

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

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

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 188

THE BATTLE AT ARMAGEDDON

(continued)

“And the *seventh angel* poured out his bowl into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, saying, ***It is done***” (Rev. 16:17).

A great voice as of a multitude comes out of the temple of His body in the heavens of the Spirit, saying, “***It is done!***” While the words “it is done” are translated from a different Greek word, the meaning is essentially the same as that triumphant cry of the Christ upon the cross at the moment of His spirit’s departure — the conqueror’s cry, “*Tetelesti*,” — “It is finished!” More exactly, “It is *accomplished*.” The idea is not merely that a thing is ended, but that it is rounded out perfectly. That piece of work, that heavenly purpose, was Divinely Finished. Nothing can be added to it. Nothing can be taken from it. The word of the preacher in Ecclesiastes, comes with wonderful power in this connection. “*I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should reverence before Him*” (Eccl. 3:14). It is that sense of completeness, of unchangeable fulfillment and consummation, which is wholly divine. Jonathan Mitchell has given some alternate renderings of the Greek: “It has come to be.” “It has been birthed.” “It has come into existence.” “It has occurred!”

When *men* say, “It is finished,” the world laughs at them. The ink is not dry upon the page of a Constitution before many people are clamoring for an Amendment. The law is not printed, oftentimes not signed by the proper authority, before defects are found. What a cry of triumph there was when the work on the formation of a Constitution for the United States was completed! But tell me how many amendments we now have. Twenty-seven! And it needs twenty-seven more! The moment a church organization says, “Now we have finished our creed,” and says of it, “We have the purest doctrine on earth,” that very moment the organization ceases to progress. Let anyone dare to interfere with the truth as they perceive it, which they have set in concrete, thus making it a *static creed*. “This is the creed,” they say, “it is the *whole truth and nothing but the truth*. If you do not agree with this thing which we have finished, Anathema; to the faggot, to the stake, to the cross, to the gallows, to the prison, to death with the man who dares to contradict this finished creed of ours! *Throw him out!*” Through the years various ones have written asking us for a copy of our “Doctrinal Statement.” We have never written one, and never will. Do you realize how many

revisions we would have had to make just during my brief lifetime? The moment you write your creed you cannot go any further with God nor have any more truth shed upon your pathway, for you have crystallized truth into a restricted form. How wonderful the knowledge that the Holy Spirit is *still leading us into all truth!* How blessed the realization that we are still progressing from glory to glory, from experience to experience, from faith to faith, and from one level of truth to another!

You have probably seen cars on the road that have a primer coat of paint on them. They are on the way to becoming great-looking cars, but they're not there yet. They are "in progress." People are like that. God's elect are like that! If you look around you today at those whom the Lord has called to sonship, you will see people who are unfinished products. I'm sure you have seen the button some people wear that says, "Please be patient, God isn't finished with me yet." Sometimes we forget that our brethren are people "in progress." We are offended when they manifest some imperfection. Sometimes we also expect ourselves to be perfect, and we become discouraged or distressed if we fail to measure up to our own expectations. The great news we can focus on today is that God will bring His work in us to completion! Oh, yes, He will! That is the great revelation and comfort shining brightly through the words of our text. God has appointed a day — there will come a great voice out of the heavenly realm, out from the throne-room, proclaiming, "*It is done!*" Oh, yes, we will be God's *finished product!* HE is the one who started the work. He planned it in eternity. He revealed it and has carried it out in history through the progression of the ages. He is GOD and He will finish His work in His apprehended ones! The *seventh bowl* brings the end of God's perfecting work in all His people. The work has been carried forth through the opening of the seven seals, through the sounding of the seven trumpets, and now we have come to the pouring out of the final bowl of the *seven last plagues*. We stand at the end, the finish, the termination of the limitations and weakness of the flesh, the turmoil of the carnal mind, the pressures of the world, the testings of the devil, the deception and bondage of religious Babylon — the end of all that has hindered and defeated God's people. "*It is done!*" What a word that is!

Meditate upon the words of the preacher in Ecclesiastes, and realize the completeness of the divine. What the Christ did was a complete, finished work. Nothing can be added to or taken from it. He accomplished the work the Father gave Him to do, and all that His death meant and effected was carried forth successfully to its divine conclusion. Yet it was only laying a finished foundation for that building that was to be built up throughout the ages. Christ did not finish everything in the divine plan, nor even everything included in our redemption, when He yielded up His spirit on the cross. But the specific work He was accomplishing by His *death* was wrought out and brought to its divine conclusion. The foundation was complete. He finished the work, and upon the altar of His own completed work which He had Himself erected, He laid Himself down to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. *It is finished!* It is significant to note that "It is finished" are the very words the priest would say when the Passover sacrifice was completed! Christ our Passover is slain for us, and having died once...he dieth no more! Hence it never needs to be repeated. IT IS DONE! "*Nor yet that He should offer Himself often...but now **once** in the consummation of the ages hath He been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.*"

