

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 167

THE THREE ANGELS' MESSAGES (continued)

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven...saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters” (Rev. 14:6-7).

It is of great interest to note that in the fourteenth chapter of the Revelation the Spirit reveals a scene of *cause* and *effect*. The *cause* is found in verses one through five where we see the 144,000 upon mount Zion in the fullness, glory, authority, and power of sonship to God. The manchild is now upon the throne! The overcoming sons of God are now ready to reign upon God’s holy hill of Zion! The stage is set. No sooner are God’s kings and priests raised up to their place of rulership than the curtain goes up on the first act in the great drama of sonship ministry. May the Holy Spirit aid our understanding to grasp the blessed truth that everything from here on is the *effect* or the *result* of that ministry! As we consider with reverent hearts the great purpose and magnitude of sonship ministry we can now think of all else that follows in the book of Revelation as the RESULT OF THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD!

Some years ago the Lord gave our dear friend, Danny Crofts, a vision which embodies within it the very message of the above passage of scripture. Danny wrote, “I saw a great mountain, which was an active volcano, with people joined together around the rim. There was an earthquake, resulting in explosions,

boiling lava, and fire shooting in all directions. The people were dancing around the fire, praising and worshipping all this, especially the power of the earthquake. I then saw a lightning bolt come down from heaven and strike the mountain, which scattered and destroyed it, also scattering all the people. Out of the thunder of the lightning came a voice, saying, *The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.*"

Ah, how the people of God love to worship the *things* of God more than *God Himself*. Without doubt that is the message in the vision. Many worship the mighty acts of God — following after signs, wonders, and miracles, but do not hear the voice of the Lord and have no true worship of the Lord in spirit and in truth. Others pay homage to personalities, to creeds, to programs, rituals, ceremonies, and ordinances, to organizations, movements, and outreaches — bowing at the false altars of the externals of religion, while falling short of that *true worship* which is focused and centered in HIM ALONE.

This brings us back to the message of the first angel. Remember, dear one, the angel (sons of God) is addressing the *leaders* and *rulers* of the carnal church systems of man! "Having the gospel of the ages to proclaim to those who *sit upon* (rule over) the earth-dwellers and over every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people...saying with a loud voice...WORSHIP HIM!" The angel first commands these "kings of the earth" or lords of the earth-realm to FEAR GOD AND GIVE GLORY TO HIM. But there is an added qualification. "WORSHIP HIM that *made* heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."

All who have followed these studies in the Revelation for a time realize that "heaven," "earth," "sea," and "fountains of waters" are all wonderful symbols of different realms where men dwell spiritually. "Heaven" signifies that spiritual people that dwells in the heavenly or exalted places in Christ Jesus, those who have ascended spiritually into the high places of the heavens of God's Spirit. "Earth" signifies the carnal-minded Christians who, though saved, think carnally and understand with the natural mind and mind earthly things. These are not occupied with those things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God, nor are they enjoying those spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ. Rather than spiritual blessings in the heavenlies, they seek temporal blessings in the earthlies — blessings of prosperity and health, of houses, lands, bank accounts, automobiles, food, and raiment. Their concern is with God's provision in this perishable realm. They are earth-dwellers.

The "sea" represents the surging, raging masses of unregenerated humanity, the "wicked who are like the troubled sea" tossed about by the base emotions, passions, lusts, and fears of the flesh. "Fountains of waters," from the earthly side, bespeak the *sources*, the well-springs of ideas, concepts, philosophies, teachings, precepts, traditions, customs, culture, imaginations, carnal knowledge, and worldly wisdom which flow out of man's earthly, natural, human life — all the intellectual, moral, and religious influences of *this world* which are the sources from which men draw their life, their natural joy and soulical refreshment, their world views, lifestyles, and relationships.

The message is just this — don't worship anything in heaven or that comes from heaven (the acts of God, etc), don't worship or pay homage to anything of the carnal earth-realm, don't esteem anything in the sea, and don't reverence anything that flows out of the fountains of the soulical, natural life. Don't be captivated or controlled by, enamored with, caught up in, or absorbed by anything pertaining to these — for it is GOD WHO CREATED ALL THINGS — GOD MADE ALL THESE REALMS AND EVERYTHING THEREIN — **WORSHIP HIM WHO MADE THEM!** Or, as Danny Crott's vision tells us, don't worship the mountain, the earthquake, or the fire — worship the God that made them!

