

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 233

THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH
(continued)

“And I saw a *new heaven* and a *new earth*: for the *first heaven* and the *first earth* were *passed away*; and there was no more sea” (Rev. 21:1).

There is no truth within the pages of God’s blessed Book more certain than the fact that God is creating a new heavens and a new earth. Beyond question this is the allegory proclaimed by the Lord to the prophet Isaiah, “I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, THAT I MAY PLANT THE HEAVENS, AND LAY THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE EARTH, and say unto Zion, THOU ART MY PEOPLE” (Isa. 51:16). Zion is a people, the Lord’s elect, and it is in Zion that the Lord plants the heavens of the new spiritual order by His word, and lays the foundations of the new earth wherein He dwells. It is God’s called and chosen elect, His glorious city and mount of Zion, that He sets in the tabernacle of the heavens to be in a settled place, firmly established by His love and grace, secure in the new spirit and the new nature, no more to be lost or wandering in the emptiness of selfhood.

Stand with me for a moment in holy contemplation of these words the Lord spoke to Isaiah. The Lord said that He would plant the heavens and lay the foundations of the earth *in Zion*, His people. But the Lord prefaced this by telling Isaiah *how it would be done!* Hear it! **“I have put my words in thy mouth...that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth.”** It would be accomplished by THE WORD OF THE LORD IN THE MOUTH OF HIS SPOKESMAN! How would you suppose God would create a new heaven and a new earth? How did He create the physical heavens and earth? “And God **said**, *Let there be!*” The apostle Peter tells us that it was “by the **word** of God” that the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water (II Pet. 3:5). John tells us in his Gospel, “In the beginning was **the Word**...all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made” (Jn. 1:1-3). God creates by His word! God creates the new heavens and the new earth with a “*Creative Word*”! He is moving within us in this hour by His revelatory word, His living word, His omnipotent creative word to plant within His elect the new heavens and to lay the foundations of the new earth. This word is nigh us, even in our *mouth* and in our *heart!* (Rom. 10:9-10). This word has no corruption in it at all — it is the incorruptible seed of the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.

It has been made very clear to me by the spirit of truth that the only way God can create within us this new heavens and new earth, in all the splendor of their fullness, is to bring us back to the beginning. When God has finished His work in you, my beloved, He will have taken you back to the beginning — because you are His spoken Word. Not just the Christ in heaven somewhere,

but the Christ within us *is the Word of God!* All that God has done, is doing, and shall yet do in us is by His powerful, omnipotent, living, creative word! How do you think a man is “born again”? “Being *born again...by the word of God*, which liveth and abideth forever” (I Pet. 1:23). The Father birthed each one of us by the spoken Word! We were birthed as the living offspring of God, who is spirit, in the image and likeness of God, through or by the Word! “And God *said*, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Gen. 1:26). That’s all God did in Genesis chapter one. “God *said*, Let there be...and it was so!” And now the thoughts of God have risen up within our minds and hearts, bringing us to the realization of our sonship to God! Treasure every word that God is speaking into your mind and heart in these days, dear one, for this word that is proceeding out of the mouth of God is the power of God to plant the new heavens, and lay the foundations of the new earth, *within you!* Aren’t you glad!

It should be clear to every enlightened mind that God is in the process of making an entirely new creation, or making *all things new* — not this time a mere natural creation, nor yet a purely spiritual one, but a *spiritual-physical* one. The present natural creation is really only a step in the process of making the creation God had in mind from the beginning. “First that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual,” is the divinely revealed order. Does that mean the natural is completely done away with, supplanted by the spiritual? Not at all! If that were so, there would only be a new *heaven*, but not a new *earth!* It means that the natural is *swallowed up* by the spiritual. The natural is a necessary step in the process of making the kind of creation God purposed from the beginning. Jesus Christ, the firstborn Son of God, is the *proto-type* of that new creation — the PHYSICAL SPIRITUALIZED, RAISED UP INTO UNION WITH THE DIVINE AND HEAVENLY! The *physical body* of Jesus was raised from the dead, brought out of the tomb, spiritualized and made a *spiritual body* — not a *spirit*, mind you, nor yet just a *body* — but a SPIRITUAL BODY! Jesus is still referred to as a *man* all through the New Testament, not only after His resurrection, but also after His ascension. And to this day “there is one mediator between God and men, the *man* Christ Jesus.”

