

Mysteries of the Kingdom

Drawn from the Old Testament
Opened up in the New Testament
Paralleling That Seen in Revelation 2-20

A Study about the Result
of the Proclamation of “the
Word of the Kingdom” in
Christendom throughout the
Dispensation

Arlen L. Chitwood

There are two places in the N.T. which set forth *a history of Christendom throughout the present dispensation relative to the proclamation of "the Word of the Kingdom," the CENTRAL message of the N.T.*

Both accounts were given by Christ, on two different occasions:

1) Christ made *the first* known to the twelve disciples during His earthly ministry. And this account was given in "*parabolic*" form, recorded in Matthew chapter thirteen (vv. 1-33).

2) Then, Christ made *the second* known to John at a time after His ascension, following John being removed from the earth into His presence, removed from Man's Day into the Lord's Day. And this account was given in "*signified*" form (Rev. 1:1) via *seven short epistles to seven Churches in Asia*, recorded in Revelation chapters two and three.

These two accounts parallel one another and present two different pictures of *the SAME thing*. And each is followed by parallel accounts of events which also present two different pictures of *the SAME thing* as well.

The first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen and the seven epistles to seven Churches in Revelation chapters two and three present a history of the Church which extends throughout the dispensation, though from two different perspectives. And this history, in each account, *CENTERS around the proclamation of "the Word of the Kingdom."*

Then, the fifth and sixth parables in Matthew chapter thirteen and the fifth through nineteenth chapters in the Book of Revelation record parallel events which deal with *the SAME thing*, presenting different facets of events which follow the present dispensation. That depicted by these two parables in the Gospel of Matthew and events recorded in these chapters in the Book of Revelation have to do with two things:

- 1) *Christ's redemption of the forfeited inheritance.*
- 2) *Christ's bride becoming His wife through this redemption.*

Then the seventh parable in Matthew chapter thirteen carries matters forward into the Messianic Kingdom. And the parallel counterpart in the Book of Revelation is seen in the opening part of chapter twenty.

Thus, the *WHOLE* of that covered in these seven parables in Matthew, or in these nineteen chapters in the Book of Revelation, *begins with events surrounding Christ's first coming and moves forward through time into events surrounding Christ's second coming and the millennial kingdom.*

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“The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the seaside.

And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

And he spake many things unto them in parables...

When anyone heareth the word of the kingdom...

...every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of the heavens is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old” (Matt. 13:1-3a, 19a, 52b).

Cover photograph: The California Pacific Coast, Winter, 2008

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**by
Arlen L. Chitwood**

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By the Same Author —

RUTH
ESTHER
BY FAITH
RUN TO WIN
LET US GO ON
MOSES AND JOHN
END OF THE DAYS
IN THE LORD'S DAY
DISTANT HOOFBEATS
THE BRIDE IN GENESIS
SO GREAT SALVATION
SEARCH FOR THE BRIDE
GOD'S FIRSTBORN SONS
WE ARE ALMOST THERE
SIGNS IN JOHN'S GOSPEL
SALVATION OF THE SOUL
HAD YE BELIEVED MOSES
THE MOST HIGH RULETH
THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE
THE STUDY OF SCRIPTURE
FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN
COMING IN HIS KINGDOM
MYSTERY OF THE WOMAN
SEVEN, TEN GENERATIONS
REDEEMED FOR A PURPOSE
JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST
THE RAPTURE AND BEYOND
FROM ACTS TO THE EPISTLES
PROPHECY ON MOUNT OLIVET
NEVER AGAIN! OR YES, AGAIN!
THE TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLE
BROUGHT FORTH FROM ABOVE
ISRAEL — FROM DEATH TO LIFE
JUDE — ACTS OF THE APOSTATES
O SLEEPER! ARISE, CALL...! (JONAH)
THE TIME OF THE END (REVELATION)
MIDDLE EAST PEACE — HOW? WHEN?
SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH
MESSAGE IN THE GOSPELS, ACTS, EPISTLES
ISRAEL — WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

FOREWORD

From the fall of 1958 to the spring of 1962 I sat under the ministry of a pastor-teacher, A. Edwin Wilson, who was well versed in “the Word of the Kingdom.” And he taught different facets of this message at the Church he pastored, among other places, week after week, month after month, year after year.

This is when and where I learned the basics of practically everything that I’ve taught and written about this message throughout the ensuing years, continuing to the present time.

A. Edwin Wilson considered the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen to be of such importance that he would return to and reteach them about once every year (*cf.* II Peter 1:12-15).

And I can still remember his exact words regarding the matter:

“If one has a conversant knowledge of these parables, he will have a conversant knowledge of the whole of Scripture.”

And after over sixty years studying these parables at different times, teaching and writing about them, I can only concur with the importance which he placed on them, along with his statement regarding them.

These parables, within their setting in Matthew’s gospel (following events in chapter twelve), cover the whole of the message regarding “the Word of the Kingdom” throughout the New Testament, beginning in the gospels.

This is a message though that had its origin in the Old Testament, beginning in the first chapter of Genesis and seen pervading the whole of the Old Testament.

Accordingly, to properly understand these parables, *numerous sections of BOTH Testaments have to be dealt with, studied together, and understood.*

(E.g., these parables draw from large parts of that seen in Genesis through Joshua, most or all of different books such as Ruth, I and II Samuel, and Esther, numerous Psalms, and large parts of the major and minor prophets.

THEN, the subject continues from the Old into and through the New.)

Thus, if you want to know what *the WHOLE of Scripture* is about, study these parables. And study them in the proper manner, *NOT ONLY letting Scripture interpret itself through comparing Scripture with Scripture BUT doing this after the manner Scripture has been structured (building on the foundations, recognizing and studying the types, signs, the use of numbers, metaphors...).*

(Note that the foundations are found in Moses, centrally in the types, particularly in the opening chapters of Genesis.

Understand and study Moses after the manner that these books have been structured, and proper foundations will be laid.

BUT, ignore or fail to do this...)

There is a wealth of information associated with a proper study of these parables, and time spent studying them *can ONLY be time well spent, time which will pay HUGE dividends when it comes to a proper understanding of the WHOLE of Scripture.*

And *the matter* begins and has to do with the Christians' reaction to *ONE thing, seen at a base point, seen in the first of the seven parables, the parable of the Sower*:

"When anyone heareth the Word of the Kingdom..." (vv. 19-23).

You can read about it in Matthew chapter thirteen.

You can read about it in large sections of Scripture beginning in Genesis and ending in Revelation.

And, you can read comments about it in this book.

INTRODUCTION

In relation to the central message of the New Testament — *“the Word of the Kingdom”* — first century Christianity and twentieth century Christianity would have *very little* in common. Things have changed in Christendom to that degree, and *they have NOT changed for the better*. Rather, over the past two millennia there has been a steady deterioration relative to correct, Biblical teaching regarding “the Word of the Kingdom,”.

This central message of the New Testament was universally understood and taught throughout the first century Church. *BUT*, this same message, except in isolated instances, *is NOT understood or taught at all throughout the twentieth century Church*.

The false message concerning the kingdom, introduced by Satan very early in the dispensation through false teachers (apostates) in the Church, resulted in a progressive, continuing deterioration which has left the Church in its present leavened condition two millennia later.

And it matters not whether one is viewing Christianity from the standpoint of those in fundamental circles or those in liberal circles. In relation to a knowledge of and attitude toward “the Word of the Kingdom,” *EXACTLY the same thing can be seen among those in BOTH segments*.

Those in fundamental circles *DON’T* understand any more about “the Word of the Kingdom” than those in liberal circles do. And anyone daring to proclaim this message today will be fought against by those in both segments — usually more so by the fundamentalists than by the liberals.

In relation to THIS message, for all practical purposes, BOTH segments exist in a COMPLETELY leavened state; and BOTH are seen described in Rev. 3:17 as “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”

The seven parables in Matthew chapter thirteen have to do with both *the Church and Israel*. The first four parables cover a history of the Church in relation to “*the Word of the Kingdom*,” which extends throughout the dispensation; and the last three continue with events which will occur after the dispensation has run its course, events having to do with both *the Church and Israel*, events preceding, during, and immediately following the Tribulation, which lead into the Messianic Kingdom.

NEVER in the history of the Church has it been more important for Christians to understand that which is revealed in these parables than it is today, for NEVER in the history of the Church has “the Word of the Kingdom” been more misunderstood and spoken against than it is today.

Christians are in a race — *the race of “the faith”* — with its corresponding spiritual warfare. *And the HIGHEST of all possible prizes is being held out for the victors — that of being accorded the privilege of ascending the throne with God’s Son and ruling over the earth as co-heirs with Him for 1,000 years.*

A Christian *can overcome* in the present race, in the present warfare, and occupy one of these positions with God’s Son; *OR he can be overcome* in this race, in this warfare, and fail to occupy one of these positions.

THIS is the message which Satan has fought so hard to destroy.

And, is it any wonder that Satan has expended so much time and effort to do away with *THIS message*?

THIS message has to do with Satan and his angels being put down, with Christ and His co-heirs *THEN* ascending the throne.

Christ and His co-heirs are to take the kingdom and rule the very domain which Satan and his angels presently rule. *And THIS is something which Satan, at ALL costs, has sought to prevent.*

THIS is the realm where Satan CENTERS his attack AGAINST Christians and AGAINST the Word of God. THIS is at the HEART of ALL things surrounding the spiritual warfare.

Satan attacks Christians, seeking *at ALL costs to bring about their defeat in the race of the faith*, causing them to be disqualified for *the prize set before them — THAT of ascending the throne with God's Son in THAT coming day.*

And he attacks the message which relates these things — *“the Word of the Kingdom” — seeking at ALL costs to corrupt and destroy THIS message.*

And how well Satan has succeeded can be seen on practically every hand today.

THIS message is all but absent in the Churches throughout the land, and, as a result, the vast majority of Christians throughout these same Churches lack any real spiritual direction and purpose in their lives.

THIS is what the leaven which the woman placed in the three measures of meal in Matt. 13:33 has done during a period encompassing almost two millenniums.

THIS is the state in which the Church finds itself near the end of the dispensation.

And *THIS* existing state of the Church should surprise no one, for *Scripture CLEARLY REVEALS that THIS is the way that the dispensation would end.*

(See the author's book, Till the Whole Was Leavened.)

These are the things developed in Chapters IV-VII of this book, dealing with the first four of the seven parables in Matthew chapter thirteen. And subsequent chapters dealing with the remaining three parables move beyond this and have to do with both Israel and the Church during and beyond the Tribulation.

But, preceding the chapters beginning the first four parables (one chapter for each of these parables), there are three introductory chapters, providing foundational and background material which will help explain material introduced in these parables, aiding in their proper and correct understanding and interpretation.

Then, preceding the last three parables (chs. XI-XIII), there are also three introductory chapters providing material to aid in a proper understanding and interpretation of these three parables as well (chs. VIII-X).

Though *ALL seven parables* have to do with “the Word of the Kingdom,” the first four have to do with events during time covering the entire present dispensation (given outside the house, down by the seaside [Israel set aside, now dealing with the Gentiles]), and the last three have to do with events during time beyond the present dispensation (after Christ had reentered the house [after He had resumed His dealing with Israel once again]).

The last three parables have to do with events during and following the last seven years of the previous dispensation, the Jewish dispensation.

Or, to state the matter another way, the last three parables have to do with events during and following the fulfillment of Daniel’s Seventy-Week prophecy, which is what large parts of the O.T. are about (*ref.* the foreword to this book).

Thus, different introductory and explanatory material is needed preceding the last three parables than was needed preceding the first four.

Then there is a concluding chapter dealing with Christ’s words to His disciples regarding what they had just heard as He gave these seven parables, followed by five appendix articles, all containing related material.

1

The Mandate Given to Adam

*Fruit-Bearing, Israel During Past Time
Fruit-Bearing, Christians During Present Time*

(This introductory chapter will deal with the mandate given to Adam at the time of his creation and how this mandate, having to do with Adam and his progeny, had to do with Israel during the past dispensation and has to do with Christians during the present dispensation.

That stated in this mandate *has been at the center of EVERYTHING Satan has done since he brought about man's fall*, accounting for the seemingly completely leavened state of Israel at Christ's first coming and the prophesied completely leavened state of Christendom immediately preceding Christ's return.