If you are star-struck by some charismatic preacher or some dynamic kingdom teacher, get your eyes off of him, for it is God who made him — **worship God who made him!** If your life is centered around a particular doctrine (even sonship, reconciliation, or kingdom), and all you can do is eat, drink, and sleep that doctrine, and especially argue about it, perhaps you are “worshipping” the doctrine rather than the God of the doctrine! This is the spirit of Babylonish religion — to pay homage to great preachers, beautiful edifices, powerful institutions, impressive programs, influential movements and organizations, to position, status, abilities, and talents — always centered in the outward, in the effect rather than the cause. The natural mind is ever seeking something visible and tangible. Throughout the centuries in the life of the church systems they have accumulated a great number of traditions, rites, ordinances, methods, institutions, and practices, each of them supplanting something of the pureness and freshness and glory of the Spirit of Christ. These things have become so universal in the churches of the world, and in the lives of their members, that there is no thought of ever being able to “run” the church and its business without them!

Generation after generation, people have been raised up from childhood in this atmosphere and have absolutely no knowledge of anything else or another way. It never enters the minds of these people that THE CHRIST is the Head of the church, He is the life of the church, and the whole sufficiency for the church, its people, its work, and its needs. Each church must be constantly creating new plans, programs, and activities to keep the people busy “doing something.” The idea is to keep the people busy and to keep up the interest, so that they may be kept in that church. In the church world such a church is known as a “lively” church, and the pastor is known as one of the more “successful” pastors. Spirituality has little, if anything, to do with it, for the whole group, including the pastor and the church leaders, is simply a natural body of people, carrying on what *they think* is a church.

If all the multiplied superfluous things employed by the churches today *were suddenly swept away*, it would in all probability *cease to function!* If all the preachers and priests were compelled to lay aside their robes and their trappings, they would lose much of their stature, prestige, and eminence. If they had to tear down their altars and elevated platforms, lay aside their professionalism and showmanship, and throw out their statues, candles, incense, and prayer books, their services would lose their sentimental sense of beauty and pageantry. If the churches had to drop all their rituals, forms, programs, ceremonies, confirmations, baptisms, communions, special singing, organ music, and altar calls, they would feel as though they had been stripped naked and could not serve God in any way. All this simply demonstrates the terrible fact that the faith and dependence of the churches is NOT IN GOD, but is in the trappings that they have accumulated to themselves through the centuries. The thought that God is perfectly able to run His church without the aid of anything in the way of man’s contributions, is found to be abhorrent to the average church member.

Oh, my beloved brother, my precious sister, men do not need religion. They need CHRIST! They do not need to know doctrine. They need to KNOW HIM! They do not need to perform ritual. They need to EXPERIENCE CHRIST! They do not need to follow signs, wonders, and miracles. They need to FOLLOW THE LAMB! This is why God sends His “flying angel company” in the power of the Spirit to announce to the leaders and rulers of the church systems that the hour has come when they must **FEAR GOD, AND GIVE THE GLORY TO HIM...AND WORSHIP HIM THAT MADE HEAVEN, AND EARTH, AND THE SEA, AND THE FOUNTAINS OF WATERS!** Get rid of all the trappings out of every realm that have been added, and worship the Father in spirit and in truth!

The message of the first angel, that is, the very *first message* to the leaders of Christendom from the manifest sons of God is that they must fear God and give all the glory to Him and worship Him that *made* all the things have been so important to them and which they have been worshiping (esteeming, reverencing)

in place of Him. It is the rebuke of the superficiality and blasphemy of *external religion*, and a call back to *reality in the spirit!* And God will deliver this message through His sons when they have found their place in the heights of the authority, power, and glory of Zion. The work is being wrought in them first, for they are the *firstfruits!*

For many centuries now we have been taught to believe that God has in His word commanded us again and again to worship Him, but the real truth is that God has never demanded our worship. God doesn't need anything. Many misunderstandings of the nature of God come from our desire to transfer human attributes to God. God does not seek praise the way humans do. The difficulty with people seeking adoration is that they usually want acclaim they don't deserve. Flattery and insincerity characterize such empty tribute. These have no part in the praise and worship of God! Heartfelt praise of God is not exaggeration or flattery. Nor is it a response to what we feel is our "duty" toward God, that which He expects or demands from us. When we praise God, we are merely telling the truth about His greatness, and in true worship it is our spontaneous response to our experience or revelation of His goodness, graciousness, love, faithfulness, and greatness toward us. It is impossible for us to exaggerate about God's mercy, love, holiness, and power! It is impossible to overstate His greatness. God is deserving of our praise and worship. "*For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise*" (Ps. 96:4). "*O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For He is our God; and we are the people of His pasture*" (Ps. 95:6-7). "*You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things*" (Rev. 4:11).