The firstborn of this new creation order is a GOD-MAN upon the throne of universal power! Think of it! When you see Jesus as a divine-human, a God-man, one of the natural creation *metamorphosed, spiritualized, raised up into the celestial and incorruptible*, then you see exactly what God is after in the whole creation, and you also see what the finished product of the new heavens and the new earth *within you* will be like! “This corruptible must *put on* incorruption.” “This mortal must *put on* immortality.” How unspeakably wonderful! We see the natural creation all around us, but this natural creation is not the finished product any more than the ore dug out of the earth is the fine piece of jewelry the artisan has in mind when he begins his work. The whole creation is still in the process of being made into the kind of creation God started out to make. God is still Creator! And He is still *creating a new heavens and a new earth!* The work has only begun in *us!*

The new heaven is the spirit of Christ and the new earth is the body of Christ, the members of which have put on incorruption. The new heaven is the new *mind of the spirit*, and the new earth is the *soul and body quickened and governed by the spirit*. Surely the fullness of redemption includes possessing the “mind of Christ” as well as a body “fashioned like unto His glorious body.” And being conformed to His image, partakers of His divine nature, we shall be His “all righteous” ones — a new heaven and a new earth WHEREIN DWELLETH RIGHTEOUSNESS!

The coming “world” will be one that will see the fullness of God in operation through His Zion people, His manifest sons, the demonstration of the mighty power of the new heavens and the new earth. It is not a mansion over the hilltop, nor a cabin in the corner of gloryland, nor white night gowns, nor harps, nor palm branches, nor dangling feet in some stream of celestial water. Oh, no! There is a job to be done! A battle to be fought! A victory to be won! An enemy to be conquered! “And there was *no more sea.*” “And there shall be *no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*” This is God’s will for humanity on this earth, and this is what our call to sonship is all about. We are not headed for a great eternal “praise service” in the sky. Creation is groaning and waiting for the sons of God

to deliver it from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God. That is a work program! When God created in that long ago beginning the record states that He *worked*. And making *all things new is work!* It would be a most beautiful thing if all the saints of God could have an open vision that would enable them to understand the glory of God's purpose on earth, and His election in man.

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and THE POWERS OF THE WORLD TO COME...” (Heb. 6:4-5). The Rotherham translation renders this last statement, “Mighty works of a coming age.” The Interlinear Greek New Testament says, “The works of power of the age to come.” Jesus said, “Greater works than these shall *ye do!*” But have the followers of Jesus really done any *greater works* than Jesus did? They did *more works*, but not necessarily *greater*. The book of Acts doesn't record any. Neither do the epistles. Nor does church history. And, my friend, after a century and a quarter since the restoration to the church of the baptism in the Spirit, after some seventy years since the great healing campaigns of the 1940's and 1950's, and the awesome Latter Rain outpouring of the Spirit with the restoration of the five-fold ministry, gifts of the Spirit, and the prophetic flow, have you seen any *greater works* than raising the dead, cleansing lepers, walking on water, calming storms, feeding thousands with a few fish and loaves of bread, and turning water into wine? You know you haven't!

Yet, according to the writer to the Hebrews, there are MIGHTY WORKS OF A COMING AGE, GREATER WORKS THAN JESUS DID TWO THOUSAND YEARS AGO! And according to the writings of the apostles, all we have experienced of God during this church age, of His Spirit, of His Word, of His power, glory, miracles, manifestation, and revelation, has been merely a small *taste*, a little *sampling*, of the glory and power to be revealed through the sons of God in that coming age! Why, friends, we have only received the *firstfruits* of the Spirit, just a little *down payment* of what God will do through His in-Christed body upon this earth. Can you imagine a world where the hospitals have been emptied, the doctor's offices deserted, the prisons closed, the policemen all laid off, the armies and armaments all dismantled, the mortuaries locked, the dead raised, all nature tamed, controlled, and subdued, the nations turned to the Lord, all men restored into the image and glory of God, and the whole world system transformed — and GREATER WORKS THAN THESE SHALL YOU SEE as all creation is delivered from the bondage of corruption, and the glorious mind of Christ rules and reigns over the earth realm through the manifest sons of God! The fullness of what we have just had a taste will be the normal works on behalf of humanity in that blessed world to come. This will be the new heavens and the new earth raised up and established in each and every man in all the fullness of what that means!