And, as will be shown, *this mandate is FOUNDATIONAL to the subject matter of this book. The latter simply CANNOT be properly understood APART FROM a proper understanding of the former.*)

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish [‘fill’] the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion [‘rule’] over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth” (Gen. 1:26-28).

(This mandate, seen in connection with man's creation at the beginning, reveals God's first recorded words to Adam, words having to do with the *PURPOSE* for his creation.

And, as well, this mandate has to do with *BOTH* the *PURPOSE* for Adam's fall through Satan's work and the *PURPOSE* for his salvation through God's subsequent work.

With that in mind, note the first two words in the full wording of the mandate in v. 28:

"BE FRUITFUL" [one word in the Hebrew text].

Then note the subject at the outset of the Matt. 13 parables, which is the *SAME* as that seen at the beginning in Genesis.

The first parable has to do with Christ sowing/placing individuals out in the world, with a view to their *BRINGING FORTH* fruit, along with Satan seeking to *PREVENT* fruit-bearing.

The second parable, continuing from the first, has to do with individuals *BRINGING FORTH* fruit and Satan seeking to *STOP* fruit-bearing.

And the parables continue after this same fashion, taking matters through the present dispensation, the Tribulation, and into the Messianic Kingdom.

This introductory chapter will provide necessary background material for succeeding chapters. And the next two chapters, chapters two and three, will build upon that seen in this first chapter, prior to beginning a study of the seven parables in Matt. 13 in chapter four.

The IMPORTANCE of that dealt with in these seven parables, along with properly understanding the parables, *CANNOT* be overemphasized [ref. the foreword to this book]. Thus, this book begins with three chapters containing sixty-two pages of introductory material before beginning a study of the parables.

Also, it MUST be understood that the Bible deals with *TIME* in relation to the *PRESENT* heavens and earth, *NOT* with the eternal ages in relation to the new heavens and the new earth beyond.

For information on the preceding, refer to Appendix II in this book.)

Man's creation and fall had to do with *the EARTH and REGALITY, associated with a SEVENTH day.*

And redemption, first and foremost, has to do with man realizing the purpose for his creation, *which is RULERSHIP over the EARTH on THAT SEVENTH day.*

BUT, individuals attempting to deal with the matter today, invariably completely ignore, most don't even know, the *PURPOSE* for man's creation, the *REASON* Satan brought about his fall, and the resulting *PURPOSE* for man's salvation.

Fallen man is invariably dealt with *in relation to heaven, hell, and eternal verities, NOT in relation to the way Scripture handles the matter — in relation to REGALITY, the EARTH, and a SEVENTH day, a seventh 1,000-year period of rest following six days, 6,000 years of redemptive work.*

BUT, redeemed man DOESN'T move immediately FROM the point of "salvation" TO "regality," NO more so than did the Israelites under Moses move immediately FROM the death of the firstborn in Egypt TO dwelling in and realizing regality in the land to which they had been called. Different things lay between these two points for the Israelites in the type, and different things lie between these SAME two points for Christians in the antitype.

Note again the mandate given to Adam. *The mandate has five parts, NOT just two or three parts — "Be fruitful...multiply...fill...subdue...", THEN, "RULE."*

And, as will be seen in this chapter, being "fruitful" is "multiplying," then "filling" the earth, *LIKE with LIKE; and this is what it will take — NOT just one or two like-minded individuals (e.g., Adam and Eve alone), BUT MANY — to THEN subdue and rule the earth.*

THIS was true for Adam, it was equally true for Israel, and it is equally true for Christians today. *ALL five parts of the mandate MUST be fulfilled, BEGINNING with being FRUITFUL and ENDING with REGALITY.*

Fruit-Bearing — Adam, Israel, Christians

Approaching the matter after a similar fashion to that seen in the parable of the Sower in Matt. 13:3-9, 18-23, beginning, as in the mandate, with “fruit-bearing,” *note how this was FIRST seen with Adam at the beginning, THEN with Israel during the past dispensation, THEN with Christians today.*

That would be to say, note “fruit-bearing” as it has been seen throughout Man’s Day in relation to the recipients of the offer of the kingdom of the heavens.

BUT, EXACTLY WHAT is “fruit-bearing?”

And “fruit-bearing,” as will be shown, *can ONLY be seen as the centerpiece to the proclamation of “the Word of the Kingdom.”*

Or, to state the matter another way, *the proclamation of “the Word of the Kingdom” is for PURPOSES surrounding “fruit-bearing.”*

And “fruit-bearing” has to do with “multiplying” and “filling” the earth with like-minded individuals; and THIS, in turn, has to do with “subduing” and THEN “RULING” the earth.

With the preceding in mind, let’s look at the matter, from the outset.

1) Adam

Fruit-bearing is introduced in Scripture at the time of man’s creation, in the opening chapter of Genesis. And the WAY fruit-bearing is dealt with in this passage establishes *an unchangeable, foundational WAY that the subject is dealt with at ANY subsequent place in Scripture.*

(The preceding statement would be drawn from what is known as “the first-mention principle” in Scripture.

The first mention of a subject in Scripture sets the unchangeable pattern for *HOW* that subject is dealt with throughout *ALL* subsequent Scripture.)

Fruit-bearing, in this first-mention respect, appears in the opening and central part of a mandate given to man at the time of his creation *and is INSEPARABLY associated with the REASON for his creation, the REASON for his very existence.*

Note again this mandate in verse twenty-eight:

“And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish [‘fill’] the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion [Heb., *radah*, ‘rule’] over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth [marine and animal life were all that existed at that time, *BUT NOT all that would one day exist; and man was to rule over ALL upon the earth*].”

The latter part of the mandate — having dominion, *i.e.*, ruling the earth — was seen back in verse twenty-six, but the complete mandate is given only in verse twenty-eight.

Being fruitful in this verse had to do with *PROCREATION, MULTIPLYING, and, through this means, FILLING the earth with individuals of LIKE-MIND and PURPOSE to that of Adam.*

It had to do with individuals from the human race FILLING the earth, allowing man to then SUBDUE and RULE the earth in the stead of the incumbent ruler and those ruling with him.

Thus, *THERE* is the Biblical definition and purpose for fruit-bearing, as *UNCHANGEBLY* set forth at the beginning.

Fruit-bearing has to do with REPRODUCTION, LIKE producing LIKE, for REGAL purposes pertaining to THIS PRESENT EARTH.

2) Israel

As previously seen, *fruit-bearing lay at the CENTER of God’s dealings with Israel at the time of the nation’s inception during Moses’ day—a nation comprised of probably about 2,000,000 individuals (Ex. 12:37, 38), brought into existence during four hundred previous years through procreation, being fruitful, from the loins of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and his twelve sons.*

“Fruit-bearing,” “multiplying,” and “filling” the earth had occurred (the latter with respect to “Egypt,” a type of *the world, the earth* [Ex. 1:7-20]). NOW, four hundred and thirty years following Abraham’s call regarding the matter (cf. Gen. 12:1-3; 15:13; Ex. 12:40, 41; Gal. 3:16, 17), Abraham’s descendants through Isaac and Jacob were *READY to leave Egypt, with a view to FULFILLING the last two parts of the mandate — “subduing” and “ruling” the land previously covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with an extended view to ultimately “subduing” and “ruling” the entire earth.*

BUT, the preceding is hardly what occurred, particularly with the generation that left Egypt under Moses.

NOR did the succeeding generation under Joshua, or any subsequent generation, move beyond attempting to fulfill the last two parts of the mandate solely in the land itself.

So, WHAT happened?

Well, you can read about the matter in Num. 13ff. But let’s move 1,500 years ahead in Israeli history — at the time of the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to the nation in the gospel accounts — and see *the ultimate end result of unbelief*, producing the wrong type of fruit-bearing, which had begun during Moses’ day. Then we’ll drop back to Moses’ day and briefly review Israeli history during these 1,500 years.

“Fruit-Bearing” lay at the heart of that stated about Israel throughout the offer of the kingdom in the gospel accounts, FROM the days of John the Baptist at the beginning of the offer (Matt. 3:8-10) TO that day over three years later when Christ announced that the kingdom would be “taken” from Israel and “given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Matt. 21:43).

All of the preceding is climactically seen in Matt. 21:18-43, during the two days preceding the crucifixion.

The account begins with Christ returning to Jerusalem from Bethany, hungering, seeing a fig tree, going to the fig tree, and finding *NO fruit, NOTHING but leaves.*

Because of this, Christ stated, “Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever [*lit.*, ‘Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward with respect to the age’ (the *aion*)].” And the fig tree subsequently “withered away.”

With the fruitless fig tree representing fruitless Israel, this act marked the end of the offer of the kingdom to Israel in the gospel accounts.

(Israel, from this point forward, could bear *NO* fruit relative to the proffered kingdom [*for their destiny was as that of the fig tree*], a kingdom which Israel could have realized during the coming age, during the seventh day, the seventh millennium.

Israel though still could and would bear fruit relative to the kingdom covenanted to David in the coming age, *BUT NOT* relative to the proffered heavenly sphere of the kingdom.)

The next day (Mark 11:12-21), at the Temple, in the presence of the chief priests, the Scribes and Pharisees, and older Israeli men, Christ stated the whole of the matter in a parable — the parable of the Householder and His vineyard.

This parable (from Isa. 5) carried matters throughout Israel’s fruitless past history, their rejection and slaying of their own prophets, and *NOW* what they were *ABOUT* to do — cast out and slay the Householder’s Own Son, *Who had been sent seeking fruit from the vineyard*.

And this was followed by the Son’s announcement in verse forty-three:

“Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”

Israel, over the years, *DID* bring forth fruit, *BUT* what kind of fruit?

In Isaiah chapter five, in the vineyard which Christ referenced in Matthew chapter twenty-one, Israel had brought

forth “wild grapes” (v. 2).

Or, in Matthew chapter twenty-three, the Scribes and Pharisees, compassing land and sea in order to make one proselyte, had ended up making him “twofold more the child of hell [*lit.*, ‘a son of Gehenna’ (a place of refuse)]” than themselves (v. 15).

Rather than making him a fruitful son of the kingdom, as seen in the second parable in Matthew chapter thirteen, the Scribes and Pharisees had made this man twofold more a fruitless son of Gehenna than they themselves were.

(Note the completely opposite positions associated with correct or incorrect fruit-bearing — *sons of the Kingdom on the one hand, and sons of Gehenna on the other* [cf. Matt. 12:30].)

And, when the Householder of the vineyard sent His Son 2,000 years ago, seeking fruit from the vineyard, the Son found a nation associated more with fruit-bearing in relation to Gehenna than with the proffered Kingdom.

ANY fruit brought forth by the nation was completely out of line with that seen in Gen. 1:28 and completely in line with that seen in Isa. 5:2 and Matt. 23:15.

Over the course of the past 1,500 years, dating back to the inception of the nation during Moses’ day, Satan had caused the whole of the matter to be turned completely around.

ANY fruit being produced by Israel was more in line with the present kingdom under Satan than with the coming kingdom under Christ.

3) *Christians*

And the Church, relative to the proclamation of the kingdom and fruit-bearing, because of the work of Satan over the past 2,000 years, finds itself in *NO better condition today*, which is what the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen relate.

As seen in these four parables, fruit-bearing results from the sons of the kingdom whom Christ has placed out in the world understanding and acting upon the message, upon “the Word of the Kingdom.”

And it was fruit-bearing which Satan sought to *PREVENT in the first parable and STOP in the second parable*, with that seen in the third and fourth parables having to do with *different descriptive ways of showing the end result of his continuing work, With BOTH parables showing EXACTLY the SAME end.*

NOW, WHAT does fruit-bearing look like and WHAT is the purpose of fruit-bearing in these parables?

Fruit-bearing looks *EXACTLY like it did and for EXACTLY the SAME purpose as seen at the beginning 6,000 years ago, or anyplace elsewhere in Scripture where the matter is dealt with—BE fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, THEN subdue and rule the earth.*

BUT, WHAT does that look like in today’s Christianity?

And that, as well, is quite simple and easy to address.