While all men everywhere were *reconciled* to God by the death of His Son, they were not *perfected*, nor were they conformed to His image, nor were they matured unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Right there is where many brethren misunderstand the "finished work" of Christ on the cross. If every saint of God would diligently and prayerfully study all the New Testament says about what was accomplished by the wonderful *cross* of Christ they would see clearly just what all is included in that "finished work." And if every member of God's elect would then carefully consider all the "shall" and "shall be" statements in God's Word they would also be enlightened and instructed concerning those great and glorious things that are *not* included in that "finished work," and therefore remaining to be accomplished in each of our lives by the mighty on-going *processings* of the Spirit of God. Time and space do not permit us to go into the many passages touching on this great truth, but in one precious verse we have an indication

of just what was “finished” at the cross and of that which was not finished at the cross, yet to be wrought out in our lives by a very different process of God. “*For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we SHALL BE SAVED by His LIFE*” (Rom. 5:10).

And now, in our text, there is a great voice out of the temple in heaven, *from the throne*, and who can deny that it is the voice of the One who sits upon the throne, who also said: “*To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne*” (Rev. 3:21). Observe, then, how it is the Lord Jesus Himself, not Jesus on the cross on Calvary’s hill, but the resurrected, ascended, and glorified Christ who now again proclaims a *finished work* — “***It is done!***” This obviously cannot be the *same* finished work He announced on the cross! Ah, now that all His redeemed people have had visited on them the passion of God through the seven last plagues, to bring them out of captivity in spiritual Egypt, to deliver them from the tyranny of religious Babylon, to purge, refine, purify, perfect, and mature them into the image of Christ, there comes a voice, not from the cross, this time, but out of the heavens of the Spirit, out from the throne of power; THAT was *atonement, reconciliation, redemption* — THIS is *deliverance, purification, perfection*: “***It is finished! It is done! It is accomplished!***” ALL DONE! All the fleshiness, all the carnality, all the foolishness of religion, all the immaturity and childishness, all the sin and lack, all the misunderstanding, all the doctrinal delusions, all the unbelief, and all the worldly ways — the day of deliverance has come and now, “*Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb*” (Rev. 17:7-9).

Paul Mueller commented on our text, “When the seventh angel poured out his vial into the *air*, which is the same ‘air’ that once was the devil’s realm, a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, said, ‘***IT IS DONE.***’ Something has been concluded, finished, and terminated. It is the continuing conflict between flesh and spirit, and between sin and death and the Life of God that has been terminated. For us, all that pertained to the past death-life will then be over. The attacks of Satan will then be over. Our bondages also will be over, and ultimately those of all mankind and of the whole creation. When God says, ‘***IT IS DONE,***’ we may be sure that it is done! The proof of this will be our transformation and the final fall of the evil powers of Babylon. The old creation, that was created by the old, carnal man, Adam, as ‘he’ was inspired by Satan, shall pass away. And the new creation, created by Christ and His brother-sons, shall then come forth to the glory of the Father.”

Just as the “it is finished” of Calvary refers to a different work than the “it is done” of our text, so there is one more “it is done” in the book of Revelation which also signifies a different work than either of the two preceding. “*And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make ALL THINGS new...and He said unto me, IT IS DONE. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end*” (Rev. 21:5-6). No longer just the body of Christ, but now the Lord moves to renew and restore ALL THINGS, the entire creation of God. All things which John had seen up to now were for the church, the people of God. But now the vision allows us to peer through the glory and to the very end, to an end which includes *all things everywhere*. Who would not longingly look toward that blessed consummation? And so certain is the Christ of the throne that all will be made new, that He declares “***IT IS DONE!***” And the glorious result is revealed in the words which immediately follow: “*I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.*” Even the rich man in hell will hear those words! Think of it!

VOICES, THUNDERS, LIGHTNINGS, AND A GREAT EARTHQUAKE

“And there were *voices, and thunders, and lightnings*; and there was a *great earthquake*, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great” (Rev. 16:18).

Let us look a bit more at what John sees when the seventh angel pours his bowl into the air. Out of the atmosphere are seen proceeding voices, and thunders, and lightnings; then there is a great earthquake, the greatest ever recorded in human history. Three other times in the Revelation it speaks of voices, thunders, and lightnings. These things, of course, are the familiar accompaniments of a storm. It is significant that each time they are named in the book it is in connection with some direct action taken by the Lord out of the heavens of the Spirit which produces a reaction and has an effect in the earth realm. And each time there is some added action intensifying the scene!

