious day! — when His light shall shine forth and the plan shall be completed as the apostle saith, “For God has allowed us to know the secret of His plan, and it is this: He purposed long ago in His sovereign will that all human history should be consummated *in Christ*, that *everything that exists in heaven or earth should find its perfection and fulfillment in Him*. IN CHRIST we have been given an inheritance, since we were destined for this, by the One who works out all His purposes according to the design of His own will” (Eph. 1:9-11, Phillips).

Everything in history is moving inexorably toward a day when Jesus shall have conquered everything and everyone. Like a mountain of dirt before a gigantic bulldozer steadily moving forward, all that can be conquered is being collected into the loving arms of Jesus, whose right it is to rule. When Christ ascended on high after His resurrection, He led many captives out of the prison house and also set forth His great purpose: “Now He that ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that *descended* is the same also that *ascended up far above all heavens* THAT HE MIGHT FILL A-L-L T-H-I-N-G-S” (Eph. 4:9-10). The message is clear — redemption includes the complete transformation of the entire universe and all that is within it so that God in Christ shall truly FILL ALL THINGS. There shall not be left one corner of this vast universe, nor one creature in it, where He shall not be Lord and King. Everything everywhere shall be restored to the beautiful harmony and order of the love of God. Indeed, He shall fill all things that *God may be all in all!*

All that God has ever done or ever will do, all that He has said or ever will say, will ultimately redound to His glory, that He may be “All in all” — *and why not?* “In the beginning GOD...” Everything else is *because* of God — God’s love, God’s wisdom, God’s purpose, God’s power, God’s righteousness. And for all things to find their purpose, their reality and their end in Him, is the final goal of salvation’s history. It is an extraordinary thing, yet sublimely true, that the Lord Jesus gives us to understand that what He is doing on earth today and throughout the ages to come *is only a beginning*. What He has given us is a root, and not yet a tree; a foundation, and not yet an edifice. The Kingdom Seed must grow, the branches spread out, the blossoms appear, and the fruit be formed. The little stone cut out without hands must grow and grow and grow until it becomes a great mountain that fills *all* the earth, having broken in pieces and consumed *all other kingdoms*. In the end the kingdom of God will have filled all realms everywhere, from the Milky Way to the outermost galaxies, from the caves of Afghanistan to the government halls of Beijing and the worshipping throngs bathing in the waters of the Ganges River — and God *will* be ALL *in all!* Those who on earth are now being perfected in Christ are the *firstfruits* of this marvelous revelation of GOD ALL IN ALL!

In these days many people are seeking to know what and when the *end* will be. At this time of frustration and confusion, men want to know what God will bring to pass in the end. Many years ago heaven shed its light in my spirit and I saw clearly that if we could know something of God’s beginning of things, we could then understand something of the end. A clearer conception of the *beginning* would give us a clearer knowledge of the *ending*. In connection with this, I would like to quote from a book called The Gospel of Thomas. While it has not been accepted as being inspired, along with many other apocryphal writings, there is still truth to be gleaned if we can separate the meat from the bones. The Gospel of Thomas consists of a series of sayings attributed to Jesus. On one occasion Jesus is reported to have said, “I will give you what eye has not seen, what ear has not heard, what hand has not touched, and what has not arisen in the heart of man.” The disciples said to Jesus, “Tell us what our end will be.” Jesus said, “Have you then

discovered the beginning, so that you enquire about the end? FOR WHERE THE BEGINNING IS, THERE SHALL BE THE END. Blessed is he who shall stand at the beginning and he shall know the end and he shall *not taste death.*” Here is blessed confirmation of what we have known from the scriptures and by the spirit of revelation from God! Jesus says that if we know the beginning and stand at the beginning, we shall know the end, and we shall not taste death! What a word!

Is it not true that in the beginning there was no sin, no sorrow, no pain, no tears, no limitation, and no death? Behold Jesus Christ! HE is the beginning and HE is the end! Are they not both the same? HE abolishes death! HE wipes the tears from off all faces! HE swallows up all sorrow and crying! HE brings life and immortality to light through the gospel! It is *in Him* that we *have life*, and have it more abundantly! All that is happening now came out of the Beginning and will bring us to the Ending. If Jesus Christ *is the End*, then this does away with all this teaching in the church systems about everlasting hell and damnation being man’s final end, for HE IS THE END. Sin is not the end, death is not the end, judgment is not the end, hell is not the end, fire and brimstone are not the end, damnation is not the end, for CHRIST IS THE END! Though men be processed by judgment “unto the ages of the ages,” neither that judgment nor those ages are the end — they are merely a *means* to the end, there is an end that lies *at the conclusion of the ages* — and that end IS CHRIST! Aren’t you glad!