The Spirit of God is in the world today, in the antitype of that seen in Gen. 24:1ff, *on a SINGULAR mission.* Though the Spirit was already in the world, *the Spirit was sent on the day of Pentecost to search for and to procure a bride for God’s Son.*

And the search for and procurement of the bride is being conducted among the saved, from the present dispensation, from among those forming the body of Christ, *who are NEITHER Jew NOR Gentile, BUT, one new man “in Christ.”*

The bride is being *called out of the larger body of Christians, removed from Christ’s body and formed into a bride, EXACTLY as seen in the original type in Gen. 2:21-24 — Eve, formed from a rib which had been removed from Adam’s body.*

The complete process has to do with moving through that foreshadowed by the six days of restorative work in Genesis chapter one, with a view to realizing that foreshadowed by the seventh day of rest which follows, beginning chapter two.

And within this complete sequence, *fruit-bearing today* would have to do with those being called out proclaiming the message, with a continued view to others being called out proclaiming the message, with a continued view to others...

Fruit-bearing, as UNCHANGEABLY established in Gen. 1:28, has to do with DUPLICATION, MULTIPLICATION, and FILLING the earth with LIKE-MINDED individuals, with a view to ultimately SUBDUING and RULING the earth.

(The first man, the first Adam, was told to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, then subdue and rule the earth.

The second Man, the last Adam, presently seated at His Fathers right hand (Ps. 110], *is carrying out the first three parts of this mandate through the work of the Spirit in the world today.*

And the Father has told His Son to sit at His right hand *UNTIL His enemies are made His "footstool," UNTIL His enemies have been subdued.*

THEN, after ALL these things have been accomplished, the Son, with those whom the Spirit will have procured to reign with Him [those who, under the leadership of the Spirit, had been fruitful, had multiplied, and had filled the earth] will RULE "in the midst" of His SUBDUED enemies.

Radah, "rule," is used in the Hebrew text of Gen. 1:26, 28; Ps. 110:2].

Also, note that Adam *could NOT* have held the sceptre *at ANY time* following his creation [some Bible students believe that Satan took it from him].

Understanding the exact wording of the mandate in Gen. 1:28 in the light of the type-antitype account of *Saul and David, Satan and Christ*, an individual can know that Adam *could NOT* have *EVER* held the sceptre.

Holding the sceptre prior to having a contingent of LIKE-MINDED individuals to occupy the throne with him would have been out of line with both God's command and order (ref. the author's article, "Saul and David, Satan and Christ").

Adam had to *FIRST* be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth *BEFORE* he could subdue and *THEN* rule the earth, *EXACTLY* as the second Man, the last Adam, has to sit at His Father's right hand, *UNTIL...*)

NOW, knowing and understanding fruit-bearing from a Scriptural perspective, note again where those in a position to bring forth fruit for the kingdom during the present time find themselves.

And this is *NOT ONLY* after 2,000 years of Satan's work seeking to *PREVENT* and *STOP* fruit-bearing *BUT ALSO* after 4,000 years, taking matters back to Abraham, and after 6,000 years, taking matters back to Adam.

It is ALL about fulfilling the mandate given to Adam at the time of man's creation 6,000 years ago, pertaining to rulership over this earth during the last 1,000 years of the earth's existence.

It is ALL about "*REGALITY*" associated with the present *HEAVENS* and *EARTH* during *ONE* climactic age, *NOT* about *REGALITY* associated with the new *HEAVENS* and the new *EARTH* during the *ENDLESS* ages beyond.

It is ALL about events during "*a SET TIME*" (the Messianic Era), *NOT* about events during *ENDLESS TIME* (the ages beyond).

The Church in the World Today

Properly understanding and dealing with Christendom as it presently exists, *particularly in relation to "the Word of the Kingdom" and "fruit-bearing,"* an individual would naturally be drawn to the two places where Scripture deals with a history of Christendom throughout the dispensation — the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen and/or the epistles to seven Churches in Revelation chapters two and three ("*To him that overcometh...*" i.e., *overcoming* the world, the flesh, and the Devil [allowing fruit-bearing]).

In the former, *at the end of the dispensation*, he would see a *completely leavened Christendom* (Matt. 13:33); and in the latter, at the end of the dispensation, he would see a *Christendom which has been deceived to the point that individuals believe they are “rich, and increased with goods,” and have “need of nothing”*; but, in reality, they are *“wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked”* (Rev. 3:17).

(Note that *“rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing,”* along with *“wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked”* have to be understood after the manner in which the book has been structured, revealed at the outset back in the opening verse — “signified.”

“Signified,” a translation of *semaino* [the verb form of *semeion*, the Gk. word for “sign”], has to do with making something known through a manner which carries the reader *FROM* a somewhat indirect means *TO* a direct means, using an illustrative statement as a means of explaining a matter.

Thus, Rev. 3:17 provides two illustrative statements to describe, through an indirect means, *NOT ONLY HOW* those Christians forming the Church at the end of the dispensation view themselves *BUT HOW* God, instead, views these same Christians.

And this *CENTERS* around *ONE* thing — “the Word of the Kingdom,” with its corresponding “fruit-bearing.”

For a more complete discussion of the word “signified,” refer to the author’s article by that same name.)

BUT, EXACTLY WHAT does all of this look like in Christendom today?

And this would have to do with ALL Christendom, NOT just the liberal segment BUT the fundamental segment as well — “till the WHOLE was leavened.”

(Previously in Israel, the entire nation had been affected after this same fashion, with the Scribes and Pharisees [the fundamental legalists], because of what they had done [Matt. 23:13], receiving the greater condemnation at Christ’s hands.)

1) Properly Dealing with the Issue

The only way to correctly answer questions about that seen in Matt. 13:33, properly addressing the issue at hand, would be to drop back 3,500 years in Jewish history and begin with the inception of the nation under Moses. Mistakes seen in much of what is taught in Christendom today emanate from the mistaken way Christians look upon that which occurred at and following this time.

And mistakes of this nature originate *from ONE central mistake, a BASIC mistake.*

The base, the beginning, in this respect is *HOW* an individual looks upon *ONE particular thing* about the nation of Israel, *FROM the time of the nation's inception during Moses' day TO the time 1,500 years later, covered by the gospels and Acts.*

And *THAT ONE thing* has to do with the status of the Jewish people relative to "salvation" — Were they "saved," or "unsaved"?

That would be to ask:

DID God, throughout these 1,500 years, deal with generations of *saved Jews*, dealing with them relative to things beyond salvation by grace?

OR, *DID* God, throughout this time, deal with generations of *unsaved Jews*, dealing with them first and foremost, relative to salvation by grace?

And *HOW* an individual looks upon and understands this whole, overall issue and answers the preceding questions will have far-reaching ramifications on his interpretation of Scripture, particularly throughout the gospels and Acts.

Get things right at the base, at the beginning, and you can remain right while building the superstructure.

BUT, go wrong at the base, and... (cf. Matt. 7:24-27).

Thus, let's see how Scripture handles the matter, beginning at the outset during Moses' day, then moving forward through 1,500 years of Jewish history to the time when events during the gospels and Acts occurred.

a) Death and Shed Blood, an Inheritance

Following the nation's inception during Moses' day — which had to do with the death and shed blood of paschal lambs and the consequent death of the firstborn — Moses led the Jewish people out of Egypt to realize an inheritance, within a theocracy, in another land.

NOW, at this point, HOW would this generation of Jews be looked upon relative to salvation — saved, or unsaved?

The REASON for their departure from Egypt — leaving Egypt (a type of the "world") to realize an inheritance in another land — would, ALONE, reveal that a saved generation of Jews had left Egypt under Moses, for God *does NOT* call unsaved people from one land to realize an inheritance in another (as He had called Abraham to leave Ur in order to realize an inheritance in another land 430 years earlier, or as he calls Christians for the same purpose today).

BUT, again, death and shed blood, with the resulting death of the firstborn, *PRECEDED* the Israelites leaving Egypt to realize an inheritance in another land.

The former HAD to occur BEFORE the latter.

The Israelites leaving Egypt under Moses had experienced the death of the firstborn (Ex. 12:1ff). Lambs had been slain, blood had been properly applied, and God had recognized a vicarious sacrifice, *EXACTLY* as seen in the message of salvation by grace today.

And the basis for that which occurred 3,500 years ago and that which occurs today *is the SAME* as well. *It HAD/HAS to be the SAME*, for salvation at *ANY* time in man's history *CANNOT* exist *APART* from Christ and His shed blood.

God *CANNOT* recognize the death and shed blood of animals in a vicarious respect (Heb. 10:4), *UNLESS*...

And that “*UNLESS*” takes an individual to an event referenced in Rev. 13:8, to Christ “slain from the foundation of the world,” which refers to a time preceding the restoration of the ruined earth in Gen. 1:2b ff.

This verse *HAS* to refer to a time when the earth still lay in ruins, for, *APART FROM Christ, His death, and His shed blood*, even the earth itself *could NOT* have been restored (note requirements for the restoration of the earth yet future [Rev. 5:1-7]; and the earth’s past restoration *could ONLY* have required the *SAME*, for the latter restoration *HAS* to be built on the foundation of the former restoration).

(*APART FROM* the restoration of the ruined earth, man *could NOT* have been brought into existence; *then, there is the matter of man’s fall, requiring restoration/redemption as well.*

The WHOLE of that which occurred is dependent on ONE thing— the preceding event referenced in Rev. 13:8.)

God could recognize efficacy in the death of the paschal lambs in Exodus chapter twelve *ONLY* because His Son was seen to have previously been slain, with His blood having been shed.

THEN, beyond His death, His shed blood *could ONLY* have been placed on the mercy seat of the heavenly tabernacle. Otherwise, *God could NOT* have recognized animal sacrifices under the subsequent Aaronic priesthood (or in preceding times).

NOW, how many of the Israelites leaving Egypt under Moses were saved?

The answer is quite simple — as many as were in a house where the blood of a slain lamb had been properly applied; and that would be to say, as many as had, through this means, properly applied the blood of the Lamb of God, “slain from the foundation of the world.”

And the whole of the matter *could ONLY* have been done “by faith” — faith in God’s promise of deliverance through the proper application of the blood of slain lambs, reflecting back on the shed blood of a particular slain Lamb.

Then, *IF* any doubt remains about the saved status of the generation leaving Egypt under Moses, note the statement regarding the matter in I Cor. 10:1-4:

“Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that *ALL* our fathers were under the cloud, and *ALL* passed through the sea;

And were *ALL* baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

And did *ALL* eat the same spiritual meat;

And did *ALL* drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.”

Note the use of “*ALL*” five times.

Do these four verses sound like a description of unsaved people?

ONLY the dead — those who had experienced the death of the firstborn — could be buried (in the Sea) and *THEN* raised (on the eastern banks, out of and separated from the things of Egypt), with an inheritance lying out ahead.

NOW, take this entire matter through subsequent generations over the next 1,500 years, which continued, year-by-year to sacrifice paschal lambs and properly apply the blood, (with some breaks [e.g., during the Babylonian captivity]).

THEN, when Christ came the first time, conditions in this respect were *EXACTLY* as they had been instituted and carried out during Moses’ day, then carried out through succeeding generations. The Jewish people *were STILL*, year-by-year, sacrificing paschal lambs and applying the blood.

And, in the light of what is revealed in Scripture about the nation and fruit-bearing — God sending His servants at different times during this period, seeking fruit — this saved status of succeeding generations of Jews, *FROM Moses TO Christ, would HAVE to be seen and understood accordingly.*

ONLY saved individuals COULD be seen in a fruit-bearing setting of this nature.

b) Expectation of Fruit-Bearing Throughout

In line with the preceding, it is clear from comparing the accounts of the parable of the vineyard in Isa. 5:1-13 and Matt. 21:33-43 that God had expected fruit from His vineyard, fruit from Israel, *THROUGHOUT the ENTIRE time of the nation's existence, FROM Moses TO Christ.*

Because of Israel's failure to bring forth fruit in the Isaiah account, Gentile nations were allowed to come into Israel's land and uproot the nation, the vineyard. And this was done to effect correction, to bring about changes in the barren condition of God's wayward son (*cf.* John 15:1, 2).

And, because of *WHERE* Israel's barren condition had ultimately taken the nation after 1,500 years, the kingdom (the proffered kingdom, the kingdom of the heavens) was taken from Israel, with a view to a new nation being called into existence which would "bring forth the fruits thereof" (Matt. 21:43; I Peter 2:9, 10).

It would *be IMPOSSIBLE* for unsaved individuals to bring forth the type fruit which God had expected from Israel throughout the nation's 1,500-year history, leading into the events seen in Matthew chapter twenty-one.