But all the praise is not telling God something He doesn't already know. Yet, He doesn't suffer from a sense of inadequacy, *needing* to be reminded continually of how great He is to feel good about Himself! Many years ago the Lord spoke suddenly and powerfully to me, saying, "**I HAVE NOT COMMANDED YOU TO PRAISE ME OR WORSHIP ME!**" I was astonished at this word, incredulous, speechless! According to my understanding I was absolutely certain that God *had* repeatedly *commanded* us to worship Him! I rushed home, got my Concordance, and began a search of all the scriptures on praise and worship. How clearly then the truth dawned on me! Yes — we are commanded to praise and worship — but the command was not issued by GOD! Instead, *men of God*, caught up in the Spirit of God, beholding the splendor and majesty of God, cried out in spirit, "*Praise ye the Lord...O let us come and worship before Him!*" Quickly I discerned the pattern. It is not God speaking in the first person, proclaiming, "I command you — worship me!" Oh, no! There is no such command anywhere in the Word. God speaks of worship and praise, but not in terms of an imperative. It is always the man of God, with the veil drawn back from his vision, getting a glimpse of the Lord of Glory, as the prophet Isaiah said, "*In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw the Lord...high and lifted up,*" — that is the beginning of worship! We could easily understand how God who made us could order us to do what He wants us to do. After all, He is our Creator! We could even understand how He could command us to say what we should say or even to think what He would have us to think. And He does, indeed, do that. But, to go into that innermost closet, that deepest recess of the human heart, that seat of our love and affection, and say that we *must love*, and to command us *to love*; and to say that we *must praise*, and to command us *to praise*; and to say that we *must worship*, and to command us *to worship*, is obviously a contradiction in terms.

Yea, it is more than that! Were God to command us to praise and worship Him He would thereby display the most proud, egotistical, conceited, self-centered, narcissistic, self-aggrandizing, and vainglorious personality in the universe! Have you never met an egoistic, self-seeking person reeking with the odor of their own self-importance? I have known men who were obsessed with their importance and power who

manipulated others to constantly fawn before them and heap flattery upon them. There is something in me that has always detested such and found them among the most despicable specimens of manhood. Shall we now attribute such contemptible characteristics to our great and glorious God? Can you imagine saying to anyone, "Thou shalt love me!" "Thou shalt adore me!" "Thou shalt praise me!" "Thou shalt not cease in telling me how wonderful I am!" We have the idea that God is good and knows He's good; that God is holy and knows He's holy; that God is great and knows He's great; that God is omnipotent and knows He's omnipotent; therefore He is justified in commanding our respect, love, praise, and worship. But that is humanism — God profiled in the image of man!

The question follows — What is worship? Ah, worship is simply man's *response* to the REVELATION OF GOD! When we see God we will worship Him and our worship will be in direct proportion to the clarity of our vision of Him. When I see my sweet, beautiful wife I adore her and tell her how lovely and wonderful she is — not because she commands me to — should I praise her because she requires it my praise would be feigned. In like manner, God has no need to command us to worship — He reveals Himself for what He is. The response of all who behold the King in His beauty is the same — the revelation redounds in blessing and honor and glory unto God because we discover Him to be *worthy*! Worship is man's response, not God's command. And the response of the man unto whom the Lord has truly unveiled Himself is as natural and spontaneous as breathing.

So here in our text it is not our almighty Father commanding men to worship Him. Rather, it is the "flying angel company," the sons of God, the redeemed ones, the processed ones who have been given the fullest revelation of God who now send forth their word to the rulers of religious Babylon who have set up all their man-made idols for the people to bow down to. And their word is "**WORSHIP HIM THAT MADE HEAVEN, AND EARTH, AND THE SEA, AND THE FOUNTAINS OF WATERS! WORSHIP HIM!**" This is the cry out of the heart of men and women who have seen Him face to face and know that HE is the *only reality*! To reverence or serve anything other than the Father Himself in spirit and in truth is idolatry and abomination! And yet the truth of our text runs deeper than this. For not only is it a command from the sons of God to worship God, it is also through them a MIGHTY REVELATION OF GOD TO THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH WORLD — for only the revelation of God can evoke the response of worship from the hearts of men! Oh, the depth of the mystery!