“God sitteth upon the *circle* of the earth,” said the prophet Isaiah. While the word for “circle” in the Hebrew text denotes the *sphericity* of the earth, it may also denote the *cycles* of nature. These cycles are the continual goings and comings of the seasons, days, months, and years, ordained by God in the beginning. Everything in nature moves in cycles: winter and summer, seedtime and harvest; generation after generation all show the might and wisdom of God. Even electricity must have a circuit. There are positives and negatives in all of nature, and everything flows through them. The earth spins upon its axis while it revolves around the sun; the sun moves in its own circuit in the heavens as also each galaxy moves in a broad circular sweep through distances that defy the imagination. SO IT IS WITH GOD’S WORK. In the spiritual realm there are the positives and negatives of life and death, good and evil, spirit and flesh, blessing and curse, temptation and triumph, strength and weakness, light and darkness, truth and error, God and Satan. It is in the interplay between these that we are brought to perfection! It is therefore reasonable to conclude that man, the highest of God’s creation, came out of God, but was then lowered into the world of vanity, darkness, and death, but will return to God, thus completing the cycle, not in part, but in full. Our Lord Jesus Christ is Himself the supreme illustration and example of this wonderful truth, for He *came out of God*, descended into the *lower parts of the earth*, that is, into the very depths of human nature and experience in the fall and the curse, overcame in it, and then arose and returned back into God.

This great principle has been called “The Law of Circularity.” Some would have us believe that this is a “New Age” concept, but I do not hesitate to tell you that such a notion is *far from the truth*. If it is a

New Age concept then they *borrowed* it from somewhere, for this great Law *originated* with GOD! It is found written by inspiration of the Holy Spirit all through the scriptures and is inscribed as well upon every law of nature within the cosmos. “For *from Him* and *through Him* and *to Him* are all things — for all things originate with Him and come from Him; all things live through Him, and all things center in and tend to *consummate and to end in Him*. To Him be glory forever! Amen” (Rom. 11:36, Amplified).

The Law of Circularity requires that just as all things began in Christ, all shall end in Christ. “I am Alpha and Omega, the *beginning* and the *end*, the *first* and the *last*, saith the Lord.” Only the glorious mind of Christ can reveal to our hearts what that means! Through a glass darkly I can see that He is the *first* — “before all things.” Can I also believe that *He is the last*? If He is the *beginning*, can my feeble mind dare to comprehend what it signifies when He says that He is also the *end*? Ah, He is the *end* because He is “the appointed *heir of all things*” (Heb. 1:2). All that existed in Christ before the ages began, shall return into Him again that He may be the First *and* the Last. All that came out of Him, lowered into the realm of the negative, completes its circuit, through redemption returning once more to its former estate — IN CHRIST! This is not New Age philosophy, my friend; this is sound, fundamental *biblical truth*. The first Adam had power to take ALL with him into sin and death, without their knowledge or consent; therefore the last Adam, the Lord from heaven, gathers up the same number in His great redemptive work and ALL MEN who came out of God shall return, that the circle may be unbroken. There is an old song that asks the question, “Will the circle be unbroken, by and by, Lord, by and by.” We now have God’s answer to that question: “YES!” The circle will be *unbroken*, the circle will *not* be broken! God’s great Law of Circularity will bring all men back into God!

THE FIRST AND THE LAST

“I am the *first* and the *last*...” (Rev. 22:13).