Fruit-bearing, as originally set forth and unchangeably established in Gen. 1:28, *had to do with multiplication, reproduction of like-minded individuals relative to a kingdom.*

And, having been set forth and established after this fashion in Genesis, *God could ONLY have expected fruit-bearing of this SAME nature throughout Israel's history.*

This is clearly seen in Matt. 21:18-43 through Christ's actions and statements, marking a terminal point for Israel relative to fruit-bearing and the proffered kingdom.

2) *Ramifications of Error*

As previously seen, part and parcel with the working of the leaven in Matt. 13:33, the one thing that practically the whole of Christendom has in common is viewing the 1,500-year history of Israel in an incorrect manner, resulting in the same mistake time and again, with far-reaching, negative ramifications.

And that is WHY so much time was previously spent on this matter.

With few exceptions, regardless of one's outlook on things pertaining to the Millennium, Christians today, viewing the gospels, invariably see Christ coming to an unsaved generation of Jews.

Some see only a salvation by grace message throughout the gospels, seeing *the kingdom* as synonymous with *heaven*.

Others see somewhat of a mixture of a message pertaining to the proffered kingdom and salvation by grace, attempting to single out places in the gospels having to do with both.

Then, resulting from this same erroneous line of thought, the Gospel of John is often separated from the three synoptics, saying that the synoptics deal mainly with the offer of the kingdom, while John deals with salvation by grace (a message to the Jews then and Christians today).

Christians over the years have looked upon and handled things in all four gospels numerous ways, and it would

serve no useful purpose to go beyond the previous general remarks.

Instead, let's simply *stay with a common way of looking at the gospels that almost ALL Christians have held over the years* — seeing Christ, 2,000 years ago, come to and deal with an unsaved generation of Jews.

Then, we can see and deal with the ramifications of this type thinking in Christian circles over the years, extending into the present time.

a) *The Four Gospels and Acts*

Viewing the four gospels and Acts CORRECTLY, an individual would see the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to a saved generation of Jews in the gospels (Matt. 3:1ff) and a re-offer of the kingdom to that same continuing generation in Acts (2:4ff).

And there would be NOTHING about the message of salvation by grace in connection with either the offer or the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel throughout this entire period (from 30 A.D. to about 62 A.D.).

Thus, since a saved generation of Jews was being dealt with throughout this time, a message of salvation by grace, *EITHER* by itself *OR* in connection with the offer or re-offer of the kingdom, *could ONLY have been COMPLETELY out of place.*

When Gentiles began to be added to the newly formed Church, the body of Christ (Acts 10ff), the gospel of grace would, of necessity, have had to be proclaimed preceding the message pertaining to the kingdom.

BUT, BEFORE this time — time throughout the gospels and the first nine chapters of Acts — the message of salvation by grace would have been completely out of place.

And, *BEYOND this time*, throughout the remainder of Acts, *this message would STILL have been out of place relative to Israel and the re-offer of the kingdom.*

(Believing Jews during both the offer and re-offer of the kingdom were being saved *FROM* an unbelieving, “untoward generation” [Acts 2:40], relative *TO* the proffered kingdom.

These believing Jews *were NOT being added to the one new man “in Christ”* [Acts 2:1-3] Rather, they were being added to the numbers of prior believing Jews [in the gospels], *with an ultimate view to having an entire repentant, believing Jewish nation.*

This was a one-of-a-kind time [33 A.D. to about 62 A.D.], *There was NOTHING like it either before or after.*

For more information on material in the preceding three paragraphs, refer to the author’s books listed at the end of this chapter.)

To provide an example of how all of this has invariably been mishandled by Christians over the years, note Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus in John 3:1ff.

And to simplify matters, though remaining completely within what almost anyone believes and teaches on this passage, Nicodemus is seen as an unsaved Jew coming to Jesus and asking, in a somewhat round-about way, how to be saved.

And Jesus tells him how to be saved. He has to be born again, born from above, or he cannot see the kingdom of God, understood simply as heaven by most, some as a reference to the proffered kingdom.

Then, if this same line of thought is carried on into verse five, things really begin to go awry by individuals trying to explain “born out of water and Spirit [*lit. rendering*]” in relation to the new birth, understood as salvation by grace.

BUT, WAIT a minute!

WHAT is the contextual setting of John chapter three?

WHAT did Nicodemus really say in his opening statement?

HOW did Jesus respond?

And *DID* either Nicodemus' opening statement or Jesus' response *have ANYTHING to do with salvation by grace?*

And, as well, note that *the ENTIRE discourse could ONLY have to do with the SAME subject throughout* (vv. 1-21). The subject *DOESN'T* change later in the discourse (at vv. 14ff).

Nicodemus, beginning the conversation, dealt with the "signs" which Jesus was performing in connection with the proffered kingdom. And Jesus' response was in complete keeping with Nicodemus' statement. His response had to do with seeing/entering the kingdom being proclaimed, the message attended by the supernatural signs in question.

And, since saved people were being dealt with in the passage, the birth from above could ONLY have had to do with being brought forth from above rather than from below, with the kingdom in view (a common concept in Scripture; e.g., Matt. 16:13-17, 21-23).

(Ref. to Ch. III in the author's book, *From the Beginning*, which deals with parallel parts of John chs. one and three.

Also, see the author's book, *Brought Forth from Above*.)

There is *NOTHING* about salvation by grace in the primary interpretation of this passage, though the whole of Christendom, over the years, *has dealt with the section ONLY relative to salvation by grace, DOING AWAY with what is really being taught.*

Relative to the "signs" which Nicodemus called attention to, note the purpose statement for signs in John's gospel, in John 20:30, 31 (a purpose which would have to include signs in the synoptics as well, for three of the signs referenced in John's gospel appear in the synoptics).

THEN, there is the matter of John's gospel introducing the three synoptic gospels and Acts, *appearing first in the arranged order, NOT last, and providing through its PURPOSE statement the REASON for signs throughout.*

("Signs" have to do with *ISRAEL and the KINGDOM*, with *salvation in relation to the kingdom*, *NOT* with salvation by grace.

Signs were introduced this way during Moses' day, *establishing an UNCHANGEABLE way in which they would have to be seen and understood throughout the remainder of Scripture*.

Supernatural signs were being manifested in connection with the message to show the Jewish people what they could have in the proffered kingdom — supernatural healing, provision, protection...

[For information on these supernatural signs, beginning with Moses, refer to the author's article, "Signs, Wonders, Miracles."

For information on John's gospel introducing the three synoptic gospels and Acts, refer to the author's book, *Moses and John*].

In John 20:31, *signs accompanied the message to effect belief that "Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God."* And this had to do with the subject at hand, with *REGALITY*, *NOT* with salvation by grace.

"The Christ" had to do with the *ANOINTED One*. Prophets, priests, and kings were anointed in Israel. Christ was "born King" [Matt. 2:2].

The statement, "the Son of God," had to do with *REGALITY* as well. "Sonship" implies *RULERSHIP*.

The present ruler of the kingdom, Satan, is both the *anointed one* [the Christ, by Divine appointment in the beginning] and *God's son* [because of creation in the beginning (Job 1:6-2:2; Ezek. 28:13, 14)].

He is to be succeeded by the Anointed One [the Christ], God's Son [in this case, God's firstborn Son], for in the human realm *ONLY firstborn Sons can rule*.

In the preceding respect, note John 3:13-16. "The Son of man" in verses thirteen and fourteen, *a Messianic title*, is referred to in verse sixteen as "His [God's] only begotten Son."

And the words in John 20:31, "that he might have life," *could ONLY refer, contextually, to life in the proffered kingdom*.

As well, note *the SAME thing* about “parables” as seen about “signs.” Jesus’ use of both parables and signs throughout His earthly ministry had to do with the message that He was proclaiming, an offer of the kingdom to Israel [or, as seen in the Matt. 13 parables, the subsequent offer of this kingdom “to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Matt. 21:43)].

And as previously seen, salvation by grace was *NOT THAT* message. Salvation by grace, except in secondary applications of Scripture [which would be mainly from John’s gospel] is *simply NOT* the message seen proclaimed by Jesus, the Twelve, and the Seventy throughout all four gospels.

Thus, NEITHER parables NOR signs can have anything to do with salvation by grace. BOTH have to do with the subject at hand, with the message being proclaimed.)

b) The Epistles

The removal of the kingdom from Israel necessitated the Church being called into existence, with the subsequent writing of the different epistles, mainly by Paul.

The epistles (Pauline, Hebrews, and general) are filled with information pertaining to “the Word of the Kingdom,” to the mystery revealed to Paul (Paul’s gospel), though seldom dealt with correctly because of what the working of the heaven has done over two millenniums of time.

Nonetheless, showing the importance of the matter at hand, “the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together,” awaiting, anticipating that coming day, the seventh millennium, when “the sons of God” will be manifested (Rom. 8:18-23).

God is about to bring forth a new order of Sons, Christ and His co-heirs, with Christ replacing Satan and His co-heirs replacing angels ruling under Satan.

And they, together, from the heavens, will rule the earth for the last 1,000 years of the existing heavens and earth, ultimately effecting that seen in I Cor. 15:24-28:

"Then cometh the end [the end of the Millennium, the end of the complete 7,000 years], when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.

And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all ['all things in all of these things']."

THEN, and ONLY THEN, AFTER ALL the things which God has decreed relative to the present heavens and earth have been brought to pass, *WILL* the new heavens and the new earth be brought into existence, *with ALL things, at THAT time, being made "NEW"* (Rev. 21:1-5).

(Because of the complexity of this whole subject, coming out of the O.T. into the gospels, then into Acts, then into the epistles, matters surrounding the proffered kingdom in the epistles will not be carried beyond the preceding brief remarks.

Rather, refer to complete books written by the author on this overall subject, such as *Message in the Gospels, Acts, Epistles; From Acts to the Epistles; The Acts Period; or, Salvation Message, Gospels, Acts, Epistles, Revelation.*)

2

Israel's Rejection

Events in Matt. 12, Leading into Matt. 13

"The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the seaside.

And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

And he spake many things unto them in parables..."
(Matt. 13:1-3a).

Matthew chapter thirteen records seven connected parables which Christ gave at a particular time during His earthly ministry, calling them, "mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens" (v. 11). These parables comprise *the FIRST of the numerous mysteries* seen in the New Testament and have to do *with the SAME thing* that any other mystery in the New Testament has to do *with, an opening up and unveiling of that which has lain in the Old Testament from the beginning.*

There is *NOTHING* in the New Testament which does not have its roots one or more places in the Old.

"The mystery" revealed to Paul (Eph. 3:1ff), for example, *NOT ONLY* had its roots in the Old Testament Scriptures *BUT* would have drawn from Paul's personal knowledge of these Scriptures (Acts 9:20-22) — moving beyond "the letter" to "the spirit" of the matter (II Cor. 3:6-18) — opening Scriptures which he already knew, providing further light on these Scriptures.

This is evidently a main reason *WHY* the Lord chose Paul to carry this message throughout the Gentile world. Paul already had a background in the Old Testament Scriptures that the Lord could take and use (e.g., Acts 9:15-22), as He took Paul aside and, over time (possibly as long as three years), personally taught him the mystery.

And so it is with “the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens” in Matthew chapter thirteen. These mysteries have their roots in the Old Testament Scriptures and draw from a presumed knowledge of these Scriptures by those to whom the mysteries are directed.

These are mysteries opened up and revealed by Christ through the use of parables, a form of teaching which He began to extensively use at this point in His ministry. Christ had used parables sparingly prior to this time (e.g., Luke 5:36-39), but from this point forward, for a particular revealed reason, *parables began to occupy a major part of His ministry* (Mark 4:1-12, 33, 34).

(The English word “parable” is simply an Anglicized form of the Greek word *parabole*, a compound word which means “to cast alongside” [*para*, “alongside”; *bole*, “to cast”]. A parable, by its own definition, is *one thing placed alongside of something previously existing, which could only be present truth placed alongside of previously revealed truth. And the additional truth would be given to help explain the previously revealed truth.*

This is why these parables could be *understood* by the disciples but would be *meaningless* to numerous others in the nation [vv. 10-17]. Understanding the presently revealed truths, the parables, depended on whether or not the previously revealed truths had been received.

The disciples had received the previously revealed truths. Therefore, they would understand the parables, for the parables dealt with that which they had previously received.