BABYLON IS FALLEN!

"And there followed *another angel*, saying, **Babylon is fallen, is fallen**, that great city, because she made all nations to drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication" (Rev. 14:8).

John, who describes this scene, had seen some strange sights in his day. There was that time just before the crucifixion of Jesus when the apostle Peter with one powerful sword stroke clipped off the ear of the servant of the high priest, whose name was Malchus. John had watched with wonder as Jesus reached down and picked up the severed ear, stepping forth and replacing it on the head of the servant, healing it so that it was as normal as the one on the other side of his head. He could hardly believe his eyes! He had witnessed five little loaves of bread and two small fish multiplied to feed a crowd of more than five thousand people — with twelve baskets of leftovers! He had seen hopeless cripples running and jumping up and down in joy at being healed, dead people raised to life again, storms instantly quieted by a single command from the Master! And, if tradition can be trusted, John even experienced being thrown into a cauldron of

boiling oil, and crawled out without a blister!

Yes, John had definitely seen some amazing sights. But I do not doubt that, as unusual and astounding as were the things John's eyes had beheld, including the resurrection and ascension of our Lord, watching the vision of three powerful angels flying across the sky in formation, John must have been excited. Not only did he *see* them, but he *heard* them as well, for each had a message to announce to the world. After the first angel delivered his message to the "kings of the earth," or the rulers of the earth-realm, John heard the voice of the second angel reverberating across the sky. "*Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink of the wine of her impure passion!*" (Rev. 14:8, RSV). That's all the angel said, but my, what depth of meaning there is in the words!

This truth regarding the fall of Babylon is one of the most important and significant truths of this present hour in which we live. This truth is first introduced in the book of Revelation here in our text. It is connected to the proclamation of the "gospel of the ages," and the proclamations of the "three angels," and is also the subject of much of the remainder of the Revelation. One of the names of Babylon is "Mystery," as well as "Babylon the great." This great "city" or "organized system" is referred to as "the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." And because she is a mystery, spiritual discernment and understanding is required to know who she is and our responsibility in relation to that harlot system.

Throughout the entire history of the church, from time to time a remnant of the Lord's people have received the revelation of the Holy Spirit that "Babylon is fallen" just as the angel declares in our text. She is "fallen" not only because the word of scripture says so, but because the HOLY SPIRIT HAS REVEALED THAT FACT. Now, for something to be "fallen" does not mean that it no longer exists, or that it has disappeared from the earth. A thing can be "fallen" and yet continue to exist in that fallen state. Actually, "fallen" describes the state or condition of something that *does* exist! People used to speak of a "fallen" woman as a woman who had left the purity of her life and become a prostitute. We all know that Adam and all mankind in him is in a "fallen" state according to the scriptures and the revelation of the Holy Spirit. In chapters seventeen and eighteen we read of the "judgment" of the harlot, Babylon, and that she will be "burned with fire" and symbolically "cast into the sea" to be found no more. Those scenes speak of the *destruction* of Babylon, but not her "fall." Babylon remains to be judged and destroyed, but Babylon "fell" long centuries ago when the church apostatized from the truth and became the fallen woman, the great harlot and the mother of harlots. Can you not see the difference? The harlot system of religious Babylon is in a fallen state as much as anything in the universe is fallen. She doesn't appear to men to be fallen, for she claims to be "the church" and her outward appearance is that of the representative of our Lord Jesus Christ. Beloved, make no mistake about it, BABYLON IS FALLEN, and the whole church system of man is religious Babylon! She is an unclean, perverted woman! Until we see clearly this difference between "fallen" Babylon and "destroyed" Babylon we will miss the message of the second angel!

Irrefutable confirmation that this is the true meaning of the statement "Babylon is fallen," is found in Revelation 18:1-6 wherein we read, "*And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage (container) of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven , saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and*

that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double..."

It must be made clear to our hearts that these verses present us with a description of Babylon in her “fallen” state — she is full of devils, she is possessed by every kind of foul religious spirit, and is like a cage full of unclean and hateful birds, or manifestations of unrighteousness and spiritual impurity. Because of this fallen condition the Lord’s people are admonished to “come out of her” in order that they might not “be partakers of her sins” and “receive not of her plagues.” If her fallen state signified her collapse or destruction, God’s people would no longer be in her because she would no longer exist as an institution, nor would they be leaving her so as not to receive of her plagues, for the plagues would have already been poured out. But “fallen” Babylon has *not yet* been rewarded for her iniquities, *nor* has she been burned with fire, *nor* has she received double for all her sins, *nor* has she been cast into the depths of the sea never to be found again! Armed with this knowledge we can now understand the great truth that this cry, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen,” refers not to the judgment or destruction of the system, but rather to the *spiritual condition* of that system in the present.