The word “last” is the Greek word *eschatos* meaning “the farthest or final” of place or time. The theologians have added the suffix *ology* to this word, creating the term *eschatology* which is a fancy word indicating prophetic “end times” or “last days” events. But the book of Revelation is not merely a book about the end-times! It is a NOW book! In this very same chapter the messenger instructs John, “*Seal not* the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for *the time is at hand*” (Rev. 22:10). This isn’t, by any stretch of the imagination, an *eschatological* work! This is no end-time book! This is how the church systems have kept the Lord’s precious people ignorant through the centuries of the true message of the Revelation, for they have been led to believe that it’s all going to happen out there in the world some day after the saints have all been raptured away to heaven. Oh, that all the Lord’s people might come to know that this is truly *the revelation of Jesus Christ!* Nothing more, and nothing less! “When He shall *come* to be *glorified in His saints*, and to be admired *in all them* that believe in that day” (II Thes. 1:10). How can the Lord Jesus

COME to be REVEALED AND ADMIRER IN HIS SAINTS if the saints continue to look outside of themselves to see the vision fulfilled while the work of God is *within*? Thus the book is about mankind being redeemed and restored, and the Lord's called and chosen elect being brought to the full stature of the Son of God — so that HE BECOMES THE LAST! Isn't it wonderful!

THEY THAT WASH THEIR ROBES

“Blessed are they that *wash their robes*, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city” (Rev. 22:14).

Oh, have your eyes truly seen the city of God? Have you seen the river, that pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb? Have you seen in the midst of the river, and on either side of the river, the tree of life and the branches meeting together and covering the river? Have you tasted its fruits? Do you know the power of the leaves of that tree for the healing of the nations? There is a beautiful picture in the opening chapters of Genesis, there is the river that flows from the highlands of the enchanting garden of Eden, flowing out of the garden with its cleansing, life-giving waters to all the lowlands of earth. In symbolism it is the same river, the river of life, and the Holy Spirit is that river; the imagery speaks to us that the river *flows out of the city*, out to all who are *outside* the city, and to all the nations who shall walk in the light of the city. The unclean and the unholy may be made pure in heart, in spirit, yea, in soul and body, and be made partakers of the inheritance of the pure in heart, above and here on earth. “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”

There's a story in Greek mythology about a king named Augeas, who owned a stable with 3,000 cattle in it. The stable had not been cleaned for decades, and the king was seeking for someone to thoroughly clean the stable, a monumental task for any man. Hercules accepted the challenge to clean the stables. But he did not use a shovel. Instead, he changed the course of two rivers and made them flow through the stables to wash all the filth away. The Greek word for “pure” in the phrase “the pure in heart” is the same word from which we get the word “catharsis.” When you go through a catharsis, you go through a cleansing that flushes out impurities. Jesus says that if you want to see God, you must have a pure heart, a heart that has been purified, washed clean by the blood of the Lamb. “Wash me, and I will be whiter than snow,” prays the psalmist.

How may we enter the city and *see God*? How may we get there now, now, now, this very day? Listen! I can tell you because I know! I know! There are many things I do not know. The things that I do not know — well, there are no books that would contain them. But I know how to get to that river, how to enter that city, how to get to that tree of life, and I know how to eat of the fruit of that tree. That is something worth knowing! Now, I *know*! I do not say that I *think*. I am not guessing. How do I know? I

point you to the words of our text. “*Blessed are they that wash their robes...*” I call your attention to that reading. It is not the old reading, as in the King James Bible. The old reading of that passage is, “Blessed are they that *do His commandments.*” That is not according to the Greek text at all. I do not know why these old translators put that in; but the fact is this, that it is absolutely different from the original, which is properly translated in many other versions just as I have quoted, “*Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to come to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.*” The way, then, to enter in through the gates into the city, and to have the right to get to the tree of life, is to WASH YOUR ROBES! Wash your robes? I tell you there are some of them that need lots of washing, too.

The spirit of every man has two robes — the *soul* and the *body*. The soul is the personality with its components of mind, will, emotion, and desire. The body is the outer vehicle through which either spirit or soul expresses itself. You must be clean vessels. You must get your blood cleansed, and your body cleansed. You will never get into that city, and you will never be able to take of the tree of life, until your robes are cleansed, and you can do it now. How may I get to the tree of life? I will tell you. I have been there. I go there often. If I had not been able to get to that tree of life, thousands of you would not be reading these pages today. If I had not been able to go through the gates, and take from the tree of life some Word of the Living God, some power to speak encouragement, understanding, wisdom, revelation, edification, strength, and blessing into your life, you would not be reading these words today!

When a man’s heart is cleansed; when his soul, dark and foul as night by nature, is made whiter than snow; when his mind is renewed, his will is exchanged, his emotions are quickened, his desires are transformed; when his blood is cleansed from the impurity of generations; when his body is yielded and made a temple that God can be at home in and use and flow through, then that man’s robes have been washed in the river of life, which is the blood of the Lamb! Then he can enter in through the gates into the city, then he can eat of the incorruptible life and the incorruptible word in the fruit of the tree, and then he can bring to this sin-cursed and disease-smitten world leaves of the tree which are for the healing of the nations. Thank God the tree grows still, and thank God the leaves have not lost their power to bring healing for every malady to every nation under heaven!