A physical storm is caused by two areas of unequal temperature coming together. The storm is the process of the coming together and equalizing of the atmospheric conditions. The inference here would seem to be that the storm is created when the two “atmospheres” of heaven and earth meet, that is, when the atmosphere of the spirit realm touches the atmosphere of the earthy, carnal, soulical realm, and a storm results which equalizes the atmosphere, bringing clear weather, or true clarity in both the atmosphere of the spiritual *and* the soulical. It suggests that the Lord is taking the next step in bringing forth the *revelation of Jesus Christ in all His people!* He has risen up from His secret place, spoken from His heavenly temple, and come forth to bring judgment in the lives of all who name His name! And my, what a storm that creates within God’s people and throughout the church world! And what commotions of voices, thunders, and lightnings this produces in the midst!

The “storms” of the book of Revelation are interesting. In chapter eight a storm is created when something symbolically represented as “fire of the altar” is cast into the earth and becomes a disturbing element in the atmosphere of the earth causing great disturbance there. When the Lord comes in His Holy Ghost fire it always changes the temperature and creates a disturbance! The fire of God *heats up* the atmosphere of Adam’s world, quickening the spirit within man, and the heated atmosphere of the spirit meets the *cold atmosphere* of man’s soulical life, and a great storm is generated! God *speaks* out of the storm, and there are heard voices proclaiming heavenly things! In the storm God manifests His *power* in the thunders! He gives brilliant flashes of *illumination* and *revelation* by the lightnings! By this storm He *shakes* (symbolized by the earthquake) everything of the old carnal understanding, the old natural life, the old worldly system of things, purifies the atmosphere, pours down the rain of His Spirit and Life, and **MAKES ALL THINGS NEW!** The vision reveals the great truth that in the outworking of God’s kingdom purposes, *first* something happens in *heaven*, and then as a *consequence*, certain *events* take place *in our earth*. And the outcome is glorious indeed!

Throughout the scriptures the earthquake was a regular feature of divine visitation. When God descended upon mount Sinai, “the whole mountain quaked greatly” (Ex. 19:18). Isaiah prophesied that men would hide in caves from the terror of the Lord, “when He ariseth to shake mightily the earth” (Isa. 2:19). “Once again, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth,” writes Haggai (Hag. 2:6). Earthquake denotes a sudden, powerful, and violent disruption of the normal state of things. No human power can control or bring about earthquakes. Many times we have seen on the news cities that were shaken by temblors, and have seen the wreck of some of the finest dwelling places and commercial buildings the ingenuity of man can devise. In a few seconds, while the hearts of men stood still with terror, while no human hand could possibly aid them, the great concrete structures crashed and shattered to ruins in the street below. Men and women grabbed their babies and fled blindly for shelter — they knew not where. No human power can stay an earthquake, or even definitively warn of its coming.

Since Armageddon is the final battle in the saint’s perfection into Christ, it is fitting that the earthquake accompanying this battle is described as “a great earthquake, *such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.*” Now if that were a *literal* earthquake it would be horrendous indeed, for there have been historically some catastrophically devastating earthquakes. Pompeii was destroyed by an earthquake in A.D. 63. In 1556 there was an earthquake in the Shensi Province of

China which took 800,000 lives. In 1693 an earthquake on the island of Sicily took 60,000 lives. Early in the eighteenth century the Japanese city of Edo (now Tokyo) was destroyed with the loss of 200,000 lives. In 1755 the city of Lisbon, Portugal lost 60,000 persons to an earthquake, the shocks of which were felt as far away as southern France and North Africa. In 1797 40,000 people were killed in an earthquake at Quito, Ecuador. In 1819 an earthquake caused 2,000 square miles to sink and become the bed of a lake in the state of Kutch in India. In 1883 a violent eruption at Krakatan in Sunda Strait caused the deaths of 36,000 people. In 1896 an earthquake in Japan took 26,000 lives. So there have been some mighty *literal* earthquakes which serve as faint shadows of the powerful *spiritual shakings* to come to God's people in the battle at Armageddon!

On the physical level, an earthquake occurs where the cooling of the earth has caused two layers of earth to overlap rather than to come together flush. As they try to settle into a more natural position, great pressure and stress is created and suddenly they release energy, there is a mighty movement, and an earthquake takes place. Spiritually, this is fulfilled within each of us in those areas of our life where the flesh and the spirit, the carnal mind and the spiritual mind, truth and error, or our will and God's will *overlap within ourselves*, causing intense pressures to be formed, evoking instability in our lives. We have these places deep within us where things do not fit together properly, where there are flaws in our thinking or defects in our character, and pressure builds up, for soul and body have not been synchronized with the spirit, so that they do not "mesh" together. When we meet a situation that begins to trigger these pressures and conflicts, a mighty rumbling and movement is set off! The flesh *wars* against the spirit, and the spirit *wars* against the flesh! When both the spirit and the flesh want to dominate great pressures are created deep within. When God sets His hand to finally and ultimately deal with every aspect of our flesh-life He gathers us straight to that place called Armageddon!