God's people are still lacking in understanding, and we must keep our anointed focus on the reality that the new heavens and the new earth are preeminently *personal*. The earth itself will only be blessed and transformed because the *people* are transformed into the righteous kingdom of God and are filled with the mind, spirit, faith, peace, joy, glory and power of God. When you look at a map of the world you find parcels of land with names such as Canada, United States, Russia, China, England, Africa, etc. These are the names of geographical territories. Here in El Paso we live only a few miles from the Mexican border and before the drug wars made Ciudad Juarez, Mexico the most dangerous city in the world we sometimes drove down there to take friends who wished to experience Mexico, or to shop or get dental work done. When I cross the border I am driving on soil that is called Mexico. When I return and cross the border again, I am back in a country called the United States of America. These are the names of these land masses. But when you listen to the news and hear that our country is conferring with Mexico about the drug wars, that the United States has sold a million bushels of wheat to Russia, that Japan has sold a million automobiles to Germany, that Europe is sending peace-keeping forces to some country in Africa or the Middle East — what are we hearing? The newscaster isn't talking about the land, the terrain, the soil that bears those names. He is talking about the *people* who live in these various lands. It is the *citizens* of Russia, Japan, the United States, and Europe that he is speaking of. Not the places, but the people. The land mass itself does nothing, it neither buys nor sells nor builds nor anything else. What determines the conditions and activities in any country is the people that live in that place. The

people are identified by the *realm* or *territory* where they live. In just the same way, when the scripture refers to “heaven” and “earth,” it is not referring to *places* as such, but the beings who inhabit them. When scripture says, “Let the *heavens* rejoice, and the *earth* be glad,” what is going to rejoice? Is it stars, suns, planets, moons; is it hills, rocks, trees, valleys, and rivers? Of course not! It is the *inhabitants of those realms* who are to rejoice and be glad.

In the opening chapters of the Bible the Garden of Eden reveals the glory of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. It is not the Kingdom IN Heaven — it is the Kingdom OF Heaven, the kingdom that originates in and out of a heavenly realm. Our prayer is that the kingdom will *come*, so that God’s will is done *on earth* as it is in heaven. God is now creating a new reality on earth, a *people* that is *heavenly* but that walks on *earth*. They bring heaven down within themselves to earth. Within them heaven and earth converge. They have no desire to leave earth to “go” to heaven. They are not looking for either a rapture or death. They *are* the city that comes down from God out of heaven. “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.” If your aim is to get to heaven, and the holy city comes down from God out of heaven to be the tabernacle of God with men — you will miss the holy city altogether! Golden streets in heaven? I don’t think so! The golden streets (a symbol, of course) are in the New Jerusalem, and the New Jerusalem is on earth!

This new reality is formed in the elect of God in this hour and shall spread to all creation. God is creating something new! A new history is beginning! A new world is coming to earth! The earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea! God is raising up the life of Christ in a people and through the sons of God He is putting a seed *into the earth*. We are now the light of men and the light of the world! We are now the salt of the earth! We are the new seed for the new age! God’s purpose in raising up Christ in us is that through us the generation of mankind may be lifted out of the curse of sin and death, toward the revelation of eternal life and glory. Why else did Jesus heal the sick and raise the dead? Why did He exalt the poor, the hungry, and the oppressed? Why did He touch, with miracle power, the hopeless and possessed? Surely not in order to tell them that they would be blessed after death in some far-off heaven somewhere!

Jesus, the first manifest Son of God, brought the blessings and benefits of the kingdom of God to men great and small right here on earth *because the kingdom of God is at hand!* He brought heaven to earth. He revealed what the whole world of mankind would be like when every man has been touched by the omnipotent power of His life. That is the homeland we seek! There is no other to be sought, *for the tabernacle of God is with men*. The holy city *comes down from God out of heaven*. There is a new heaven and a new earth *within the experience of mankind*. Strange, is it not, how all the churches on earth teach just the opposite! They teach that the tabernacle of *man is with God* — in heaven. They teach that the streets of gold, the river of life, the tree of life, are all *far away in heaven*. But the goal of all God’s redemptive effort is that finally He will be a God whom men will see on earth, a God who will make earth to be one with heaven, where Jesus is Lord over all men and they, in Him, will live in the Kingdom of Heaven. *That is the new heavens and the new earth!*