There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Emmanuel’s veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stain!

OUTSIDE THE CITY

“For *without* are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie” (Rev. 22:15).

Note that there are *six* things mentioned. Six, in the numerology of scripture, is the number of *man*, that is, the natural man, in the totality thereof. These bespeak of the fullness of the flesh nature and the works of the flesh. Those *outside* the city do not signify some future condition into which God shall thrust men. Oh, no! It is descriptive of *where men are right now in their relation to God and His city*. “Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for *the time is at hand*.” The time is *now*! The place is *here*! Outer darkness represents that realm which is farthest from the light. Some men, though not entering the city, do walk in the light of the city. But those men who walk far from God and His city are groping about in the gross outer darkness even now. It is not a future state, but a present reality! Billions wander there. But, thank God! men are not eternally confined to that condition, for only two verses later the Lord Jesus, the blessed Saviour of all men, cries out: “And the Spirit and the bride say, *Come*. And let him that heareth say, *Come*. And let him that is athirst *come*. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life *freely*” (Rev. 22:17). And for how long will they be able to come? “And the gates of it *shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there*” (Rev. 21:25). Isn’t it wonderful!

“For without are *dogs*...” Dogs come off rather badly in scripture. This does not mean there will be no literal dogs in heaven! But because dogs were scavengers in the ancient world, they were considered unclean and impure, and were used by the people of Israel as the designation for Gentiles in general as well as wicked, corrupt, and perverse men (Mat. 15:21-28). Some of you will meet dogs today. You will either meet or hear of men and women who are worse than dogs. You will meet men who are mere dogs, intellectual dogs, moral dogs, religious dogs, big dogs and little dogs, black dogs and white dogs, well-bred dogs that have become corrupted, and dogs that never had any breeding at all, miserable little curs, that almost seem as if they had no right to be born at all. You are apt to become disgusted, especially when you see a mangy dog, a dog that is diseased, and you turn away. Hollywood is full of dogs. The business world is full of dogs. Politics is loaded with dogs. The illegal drug business, the prostitution business, the porn industry, the bars and nightclubs, and a thousand other places are swarming with dogs. And saddest of all, the churches are full of dogs!

Be kind to that dog, but do not give that which is holy to him. If it is baring its teeth and snarling and snapping, be kind. All you can do is to be kind, loving, and gentle. The dogs are part of God’s creation! Even the little, nasty, mangy dog that gets kicks from everybody will look up when you say a kind word, and wag its ugly little tail. It will say, “I have found a friend at last.” You do not need to give a great deal of pious talk to a dog. There are looks and acts which come from loving hearts which are far more eloquent. If you can only give a small pat, perhaps you might win even that poor little dog; it has need to be both pitied and respected. Truly, if we pity the poor little dog, can we not pity these people who think and

act and live like dogs? Can we not take into consideration the fact that oft times they never had a chance of being better? At the same time we do not throw out a great deal that the dogs will snap at. Just speak kindly and pass on, and God will take care of the seed you sow.

Our Lord Jesus Christ in the course of His preaching came into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. A very remarkable people dwelt there. The Syrophenicians were directly descended from those who had invented letters. The first written language we know anything about is Phoenician. But they were heathen; they were very enterprising; they were renowned for their industries, and their magnificent houses, and their wonderful enthusiasm in everything they undertook; but, like the ancient Greeks, with the highest culture, and the most extensive commerce, and great valor on sea and land, they were debased idolaters. When the people of Israel came into possession of the land of Israel, they halted in their work, and did not drive these heathen out, and there never was a time when they were not a thorn in the side of Israel. The Philistines, the Phoenicians, and all that bordered upon the sea were a perpetual curse to Israel and a defilement to the land. They were held in great contempt and abhorrence!