As the Spirit of God moves sovereignly in our life, exerting a force beyond the capacity of the natural man, the great "earthquake" then ensues! The earthquake touches the fault-lines of our life, not just the surface things, but the very depths of being where the foundation is defective, imperfect, and unsound. It should not be difficult to understand that *no man* can be conformed to the image of God apart from spiritually devastating and destructive earthquakes! In order for creation to be delivered and restored into God everything of the natural constitution, the human mentality, the Adamic consciousness, the carnal mind, the flesh life, our own will and ways, yes, and even all our former heavens of spiritual experience must be shaken, utterly removed, and demolished! And when He has finished His great work, in the most powerful earthquake we have ever experienced or any man has ever experienced, the carnal mind, the human nature, the flesh, and religious Babylon will lie in ruins and eternal desolation! But the Christ-life will be exalted on high in our lives!

When the earthquake comes there are great commotions within and we react and feel in a spiritual way exactly like those people experience naturally who are victims of physical earthquakes. Cars in the streets roll back and forth, trees thresh about, broken like toothpicks; buildings collapse, the terrain moves violently, bridges buckle, hospitals are devastated, water supplies are broken, communications are cut off, highways and railways are split asunder, our whole equilibrium is thrown off balance, and there is great suffering and death. Oh, yes! When the spiritual earthquake occurs within us, the old world of our carnal understanding, the powerful citadels of the flesh, and all the entrenched spirit of man-made religion are wiped away! This is the awesome work of the earthquake that strikes when the word of our Father comes in power and shakes us out of heaven!

Some years ago Rosemary Garzon wrote, "We have recently heard of a prophecy given concerning a terrible earthquake this summer in this country. Through the years we have heard of similar prophecies being given, which most of you have also heard. Be that as it may. We do know that the hour of the manifestation of the sons of God must surely be nigh at hand. There is enough proof in His word that when

we have a breakthrough of great intensity from the natural earth realm into the realm of His Spirit, an earthquake is assured! We might liken this reaction to the ‘sonic boom’ we are all familiar with when a jet plane breaks through the sound barrier. This reaction is one of God’s laws in His vast universe. When Jesus Christ broke through His flesh body and ‘yielded up the ghost’ we read of what took place. *‘And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom: **and the earth did quake**, and the rocks rent: and the graves were opened: and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many’* (Mat. 27:51-53).

But there is a truth beyond just the personal application. It is significant to note that in chapter eleven of the Revelation we see a *token* fall of the great city Babylon, which is the fall of Babylon within God’s chosen and separated elect, while in chapters sixteen through eighteen we are shown Babylon’s *total collapse and destruction*, which is the fall of Babylon within the lives of ALL God’s people! “And the same hour there was an earthquake, and *the tenth part of the city (Babylon) fell...*” (Rev. 11:13). What is a tenth? It’s a tithe, a firstfruit, an earnest — that which is uniquely God’s and guarantees the balance! All of Babylon, the “great city,” will fall, but here it is a partial fall. The manchild company, the sons of God themselves, are the “tenth” part of Babylon that is now falling. As the Spirit of the Lord has destroyed the strongholds of Babylon within us, we are all aware that not all of this symbolic city has fallen! The other nine-tenths, the structure of the carnal church systems, has continued till today, but it has suffered some loss from the earthquake that has freed God’s elect from its clutches. What it has lost and is losing from itself is here called “a tenth.”

This reminds us that, when the prophet Isaiah was told about the destruction coming upon Jerusalem and its kingdom of Judah, he was told “there will still be within it a tenth, and it must again become...like a massive tree in which, when there is a cutting down of them, there is a stump; a holy seed will be the stump of it” (Isa. 6:13). The “stump” or “holy seed” proved to be the faithful remnant that survived the exile in Babylon and returned home to rebuild the holy temple at Jerusalem and restore the kingdom of Israel. Though the application is a little different, the principle is the same — the “tenth part” is the promise that the whole kingdom of Babylon will come down! Only after the blessed sons of God are manifest and the glorious bride of Christ has “made herself ready” will the entire city of Mystery Babylon be eternally desolated, burned with fire, and reduced to ashes!

*“See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven: whose voice then **shook the earth**: but now He hath promised, saying, **Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven**. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the **removing of those things that are shaken**, as of things that are made, that those things which **cannot be shaken may remain**. Wherefore we receiving a **kingdom which cannot be moved**, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably”* (Heb. 12:25-28).