When the second angel delivers his message, there is a mighty move of the Spirit of God and the scales begin to fall from the eyes of the leaders of Babylon who have already awakened to the fact that they should fear God and give all the glory to Him, and worship HIM, not the religious traditions, exercises, works, and practices they have valued so highly. Though they realize there needs to be a change in focus, they still have not seen the system for what it really is — a corrupt, fallen *whore!* Now the revelation breaks powerfully within their consciousness as to just how carnal, corrupt, abominable, and devilish that whole religious system is! What a revelation that is! And beloved, it *takes* a revelation from God to see Babylon for what it is! The second angel’s message, or the *second authoritative word* from the manifest sons of God to the Lord’s people who have served as *slaves* in the captivity of religious Babylon is just this: “**Babylon is fallen, is fallen!**” That is the mystery. The destruction of the Babylon system finally takes place in chapters seventeen and eighteen of the book of Revelation — *because it is fallen!*

The firstfruits of His redemption, the called and chosen elect of the Lord, who are the sons of God, are those who now have ears to hear what the Spirit is saying, and hearing, they have obeyed the Lord, forsaking Babylon. And as the elect of God forsakes Babylon, we then come to Zion, according to the word of the Lord: “*In those days, and in that time saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come...and weeping they shall go, and seek the Lord their God, THEY SHALL ASK THE WAY TO ZION with their faces thitherward (or toward the presence of the Lord), saying, Come, and let us join ourselves TO THE LORD in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten. My people hath been LOST SHEEP: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, and they have turned away on the mountains (the kingdoms of men): they have gone from mountain to hill, THEY HAVE FORGOTTEN THEIR RESTING PLACE. All that found them have devoured them: and their adversaries said, We offend not, because they have sinned against the Lord...the hope of their fathers. REMOVE OUT OF THE MIDST OF BABYLON...*” (Jer. 50:5-8).

Where do we go, when we come out of Babylon? We go to Zion, the holy and blessed hill of the Lord’s habitation. Why have the Lord’s people gone astray as *lost sheep*, running from mountain to hill, from church to church, from revival to revival, from move to move? Because their shepherds have caused them to go astray, and they all have forgotten their resting place *in God and in His habitation of Zion!* Why have the enemies of the Lord’s people “devoured them” and troubled them among the religious kingdoms of men? Because God’s people have “sinned against the Lord” in finding a counterfeit habitation in

Babylon. And what is God's answer to this transgression? "**FLEE YE OUT OF THE MIDST OF BABYLON!**" And inasmuch as the Lord has been calling His firstfruits company out of religious Babylon, we know from that that He is restoring His people in a right and proper relationship with Him in preparation for the manifestation of the sons of God. And we know also by this that in due time GOD WILL DELIVER ALL HIS PEOPLE OUT OF BABYLON, AND HE WILL BEGIN WITH THE SHEPHERDS — those who led the people astray will now lead them *with tears of repentance and great brokenness and weeping* back to Zion! Aren't you glad!

THE WINE OF HER FORNICATION

"And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations *drink of the wine of her fornication*" (Rev. 14:8).

In the ancient world all the major religions of the gods of Babylon, Greece, and Rome joined pagan worshippers to demons through sexual intercourse with religious (temple) prostitutes and sodomites. History reveals that such vile creatures, because they were in the service of demons, under their will, and actually indwelt by demon-deities, were called by the ancients, "holy ones," meaning "sanctified" or "set apart ones" unto the false god. They were "sanctified" or "set apart" by the will, presence, and nature of unclean spirits. Christians who had once engaged in those shameful practices before being delivered from the adversary's clutches by faith in the Lord Jesus and the washing of regeneration knew that the practical result of their sanctification unto the Lord was abstinence from fornication (I Thes. 4:4). The indwelling Christ, who of God is made unto us "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption" enables each to "know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor, not in the lust of sensuality even as the pagans who know not God." We know that our bodies are the "temple of the Holy Spirit," and that fornication (physical or spiritual) is a formal act of turning ourselves over to the control of an alien power. Uncleanliness is actually "**SANCTIFICATION UNTO THE FLESH**" — separation unto the flesh and sensuality! The calling of the believer, therefore, is to purity of life that he might be wholly sanctified *unto the Lord* in attitude and action, in body and spirit.