But those rejecting Christ and His message *had NOT received* the previously revealed truths. Therefore, *they would NOT be able* to understand the parables, for the parables dealt with that which they had previously rejected.)

Though these parables form truths placed alongside things revealed in the Old Testament, they, as well, form truths placed alongside things which had been revealed during Christ's earthly ministry (things completely in accord with and drawn from Old Testament Scripture). And, in this respect, though they have their basis in the Old Testament Scriptures, they emanate out of things having previously been revealed during Christ's earthly ministry, particularly things immediately preceding Christ's departure *FROM the house* and His beginning to give these parables *BY the seaside*.

Thus, Matthew chapter thirteen has to do with *an opening up and unveiling, through using parables, of mysteries surrounding the kingdom of the heavens*.

And the kingdom of the heavens in this chapter is *the SAME kingdom seen in EXACTLY the same form* in which it was previously seen in this gospel, or in the Old Testament Scriptures. *This chapter continues, from previous Scripture, dealing with a LITERAL, EXISTING kingdom.*

(This kingdom has existed in the same form, with the same ruler, from the beginning, seen in Gen. 1:1, 2a. Information about the kingdom and its ruler during time covered by the previous reference is given elsewhere in Scripture [though very succinctly, for this is *NOT* the subject of God's revelation to man (cf. Isa. 14:12-17; 45:18; Ezek. 28:12-19)].

God only provides enough information about events preceding the restoration of a ruined earth and associated heavens that His subsequent revelation [Gen. 1:2b ff] to His new creation, man, could be understood within context.

And the same would be true concerning events on the other end of the spectrum as well, events having to do with the future destruction of the present kingdom, with its associated heavens, along with that which lay beyond. AS preceding Man's 6,000-year Day, SO following the Lord's 1,000-year Day, only enough information has been given to complete the contextual setting for God's revelation to man regarding the kingdom in relation to time during the whole of both Man's Day and the Lord's Day [*cf.* II Peter 3:7-13; Rev. 21, 22].

Accordingly, the kingdom ["the kingdom of the heavens," "the kingdom of this world" (Gen. 1:2b ff; Matt. 13:24; Rev. 11:15)] will be dealt with throughout the remainder of this second chapter of the book the same way Scripture deals with it — in relation to the last 7,000 years of its existence.

If context is needed, refer to Scriptures that deal with it.)

There is absolutely *NO difference* in the way that the form of the kingdom of the heavens exists and is seen at any point in Scripture throughout Man's Day and the future Lord's Day, throughout 7,000 years of time — past, present, and future. The reference is to the heavenly realm of the kingdom associated with this earth. The reference is to the rule of the heavens over the earth.

During past and present time, throughout Man's Day, Satan and his angels (though disqualified) have continued to rule over the earth from this heavenly realm.

But in the future, during the coming Lord's Day, angels *will NO longer* rule the earth from this heavenly realm. Rather, Man — namely, Christ and His co-heirs — will take the sceptre and rule from this realm (Heb. 2:5-10; 4:4-9; 5:6, 10; *cf.* Ps. 110:1-4).

And the message surrounding the kingdom of the heavens — whether to Israel (past), or to Christians (present) — has to do with *Man moving into this heavenly realm, occupying this realm, and holding the sceptre.*

ALL seven parables in Matthew chapter thirteen have to do with this subject. This is something NOT ONLY drawn from the Old Testament BUT clearly stated at the outset in these parables, and they MUST be interpreted and understood accordingly.

(There is widespread, erroneous thought in Christendom today which attempts to associate that which is stated in the seven parables in Matthew chapter thirteen *with some type mystery form of the kingdom* existing during the present dispensation. However, such a form of the kingdom *does NOT presently exist; NOR has it ever existed; NOR will it ever exist.*

And along with this erroneous thought of an existing *mystery form of the kingdom*, a related error exists — that of seeing a *presently existing spiritual form of the Son's kingdom* [somehow existing in the hearts of men] which will be brought into full reality at a future time. This type understanding of the kingdom is little more than another way of dealing with a so-called *present mystery form of the kingdom*.

The Son — rather than presently ruling in the kingdom in view, in which Satan and his angels hold the sceptre — *is seated at the right hand of His Father, awaiting that day when His enemies will be made His footstool, at which time He will take the kingdom* [Ps. 110:1].

Further, *the Son is presently occupying the office of High Priest, NOT that of King*. He is presently ministering on behalf of Christians in the heavenly sanctuary, with a view to “bringing many sons unto glory” [Heb. 2:5-10; 10:19-22]. His Kingship, the time when He and His co-heirs will ascend the throne together, lies in the future [Heb. 1:9; 3:14; 4:4-9].

A misunderstanding of verses such as Col. 1:13 has led numerous Christians to erroneously view a present aspect to Christ's future kingdom. However, *NEITHER this verse NOR any other verse teaches such a thing*.

Colossians 1:13 deals with *Christians being moved from one place to another with respect to two manifestations of the kingdom — present under Satan, and future under Christ*.

Christians, according to this verse, have been delivered from the power of darkness [having to do with the present kingdom under Satan] and have been translated [have been moved from one place to another, have been caused to change sides] with respect to the future kingdom under Christ.

There can be *NO such thing* as being translated into the kingdom of Christ during the present dispensation, for *such a kingdom DOESN'T presently exist*.

But there is such a thing as being caused to change sides with respect to two forms of the same kingdom — both *present* and *future*. This is what the epistles are about, and this is what is in view in Col. 1:13.)

Attempts to understand the seven parables in Matthew chapter thirteen after any fashion which ignores the context and/or subject matter at hand *will leave one hopelessly lost in a sea of misinterpretation*.

These parables are quite easy to understand *IF* one remains with and allows Scripture to be its own interpreter.

BUT, if this is NOT done...

Events Leading into Matthew Chapter Thirteen

John the Baptist appeared as the forerunner of the Messiah at His first coming, as Elijah will appear as the forerunner of the Messiah at His second coming.

A prophecy which had to do with Elijah was applied to John the Baptist (*cf.* Isa. 40:3; Matt. 3:3); and John was said by Jesus to be Elijah, *with a condition* applied to the statement (Matt. 11:13, 14).

The passage in Isaiah, applied to John the Baptist, is set in a context surrounding Messiah's coming at a time when Israel repents and the nation is healed (vv. 1-5). This, of course, *didn't occur* during or following John's appearance, though the prophecy was applied to John.

The fulfillment of this prophecy will occur ONLY following Elijah's appearance, yet future, as the forerunner of the Messiah (Mal. 4:1-6).

Christ's statement concerning John being Elijah carried the condition, "*IF* ye will receive."

That is to say, *IF* the nation would have received the message, Elijah, rather than John, would have appeared at that time as the forerunner of the Messiah.

The latter was conditioned on the former.

God though, Who knows "the end from the beginning" (Isa. 46:9, 10), knew what Israel would do and sent John the Baptist instead of Elijah as the forerunner of Christ at His first coming.

John the Baptist was the Elijah of his day, as Elijah will be the John the Baptist of his day. And the two men are so closely associated with one another that the prophecy applying to Elijah at Christ's second coming in Isa. 40:3 could be applied to John at Christ's first coming in Matt. 3:3.

1) Ministry of John, Jesus, the Twelve, and the Seventy

John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judaea with a single, simple message: "Repent ye [plural, *ALL Israel*]: for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand" (Matt. 3:2).

This was a message directed to the nation of Israel, calling for national repentance relative to sin, disobedience. And the nation's repentance was with a view to the Jewish people holding the sceptre, with their Messiah, within the heavenly sphere of the kingdom.

The kingdom was "at hand [had 'drawn near']" because Messiah was present. The King of the kingdom — the One destined to replace Satan as the ruler over this earth — was present; and *the sceptre could, at that time, have passed FROM the hands of Satan and his angels INTO the hands of Man, conditioned on Israel's repentance.*

Israel was being offered regal positions with the nation's Messiah, in a heavenly realm; *but there was a CONDITION.*

The nation HAD to repent; the nation HAD to change its mind.

(Note that Israel had been made the repository for both heavenly and earthly regal promises in the O.T. [Gen. 13:16; 14:18-22; 15:5; 22:17, 18; 26:3, 4; 28:14; 32:12; Ex. 32:13; cf. Heb. 11:12-16].

The nation had realized *earthly* regal promises and blessings in the O.T. theocracy and will realize these same promises and blessings again, but in a *much fuller sense*, when the kingdom has been restored to Israel yet future [Acts 1:6; 3:19-21; cf. Isa. 2:1-5; Ezek. 36:24-38; 37:21-28; 39:25-29].

But that facet of the kingdom offered to Israel at Christ's first coming *was heavenly, NOT earthly*. The *heavenly* facet of the kingdom was the other part of the kingdom in Israel's possession, *though NOT yet realized*.

And this was that part of the kingdom later taken from Israel [Matt. 21:33-46], which is today being offered to *the one new man* "in Christ."

This was all foreshadowed by the Jewish religious leaders' rejection of Christ in Matt. 12 and the seven parables which Christ gave immediately following their rejection, on the same day, in Matt. 13.)

The totality of the message proclaimed by John was a call for *the nation of Israel (the entire nation) to repent (to change its mind), with a view to the Jewish people occupying regal positions with the nation's Messiah in the heavenly sphere of the kingdom.*

Satan and his angels would be put down, and Christ and the repentant nation would move in and take the kingdom.

However, things didn't go in this direction, and John eventually found himself in prison.

Then Jesus took up the same message, which, under His ministry, was accompanied by *miraculous signs—signs having to do with the kingdom, which centered around physical healings.*

Jesus went throughout all Galilee doing two things:

- 1) "Preaching the gospel of the kingdom."
- 2) "Healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people" (Matt. 4:12, 17-25).

The message concerned the proffered kingdom, and the healings were miraculous signs intimately and inseparably connected with the message being proclaimed.

Israel was sick (the result of past sin, disobedience), "from the sole of the foot even unto the head," *and healing for the nation was in the offing, conditioned upon the nation's repentance.*

All of this — Israel's condition and that which could and would occur following Israel's repentance — was set forth in detail numerous places in Old Testament prophecy. But one section of the numerous prophecies will suffice to illustrate the point — a section of Isaiah's prophecy.

Note how Isaiah opened his prophecy. He began by describing *Israel's present condition*:

"Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they have gone away backward.

Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint.

From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment" (Isa. 1:4-6).

Isaiah, after continuing with similar statements (vv. 7-15), *THEN called the nation to repentance, resulting in healing*:

"Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land” (Isa. 1:16-19).

And, beyond that, Isaiah concluded this section of his prophecy by describing *conditions in Israel following the time of the nation’s repentance and healing*:

“And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin [paralleling ‘dross,’ undoubtedly referring to metals in an impure sense].

And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city...

And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

And many people shall go up and say, Come ye, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

And he shall judge among the nations...” (Isa. 1:25, 26; 2:2-4a).

Christ’s message to Israel, along with the message of the Twelve, and later the Seventy (Matt. 10:1-8) — in complete keeping with Isaiah’s prophecy (among numerous other Old Testament prophecies) — was simply *a call for the nation to repent, with a view to healing and the nation being established in her God-ordained position in the kingdom* (Ex. 19:5, 6).

The healing of an individual constituted *a sign for the Jewish people to visibly behold, showing them what could happen to the entire nation, IF...*

"Repentance" on the part of Israel was the *SOLE condition* in the message proclaimed to the nation by John, Jesus, the Twelve, and later the Seventy:

"Repent ye: for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand"
(Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 10:7; Luke 10:9-11).

THEN, following national repentance, healing would occur.

The Jewish people were to change their minds (leading to a change of action) about their prior attitude toward God's commandments (Isa. 1:19; cf. Lev. 26:3ff; Deut. 28:1ff).

They had previously disobeyed that which God had commanded. And because of this disobedience, Israel had not only failed to fully occupy her God-ordained position in the Old Testament theocracy but the day came when this theocracy ceased to exist.

And, in connection with the end of the Old Testament theocracy, Israel found herself removed from her land and scattered among the Gentile nations.

(The northern ten tribes were carried into captivity by the Assyrians about 722 B.C., and the southern two tribes were carried into captivity by the Babylonians about 605 B.C., beginning the Times of the Gentiles.

And about two decades later the Shekinah Glory departed from the holy of holies of the temple in Jerusalem, ascending to heaven from the Mount of Olives [Ezek. 10:4-19; 11:1, 22, 23], marking the end of the Old Testament theocracy.)