Reference to the *shaking of the earth and heaven* comes closer home than just the upheaval and doing away with man’s earthly orders, governments, institutions, cultures, and religious systems. Certainly all of that, too, shall pass away! It also speaks of God’s dealings with all who aspire to become sons of God in the here and now. Not only *the earth* in us — our humanity with its faults, weaknesses, limitations, emotions, ways, powers, and attributes — but also *the heaven* in us must be shaken! The heaven in us embraces all our spiritual blessings and experiences of the past. The purpose of this shaking is not to destroy but to replace what has been of God in our spiritual journey but only intended for a specific time and purpose in our growth and development in Christ. The removal of those things is to reveal something far greater! Never does the Lord take something away unless it is to give us something better! He removes the natural to give us the spiritual. He replaces the good with His best. He takes away the “in part” to reveal in us His fullness. When the transitory (shadow, letter of the word) has fulfilled its purpose, He then introduces us

to what is real, heavenly, and eternal (divine substance). Therefore let us be grateful for the shaking of even our heavens and for receiving a *kingdom that cannot be shaken!* This wonderful kingdom of our Father is *earthquake proof*— it will never pass away, and of the increase of His government and peace there shall be NO END!

THE SHAKING OF BABYLON

“And there was a great earthquake...and *the great city was divided into three parts*, and the cities of the nations fell: *and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath*” (Rev. 16:18-19).

What dreadful thoughts and feelings are awakened in the soul by the very sound of the words *Mystery Babylon!* They are terrible words. They bring before us at once, that vast mass of professed Christians who call themselves “the church,” but are not. Mystery Babylon is a dark and dreadful anomaly. It is neither one thing nor the other. It is not “Israel, nor the Gentiles, nor the church of God.” The “great city” spoken of is neither natural Jerusalem nor is it the heavenly Jerusalem from above, the mother of us all. It is a corrupt mysterious mixture, a spiritual malformation, a hideous mutation, the masterpiece of Satan, the corrupter of the truth of God, the distorter of the character of God, the perverter of the ways of God, the destroyer of the souls of men, a trap, a snare, a stumbling block by which men are made two-fold more the children of hell than before. It is the corruption of the very best thing — the body of Christ — and therefore the most vile of corruptions. It is that thing which Satan has made of professing Christianity.

It is worse by far than Judaism; worse by far than the darkest of pagan religions; because it has higher light and richer privileges, makes the very highest profession, and occupies the very loftiest seat. It is without doubt that awful apostasy for which is reserved the very heaviest judgments of God — the most bitter dregs in the cup of His righteous wrath. If the words penned by John on Patmos do not say this, then I have no understanding or comprehension of language. I doubt if one Christian in one hundred thousand has anything like an adequate sense of the true character and inevitable doom of that system together with all the teachings, rituals, traditions, holy days, programs, organization, promotions, and religious exercises which surround them. If they had it would solemnize their minds and hearts, and cause them to sense the urgent need to flee at once out of Babylon’s clutches, and stand apart in holy separation from Babylon’s ways, that they might escape such awful judgment as is about to be executed, for “strong is the Lord that judgeth her.”

In our text, as a result of the “great earthquake,” the “great city” was *divided into three parts*. Elwin Roach gave the following commentary on this thought, which I think is excellent. “‘Divided into three parts’ indicates a division of a whole unit. In God we have one unit with three parts, but not divided: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In man we also have a tripartite being: spirit, soul, and body. To be complete, whether it be God or man, there can be no division. It is the same with a natural city which consists of man. If it is divided in its common interest then it will surely fall. Not only that, all the other cities in her dominion will also be desolated. ‘*And the cities of the nations fell.*’ This is what we see happening to this “great city” — a division before the fall. This division also happened in seed form with Eve. She was tempted, seduced, divided herself from her husband, conceived sin, died spiritually, and was judged of God. We should be able to see the parallel here. The city is divided, but this time it is by the hand of God — an earthquake! But before the shakings could cause the division she would have had to already have separated herself from God. Otherwise the earthquake could not have moved her, for that which is founded in God cannot be moved!” — end quote.

In another sense the great city, Babylon, is split into three parts by the shaking of God, that is, it is brought to a *complete break-up*, to *complete ruin* — for three is the number of completeness. The two statements — “the great city was divided into three parts” and “the cities of the nations fell” — indicate that

the whole city and every structure in it fell in a heap in utter ruin. Every structure collapsed, one wall falling to the right, another to the left, the roof and the floors falling down between them. It is total disintegration! There is, of course, an individual and personal application as the Babylon within each of us is judged. The mighty earthquakes come to each individual as the Lord shakes each believer from the death-hold of the spirit of Babylon, to be loosed unto the complete control and Lordship of Jesus Christ through the indwelling Spirit. All the cities (the religious strongholds, dominating hierarchies, denominational headquarters) of the nations fall. They fall within the affections of each of us! They all fall before the greater revelation of Jesus Christ! Every island of religious gatherings flees away. Every mountain of religious achievement, fame, and power crumbles and are no more. The ultimate truth of God's great hail falls unrelentingly upon every thought, concept, doctrine, and tradition of man, crushing it into the earth. The spirit of Babylon is marked "finished" because the Lord, by His Spirit and His Word, puts down all rule, authority, and power! Isn't it wonderful!