The "fornication" of religious Babylon is a *symbol*, not the fornication of the flesh, but something spiritual, a joining on a religious plane to that which is not Christ. Women in the Revelation are likewise symbolic, either positively of the bride of Christ, or negatively of the soul, or of religious organizations and activities which are *soulical* rather than *spiritual*. These are those ministries, and multiplied millions of believers, who daily sow their seed, deposit their spiritual life of Christ, into man-made religious systems, mingling the reality of Christ with the traditions and commandments of men, joining themselves to carnal programs, promotions, methods, and worldly religious activities, as well as with the political systems and governments of the world, satisfying their own soulish appetites and lusts in the name of the Lord. It is *spiritual fornication!* The church is imitating the world! The church schedule is packed with flesh-appeal programs and activities that run day and night. They feel that unless every night of the week is taken up with some sort of activity, the ministry is an ineffective thing. They have the strange idea that nothing is being done unless someone is talking! So they fairly swarm to conferences, seminars, workshops, committee meetings, platform discussions, concerts, plays, programs and outreaches of many kinds.

It is distasteful to have to admit it, but the plain truth is that the vast majority of Christians live their lives in *soulish lusts*. The further truth is that God's purposes are not accomplished by intellect and soulical

activity! The church systems go forward today like a little Samson shorn of his locks of power. It parades up and down, boasting of its accomplishments, and like Samson, it knows not that the Spirit of God has departed from it. But even as Saul and his armies tremble in fear before the mighty Goliath, the Lord is raising up a little David with a sling shot of the spirit of sonship to meet the enemy with all of his stratagems and come off with a mighty victory! The David company is still in preparation, far out in the solitude of the green pastures of a living word, and beside the still waters of the quickening spirit, learning by faith and obedience to slay their bear and kill their lion. But we are gaining new victories every day and learning within ourselves the power of God and the ways of His kingdom! Saul's armor will not do! The sons of God are being prepared to step forth in the majesty of the name of the Lord God of Israel! The preparation does not take place with the seven brothers who appear so tall, handsome, articulate, charismatic, and accomplished, nor in the hustle and bustle of the streets of Bethlehem, but *alone with God* in the pastures of HIS choosing, outside the camp, in the secret place of the Most High!

Amid all the religious ruckus of the hour, and all the fuss of those who run after many lovers, fornicating with the flesh, the world, and the carnal mind, there is a *little flock* that has climbed the mount with Jesus. They care not for the flamboyant humbug of the gaudy harlot's house, but, having beheld the glories of the kingdom afar off, they are pressing through surging waves of flesh-oriented believers to *come apart* to receive instruction from the King of the kingdom. At His feet they hear the call to the heavenly mark and find a door opened for them to enter in and lay hold upon the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

These are they who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth! They lean hard upon Christ! They keep themselves unto Him, and to Him alone! They are not enticed by the heady wine of the harlot's house, with its numbing of the spiritual senses and its unrestrained passion and sensuality. As the hart pants after the water brooks, so pant their souls after God! The spirit of sonship to God dwells within them! They are partakers of His mind! They have been given the knowledge of His will! They comprehend His great plan and purpose in the earth, in His sons, and throughout the unbounded universe! They have laid aside every weight and the sin which does so easily beset them! They are running the race with patience! They esteem the hope that is set before them higher than all the pleasures of Egypt and greater far than the prestige of Babylon! They are patient in tribulation, knowing that through much tribulation we shall inherit the kingdom! They continue instant in prayer to God, and He comforts them and upholds them with the right hand of His righteousness! To them the voice of the Father speaks in words of everlasting hope and assurance, "Fear not, *little flock*; for it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Isn't it wonderful!

Jonathan Mitchell stated it so well when he wrote, "The figure of the *drinking of the wine* speaks of participating in something that has an effect upon you. Here it signifies participating in the strong passion of her prostitution, which effected a departure from God and an entering into her sins. It causes a drunkenness, a stupor, to come upon the peoples who participate with her. They cannot think clearly, and are led astray like the fool."

