



The Man Child

Brother Emerson A. Wilson

Revelation 12:5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule nations with a rod of iron: and child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

Psalms 2:1 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?

2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying,

3 Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

4 He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.

5 Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.

6 Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

7 I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

8 Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

A Man Child

John and Isaiah (Isaiah 66:7-8) teach that Zion was delivered of a "man child." In Ephesians 2:13-14 Paul made plain what the man child symbolizes: he is the convert of the church, especially those many converts produced in the early days of the church. In Ephesians 2:11 the Apostle reminded us that we were in times past Gentiles in the flesh, uncircumcised and without promise, without God, without hope in the world. This was because the first covenant was only for the Jews, Abraham's fleshly seed. All Gentiles were left out completely until God brought a new covenant, a better covenant, one for all nations.

Therefore, Paul said in Ephesians 2:13-15: "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both [the Jew and the Greek] one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace."

Here we see that God took some of the literal Jews and some of the literal Gentiles and, through their acceptance of Christ, brought them both into one body (the body of Christ), making them one new man.

In Galatians 4:22-31 Paul used the allegory of Sarah and Hagar to represent the two covenants. There were two sons: one was after the flesh, or the Law, and one was after the Spirit, or the Gospel. Paul taught that the son after the Spirit represents the converts of the church. The mother, Sarah, who brought forth the man child, Isaac, symbolizes the church. Now, the church will produce more of herself. Whatever we are, that is what we will produce. If we are a worldly church, we will produce worldly Christians. This is why we need to be careful what we are.

The question may arise in your mind, "How can the woman and the man child both symbolize the church?" There is a good reason for this double symbol. In Revelation 12:5 we find that the man child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron was caught up to God's throne. Although this point properly belongs to the next article, I will briefly touch on it here: the pagan Roman Empire killed the Christians, and the converts were caught up to God and to His throne, while the mother church, the woman, stayed here on the earth.

The vision calls for two symbols because there were two positions to be taken by the church. The church's converts were literally killed, burned, thrown to the lions, and beheaded, but their spirits were caught up to be with God around His throne. There was a part of the church, however, that remained on the earth, for God had this woman producing converts all the time. This is why Paul wrote in Ephesians 3:15, ". . . the whole family [is] in heaven and earth . . ."

More Twin Symbols

Just as there are twin symbols to represent the true church, there are twin symbols in the Revelation to symbolize the false church. Apostate religion is depicted as a mother with harlot daughters (Revelation 17:5). Why did John use two symbols for false Christianity? Part of the false church ruled one era of history as Roman Catholicism. From her darkness and corruption came her daughters—the many Protestant sectarian organizations that dominated a later

historical era.

There is another reason John spoke of the true church as a mother and a son, while he called the false church mother and daughters. The reason the true church's converts appear as a man child is simple: God wants the church to hold her position and teaching concerning her name. Only a man child keeps his family name, so the church's converts are symbolized as a man child. When a man child is born into your home, he will keep the family name, but when a daughter is born, she will take somebody else's family name upon marriage. In the Revelation, Catholicism is symbolized as the mother of many daughters, every one of them a harlot. Because they are females, they are liable to take any name.

There is a deception that has worked on people, making them feel that any name is all right for the church as long as its members are sincere. God, however, did not leave it to any of us to name His church. He already named it. Long before the first Pope ever reigned in Rome, long before any priest or preacher ministered, long before any board of elders or council of churches ever convened, God named the church!

The Name of the Church

Paul said in Ephesians 3:14-15: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family [the whole church] in heaven and earth is named." A real born-again experience does not make you anything but a member of God's family. It does not make you a Baptist, a Presbyterian, a United Brethren, an Episcopalian, or any other sectarian. If you ever become one of them, you must do what some man tells you to do, but a born-again experience makes you a member of the family of God, a child of God, a part of the Church of God.