EVERY ISLAND FLED

"And every island fled away" (Rev. 16:20).

This also is the result of the "great earthquake" as God shakes the kingdom of Babylon within us. Islands signify that separate, individualized, independent gathering and effort of man to do his own thing, build his own kingdom, gain a following, and make a name for himself. This is one of the roots of the Babylonian religious system which separates, divides, and exalts itself into a domineering, cultish form — "WE are the true church, WE are the body of Christ, WE are the repository of all truth, WE, and WE ALONE, are God's anointed instrument in the earth!" How many times have you heard that! Catholicism, Eastern Orthodox, Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, certain "sonship" groups, and the list goes on and on. But all spiritual egotism, self-centeredness, self-exaltation, and sectarian spirit will be dealt with by the Lord! All this is the "way of Cain" who "went out from the presence of the Lord... and *he builded a city*" (Gen. 4:16). He sought to exalt his own name, gain a following, and build a kingdom around himself. The final result of that spirit became Babylon — first ancient Babylon and now *Mystery Babylon*. But all the efforts of man will fail, for God sends His great earthquake and the "great city" is divided and demolished and *every island flees away!* Oh, yes!

THE MOUNTAINS ARE NOT FOUND

"...and the mountains were not found" (Rev. 16:20).

Mountains always occupy a dominant position in relation to the surrounding terrain and are imposing and strong, consisting primarily of rock. From this standpoint they fittingly picture kingdoms, governments, organizations, and strong dominating powers which impose themselves over men. Thus mountains signify great and strong kingdoms of man, either within ourselves or that which is built up outwardly. The kingdom of God itself is symbolized by the stone cut out without hands which smites the image in its feet, grinds it to powder, and then grows to become a "great mountain" that fills the whole earth! The prophet Micah saw that "*in the last days it shall come to pass, that the **mountain (kingdom)** of the house of the Lord shall be established in the **top of the mountains (above and over all other strong kingdoms)**, and it shall be exalted **above the hills (above and over the smaller kingdoms)**, and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the **mountain of the Lord...and He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths...***" (Mic. 4:1-2). As the prophet Daniel reveals, the end result shall be that all these earthly "mountains" shall be swallowed up by THE MOUNTAIN OF THE LORD! "*...and the mountains were not found.*" All the kingdom-building of man shall cease. The empires — religious, economic, or political — which were monuments to the abilities of the flesh will be brought low.

HAIL

“And there fell upon men a *great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent*: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for *the plague thereof was exceeding great*” (Rev. 16:21).

The plague of hail is also reminiscent of the seventh plague that God sent upon Egypt at the hand of Moses. It was this plague that brought total devastation to the land of Egypt. Men, animals, and plants were violently killed by the hail and lightning that rained down from heaven upon Egypt. This plague was somewhat unique because Yahweh constantly reiterated the fact that this plague was intended to prove to all the Egyptians that He was the one, true God who was to be revered and worshiped (Ex. 9:14, 16, 27, 29). This plague brought “very grievous hail, such as hath not been seen in Egypt since the foundation thereof” (Ex. 9:18). Many gods of the Egyptians were humiliated by the events that came to pass as a result of the plague of hail. Because many cattle were killed, the bull and cow gods were again proven to be powerless. Because the trees, plants, and crops were destroyed by the hail, *Renenutet* — the harvest goddess was shown to be impotent. *Seth*, the god of storms and protector of crops was ineffectual. As cattle and men died in great numbers, *Isis*, the goddess of life was humiliated by this plague, as was *Shu*, the god of the air, *Tefnut*, the goddess of moisture, and *Osiris*, a god of vegetation. And there were others! The plague of hail was undoubtedly a direct affront on more Egyptian gods than any other plague that had come before! And without doubt, the plague of hail in the Revelation is a powerful and devastating judgment against the many “false gods” of the religious systems of man!