The wise man said, "*Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise*" (Prov. 29:1). This is not talking about a glass of wine with your meal. "Deceived" infers inebriation, intoxication, besotted, liquored up — *drunk*. It could be rendered, "*whosoever is inebriated thereby is a fool.*" It is inebriating wine, wine that excites the passions leading to fornication — spiritual uncleanness. Furthermore, Babylon's wine is called, "The wine of the *wrath* of her fornication." Does "wrath" mean the harlot is practicing her fornication in a state of anger, rage, vindictiveness, and

vengeance? Not at all! The word “wrath” in our text is from the Greek word *thumos*, and surprisingly Strong’s Concordance gives as the basic meaning of this word, “breathing hard, passion.” This word, and another Greek word, *orge*, meaning “desire, excitement, passion,” are also used of the “wrath” of GOD. Why haven’t the preachers told us this before! Now, I ask, who ever heard of wrath being sweet and intoxicating *like wine!* And who would ever think of the sensual pleasures of fornication as being angry, vengeful, full of fury and violence! But when we consider the true meaning of the word *thumos* it becomes very clear — “For all nations have drunk of the *wine of the passion* of her fornication.” What a difference that makes! People who have sex are caught up in *passion* — not *anger!* The King James translation makes no sense at all. The correct rendering signifies that the people of the nations have been “high” on the passion and excitement of the harlot activities of Babylon!

The apostate church has been given false teaching and has become drunk with it. She doesn’t even know the truth because she’s drunk! When people are drunk they lack perception; they’re deceived; they cannot see or reason clearly. As long as men are inflamed by the heady wine of Babylon’s seductions, they are not free to either know or love the truth. Those who are drunk on the false teachings in Babylon are so totally confused that they mistake “heresy” for “orthodoxy.” They are so drunk on these false doctrines that they suppose that eternal damnation in hell-fire for the vast majority of men who have lived and died on this planet is the pure, unadulterated Word of God! In their eyes *you* are the heretic if you suggest otherwise! They are so drunk that when they read of the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, with a street of gold, a river of life, the tree of life, and the throne of God, they mistake the *symbol* for the *reality* and drunkenly imagine that this city is *heaven as a place* and that they will one day own a mansion, a robe, and a crown somewhere on Hallelujah Boulevard! They are so drunk that in their stupor they are quite sure that the Bible clearly teaches that they are going to heaven in a “rapture” and everyone else will be “left behind” to face the horrors of the antichrist and the great tribulation. I do not hesitate to add that you *have* to be drunk to find that teaching in the scriptures! Others, in their state of intoxication, confuse law and grace, thinking that we are still under the Old Testament laws of meats and drinks, holy days, sabbaths, and various other things. Many, many nations have committed fornication with the wanton harlot. I love my own country, the United States of America, but she is in bed with the harlot just like most other countries. Almost everyone you meet is religious, but you have only to discuss spiritual matters for a very few minutes to discover just how drunk they are on the teachings of Babylon! America is not serving God, she is consorting with the harlot’s house. There is more freedom of conscience and worship in America than in many nations, and for this we are indeed thankful, but she’s still part of the harlot system for her fornications have infiltrated all nations. The wine that all nations have drunk is the wine of false teaching and false religious practices!

The symbol of the drunkenness of the nations is one that is found frequently in the Old Testament. If men are drunken they are no longer themselves. They are turned into something less than human and their drunkenness brings in its train misery, sorrow, poverty, degradation, and shame. One writer has pointed out that it is very interesting to note that in Japanese they have, to describe different types of drunkenness, the different names of animals. If a man is just filthy drunk, the Japanese call him pig-drunk; if he’s just so drunk that he wants to cut capers, they call him monkey-drunk; if he’s just so drunk that he wants to make love to every woman he sees, they call him rooster-drunk; if he wants to fight everyone he sees, they call him lion-drunk, and so on. This symbol of the bestiality or fleshliness of drunkenness is found throughout the whole of the Bible.

The ministers of Babylon give their flocks to drink of the wine of the *passion* of her fornication —

a mixture of truth and error, of spirit and flesh, of the ways of God and the ways of the world, which like any intoxicant, numbs the sensibilities, and causes him who drinks to turn from purity, truth, and singleness of heart. Babylon, the great Old Testament kingdom which offered the worship of idols with gross sensuality, is used by the Spirit in our text to symbolize the church systems of man, which, like the Jewish nation in the days of Christ, mix the philosophy, methods, and spirit of the world with the truth of God, and offer this wine to men in the place of the living word of God and the mind of Christ. The church which does this, realizes its inability to reach the souls of men, and employs the flaming passion of the harlot to seduce the people, utilizing all kinds of flesh-appeal activities, religious forms, programs, entertainment, social and political action, and in some countries even the coercive power of the state, to suck men into the orgy of her sin. There is a form of godliness, but no power therein. "Babylon is fallen, is fallen," cries the angel!