And even during the time Christ was on earth, though a remnant was back in the land, the nation remained under Gentile dominion, with most of the Jewish people still scattered among the nations.

The Times of the Gentiles, which had begun during the days of Nebuchadnezzar, continued then, as it still continues today.

John opened the message to Israel concerning the professed kingdom, Christ continued this message following John's imprisonment; and later the Twelve, then the Seventy, also carried this same message to Israel.

And, though numerous Jewish people heeded the call and repented, the nation as a whole refused. The nation as a whole refused to change its mind relative to disobedience, something which had marked the history of the nation.

2) *Israel's Climactic Rejection*

Events surrounding the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel, beginning with John and continuing with Jesus and the Twelve, reached an apex in Matthew chapter twelve. And the apex reached was *REJECTION on the part of the nation, NOT acceptance*.

In this chapter, Christ healed a man on the Sabbath (vv. 9-13), pointing to Israel's coming healing on the Sabbath (the seventh millennium, the coming Lord's Day, following the six millenniums comprising Man's Day [cf. Num. 19:11, 12; Hosea 5:15-6:2; Matt. 17:1-5]).

And, following this miraculous sign, "the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him" (v. 14).

The Pharisees (along with their Scribes) — fundamental, legalistic religious leaders — were, by far, the largest of the religious parties in Israel. And, occupying this position, they sat "in Moses' seat" (Matt. 23:2), controlling the religious life of the nation.

This controlling group of religious leaders followed Christ about the country, seeking, at every turn, to counter both His message and the miraculous signs He was performing.

And, in this chapter they reached an apex in their rejection by not only rejecting the manifested sign of a man being healed on the Sabbath (*pointing to Israel's healing on the Sabbath*) but by subsequently holding a council concerning how they might be able to do away with the One having performed this sign (Matt. 12:10-14).

Then, later in the chapter, Christ healed a man possessed with a demon, who was also both blind and dumb (v. 22 [*again, pointing to Israel's healing on the Sabbath*]). And the Pharisees, in their negative attitude toward the manifested signs, reached a terminal point in their rejection of Christ and His works after this second sign had been performed.

They attributed the power behind the manifestation of this miraculous sign to *Satan* (v. 24). And doing this after they had rejected the signs pertaining to Israel being healed on the Sabbath, along with subsequently seeking to do away with Christ, *was the final straw*.

These signs were being performed through the power of the Spirit (in complete keeping with the way God performs His works [*cf. Gen. 1:2b*]); and the Pharisees, attributing Christ's works to Satan, committed what was called by Christ, "the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit" (v. 31).

The Pharisees had previously done the same thing (Matt. 9:34), but here in chapter twelve the setting was different.

Here, this act by the Pharisees follows their rejecting the sign of the Sabbath and their attempting to do away with the One having performed this sign.

Israel's religious leaders, at this point, *had gone beyond that which could be allowed*. And Christ stated, relative to that which had been done:

"Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven unto men.

And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world ['age'], neither in the world ['age'] to come" (vv. 31, 32).

For all practical purposes the kingdom of the heavens was taken from Israel at this point in Matthew's gospel, though the announcement was not made until later (Matt. 21:43). And it was at this point in Christ's ministry that a major change occurred.

The Scribes and Pharisees, immediately after Christ told them that they had committed a sin having far-reaching consequences, had the effrontery to ask Christ for an additional sign (v. 38). They had rejected all of His previous signs, even attributing the power behind the last one to Satan, and now they asked for something which they had previously rejected time after time.

This was little more than a personal affront, further seeking, by any means possible, to discredit the One performing these signs (as they had previously attempted to do). But Jesus, knowing full-well their thoughts, responded with the only sign which would now be given to them — the sign of the prophet Jonah, pointing to His coming death, burial, and resurrection rather than to the kingdom (vv. 39, 40).

Then Christ described the condition in which the nation of Israel now found itself — a condition resulting from the actions of Israel's religious leaders, misleading the people (*cf.* Matt. 12:14-23).

The men of Nineveh would rise up in judgment and condemn this generation, for they had repented at the preaching of Jonah. And One greater than Jonah was standing in Israel's midst, calling for the nation's repentance, but to no avail (v. 41).

The queen of the south would, likewise, rise up in judgment and condemn this generation, for she had come from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon. And One greater than Solomon was standing in Israel's midst, One Whom the Jewish people wouldn't hear (v. 42).

The nation was to be left *in a desolate condition*, wherein the Jewish people would walk through dry places, seeking rest, and find none. And, should the people comprising this nation persist in their disobedience, particularly relative to any attempt to bring about a change in their state themselves, *conditions would ONLY become WORSE*. Their latter end would be "worse than the first" (vv. 43-45; cf. Lev. 26:18-31).

And this is the setting for *Christ's departure from the house, going down by the seaside, and beginning to speak in parables* in Matthew chapter thirteen.

Christ's Actions, Continued Rejection

The seven parables in Matthew chapter thirteen present *a sharp change in God's dealings with the nation of Israel*. Heretofore, events surrounding the proffered kingdom had been strictly *Jewish* in nature, *but NOW something completely new and different* in relation to this kingdom is introduced.

These parables have to do with the kingdom of the heavens as it pertains to individuals SEPARATE and DISTINCT from the nation of Israel.

Before Christ began to speak in parables, He went "out of the house, and sat by the seaside" (v. 1).

The first four parables were spoken *outside the house, down by the seaside* (vv. 3-9, 18-33).

Then, Christ went back "into the house" (v. 36) and gave three more parables (vv. 44-50).

The use of “house” and “seaside” is *fraught with significance and meaning*. “The house,” from which Christ departed, and later reentered, is a reference *to the house of Israel* (Matt. 10:6; 23:38); and “the seaside,” to which Christ went, is a reference *to the Gentiles* (Jonah 1:12; 2:10; Rev. 13:1).

Thus, within the symbolism of that which is stated, the Lord left Israel (departed the house), went to the Gentiles (sat by the seaside, then in a boat on the sea), and gave four parables. Then the Lord returned to Israel (went back inside the house) and gave three additional parables.

The kingdom of the heavens — about to be taken from Israel at this point in Matthew’s gospel — would have been taken from Israel prior to the time (a future time) of the occurrence of events revealed in the first four parables, spoken outside the house.

And the last three parables, though spoken back *inside the house*, could NOT really pertain centrally to Israel *per se*. Because of the subject matter — *the kingdom of the heavens, having previously been taken from Israel* — these parables would STILL have to pertain centrally to those outside the house, associated with the seaside (note that there is no mention of Christ leaving the seaside [leaving the Gentiles] when He reentered the house [returned to Israel]).

In this respect, the first four parables would concern the Lord’s dealings with a people other than Israel, associated with the Gentiles; and these dealings would have to do with these people in a particular realm — in relation to the kingdom of the heavens.

Then, the last three parables, because of the continued subject matter (*the kingdom of the heavens*), would have to continue the continuity of thought from the first four. And further, though spoken back inside the house, these parables really cannot be Jewish in nature (for, again, they deal with *the kingdom of the heavens* — a sphere of the kingdom in which Israel could no longer have a part).

All seven parables have to do *with events during time* which elapses following the Nobleman's departure in Luke 19:12ff "into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom," and with *events during time* surrounding His "return" after receiving the kingdom. Other than allusions back to Christ's dealings with Israel during His earthly ministry and the events of Calvary, there is *NOTHING* in these parables which occurs *BEFORE* Christ's departure from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:9). Events depicted in these parables occur *ALMOST ENTIRELY* during the time of Christ's absence (Ps. 110:1), and events in these parables will be *CONCLUDED* immediately following Christ's return (Rev. 19:11ff).

These parables — centering around a message pertaining *to the kingdom of the heavens* — have to do with an offer of the kingdom *to a people OTHER THAN Israel, following the REMOVAL of the kingdom from Israel* (cf. Matt. 21:33-43; I Peter 2:9, 10). These parables *have to do with the message pertaining to the kingdom of the heavens DURING and FOLLOWING the present dispensation*, and these parables *conclude with EVENTS surrounding Christ's return* (after He, the Nobleman in Luke 19:12, had received the kingdom from the Father [cf. Dan. 7:13, 14; Rev. 11:15; 19:11ff]).

The course of the dispensation is depicted in the first four parables, and the last three have to do *with concluding events* (directly related to that previously revealed in the first four) which will not only bring the present age to a close but also usher in the next age, the Messianic Era.

Thus, the Lord reentering the house is NOT an act which places an emphasis on His dealing with Israel once again. Rather, the emphasis remains where it is seen in the first four parables.

NOR, as previously stated, is there any mention of Christ leaving the seaside when He goes back inside the house. And the significance of this is seen in the fact that *His prior dealings with the Gentiles (first four parables) would continue.*

Israel is reintroduced because that dealt with in the final three parables cannot be accomplished apart from God dealing with the Jewish people once again. But the emphasis in these three parables *continues from the SAME place that it was seen in the first four parables.*

(Briefly stated, all seven parables in Matthew chapter thirteen form *a continuous discourse having to do with the kingdom of the heavens being offered to a people OTHER than Israel.* The nation of Israel had rejected the proffered kingdom, and the kingdom was about to be taken from Israel, with a view to a separate and distinct entity [the Church] being called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected [Matt. 21:33-43].

In the first four parables, *Israel is NOT in view.* These parables have to do with *God's dealings with this new entity, separate from Israel, during a time when Israel is set aside;* but in the last three parables, *Israel is brought back into the picture. And God begins to deal with the nation once again, with a view to two things:*

1. *God concluding His dealings with Israel* [something not seen per se in these parables but seen numerous places in related Scripture].

2. *God concluding His dealings with the new entity brought into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected* [the central issue seen in these parables].

Because of Israel's connection with certain concluding events relating to the Church, Christ had to go back inside the house before delivering the last three parables.

The first four parables have to do with the course of Christendom during the present dispensation [the course of the period during which God is removing from the Gentiles "a people for his name" (Acts 15:14)], with Israel set aside; and the last three parables have to do with events occurring after God resumes His national dealings with Israel, following the removal of the Church from the earth and God turning once again to Israel.

But the Church, though having been removed from the earth before events in these last three parables begin to occur, *is STILL the central figure seen throughout these parables.*

The setting for the last three parables is the coming Tribulation and events surrounding Christ's subsequent return. And, though the Church will not be on earth during this time, this complete period really has just as much to do with the Church as with Israel.

The Tribulation and immediately following events, along with being "the time of Jacob's trouble" [Jer. 30:7], will be the time when the redemption [*future, not past*] of the inheritance awaiting Christ and His co-heirs will occur.

And this future redemption *has to do with BOTH God and Israel and Christ and His co-heirs.* This future redemption *provides NOT ONLY the territorial part of the kingdom BUT ALSO results in Israel being restored as the wife of Jehovah and Christ's bride becoming His wife.*

This entire sequence of events, along with related events which usher in the Messianic Kingdom, is depicted in the last three parables.

[Note from the preceding *the REASON* Christ reentered the house prior to giving the last three parables.

Israel is brought back into the picture and dealt with, *though NOT relative to "the kingdom of the heavens BUT relative to "the kingdom covenanted to David"*].

The last three parables, along with providing information pertaining to God's resumption of His dealings with Israel, simply form a chronological continuation and conclusion to the events depicted in the first four parables. In this respect, *ALL seven parables* form a history of Christendom in relation to "the Word of the Kingdom," extending from the time of the Church's inception on the day of Pentecost in 33 A.D. to that future time when the Church is present, with Christ, in the Messianic Kingdom.)

3

Israel's Return, Before the Time

Present Return, Major Problems

"When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.

Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished.

Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of the man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation" (Matt. 12:43-45).

These are Christ's closing recorded words to Israel's religious leaders *AFTER* they had committed the "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit" (12:24-32), *BEFORE* He "went...out of the house," "sat by the seaside," and began to speak "in parables" (13:1-3).