Now a remarkable thing about Jesus going into such quarters as these is this, that He never went beyond the borders of Palestine to preach His gospel; so far as we can tell, not a step. Some contend that He did, but their information is rooted in legend and fable, not in the record God has given us. So Jesus came to the borders of Tyre and Sidon. He came to His *own* (Judah, for He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah), and His own received Him not, and He came in those three years to minister to His own people, and to die, first for Israel, and then for the world. Now, as we have mentioned, the Israelite had the conception that all nations outside were Gentiles — heathen outcasts; that God would not pay them any heed nor listen to them. Coming into the borders of Tyre and Sidon a woman, who evidently was a woman of station, is attracted by the splendor of Christ. This woman was a Gentile, for the record states that she was a woman of *Canaan*. But she beholds the Christ, His love, His power, His magnanimity; His great personality goes out as He speaks to the multitudes there, and proclaims that He Himself has the power to give rest to the weary, to give salvation to the sinful, healing to the sick, and out of the depths of despair to guide all humanity into the paths of faith, and hope, and love, and life that lead to heaven here and heaven above.

In that wonderful instant this woman begins to pray to Him. She has a daughter that has a devil, and she is emboldened to ask for healing for her daughter. Oh, I see Him standing there, and He looks at her with great compassion, and yet He utters words that are just the bitterest that can come from His divine lips. He looks at her, and she is pleading, “Oh Lord, you will not send me away. You have healed so many; you have saved so many; please don’t send me away.” He looks at her and He says these words: “I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” and He walks right off. There she is, and He is gone. Now she is going to give up praying, surely. She has gone in vain to Him; she had gone first in vain to the apostles, and she has come back to Him, and she is told that He is not sent to any except the lost sheep of the house of

Israel! Now, she is a Canaanite; she belongs to that accursed race, and, almost in despair, she looks at His retreating figure. Oh, how hard it is! How hard that answer is!

This woman did not know how to stop praying. She had been to Christ, and also to the apostles, and she goes after Christ the second time, and always finds a repulse. Yet she goes after Him again! I like to see that woman. Now, you watch what she says this time. This time she goes right off, and sees where her error has been. She goes after Him, and she seeks Him until she finds Him, and then she falls at His feet; and for the first time she does that which gets her an answer to her prayer — she worships Him. Notice her prayer. The first prayer was a long one, a very long one, and this prayer is a totally different one. It is a very short one. “Then she came and she worshipped Him, saying, LORD, HELP ME!” When she worships Him her prayer comes right down to three words. What are they? When she worships Him she says, “Lord, help me!” And how does He answer her? Oh, how mysterious it is; the most cruel answer that could come from human lips seems to come from His lips that day.

There she is; she is worshipping Him. She says, “*Lord, help me.*” And now the great Lord raises Himself, and points down at her, and says, “It is not right or proper to take the children’s bread, and cast it to *dogs.*” How many American women would go on praying after that? I can imagine how you would react and say, “I thought you were a kind man. I thought you were God, but you call me a dog. I am not a dog, Sir! I am an American lady. I have rights. I have dignity. You are discriminating against me because of my race. You are a male chauvinist pig!” Every bit of the devil of pride and feminism would be aroused. How the eyes would flash hell-fire, and the teeth clinch, and the face become pale with passion, and the heart cry out for revenge, if you, oh women of America, were refused bread and called “a dog!” I do not believe there are a dozen women upon God’s earth that would stand for that, and I tell you that the greatness of this woman’s faith is measured by just that fact, that she lay there at Christ’s feet, and she heard Him lift His voice and point His hand, and say, “You dog!” and go off, and she still loved Him and hoped in Him.

Now, did she stop praying? Not a bit of it. That woman went right after Him quickly. She went to His feet, and she made her last appeal, and I think it one of the most touching things in all the story of prevailing prayer in the scripture. All her heathen pride has gone. She cannot give up the hope that is bound up in her. She hears Him call her, even in the words that repel her, and she goes to His feet, and she says, “Lord, that is true; I am only a dog; but the little dogs” (for that is the word in Greek — the little dogs, the wee little dogs) “eat from the crumbs that fall from their master’s table, and I will take the place of a dog, but I want this crumb. Help me; help my devil-possessed daughter. Give me that crumb.” Now, the Lord looks up, and now He speaks the words that ring through the ages, “O woman” — His own heart is touched to the deepest depths by her humility — “O woman, *great is thy faith!* It has stood all these testings; it has stood all my hard answers, all my silence, all the apostles’ reproaching, all of my driving you

down and back; and now you are willing to take the place of a dog. YOU SHALL TAKE THE PLACE OF MY OWN DAUGHTER. O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.” She willed her daughter’s deliverance from the devil that grievously vexed her, and her daughter was delivered in that same hour.