There is really nothing complicated about the new heavens and the new earth. To aid our understanding of this beautiful truth let us learn a lesson from the symbolism of the book of Revelation. The key to this understanding is the word “sea.” As soon as John sees the new heaven and the new earth he immediately notes that “there was no more sea.” Again and again throughout the book of Revelation we have shown that the word “sea” is not used in the literal sense of the vast oceans of earth, but in a figurative and symbolic way. The vast majority of the events in the Revelation take place in one of three dimensions: HEAVEN, EARTH, and SEA. These three realms, of course, represent three dimensions of life within each of us, three states of being, lifestyles, levels of consciousness, spheres of existence, and realms of experience. There is a “heaven” realm within our spirit, an “earth” realm within our soul, and a “sea” realm within our body. The highest of these realms is heaven — where God dwells in our spirit. Earth is the in-between realm, a dimension that at its highest touches heaven, and at its lowest kisses the sea. That is the soul which

lies between the spirit and the body. It can yield to the spirit above to become heavenly, or to the sea (body realm, flesh nature) to become sensual and devilish.

The *lowest* of these three realms is the sea. Throughout the scriptures the sea is a type of the inner storms and turbulent nature of the Adamic man. The prophet Isaiah penned these inspired words: “The *wicked* are *like the troubled sea*, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked” (Isa. 57:20-21). Jude also described wicked men when he said, “These are *raging waves of the sea*, foaming out their own shame” (Jude 13). No one can dispute the fact that it is this restless, turbulent, raging, evil heart of the fleshly man, with the passions and lusts and the motions of sin that lurk in the body with its lower nature, that inspires every evil and devilish perversion, and has filled the world with ever increasing confusion, faithlessness, immorality, falsehood, fraud, hatred, violence, greed, cruelty, strife, wars, bloodshed, and every wicked work. It is more than a raging sea of evil — it is a virtual *tsunami of self-destruction!*

Now, when John says, “...and there was no more sea,” that does not suggest to me that the vast oceans of earth have dried up. That tells me that there is no more realm for a dragon to rise out of; Leviathan, that serpent in the sea, has been destroyed. There are no more men in whom the dragon nature agitates, tosses, overthrows, and torments them like the troubled sea. That tells me that all men have been reconciled to God, the nature has been transformed, and the peace and righteousness and love of God reigns in every heart. It is already true within the elect of the Lord! Ah, there is a place — a place in God’s *new heaven* and in God’s *new earth*, in the triumph of Christ raised up in our land, where the anguish represented by the sea exists for us no more! When all men, and all things, and all realms have been restored into Christ again it shall truly be said, “AND THERE WAS NO MORE SEA!”

If “no more sea” does not indicate the drying up of earth’s oceans, is it not also true that “a new heaven and a new earth” does not suggest that somewhere out in space John saw a new planet, or a new atmosphere, or a new solar system, or a new cosmos? I know and am sure that the new heaven and the new earth of which the prophets have so vividly spoken is a typical representation of the new order of the kingdom of God on earth. The kingdom of God is established in that domain where God’s *saving power* has defeated all opposition, broke down every wall, transformed all that is contrary to God’s nature, mind, and will, and has brought men into willing submission to His authority. Where the nature of God and the mind of Christ have mightily conquered, the state of things is called the *Kingdom of God*. Where hearts are changed, where sin and error and darkness have been defeated, where truth and righteousness advance, where the will, the word, and the ways of God are raised up as reality and life in a people, where the mind of Christ rules out of union with God — *there* the kingdom of God has come and is advancing! In the kingdom it is no longer God ruling *over you* by His sovereignty from without, but the life, mind, heart, nature, power, wisdom, knowledge, and will of God *entering into you, becoming your very own reality*.

This is where the kingdom of God and the new heaven and earth become synonymous. The kingdom out of the heavens must affect the earth and bring a mighty change. The highest expression of the new heavens and the new earth, or the kingdom of God, in the world today, is found in that company of elect sons of God who have aligned themselves with God; who lean upon His breast, who listen to His voice, who put on His mind, who obey His commands, who walk in His nature, who do His will and carry out His divine purpose in the heavens and on the earth. They are loyal subjects of His kingdom, for they ever do His bidding. Their King is the Lord God Almighty and He is their Father. They obey without question, for it is their nature to do only and always those things that please the Father. They are true citizens of the kingdom of God! They are first under His rule and authority, but they are ambassadors of that divine and heavenly kingdom. They are the embodiment and manifestation of the new heavens and the new earth. They are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ! They are destined to share all His glory and sit with Him upon His throne! They are the members of the government of God, the holy city coming down, and the kingdom of heaven is expressed through them and the power and the glory of the kingdom is being committed into their hands for the age and the ages to come.