When Paul said that the "whole family in heaven and earth is named" after the Father, he gave us a clue as to the name of the church—the Church of God. The family name of the church is Church of God. Some people think the proper name of the church is "Church of Christ," but "Christ" is not a family name. It is a title. When Jesus was born, the angel told Mary, ". . . that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). In verse 31 he had said, "Thou . . . shalt call his name JESUS." Jesus was His given name; Christ was His office. His natural, family name, however, was God. So, His name is Jesus God. He was the Son of God when He was born, and He bore His Father's name. In one sense, there is no difference between the church and the kingdom, and the kingdom is called "the kingdom of God." Did you ever read in the Bible about the "kingdom of Baptists" or the "kingdom of Methodists"? No, it is the Kingdom of God because everyone who repents and is born again becomes a little child of God. He enters the Kingdom of God, the Church of God.

Jesus taught this same truth. John, Chapter 17, contains His high priestly prayer. In verse 11 He prayed, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one [even], as we are [one]." This is a family relationship, and since the church is the bride of Christ, she has taken her Husband's family name, not His given name. Now, my father's family name is Wilson, but my given name is Emerson. When I took a bride, she did not become Mrs. Emerson; she became Mrs. Wilson. She took my father's name. Now, I have four sons, and they all have my father's name—Wilson. I also have two daughters, but they are married, so they traded their family name for their husbands' family names. My sons kept their father's name, and every one of them has taken a wife, each wife becoming Mrs. Wilson. In the same manner, the name of the church is the Church of God, not the Church of Christ. That is not a bit more narrow than the Bible.

A Practical Application of Revelation 12:5

Let me now address the church from the fifth verse. I am interested in more than a mere understanding of the symbols of the Revelation, for unless the Revelation challenges us, we miss the whole purpose of the Book. I believe every true pastor must honestly confess that he is not satisfied with the progress the church is making today. Perhaps our dissatisfaction is not too important, but what is important is that God is not satisfied, either.

Revelation 12:5 says, "And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron." To reign is why the church is here, why she makes converts. It so happened, however, during this first period of church history that God allowed the Roman Empire to kill the Christians. So, the newborn babes were caught up to God and His throne. The point I want to emphasize concerns the purpose of making converts.

Why were you saved? John said you were saved to rule all nations with a rod of iron. This applies to later converts of the church too. If you are a Christian, you are a convert of this same mother. God has kept the mother seed. He took her through the wilderness condition of 1260 years, when the saints hid in the dens and the caves of the earth. He produced the seed, and He kept the mother. So it was no accident that you and I are saved. Somebody carried a burden for us; somebody did much praying for us.

This ruling of all nations with a rod of iron is as symbolic as the rest of the vision. We, as later converts of the church, need to reconsider our position in Christ. When John said the man child was to rule with a rod of iron, he

was comparing the Word of God to a rod of iron. It cannot be bent or twisted, but it is solid and brings victory. John said the church's converts were to rule all nations with a rod of iron, meaning that the church is to rule all nations by the Word of God. The word *rule* means "have dominion over, have power over." The Word of God is called a rod of iron because it is strong and irresistible. The Word of God is an iron scepter that cannot be broken, and when it is handled properly, it cannot be resisted.

I do not mean to find fault, but I ask God to challenge us to have more effect on the nations of the lost around us. Too many people regard such a statement as "rule all nations with a rod of iron" as a literal sitting on a throne with civil authority to say, "You'd better line up or I'll punish you." This is a figurative expression. Bible students recognize that the "rod of iron" is the Word of God, which is solid and which men cannot change, twist, bend, or break. The Word of God forever remains the same.

Power Over the Nations

What does it mean to rule over all nations by the Word of God? This phrase appears in Revelation in the context of the letter written to Thyatira. Christ criticized her because she tolerated Jezebel as a teacher, an unclean person. Just as King Ahab's wife, Jezebel, seduced God's servants in the Old Testament, Thyatira allowed teachers in the church to promote things that were contrary to truth, things that caused God's people to commit spiritual fornication. To this church Jesus said: "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father" (Revelation 2:26-27).

When He said He would give them power over the nations, He said they would be just like a potter who can break his vessel to shivers. The potter only breaks one kind of vessel to shivers—a vessel that is not formed right, that does not come out as the potter wants it to come out. Too many people's lives are coming short of the glory of God, for they are not truly being the vessels they ought to be for God.