The house — "your house," *the house of Israel* — during time covered by events seen in these parables, was to be left "empty, swept, and garnished ['put in order']" (v. 44; cf. Matt. 23:38). The house was *to stand vacant* ("empty"), and it was to be "swept" and "put in order" relative to its vacated state. *NOTHING was to remain.*

And, once the house of Israel found itself in this condition (which would include *the people, the temple, the city of Jerusalem, and the land*), the nation was left with *ONLY* the same previously existing recourse: *Repentance.*

But, should repentance not be forthcoming — with the Jewish people persisting in their disobedience, ignoring the reason for their condition, seeking to bring about a change in the existing situation themselves — *matters would ONLY become worse.*

God had revealed through Moses, at the beginning, that Israel would not be allowed to continue indefinitely in disobedience. The nation would ultimately be brought to the place of *repentance*. And, to bring this to pass, if necessary, Israel's punishment would be intensified *seven times* (Lev. 26:18-31). Israel, through this means, would be brought to *a place where the nation would have NO recourse OTHER than to turn to the God of their fathers* (cf. Ex. 2:23-25; 3:7ff; Jonah 2:2-10).

Then, fifteen hundred years after God had revealed this through Moses, Christ called attention to this established, fundamental truth immediately before He left the house, went down by the seaside, and began to speak in parables (Matt. 12:43-45; 13:1ff).

Matthew 12:43-45 reveals an "unclean spirit" dwelling in the house prior to the house being left "empty, swept, and garnished." Then, following this — because of Israel's refusal to repent, and because of Israel's efforts to bring about a change in the existing situation through naturalistic means — "seven other spirits," *more wicked than the first*, would take up residence in the house, *with the LATTER state of the nation being FAR WORSE than the FORMER state* (v. 45).

("Seven" is a complete number, showing *the completeness of that which is in view*. "Seven times," or "seven other spirits," may refer to *completeness* rather than to *a literal seven-fold intensity*.)

However, either way, matters would be quite similar. With *completeness* in view, *intensity* would be involved; and this intensity could, at times, possibly be even greater than seven-fold.)

Israel was *sick* (resulting from sin, disobedience [Isa. 1:4-6]); and “the house,” *the house of Israel*, was about to be left *desolate*. And the nation’s condition *would continue after this fashion UNTIL a certain decreed time*.

This condition would continue *UNTIL* matters had become so bad that Israel would be forced to cry out to the God of their Fathers for help (Ex. 2:23-25). And, correspondingly, the nation would, in that day, through Divine power, be brought into *such dire straits* that the Jewish people would willingly, gladly, and eagerly say, “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Matt. 23:37-39; cf. Isa. 53:1ff).

Israel’s condition was/is of *Divine origin*, and the nation’s cure *MUST* also be of *Divine origin* (Hosea 5:13-6:2). A *Divine purpose* lies behind the nation’s present Divinely decreed condition — a purpose having to do with bringing a nation to the end of itself, *leaving the nation with NO place to turn OTHER than to the God of their fathers*.

(A similar *Divine work* can be seen in Zech. 1:14, 15, where the Lord set about to chasten His son, Israel, because of disobedience; but, in this case, the Gentile nations stepped in and “helped forward the affliction.”

That is, God, in His infinite wisdom, set about to chasten His son in order to bring about *correction*. And the Gentiles, seeing Israel being chastened, in their finite wisdom, stepped in and sought to intensify the nation’s sufferings.

And God will not countenance such action. God said that He was “a little displeased” with Israel, resulting in the chastening; but, when the Gentiles stepped in and “helped forward the affliction,” God said that He was “very sore displeased” with the Gentiles.

In this respect, the Gentile nations should take note of that which has been happening and continues to happen to Israel today. It is, again, *the SAME chastening hand of God, for the SAME purpose*. And God will *NO more* countenance

interference in His plans and purposes for Israel today than He would in Old Testament days.

Should any Gentile nation attempt such [as some already have], God will, again, be “very sore displeased”; and the principle set forth in Gen. 12:3 will still apply: “I will...curse him that curseth thee.”)

A Modern-Day Situation

An interesting situation pertaining to Israel and that stated in Matt. 12:43-45 has developed during modern times. *And this is something which affects NOT ONLY Israel BUT the surrounding Gentile nations as well.*

Israel has sought to return to her land, while, at the same time, remaining in disobedience. And, attempting to return after this fashion is NOT ONLY attempting to return before the time BUT ALSO attempting to reverse that which God has decreed concerning Israel's sickness and desolation.

It is attempting, through humanistic means, to bring about a change in an “empty, swept, and garnished” house, the house of Israel. And an attempt of this nature can ONLY result in seven other spirits, more wicked than the first, entering into the house.

The principle has been established — given by God through Moses, reiterated by Christ — and it CANNOT be broken.

With an existing Jewish nation in the Middle East, in the eyes of man, Israel has seemingly succeeded in that which the nation attempted (RETURN to the land, and CHANGE that which God had previously decreed).

But, in the eyes of God, though an Israeli nation presently exists in the Middle East, matters are viewed from a quite different perspective. According to Scripture, all of the best efforts put forth by Israel — seeking to bring about a change in an “empty, swept, and garnished” house — can ONLY have ONE end. Conditions for the nation can ONLY become worse.

One *need ONLY look* at a decaying Middle East situation, in the light of Scripture, *to see what is really happening*. Intensifying trouble exists throughout the Middle East. The whole area is like a powder keg, with a lit fuse, waiting to explode. And the nations (Israel and the Gentile nations, including the United States) are desperately, though vainly, seeking to defuse the situation.

But *NEITHER* Israel *NOR* the Gentile nations have any understanding at all of that which is happening. They have *NO* understanding of the *NATURE* of the problem, *WHY* it exists, or *HOW* to deal with it.

And, even if they did understand all the ramifications of the existing problem, *they COULDN'T even begin to deal with it*.

God ALONE is the ONLY One Who can possibly deal with it!

The WHOLE of the existing problem is a matter between GOD and ISRAEL.

"I will take away, and *NONE* shall rescue him" (Hosea 5:13, 14).

And the revealed solution, as previously seen, is ALSO a matter between GOD and ISRAEL.

"...*TILL* they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face..." (Hosea 5:15-6:2).

An eluding Middle East peace is the MOST intractable problem facing man in the world today. And Israel, along with the Gentile nations — understanding somewhat the gravity of the situation if it is allowed to continue (though still not understanding "*WHY*" this is the case) — *are desperately seeking a solution*.

But a solution will *NOT* be forthcoming *UNTIL* a full-end to the decreed "seven times" or "seven other spirits," in relation to Israel's chastisement, has come to pass. And the nations, awaiting *the full-end* to a problem and situation which they

can't even begin to understand or deal with, don't have a clue concerning which way to turn.

Various plans are being studied and considered, and concessions are being made which were unheard of only a short time back.

BUT, ALL of man's BEST efforts will FAIL. This is simply something which man has NO control over and CANNOT deal with.

And *WHERE* is it all headed?

From a Scriptural standpoint, *there is ONLY one possible answer. It is all headed toward a climactic, desolate end — an end seven times worse than it would have been had the Jewish people not persisted in their disobedience and sought, themselves, to bring about a change in an "empty, swept, and garnished" house.*

(For additional information on the preceding, refer to the author's book, *Never Again! or Yes, Again!*)

A Man Seemingly Possessing the Answer

In the immediate future, a man is going to appear in the Middle East with the seeming solution to the insoluble problem. And he will undoubtedly be received with open arms by the world at large, for he will appear to have the answer to this intractable problem.

But, though his solution for Middle East peace will appear to work for awhile, the end result *will be EXACTLY* as stated by Christ in Matt. 12:43-45. *Instead of one wicked spirit in the house, in the end, seven spirits more wicked than the first will be found therein.*

Israel will seek to be cured of her sickness through an association with this man — the man of sin, the Antichrist.

But he will be *UNABLE to effect a cure. The Lord wrought Israel's sickness, and ONLY the Lord can effect the nation's cure* (Hosea 5:13, 14).

The matter of a Jewish nation, a remnant in the land today, is as *Jonah out of the Lord's will, asleep in the hold of the ship, out of the sea.*

This remnant in the land today, *out of the Lord's will*, is no longer scattered among the nations. They are *in their own land, out of the sea, though asleep to the true nature of their condition and calling.*

(“The sea” is used in Scripture referring to *the Gentile nations* and to *death*. And though the remnant in the land is no longer scattered among the nations, they are *spiritually dead*. Though removed from the sea in one sense, they have not been removed from the sea in another.)

In Jonah's case, *the sea raged* as long as this condition persisted — Jonah asleep on board the ship, out of the sea.

But once Jonah had been cast into the sea, the sea became *calm* (Jonah 1:3-15). And Jonah had to remain *in the sea, in the place of death (typifying, as well, being scattered among the nations)*, for two days, until the third day. *Only then* could Jonah be removed from the sea and be placed back in the land (Jonah 1:17-2:10).

Israel's place out of the Lord's will *can ONLY be in EXACTLY the same place* which Jonah occupied out of the Lord's will — in the sea, *i.e., in the place of death and scattered among the nations*. *THIS* is the place where God dealt with Jonah in *the type*, and *THIS* is the place where God has decreed that He will deal with Israel in *the antitype*.

And Israel, as Jonah, has to remain in this place and condition (*in the sea — in the place of death, scattered among the nations*) *UNTIL the third day*.

ANY attempt by either Israel or others to bring about a change in the timing of Israel's return or the nation's present condition and situation is *NOT ONLY doomed to failure BUT is also destined to make matters worse than they had previously existed.*

An attempt has been made in modern times *to remove Israel from the sea, through humanistic means, BEFORE the time, ON the second day.* An attempt has been made, through Zionistic endeavors, *to reenter an "empty, swept, and garnished" house.* And this, in itself, will reveal *the ONLY possible future for the presently existing Jewish nation in the Middle East.*

What is going to happen according to Jonah?

The sea is going to rage; the Gentile nations are going to be in turmoil. And this scene from the Book of Jonah will address the whole of what is happening in the world today in relation to Israel and the Gentile nations.

What is going to happen according to Matthew?

EXACTLY the same thing! Conditions will ONLY become worse for Israel; and the Gentile nations, inseparably linked to Israel's destiny in this respect, will fare no better.

And *THAT'S* where the world presently finds itself.

EVERYTHING is unalterably tied to Israel and that which Scripture reveals about the nation's destiny.

Israel finds herself *in dire straits*, the Gentile nations surrounding Israel are *in turmoil*, and an eluding Middle East peace is *desperately being sought* at practically any price.

Peace though will NOT be forthcoming, and conditions will ONLY become worse as time goes on.

The man of sin, who will shortly appear and seemingly have the solution to the problem, will *fail*; and matters will become even worse. In fact, the whole of man's efforts will end *with the darkest time* in Jewish history, immediately before "*the Sun [Son] of Righteousness*" arises "with healing in his wings" (Mal. 4:1, 2).

In the middle of the Tribulation, the Jews presently in the land comprising the present nation of Israel are going to be uprooted. And those not escaping into surrounding Gentile nations will either "fall by the edge of the sword [be slain]" or "be led away captive into all nations" (Luke 21:20-24),

with two-thirds of world Jewry (some 9,000,000 by today's count) ultimately being slain (Zech. 13:8).

ALL of this is according to the *CLEAR* revelation of *Scripture*; and, try as man might, he is *COMPLETELY* powerless to change the course of that which has been set in motion.

Scripture clearly reveals Israel's destiny, *NOT ONLY* during her approaching darkest hour, *BUT ALSO* during and following that time when the Jewish people cry out to the God of their fathers.

UNTIL the latter occurs, there can be *NOTHING* but intensifying trouble; *BUT*, following the occurrence of the latter, the whole of the matter will be reversed. *THEN*, and *ONLY THEN*, will peace exist in the Middle East and the world at large.

And all this foretold calamity is the setting for Christ's departure from the house, going down by the seaside, and beginning to speak in parables in Matthew chapter thirteen.

Israel's climactic rejection (Matt. 12) and *Christ's subsequent action* (Matt. 13) anticipate the *REMOVAL* of the kingdom from Israel (Matt. 21:33-43), the *CONDEMNATION* of the Scribes and Pharisees, and the *ANNOUNCEMENT* concerning the house being left desolate (Matt. 23:1-39).

And all of this *ANTICIPATES* the *CHURCH* being called into existence (to be the recipient of that which Israel rejected), the entire present *DISPENSATION* (in which the house lies desolate, while God, through His Spirit, calls out a bride for His Son), and the coming *TRIBULATION* (when Israel's desolation will reach an apex, as the nation enters her darkest hour).