Consider again these awesome words: “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth *were passed away*.” How unutterably significant this is! John tells us in the plainest of words that there is a new heaven and a new earth *for...that is, because...*the former heaven and the former earth *had passed away*. The message is just this — God cannot bring forth His *new* until the *old* has been done away with! If the Spirit of God has begun to build in your life a new world and a new order, and left any of the old citadels of fleshly living, of self-will, of carnal understanding, of religious mentality, and worldly ways and means standing, they would have to come down. You may congratulate yourself upon their remaining, but it is a false congratulation, your glorying is not good. I am sure of this, that Christ will never put a new piece upon an old garment, or new wine in old wineskins: He knows the rent would be worse in the long run, and the bottles would burst. All that is of the flesh’s spinning must be unraveled. The natural building must come down, lath and plaster, stud and truss, roof and foundation, and we must have a house not made with hands, of a new creation.

It was a great mercy for the city of London, England that the great fire cleared away all the old buildings which were the den of the plague, a far healthier city was then built; and it is a great mercy for a man when God sweeps right away all his own righteousness and strength, his own religious edifice and soulish efforts, when He makes him feel that he is nothing, and can be nothing, and can do nothing, and drives him to confess that Christ must be all in all, and that his only hope and strength lies in the eternal might of the ever-blessed Spirit. Sometimes in a house of business an old system has been going on for years, and it has caused much confusion, and allowed much dishonesty. You come in as a new manager, and you adopt an entirely new plan. Now, try if you can, to graft your method on to the old system. How it will frustrate you! Day after day you say to yourself, I cannot work it: if I had swept the whole away and started afresh, clear from the beginning, it would not have given me one-tenth of the trouble!” God does not intend to graft the system of His kingdom upon the fleshly ways of man, nor upon the tired old methods of religious Babylon, nor to make the new Adam to grow out of the old Adam, nor to evolve the new heaven and the new earth out of the old heaven and earth, but He intends to teach us this: “If any man be in Christ, he is a *new creation*: old things *are passed away*; behold, *all things are become new*” (II Cor. 5:17). “And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, *I make all things new*” (Rev. 21:5).

Consider with me this scene. There is an organ in the corner of a church building. Suppose the pastor tells the congregation that this organ is going to be taken away this week and replaced with a new one. Then on next Sunday they come to church and he says to them, “The old organ is gone now and we have a new one in its place.” Would you look for a fresh coat of paint on the old organ? Would you listen to determine whether the old organ had been tuned up? Would you examine the organ to see whether it was the old organ with some new parts installed? No — you would expect to see a *brand new organ!* Well, our text says that our old heaven and our old earth will *pass away* and be *replaced* by a new heaven and a new earth!

“For, behold, I *create new heavens and a new earth*: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind” (Isa. 65:17). When God says that He “will create,” what does He mean? He means that He is going to call into existence something that did not previously exist. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). He made the billions of swirling nebulae and galaxies of glory. He created the earth, the sun, and the moon. He had nothing with which to begin. He simply spoke and these things came into existence. Now, you can build a table or make a cake, but you must use pre-existent materials. However, when God creates He brings things into existence only by His powerful and omnipotent Word! So when I say that God is creating a new heaven and a new earth, I do not mean that God will use the old heaven and old earth. These are passed away! Our physical life does not become our spiritual life. Our carnal mind does not become our spiritual mind. Our human strength does not become “anointed” to be divine strength. Human wisdom is not translated into the wisdom of God. All must be destroyed!