The size and weight of this hail is designated to be “about a talent.” A talent is estimated at various weight figures, and this need not surprise us when we consider that the modern concept of having a standard gram or kilogram had not pervaded the ancient world. Suffice it to say that it was probably in the vicinity of 95 pounds. Hail of such magnitude, weighing almost as much as a 100 pound bomb, would indeed be an unquestionably lethal weapon! To be struck on an arm or foot would mean certain severe damage, and a strike landing directly on the head would bring instant death. The property damage to buildings, cars, planes, and infrastructure would be incalculable. Here in Texas I have heard of hailstones as big as baseballs. A lady in Iowa said she could top that — she had seen hail fall in great chunks. Yet most of us have seen how hailstones no bigger than the end of your thumb can devastate a cornfield, a cotton field, an automobile, or a house roof. The destruction of hailstones of a talent weight can hardly be imagined. The Roman catapults threw stones this size into Jerusalem, according to the historian Josephus.

This, of course, is all *symbolism*, emphasizing the power and effectiveness of God’s judgment upon spiritual Babylon! Job 38:22 asks the piercing question, “*Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail.*” The sweet singer of Israel spake unto the Lord the words of a song in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hands of his enemies, and from the hand of Saul; in one place in that song David says concerning the intervention of the Lord on his behalf, “*The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave His voice; hailstones and coals of fire*” (Ps. 18:13).

Notice now the sublime message in the words of the prophet Isaiah wherein he says, “*Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies...and your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand*” (Isa. 28:16-18). I think that’s a marvelous passage because what the inspired prophet is declaring is that the hail which He sends as judgment will REMOVE THE REFUGE OF LIES which is a covenant with death and an agreement with hell — and it will do it through the tried stone, the precious corner stone — the mighty Christ within our spirit! Christ is the word of God and He is the truth. The “great hail” is another symbol for the word of God and the truth. It is not the truth of God as the gentle rain of blessing, but the “hard word” of correction and judgment! If you pause to think, you will

become fully aware that only HE can remove the refuge of lies beneath which the whole church world has been enshrouded! Who can deny that a vast amount of what the church systems teach about the nature of God, His purposes, the church, heaven, hell, eternity, sacraments, baptisms, the end-time, the great tribulation, the rapture, the millennium, the antichrist, free will, the judgment, and a hundred other things is just that — a refuge of *lies!*

The elect of the Lord should be aware that water, especially rain falling from heaven, is used in the scriptures as a type of God's word and God's spirit combined, that is, the *living word of God!* Usually it indicates that He is sending a blessing in the time of drought. When God sends the rain that refreshes, sometimes it has come to us as a prophetic word. The Spirit speaks words like these, "Yea, my son, thou art mine, thou art precious in my eyes; I have called thee, I have chosen thee before the foundation of the world unto a high and holy calling. Yea, thou shalt be a great one, a mighty one in my kingdom! My goodly spices shall flow out from thee and thy fragrance shall fill the earth in the day of my moving! I will never leave thee nor forsake thee, I will be with thee in all of thy ways, yea, my hand shall bring thee unto thy appointed place, saith the Lord!" Oh, yes, we all love a word like that, and in days past the Lord has spoken in just such endearing, encouraging, and faith-inspiring promises to many of us! But not so when He sends His word that comes as *hail!*

Water flows, and also it becomes sometimes hard as ice and hail. When it falls as hail it is not a blessing, as we think of blessing. When it falls as hail it always brings destruction, depending on its size, quantity, and duration. Hail is water, but it is frozen water, thus it bespeaks a *hard word* from the Lord! It is the word of God that strikes us and knocks the carnal-mindedness out of us! It is the word that rebukes, chastises, and corrects us! It gives us an attitude adjustment! It is not an easy word, not a flowery word, not a sweet, soothing word, but a word that devastates our field and beats down the carnal mindset, ways, and works that grow out of our earthly nature. What large hailstones of a "hard word" fall from the heavens of God's Spirit into our land as He smashes our religious idols and all the things we treasure more than His will and way! The "refuge of lies" speaks of all the false ideas, false concepts, false doctrines, and false ways of the Lord's people!

You can be a good Christian and embrace these false teachings and practices, but you'll never be a *son!* The dealing hand of God must come into our lives to thoroughly correct, purge and purify us from all the defilements of religion! Multitudes of believers want only the *rain* of God's word and God's spirit, only the blessings from above. To these the Lord says, "*Ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto sons, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him: for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every SON whom He receiveth. And if ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement...then are ye bastards, and not sons*" (Heb. 12:5-8). Oh, yes, the Father will give us His glory, His nature, His wisdom, authority, and power, and raise us up to judge the world and rule the nations with a rod of iron. But before He entrusts into our hands such awesome responsibilities He will put His finger on every aspect of our lives, He will bring training, discipline, order, and judgment to our house. He will send the *hailstorms* into our lives to beat down and destroy all the refuge of lies, all the *falsehoods* of the doctrines of men, all the foolishness of the religious systems, in which men take refuge, in which they trust for their blessing and eternal salvation.