It seems to me that the scene above is one of the most outstanding and shining examples of the infinite mercy and unconditional, unrestricted, unbounded, and unending love of our Lord toward every member of Adam’s race that the world has ever known. To the Syrophenician woman Jesus said, “O woman, *great* is thy faith!” Only one other time did Jesus attribute such greatness of faith to a person He helped — the Roman centurion whose servant lay at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. This centurion was another of the Gentile dogs, and this dog said to Jesus, “I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.” When Jesus heard it He marveled, and said to them that followed, “Verily I say unto you, I have not found *so great faith, no not in Israel.*” And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour (Mat. 8:5-13).

How I admire our wonderful Lord and Christ for walking rough shod over the worthless traditions and hypocritic bigotry of prideful and self-righteous men, pausing to minister with compassion and mercy even to the dogs that crossed His pathway. Jesus moved for the dogs! Let everyone who has ears to hear stop and take earnest heed, for these examples reveal powerfully to us the *heart* of our Lord toward the dogs, which also must be the heart of all who become the *sons of God*. And now, in our present text, we come across the “*dogs*” once more. “For without are *dogs*.” Ah, the Canaanite woman was from beyond the borders of God’s favored nation, outside the camp she was but a dog, despised, maligned, hated, cut off from every blessing. But she cried out of her despair and the compassionate Christ received her! Little wonder, then, that once we are shown the dogs outside the city, almost immediately we hear the heavenly sound — how wonderful are the words of our Saviour that come out of the heavens of God’s Spirit: “And the Spirit and the bride say, *Come*. And let him that heareth say, *Come*. And let him that is athirst *come*. And *whosoever will*, let him take the water of life *freely!*” The gates of the city are open, though the dogs are without, blessed are they who *wash their robes* that they may enter through the gates of the city. Do you not see what the Lord is saying? Even the dogs — all they have to do is wash their robes! Methinks that as the Canaanite dog got her bread from the Master’s table, so shall a vast multitude of dogs from the outer darkness of sin and death come to the banks of the river of life to drink deeply of the all-sufficient supply that shall meet their every need! Oh, the wonder of it! Oh, the mystery of it!

THE MORNING STAR

“I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and *the bright and morning star*” (Rev. 22:16).

Oh, yes, there is a dense and dreadful darkness outside the city, a darkness inhabited by dogs, sorcerers, whoremongers, murderers, idolaters, and liars. But in the very next breath we hear our Lord's gracious words of hope, proclaiming, "I am the bright and morning star!" The morning star is a symbol. The rising sun is a symbol. The morning star comes before the sun. It gives no shattering, awakening signs of its coming. It appears at the hour when the night is disputing with the morn. It comes when all the lowlands are shrouded in depths of darkness, when the mountain peaks stand out against a tremulous sky, and the myriad stars seem like the eyes of watchers waiting for the dawn. It shines with noiseless softness upon the earth, like a golden lamp let down by an invisible chain. It poises itself for a brief moment on the rim of the night and the rim of the morning, like a note of unuttered song. It quivers there for a space as though it were a tear from the eye of God, sorrowing that so many should sleep and miss the breath-taking transition from the darkness into light. Then it disappears and the earth seems full of a strange hush.

Then there are mists that rise like wraiths above the streams. Shadows and shapes come and go. Voices are calling to each other. Things are in motion and undefined. The star has come and gone and the interval between the star and the sun is on. The sun comes after the star is gone, or the star disappears because of the surpassing glory of the sun. The sun comes like one who has a bow, and he goes forth conquering and to conquer. He shoots his gleaming arrows upward and they fall slanting into the eyes of men to awaken them. All the land is flooded and drowned in light, and every mountain, every valley is disclosed. These symbols have been applied by divine authority to the coming of Christ. Do you enquire what is the Morning Star? It is the Lord Jesus Christ! And what is the sun of righteousness that rises with healing in its rays? It is the Lord Jesus Christ, but the Lord Jesus seen, experienced, and known in a totally different dimension. The symbols proclaim it. The coming of Christ is compared to the Morning Star. He comes to us, He comes to all, like that bright and morning star! He is the herald, the harbinger of the full dawn of a new day! He comes while the darkness of our carnal minds is disputing with the morn of holiness and truth. He comes when all the base emotions and desires of the flesh are in deepest darkness and we suppose that the night is the norm. He comes when all our self-will, self-centeredness, pride, and ego stand in contrast to the heavenly ways and divine will of the precious mind that is in Christ Jesus. He appears in noiseless beauty as the star of the morning, gently indicating to us an imminent change, a transformation, that the morning comes, a new day dawns; it is the pledge of the promise, purpose, and faithfulness of God! It is intermingled with the first rays of the light of the sun, it comes as a herald to announce the arrival of a light so bright and so powerful and so glorious that all must be transformed before it.