In the Bible the term “creation” is used one hundred and twenty times, and each time it is used it means the origin of things and not the cleansing or the change of some old thing. That reveals why every *revival* in church history has eventually gone into apostasy. A new revelation, a

new vision, a new anointing, a new ministry, a new worship, a new moving of the Spirit was simply *added* to the old church order that was already in place. It was new wine in old wineskins, it was a new piece of cloth sewed onto an old garment. How soon it burst! How soon it rent! I do not hesitate to tell you that the manifestation of the sons of God has absolutely nothing to do with any established religious order of man. When the sons of God are revealed they will not be preaching in church buildings, they will not advertise a crusade, they will have no worship team and no choir. They will not sing ten choruses, prophesy over a few folks, followed by preaching and an altar call. When they heal the sick or cast out devils or do any miracle the people will not be paraded across a platform with great theatrics before television cameras. There will be no offering plates, no announcements, no pot-luck dinners, no fund raising seminars, no youth meetings, no singles clubs, and no altar calls. The new heavens and the new earth that God is creating is unlike any religious thing you have ever seen! It is something that has not previously existed. It is greater than all. The only model for it is the ministry of Jesus, the firstborn Son of God — but even that is not enough! For His sonship ministry was in the days of His flesh — but the sons creation is groaning and travailing for shall arise in THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION! Nothing less than that will suffice, for they shall not heal the sick to get sick again, or raise the dead to die again, or feed the multitude to become hungry again. Oh, no! These sons come to ***deliver creation from the bondage of corruption.*** They come to ***bring forth a new creation.*** Don't think you know how it will be, my beloved, for it will be far beyond anything your mind can conceive!

None of Adam's race will ever enter this new world. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor. 15:50). Adam must die, as was spoken to him in the beginning. Adam's nature and life cannot inherit this new heaven or this new earth. Not that God is vindictive or unforgiving. It's just that the Adamic nature cannot stand in that glorious light unto which no man can approach. So God is creating a *new man*. "This shall be written for the generation to come, and the people which SHALL BE CREATED shall praise the Lord" (Ps. 102:18). This creation or world of which I speak was never in existence until Jesus came. He was the beginning of this *new creation Man*. He is the beginning and the end, the first and the last, the Alpha and the Omega. In Revelation 21 the Lord says, "Behold, I make all things new." Then immediately He says, "It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end." Can we not see that HE is the beginning and the end and the surety of this new creation for it all comes forth *out of Him*. He is its beginning or origin, just as He is also its end or consummation.

So through Jesus Christ, something new came into existence. And He is the Door, so none can enter this realm except through Him. He is the Head, so once in this realm you cannot move or operate in His divine principles except as He directs you. He is the first and the last, the beginning and the end, so no one ever had this without Him, and you will never get past Him or surpass Him; no matter how far you go in God, you will find that Jesus is there, too! He is truly the GOD-MAN. And in union with Him we become GOD-MEN. As it is written, "Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the GODS!" Yes, indeed, *who is* like unto Him? Those who are born of God and conformed unto His image. Oh, the wonder of it!

"These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens" (Gen. 2:4). Now I have discovered that each time I read the scriptures I find something new. The word of God is absolutely inexhaustible! It seems truly remarkable to find something new in so familiar a chapter as this, yet I have no doubt there are depths and heights of revelation far transcending our present comprehension. Notice how it reads, "These are the generations of the *heavens* and the *earth*..." — the heavens are mentioned first. Then, when he begins to talk about man, it reads, "...in the day when the Lord God made the *earth* and the *heavens*." There is a complete turn around, a reversal of the order; the earth becomes the center of interest because man is to be lowered into this material realm, formed of the dust of the earth, and placed in dominion over all the earth realm.

Just here we want to note a particular word, the use of which is peculiar to Genesis — the word *generations*. Every time it is used it gives the generations that are to follow, thus the generations of the *heavens* and the *earth* are clearly the generations of MAN. Now notice

something that is quite wonderful, and in looking at it keep in mind the fact that when the Lord speaks of the generations of the earth, He is not speaking of what preceded, but what follows. He speaks of unfoldment, not origins; of results, not causes. “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Gen. 2:7). Man is at once the offspring of both the heavens and the earth! His spirit of life is from the very nostrils of God — it is the divine life of the heavens. God did not breathe such a life into any of the animal kingdom, nor the sea creatures, nor the vegetation. Only man is the offspring of the heavens! These are the generations of the heavens and the earth, so now God takes dust — man is of the earth earthy — and God breathes into man’s nostrils the *spirit* of life. Man is not only of this earth, but man is of heaven!

In fact, three stages are given here of creation, for the word for “*creation*” is used only three times in the first chapter of Genesis:

- (1) The creation of the world of matter:

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1).

- (2) The creation of life:

“And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good” (Gen. 1:21).