In the statement above I substituted the word *falsehoods* for *lies* because lies infer a deliberate, intentional, malicious deception. Very few preachers, teachers, and church systems deliberately intend to deceive God's people. They themselves *are deceived* and the message they proclaim is laced with falsehoods. The hail is a strong, hard, corrective word from the Lord which He sends into our lives with such SOLID IMPACT that it sweeps away our refuge of falsehoods. I have experienced the hail, and I tell you that in just a very brief period of time the word of God can come to us in such power that it completely

lays to ruin all our strongholds of carnal thinking and religious error! The ultimate result of this wonderful deliverance is that He will abolish our covenant with death and destroy our league with hell! (Isa. 28:17-18). It is a complete salvation, yet it cannot be wrought apart from the hailstorm of God's strong and powerful word which sweeps away the falsehoods that have kept us from laying hold upon life and immortality. He is doing this now in the life of each member of His called and chosen elect, but before it can be said that "the bride has made herself ready" He will also accomplish this same work in ALL OF HIS REDEEMED PEOPLE! Aren't you glad!

This certainly edifies me more than to think Russia is going to invade Israel or that there will be some kind of nuclear holocaust over on the plains near Megiddo, somehow causing giant hailstones to fall upon the people. If any of this is *literal*, we have some glaring inconsistencies. Notice — if the great earthquake has shaken everything apart, the great city split into three parts, the cities of the nations fell, great Babylon was judged, every island fled away, none of the mountains could be found — who or what could even be *left* for the hail to fall upon! We have all kinds of carnal-minded prophets of doom and gloom in the land today talking about hailstones as big around as beach-balls, Godzilla monsters walking down Main Street, giant insects invading the homes, hideous demons riding horses, scorpions as big as bulls crawling up out of the earth, and other foolishness too ridiculous to enumerate — all of which they imagine is revealed in the book of Revelation! I often wonder how people who have received the Holy Spirit of God can fail to see that all these things are symbolic, they are metaphors representing great spiritual realities within our lives and in the experience of mankind. I really have to question whether a man has truly been filled with the Holy Spirit of Truth if he can listen to such literalistic trash, such carnal drivel, and never say, "Wait a minute — there's something about this that doesn't add up — how can that be *the revelation of Jesus Christ!*"

I'm sure there are some who read these lines who have attended seminars where the literalistic doom and gloom were taught, and when you left there you thought, "You know, that really doesn't bear witness with my spirit," but for lack of a better answer you thought, "This brother *must know* what he's talking about!" Yet, a voice way down in your inner being whispered to you even then that it wasn't true. There was a sudden flash of lightning, a momentary burst of illumination, that suggested to you that there was a truth deeper and higher in God! And today prophets of God are openly proclaiming that truth which you knew in the very depths of your life but which you were unable to clearly focus or articulate. The truth does not speak from outside of you. Truth speaks from inside of you, out of the inner sanctum of your spirit. If it is the voice of our Beloved it will make our inner-son leap! That is what is happening within God's elect in this hour as the message of Christ in the Revelation is quickened within our hearts!

THE BLASPHEMY OF MEN

"...and *men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great*" (Rev. 16:21).

For a time men will blaspheme God "because of the plague of the hail," for it will be devastating in its working. This verse, however, it is not placed at the *end* of the judgment upon Babylon and the final deliverance of God's people. This work continues on through chapters seventeen and eighteen. Only *then* does the seventh plague complete its grand purpose! Therefore, the "blasphemy" of men is a response along the way in the process of judgment. When the work is finished Great Babylon will fall to rise no more, the church — the bride — will have been purified and made herself ready, the city of God will be adorned with the glory of God descending out of the heavens, and the nations will walk in the light of that city which *is* the bride of the Lamb. The whole of creation will be subdued before Him, joyfully to live in His sight, *all things* will be *made new*, and all will be gathered into Him — for *HE is the beginning and the end!*

It is the Truth that is to fall on men and cause them to blaspheme. The carnal mind and the old

Adamic reasoning always resist the mind of the Lord, for they are enmity against God and cannot receive the things of the spirit of God, because they are *spiritually discerned*. The truth *hurts* carnal-minded men and causes them to resist it in resentful blasphemy. This is the natural man crying out because his death-knell has arrived, his day has ended, his time has come, and he will now sink into oblivion to be reckoned with no more! The Lord employs nothing with which to defeat error and correct men except the Truth. The adversary attempted in the beginning of human history to defeat the purposes of God and destroy the life of man by and through *deception* and *falsehood*, and not through the employment of physical or any form of super-human power. God will likewise send a *hard word* with such *devastating power* that it will prevail and *sweep away the refuge of lies*. Falsehood swept away, Babylon is disarmed and helpless, and her armies must perish by *the sword of the Spirit!*

To be continued...

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