Revelation 2:26-27 refers to Psalm 2:1-9. According to verse 1, the first thing a man should do when he considers taking counsel against God's plan is to remember that he is wasting time and indulging in vain imaginations. Right while the heathen raged and men imagined vain things, right while they took counsel against Him, God set His King on the throne in Zion!

God's plan will be fulfilled, and God's plan for us is to get the lost around us saved, brought into the kingdom! Why do such men rise up against the Lord? Why do they break their bands and cast away their cords? When the truth of God's Word goes forth, it binds men. It puts cords on them. Where the truth is preached, men do not operate as freely as they do in other places. There is more power in this "rod of iron" than we often credit it with.

After men have risen up, then God says, "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree . . ." It is not what man says he is going to do, but what God says He will do that is accomplished. Then God says to us, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen [in other words 'I will give you the unbelieving'] for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." God was not talking about literally beating someone up, but He meant that if we truly abide by the Word of God, we reign with Christ with power over the nations.

A Lost Vision

Here is a vision too many have lost: the vision of the power of God's Word. Revelation, Chapter 19, which concerns our day, further clarifies this rod of iron. Revelation 19:11-15 states: "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns [symbolizing His many victories]; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."

This is a symbolic picture of Christ in our day. He still has the rod of iron. In this passage it is coming out of Christ's mouth, and when the Word of God comes forth, it is like a rod of iron.

The man child was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. Revelation, Chapter 2, said God gave us dominion over all nations, enabling us to reign, or rule, over them. Psalm 2:8 tells us what nation he was talking about: "Ask of me, and I shall give thee, the heathen . . ." The Hebrew word translated *heathen* here merely means "unbeliever" or the lost. God will give you the lost ones around you, if you will meet the proper conditions. God will not save people against their will, but He can make them willing to be saved. No one can resist God when the church becomes serious

about soul winning.

As soon as the church travails, she brings forth converts. In our day, we might have hundreds of people come and listen to us preach but only have a dozen come to a prayer service. You might have other things to do, but you are not reaching the lost and your life is not very effective for God. Too large a segment of the church has been living below the standard. Thus, the only power she has is enough power to keep her own members through temptation, safe from sin. She has never experienced this power that God gives over the lost, power to win them.

Power Over the Nations

Psalms 149:1-9 expands this idea of "power over the nations." It says: "Praise ye the Lord. Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints. Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. Let them praise his name in the dance: let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp. For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation.

"Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand; To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the Lord."

Verse 2 says, ". . . Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King." Too often the world sees the Church of God as a people over whom their King reigns, but who find life so hard they can barely make it. They get that image from the attitude too many saints have: "I'm having such a struggle." That tells the world, "You might be better off if you do not try this way, because you might not make it; and I would rather you wouldn't start if you can't make it." David cried, "Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King." If you are where God wants you to be, there will be a joy bubbling up and running over in you because you are privileged to have such a King, one you can lean on, one who has all-power both in Heaven and earth. We have a King who says no one can touch a hair on your head unless He says so. We have a King who is able to make us able to do anything that He wants us to do. What a King!

There is a way that we can have greater power over the nations, but this power is not the mere ability to tell them what they need to do. It is the power to affect men and women when you talk to them about their souls.

I do not appreciate preachers who get in the pulpit to say: "This is a hard day to work in. When you speak to people about their souls, it just runs off like water off a duck's back." We all need to work on this area, for none of us is as fruitful as God desires us to be. God will not put up with our gathering together to have a wonderful time praising God and singing, while people are dying and going to hell. He has given us power over them, so let us exercise that power!

The Psalmist said in verse 4, "For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation." Now, if God takes pleasure in the church, then if we are Christians, we must take pleasure in the church. More people are not attending church because they live such substandard lives that church attendance is just a duty. They find no real pleasure in praying, in reading their Bibles, and in the services of the church. Yet, God does.

The successful businessman is the one who finds pleasure in doing business, who enjoys it. God finds pleasure in His people, in His church. You and I must find pleasure in it, too, or we will not win the world. Too often all the world can see in the church is a liability. They feel no need for more commitments, for they already are committed to their cars, houses, and material things. They are not looking for another liability, but if they can see the church as an asset, they want it!