- (3) The creation of man with spiritual capacities:

“So God created man, in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them” (Gen. 1:27).

These three phases find their conclusion in Paul’s great statement, “Your whole *spirit* and *soul* and *body* be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Thes. 5:23). On the physical plane man is kin to the animal world — he is made of the same kind of dust with the same kind of biological make-up. Now just because a Ford automobile has four wheels, two headlights, and one steering wheel, does not mean that it was made in the same factory as a Rolls-Royce. They are different although they have the same parts. They are made this way because they both are going to operate on the same place, the highway. Man has two eyes, two ears, and he has a mouth; he has a digestive system and an elimination system, as also does the animal world, because both live in the same environment, they both travel, as it were, on the same highway. This merely proves that on the physical side he is made of dust, as the scripture says. On the psychological side he has a soul, the functional part of man with his drives and his urges, which in some ways are similar to the animal kingdom, but much more sophisticated and rational — but which, because of the fall, are also too often depraved and perverted. Then there is his spiritual side which came directly from God when God breathed into him divine life, the God kind of life. Man has a humble origin; he has a high origin. There is part of him which is mean; there is part of him which is mighty; there is part of him which is sensual, there is part of him that is holy. He is both earthy and heavenly. Truly the Psalmist was inspired when he wrote, “I am fearfully and wonderfully made!”

The first man Adam lost the dignity and power that was his by yielding to his lower nature, raising it up to dominate and rule his life, obscuring the majesty and glory of His divine nature. The second man, the last Adam, came to reveal and restore the true reality and stature of man as he was meant to be. He came as the *Redeemer* of all mankind! The grandest of all truths is that **CHRIST IS THE IMAGE OF GOD!** If you want to truly understand what God had in mind when He said, “Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness,” you have only to look at Jesus Christ. **That is what God meant!** “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are *lost* (who know not *who* or *where* they are): in whom the god of this world hath *blinded the minds* of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel (good news) of **CHRIST, WHO IS THE IMAGE OF GOD,** should shine unto them” (II Cor. 4:3-4). “In whom we have redemption through His blood...who is

THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD, the firstborn (prototype) of *every creature*" (Col. 1:14-15). His dignity is still further elaborated in these words of the writer to the Hebrews: "Who being the brightness of His glory, and the EXPRESS IMAGE OF HIS PERSON..." (Heb. 1:3-4). The Amplified Bible reads, "He is the...expression of the glory of God — the Light Being, the out-raying of the divine — and He is the PERFECT IMPRINT AND VERY IMAGE OF GOD'S NATURE..."

How totally inadequate do our words become in the light of words of such wonder as these! Jesus is the *prototype* of what God intends man to be. He is God's finished product, God's perfect man; what every man should be and ultimately will be. We will only understand the majesty of man in God's image when we see Jesus as THE BEAM OF THE DIVINE GLORY, and THE OUT-RAYING OF GOD'S PERSON. Jesus Christ is the express or *exact* image of the Father's being, the perfect imprint and the very image of God's nature. The allusion here is to the impression made in ancient times by a seal on molten wax; and as the image made on the wax is the exact representation (though on another substance) of the die, so is Christ the exact representation of the invisible Father in human flesh. And thus He was able to say, "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father."

The life of Jesus is the life of God transmuted into the form of our human life, so that we may see, touch, hear, know, understand, and experience the very being and nature of God in human terms. The natural mind cannot understand such a truth as this, but this is what God meant when He said, "Let us make *man* in our image, and after our likeness." CHRIST is the image of God and God meant for every man to look and speak and act and be just like Jesus Christ! Can you not see the mystery? *This is the value of man's life in redemption*, for God sent One who was all that man was meant to be to purchase us — not to harps and golden streets and fluttering wings in some far-off heaven somewhere — but back to relationship with God as sons in His very own image.

As we consider the wonderful advent of man created "in the image of God" we can only conclude that this is a SPIRITUAL MAN brought forth out of the very spirit-substance of God almighty, and bearing His own divine nature, character, power, and attributes. The *image* of God is the nature of God reproduced in man. Thus, man is the true image of God! The divine nature was best and fully expressed in the man Christ Jesus who shined upon the world of mankind the truest revelation of God and lifted man's sights higher than their poor thoughts would allow. Jesus revealed to men their true origin, heritage, and destiny. He came to show man what man really is, was intended to be, and through redemption and so great a salvation shall be — THE IMAGE OF GOD. Christ is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. In Jesus Christ you see man as he was in the beginning before sin entered, and as he ever shall be world without end — THE IMAGE OF GOD WITH DOMINION OVER ALL THINGS.