We have passed through a time of great darkness. But thank God, the first rays of light of a new day are painting the eastern sky! Thank God, a few of His chosen ones have arisen to behold the glories of the dawn and to drink in the exhilarating freshness of the morn. But the popular churches are still lost in dreams. They have not awakened. They know not of the dawn. They have not yet heard the messages of the flying angel company. And the scripture describes them and their shepherds in very uncomplimentary terms. The heads of the churches are called "the drunkards of Ephraim" (Isa. 28:1-4). Then in Isaiah 29:9-11 we are told, "*They are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your heads...hath He covered. And all vision hath become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed.*" And when these drunken shepherds spread tables for their flocks, instead of those tables being loaded with good wholesome spiritual food, the prophet says, "*ALL tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean*" (Isa. 28:8).

But those who are of the Day, who are not lovers of the drunkenness of religious teachings and promotions, nor sleepers of the night, have a higher heritage. "*We are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others*" (I Thes. 5:5-6). All who in this significant hour have received the love of the truth are heirs to a higher calling. We have privileges, and we have duties to perform. We must be about our Father's business! It is time to forsake the shame and error, and time to look up, time to arise and shine. The day is at hand. The night is far spent. We must go forth and lead the way for all who will follow. "*Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean*" (Isa. 52:1). Because the church today has not received of God's enlightenment, we find Christians in the pathetic state of darkness. Because Christians today, whether baptized in God's Spirit, or not, have stopped far short of God's fullness, and are still spiritual babes, they, with few exceptions, do not discern the things that pertain to the kingdom of God. Their human minds comprehend the natural side of things, but deep spiritual realities are veiled from their view. They have not arisen above the mists of night. But the Day which we have now entered calls for all who will to awake, and to go forth, beholding the more glorious scene of an **abundant entrance into the kingdom of God!**

The following words by Ray Prinzing bear eloquent testimony to this precious truth. "*May God indeed 'keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger which flattereth with her words — she lieth in wait at every corner. She says, I have peace offerings with me; this day have I paid my vows — come, let us take our fill of love until the morning: let us solace ourselves with loves'* (Prov. 7:7,12,14,18). What an allegory portraying the whole religious harlot system of Babylon, lying wait at every corner (the church

of your choice on every corner) to flatter with their words. They speak of their peace offerings, their quiet communion times. They profess to have paid their vows — fulfilled their good works, done their Christian duty, made their vows to God, offered their sacrifices, and embraced a message of love, tolerance, etc. until they become swampy, without any identifiable marks of purity and holiness. Mix all the sounds and practices of the world into their religion — a little something for everybody, but without reality for anybody. O beloved friend, '*Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths. For she hath cast down many wounded: yes, many strong have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death*' (Prov. 7:25-27).

"There are so many things stated in these passages, which the discerning heart is able to see in many of the religious hucksters of our times. What keen discernment we need when we read of the one seduced by the strange woman (harlot) by the way. '*With much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him*' (Prov. 7:21). How often this has happened even on the most natural basis. By the time they had heaped so much flattery on you, how well you did the job, how necessary you were for the cause, so indispensable, only God could have sent someone like you to them, they had you talked into doing something you had neither inclination, time, energy, or anointing to accomplish, and it was hard to fulfill your promise. Snared with flattery!

"When God has drawn us out, separated us unto Himself, making it clear that Babylon is *fallen* and that we are to flee from her, then someone comes that feels they are called to start another group, and they begin to 'butter you up,' how your talents are needed, your revelation is needed to bring a balance, you can be that solid one which will spur the new ones onward, and on and on they go with your flatteries — until, unless you discern what's happening, you are caught up with '*their vision*' and compromising your own God-given vision. We are not, let us make it very clear, we are not saying you should not be part of some group, nor attend meetings, etc. What we are saying is, we must discern GOD'S WILL FOR OURSELVES, and not allow flattery to snare us into a course of action that is not directed of Him. Simeon 'came by the Spirit into the temple,' (Lk. 2:27) not because someone flattered him on how essential he was to the plan of God.

"Might even go on to point out, some will use flattery to cause you to share your deeper revelations with them, only so that they can use it against you, and turn and rend you with it later. As a leech they will draw out of you that strength and vitality, until you are weary and exhausted. Subtle indeed is the warfare, but God is helping His elect discern when to just keep silent" — end quote.

To be continued...

J. PRESTON EBY