Real Beauty

When the Lord takes pleasure in His people, David said, "He will beautify the meek with salvation." Since God beautifies the meek with salvation, every one of us ought to cultivate the trait of meekness. Too many saints have lost their beauty, for God only puts this beauty on the meek. Whenever we cease to be meek, we lose all real beauty, and we cease to be an attraction to the lost. As the man child, as the Church of God, we can have a greater power and do a more effective work among the nations. The devil has caused us to lean to our own understanding and to rely on our own strength for so long that our witness is almost a failure when it comes to reaching sinners. Where is that power over the nations that when you talk to them causes them to become broken like a potter's vessel, broken to shivers, and shaking? Where is that power? It is for us. The primitive church had it. Their efforts did not run off people like water off a duck's back. When they dealt with people, the people were broken and shivered, they trembled and shook.

"He will beautify the meek with salvation," David said. The character trait to cultivate is meekness. The word *meek* means "submissive." We must be submissive to God, submissive to His truth, submissive to His dealings, and submissive to leaders. To be meek is to be gentle toward others bearing things with patience, forgiving heartily.

People sometimes say, "I forgive you," but their forgiveness does not come from the heart, and five minutes later their attitude reverts to its previous grudge. A person forgives from the heart, and when he forgives, he forgets. Here is the virtue to aim for—meekness. Here is the favor to enjoyed—real beauty. He beautifies the meek with the beauty of peace, the beauty of contentment, the beauty of joy, the beauty of holiness, the beauty of respect, and the beauty of influence. Those whose actions are not meek, are fruitless as Christians. Does the world see any real beauty in your life? God only beautifies the meek.

Joyful in Glory

This will give us power over nations. If we ever win the nations to God, we must have power over them. We know that the world is lost, that it is under the power of Satan. The Bible says they are in a prison house and that the enemy of souls has blinded them. How pitiful that they cannot understand spiritual things! God, however, wants to give us power over the nations, and if we will allow Him, He will make our lives so effective that when we speak for Him, we will see results.

The good results expected will be: God will be glorified in our lives, Christ will be manifested, men will be attracted, and Heaven will be anticipated. Verses 5-6 say: "Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand."

To sing aloud on your bed indicates genuineness in your experience. Some time ago I asked a man, "What's wrong?" He said, "Nothing's wrong with me, brother." Looking at his countenance made me think something was wrong, but he denied it. Several months later, he confessed that he had lied to me. He was in deep trouble.

He said: "Brother Wilson, I have just been putting on a show in front of the people. I do not have anything." You may put on a profession in church to make others think you are spiritual, you may put on a show while you are in other public places with the people, but when you are alone on your bed in the dark, there is no one to put a show on for. Then you are just what you are before God, and if you cannot shout "hallelujah" then, keep your mouth shut in the church! These are some of the things that hinder us from having power over the nations as we ought.

Verse 6 tells us how to win the nations: "Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand." Let the high praises of God be in your mouth as you bring forth the words of God. Praising God with the high praises will shake them to the degree that they will want to know how to find this. Then, we just have to reach the Word, the two-edged sword, to them. Even when the economy is bad, even when it is income tax time, we ought to be able to sing the high praises of God.

Too often we think the world will make fun of us, but God knows exactly what it takes to win the world. Too many people are living a down-in-the-mouth experience. Let the high praises of God be in your mouth and a two-edged sword in your hand!

The Strength of This Rod

Verses 7-8 continue: "To execute vengeance [judgment] upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron." These verses do not mean the Word will actually hurt people, but if they are living in sin, the Word of God spoken will bring punishment on them. These verses show that praise and power go together. They are ever hand in hand. The high praises of God should be in your mouth, and the Word of God should be in your hand. Verse 8 tells us how strong this power is. The Word of God, the rod of iron, is so strong that it will bind kings and fasten nobles with fetters.