There is a story which I have shared before but am compelled to share again in the light of our present thought. It is the story about a little piece of wood that once bitterly complained because its owner kept whittling away at it, gouging it and making holes in it. But the one who was cutting it paid no attention to the stick's protests. He was making a flute out of that piece of ebony, and he was too wise to stop when the wood complained so bitterly. The man said, "Little piece of wood, without these rifts and holes, and all this cutting, you'd be just a stick forever — a useless and valueless piece of ebony. What I am doing now may seem as if I am destroying you, but instead it will change you into a flute. Your sweet music will charm the souls of many and comfort sorrowing hearts. My cutting you is the making of you, for only thus can you be a blessing in the world." The meaning of this little parable is clear: That flute, whose music blended so sweetly in the orchestra, was made a flute only by the knife and file that filled it with rifts and holes which seemed to be its very destruction. But the purpose of the master was the cutting away of the outward form so that breath could flow through it. The breath upon the wood created a melodious sound which made it an instrument to the praise of God. Ah, the Lord is shaping us, my beloved, cutting away the denseness of our outer shell of the flesh with its darkened understanding, making rifts and holes in the way that seems right to the natural man, that the in-breathed spirit of life from God may sweep through our earthen vessel, producing the image of God, that His glory might be revealed in creation. Aren't you glad!

Now while we are considering such a wonderful work as this, does our heart not say, “Truly this is the vision John beheld on Patmos when he said, “And I saw a *new heaven* and a *new earth*: for the former heaven and the former earth were passed away!” Even now as we learn to rise up in the purpose of God, to put on His mind, to walk in His ways, to know His voice, to be led by His Spirit, to be conformed to His image, the nature, glory, and authority of that NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH are being formed within us. There has been released from heaven in the past several years a great and wonderful expectancy. It is the expectancy that all heaven is about to break loose in the midst of the Lord’s people on a world-wide scale. Do you identify with that expectancy? God is raising up voices throughout the length and breadth of the earth to say, “The earth is about to see the glory of God in an unprecedented way.” A host of heavenly messengers has been released to every corner of the globe bearing the message, “And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all mankind together will see it, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it” (Isa. 40:5). I have heard that message from every quarter of the earth, and it is the word of the Lord for this day! God’s “new heaven and earth company” is prepared to arise and bring such a transformation to the nations that it shall come to pass as John proclaimed, “*...and there was no more sea!*”

As the late Carl Schwing wrote, “It has been appointed to the sons of God to establish the New Heaven and the New Earth in righteousness and peace. The high places shall shout for joy and leap for gladness; the low places shall be filled with blessing, honor, and glory unto the Lord. And like a mighty river the Word of the Lord shall go forth, baptizing all things in the light and life of the Son of God. All creation shall gather before the Father to proclaim His power and might. Everything that has breath shall glorify the Lord. Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that God’s Christ is Lord and King over all...unto the eternal praise of the Father. Knowing that such glory lies just ahead, should we not lose sight of all else? Even now our inner son can ascend to the place of his former birth and eat of the feast that has been prepared. Even now we can walk at the Father’s side amid the Paradise of our former dwelling.

“Though all the powers of the world and of religion oppose the hand of the Lord, He shall, through the sons of His Christ, bring forth His good pleasure. Not one portion of His plan will be altered, not one among His creation will be able to resist His authority. Among the lightening and the thundering of the Father’s infinite glory, the sons shall send forth the proclamation of freedom, to establish the justice and goodness of the Lord. Life, and love, and grace, shall burn as a purifying flame throughout all creation, until God is all and in all. The New Age dawns before us; the New Heaven and the New Earth loom upon the horizon; bask freely in the rays of this earthly morning. Let thy spirit soar upon the wings of the Spirit to the place known only to the sons of God. Enter into the peace and stillness of the age; enter into the rest of the Greater Sabbath. Where we are, there is light; for He who is our light hath enlightened us with Himself. He is the True Light, born from the Divine Energy of the Supreme Being. He is the Light that conquers all darkness; the Light that shall lead all creation into the City of Life. He is the Eternal Light that rises as the Morning Star within our hearts.”

To be continued...

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