So what do we see — when does the morning star appear in the natural world? Just before the dawning of the day! Who sees it? The one who has been moving in the dark and dreary hours of the night. Anyone acquainted with natural things, or who has traveled by night, knows that the appearance of the morning star is hailed as the intimation that day is at hand. In the morning darkness it shines with a most wondrous, clear, silver light, dazzling as a gem of rarest hue. Someone once wrote: "At 4:00 A.M. I

awakened and looked out my window which was half covered by frost, and half was clear, and there I saw the bright morning star. As I lay there for a while beholding the brilliance and beauty of that star, I slipped away into sleep. When I awoke again the brilliance of the sun flooded my room.” Is it not thus with God’s Christ, with God’s Day? Now we see Christ, the bright and morning star, the firstfruit, the forerunner, the prototype, the sample and first specimen of what God has purposed and planned *for each and every man and woman of Adam’s race*. The bright and morning star! The star of hope that tells us that the long night of sin and death is almost over, and the Day is not far hence, a Day so bright that all the peoples and nations shall walk in its light and even the dogs will hear the sound of His voice, calling, “*Whosoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely.*”

How plain, how practical the application! There is a remnant of God’s people over the whole earth that has taken heed to the word of this prophecy as to a light that shines in a dark place. We have Jesus’ own word for it — HE HIMSELF is the Morning Star — and that Morning Star has shined in our hearts, foretelling the approach of Eternal Day at the arising of the Sun of Righteousness. This remnant has fixed their eyes on Jesus, they are looking away from all the darkness of this world, from the chaos of sin, sickness, pain, rebellion, crime, drugs, tyranny, war, hatred, injustice, fear, and death stalking the earth; and they are looking away from the seeming hopeless carnality of their own lives, away from people, away from politicians, away from limitation, from everything to the Everlasting Hills of God.

There is to be a restoration! Today we see a terrible lack of things being right, or in divine order. There is a divine order for creation, an order of life and harmony. There is a proper order for animal life, vegetable life, and human life. There is a proper order for every planet, for every world, for every life form throughout the infinite stretches of space. But all things are out of order, in frightful chaos. The curse must be lifted, every enemy put under our feet. All creation is groaning and crying for release from the bondage of sin, decay, and death. And everything hinges on that body of *sons* that is to be manifested in that perfect state of divine order. Jesus is the Morning Star proclaiming the soon arising of the Sun. Christ glorified in His many-membered body, the increase, expansion, and intensification of that *Light of Life* which *He is*, is the ARISING OF THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WITH HEALING IN HIS RAYS BRINGING THE GLORY OF THE DAWN! Those who receive of His fullness of life, nature, victory, and glory, who put on His wonderful mind, who are conformed to His glorious image, with a full and complete triumph over sin, carnality, and death — these make up that blessed company of the Sun of Righteousness that shall shine His penetrating Light of Life upon all men and all things.

Praise God that we are living in the times of this restoration. It is the greatest day in the long history of man. It is at hand. I know it’s at hand because heaven has spoken and I see a people being pressed and processed into the very life of God. Not only you and me, but all creation as well will thrill to what God brings about in this grand and glorious restoration! “The creation itself *also* shall be delivered from the

bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God” (Rom. 8:21). The testimony of scripture, as well as the witness of the Spirit, makes us know that this is not for some other, distant age. It is now! It is here! I see the Morning Star bright and luminous in the heavens of the Spirit of God! Be ready! Prepare yourself! Cast aside all doubt and fear! Today it is the Morning Star, tomorrow it will be the Sun of Righteousness! The nations outside the city, and even the dogs in the outer darkness, shall come to the light of God’s great Day! Great is the mystery!

To be continued...

J. PRESTON EBY

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