We may see this illustrated in Acts, Chapter 16, in the primitive church. Paul and Silas had cast the devil out of a woman and stirred up some religious folks. The Apostles were put in jail, and at midnight they began to sing aloud on their beds. When they sang aloud, God shook the jail. They had power over the nations! God shook the jail, and the jailer was about to commit suicide because he thought all the prisoners had run away. Paul said, "Do thyself no harm: for we are all here." Luke said he came in trembling, broken up, saying, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (verses 28-30).

Acts, Chapters 24-26, shows the binding of rulers. Paul was brought before Felix, a governor in all his splendor. Paul reasoned with him from the Word of God, and he had the high praises of God in his mouth. Felix forgot all of his honor as he trembled and shook. He was broken like a clay vessel. On another occasion, Festus, Bernice and King Agrippa came to hear him. Paul reasoned with them about temperance and judgment to come, and the Bible said Paul, the prisoner, made Agrippa a prisoner, for Paul had his attention. When the Apostle finished his message, King Agrippa was so bound and so broken that he trembled and cried before a crowd of royalty, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" (Acts 26:28).

This is a power over the nations that we seldom see today. Because of the lack of this power, many are knocking on doors and presenting some plan to trick people into believing in Christ. We need to get back where the power is.

God still gives the church power over the nations. It makes no difference how hard the man's heart, how deep in sin he is, if God is leading you in your dealings with him, you can break him in shivers. This is the power that he is talking about.

Who Has This Power?

Psalm 149:9 tells us that "this honour have all his saints." All the saints need this power over the nations. We need to see the majesty and force of the Word of God when it is lived, obeyed, enjoyed, and spoken. Anyone who is not living it, enjoying it, and obeying it needs to keep silent, for he will not win anybody. Such a professing Christian is an enemy to the cause of Christ. He hinders the church. All the church's true converts have received from the Holy Spirit this power over the nations. The reason God wanted the disciples to tarry until the Day of Pentecost was so they could receive this power from on high. Although the power of the Holy Ghost included the power to live right and to be right, it also brought power into their lives to bind kings and to break people down. Where is this power?

Psalm 149 gives step-by-step conditions to meet to have this power. If you find a loophole somewhere in your life, a place where you have made too much room for yourself or where you have failed to measure to God's eternal Word, you will find you are short on this power. Since the world is waxing worse and worse, humanly speaking, it is harder to reach them. As far as God's power is concerned, however, He can break our world in its depth of corruption as easily as ever He broke any culture in any day. We cannot win the world if God does not give us power over the nations.

The Power Is in the Spirit

Our later study in Revelation will concern the battle between two powers, the powers of evil and the powers of righteousness, and God's message to us is, "I give you power to rule over the nations." God is still able through the power of His Holy Spirit to break down the hardest sinner there is, but if we are not careful we will settle for less. Too often we are content to live short of the glory of God, too often satisfied with only a nominal prayer life, too frequently complacent to witness only once a week or once a month.

Church of God, there will be a judgment day, and the group who finds approval at the Judgment will be the church in her pristine glory, those who were willing to lay down their lives. Those who are approved will be those who lived for God, worked for God, and died for God, those who sowed seed and brought forth many other converts. Do we think we can stand with that number and give excuses for not being fruitful?

If you are a Christian, you are with child, for Christ is formed in you (Galatians 4:19). Christ is formed in you so that you may take Him to others. Every lost person around us needs Jesus, but they will fuss with us unless we have this power to break them, as a potter's vessel is broken with a rod of iron.

God did not send us to fight the battle to win souls in our own strength, to pit our wisdom against their wisdom, to challenge their strength with our strength. The devil has them, and he is greater than any one of us, but if we can realize that He that is in us greater than he that is in the world; we will have power over the nations. Every defense the devil tries to raise against us, the power of the Holy Ghost can break down. This power, I repeat, will bind kings and nobles. Prestige, high positions, and low positions make no difference to the Holy Ghost. When the Holy Ghost works on a person, whether he is a king or a bum on the street, he is just another lost soul who needs Jesus.

Jesus said in Matthew 16:19, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven . . ." The first thing the Word of God does is bind men. Then, if they believe it, it will loose them. If they do not believe it, it will leave them bound.

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