And, as well, all of this *ANTICIPATES* Israel ultimately *RETURNING* to the One Who has torn and smitten, the only One Who can bind her wound. It will be in that day *ALONE* that *HEALING* will occur, with Israel then being *RAISED UP* to *LIVE* in God's sight (Hosea 6:1, 2; cf. Isa. 1:4-2:5).

Similarities Seen in Jewish History

There are a number of parallels which can be seen through viewing Israel during both the days of Moses and the days when Christ was on earth the first time.

- a) *A theocracy* was in the offing in both instances.
- b) A *Magna Charta* for the kingdom was seen in both instances.
- c) There was a *climactic rejection* in both instances.
- d) *The same consequences* followed in both instances.

1) Moses' Day

During Moses' day, *the people were delivered FROM Egypt following the death of the firstborn, with a view TO realizing the rights of the firstborn in an earthly land, separate from Egypt.*

AFTER their deliverance from Egypt, prior to entering the land, the Magna Charta for the theocracy — the constitution, the law, the rules and regulations governing the people — was given through Moses.

THEN the march was to Kadesh-Barnea, where the people of Israel were to enter the land, conquer the inhabitants, and rule the nations within this theocracy.

At Kadesh-Barnea, prior to the nation entering the land, twelve men — leaders from each of the twelve tribes of Israel, one from each tribe — were chosen to enter the land first in order to derive information concerning the land and its inhabitants (Num. 13:1ff).

These men traversed the land from one end to the other for forty days and nights, deriving this information. And they returned at the end of this time, *NOT ONLY* with this information, *BUT ALSO* with fruits from the land for the people to see (Num. 13:21ff).

Then, after all twelve of the Jewish leaders had delivered their report “to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel,” exhibiting the fruits of the land, *they concluded with two diametrically opposed statements.*

Two of the men concluded *with a positive statement*, but the remaining ten concluded *with a negative statement*. Two of the men delivered *a good report*, but the remaining ten delivered *an evil report* (Num. 13:26ff).

The two, Caleb and Joshua (with Caleb speaking for both), said:

“Let us go up at once and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it” (Num. 13:30; cf. Num. 14:6).

But the remaining ten said:

“We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we” (Num. 13:31).

And the people listened to and gave heed to the ten with *the evil report* rather than the two with *the good report*.

Unbelief on the part of Israel in this respect was *unbelief in God's ability to see the matter through to its completion*.

God had supernaturally delivered His people from Egypt and had supernaturally provided for them thus far (Ex. 14:13-31; 16:1ff; 17:1ff).

And NOW He was to allow them to possess the land through supernaturally delivering those inhabiting the land (a land previously covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) into their hands (Deut. 1:30; 4:38; 7:1, 2, 16, 22-24; 28:7).

BUT, the people, through their unbelief, STAYED God's delivering hand.

And, because of this unbelief, Israel, at Kadesh-Barnea, *FELL AWAY after such a fashion that a return to their former state*

was *NO longer possible*. They had crossed the line; they had committed a sin for which *there was NO sacrifice* (cf. Num. 15:30-36; Heb. 10:26, 27).

And because of this, the entire unbelieving generation, twenty years old and above, save Caleb and Joshua, was to be *overthrown in the wilderness* (Num. 14:29, 30). They were to be overthrown *on the RIGHT SIDE* of the blood (the death of the firstborn back in Egypt) but *on the WRONG SIDE* of the goal of their calling (entrance into the land to realize the rights of the firstborn).

After God had dealt with the ten leaders who delivered *an evil report* to the people (Num. 14:37), the entire unbelieving generation was progressively overthrown during the next thirty-eight and one-half years. Those comprising this generation were led away from the promised land, into the wilderness lands of Esau and Lot, down by the sea; and this entire unbelieving generation died in these wilderness lands (Deut. 2:1-14).

And there was *NOTHING* any one of them could do about it. They were *completely, totally powerless* to bring about a change. They had fallen away at Kadesh-Barnea after a fashion which made a return to their former state *impossible*.

2) Christ's Day

During Christ's day, exactly the same thing can be seen, though from a different perspective. As during Moses' day, the death of the firstborn was past (the people of Israel were still sacrificing paschal lambs year after year [though they were about to slay the Paschal Lamb, presenting the beginning of a different series of events which would be culminated at the time of Christ's return]).

BUT, rather than deliverance FROM one EARTHLY land TO another, as during Moses' day, deliverance FROM the earth TO a HEAVENLY land was in view.

THEN, with a view to the Jewish people entering this heavenly land, the Magna Charta for the theocracy (again, the constitution, the law, the rules and regulations governing the people) was given through Christ.

THIS is what the message Christ delivered on the Mount in Matt. 5-7 was about.

And, though the message surrounding the kingdom had previously been proclaimed to Israel (Matt. 3, 4), *ONLY after the Magna Charta for the kingdom had been delivered (Matt. 5-7) could the FULL force of the offer come into view (Matt. 8ff).*

But the religious leaders in Israel led an unbelieving generation *to do EXACTLY the same thing* which the leadership in Israel had led the people to do during Moses' day.

These religious leaders had *NO interest in entering the kingdom, and they did EVERYTHING within their power to see that those comprising the remainder of the nation didn't enter either* (Matt. 23:13).

They had heard the report (beginning with John), and they had seen the fruits of the land (the various signs being manifested, showing that which Israel could have if the nation would repent). *BUT, they wanted NOTHING to do with the matter.* And Israel's religious leaders, *EXACTLY* as had been done during Moses' day, *presented an evil report, leading the nation into a rejection from which there could be NO return.*

Events of Num. 13, 14 and Matt. 12 parallel one another in this respect (*ref.* Chapter II in this book). Both have to do with *CLIMACTIC points of rejection, with a theocracy in view;* and both present the nation, *because of its leadership, being brought to a point of NO return.*

After they had been brought to this place, *ONLY one thing lay in store for BOTH generations.*

BOTH were overthrown, on the RIGHT SIDE of the blood, but on the WRONG SIDE of the goal of their calling.

A Similarity Seen in Christendom

In Christendom, *things are little different* concerning the message surrounding the coming kingdom of Christ. *NOT ONLY* is the message being rejected, *BUT* Christians, as the Israelites during both Moses' day and Christ's day, can reach a terminal point in their rejection. That's what the third of the five major warnings in the Book of Hebrews is about.

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit,

And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world ['age'] to come,

If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (Heb. 6:4-6).

This section in Hebrews warns against a falling away after such a fashion that, once the individual has fallen away, *he will be UNABLE to find a place of repentance*. And, contextually, the warning is drawn from the type seen in the previous warning — the Israelites under Moses (chs. 3, 4).

Under Moses, the Israelites fell away at Kadesh-Barnea after they had heard the report of the Twelve and had seen the fruits of the land.

Their falling away *had to do with a rejection of that which lay before them*; and once they had fallen away in this manner, *NO place of repentance could THEN be found*.

"Repentance" simply means *a change of mind*. And the thought *has NOTHING to do with the Israelites changing their minds*. This is something which they did the very next day, *but to NO avail* (Num. 14:39-45). They changed their minds and sought to go into the land set before them and conquer the inhabitants in accordance with God's previous command.

BUT, because of their previous unbelief upon hearing the report of the Twelve and seeing the fruits of the land, God had already told them that *they would NOT be allowed to do that which they were now attempting to do*. Instead, the entire unbelieving generation *was destined to be overthrown in the wilderness*.

The repentance in view in the type *was on the part of God, NOT on the part of the Israelites*. God, because of that which had occurred, *was NOT going to change His mind*. And there was *NOTHING* which the Israelites could do to alter the existing situation.

The matter would be similar to Esau's forfeiture of his birthright and that which occurred following Isaac bestowing the blessing of the firstborn on Jacob. Esau, realizing for the first time *the value of the birthright* and realizing *the gravity of that which had occurred*, sought to get his father, Isaac, to bless him as well. But Isaac couldn't now bless Esau after this manner. He had already bestowed the blessing of the firstborn on Jacob, *and the matter could NOT be reversed*.

Esau's forfeiture of his birthright constitutes the fifth and last of the five major warnings in Hebrews. And this warning concludes by stating that Esau "found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears" (Heb. 12:16, 17).

Esau repented; he changed his mind. But Esau couldn't get his father to repent; he couldn't get his father to change his mind. Isaac *COULDN'T* change his mind. It was *too late*. He had already bestowed the blessing of the firstborn on Jacob. And, realizing *NOT ONLY the gravity of the situation BUT the finality of the matter*, it is recorded that "Esau lifted up his voice, and wept" (Gen. 27:34-38).

Though the forfeiture of one's birthright would be in view in the third warning in Hebrews, as well as the fifth warning, the third warning is drawn from the experiences

of the Israelites at Kadesh-Barnea under Moses. And *THIS* is the point in Scripture where one must center his attention *IF* he is to properly understand this warning.

A falling away in the antitype would require that an individual *NOT ONLY first hear the message BUT that he ALSO have some understanding of the subject*. It would require Christians to be placed in *EXACTLY the same position* as the Israelites under Moses, who had both heard the report and seen the fruits of the land.

Note how Heb. 6:4, 5 is worded, keeping in mind that the matter has to do with “the powers of the world to come [‘the age to come,’ the Messianic Era]” (v. 5b):

The individuals in this passage had been “enlightened,” they had “tasted of the heavenly gift,” they had been made “partakers [‘companions’] of the Holy Spirit [note that the primary function of the Holy Spirit’s ministry in the world today is the search for the bride (Gen. 24)],” and they had “tasted the good word of God.”

All of these things have to do *with that which is in view in the type*. All of these things have to do *with entrance into the land and realizing the rights of the firstborn therein*.

And a person finding himself in this position, then falling away in the antitype of the Israelites falling away at Kadesh-Barnea (turning from, rejecting that set before him), will find himself in *EXACTLY the SAME position* as the unbelieving generation under Moses found itself. He will find himself *in a position where he CANNOT be renewed again unto repentance*.

God *DIDN’T* change His mind relative to an unbelieving generation during Moses’ day, He *DIDN’T* change His mind relative to an unbelieving generation when Christ was on earth the first time, and He is *NOT going to change His mind relative to unbelieving Christians*. God’s people *DIDN’T* then, *NOR will they today, or yet future, find a place of repentance*.

But God Honors Faithfulness

During Moses' day, Caleb and Joshua were set apart from the unbelieving generation. They had believed the Lord, and God honored their belief. They were subsequently allowed *to enter the land, conquer the inhabitants, and realize the goal of their calling.*

Caleb and Joshua form a type of faithful Christians (in the same fashion that the unbelieving generation of that day forms a type of unfaithful Christians). And God will honor faithfulness among Christians today, *EXACTLY* as He honored faithfulness during Moses' day.

Faithful Christians will be dealt with in a PARALLEL fashion to the way God dealt with Caleb and Joshua.

Following the crossing of Jordan, the conquest of Jericho, and numerous subsequent battles, Caleb realized his inheritance.

And upon realizing his inheritance, Caleb said:

"Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh-Barnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in my heart.

Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the Lord my God.

And Moses swore on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's forever, because thou hast wholly followed the Lord thy God.

And now, behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, as he said...

Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the Lord spake in that day..." (Josh. 14:7-10a, 12a).

Joshua then blessed Caleb and gave him "Hebron for an inheritance" (vv. 13, 14).

Then Joshua's inheritance in the land is spoken of at a later time, after the land had been divided and things had been put in order:

"When they had made an end of dividing the land for inheritance by their coasts, the children of Israel gave an inheritance to Joshua the son of Nun among them.

According to the word of the Lord they gave him the city which he asked, even Timnath-serah in mount Ephraim: and he built the city, and dwelt therein" (Josh. 19:49, 50; cf. Luke 19:15-18).

And therein lies the difference between *faithfulness* and *unfaithfulness* to that which God had commanded during Moses' day, which would be *EXACTLY the same* for Christians in the antitype.

It was/is being allowed to realize an inheritance in a land flowing with milk and honey on the one hand, OR it was/is being overthrown in the lands of Esau and Lot on the other.

ONE thing ALONE is seen as the deciding factor.

THIS ONE THING was stated by Caleb before he realized his inheritance, something *upon which he based the whole of his claim to the inheritance:*

"I wholly followed the Lord my God" (Josh. 14:8b; cf. v. 9).

And *THIS ONE THING* was stated again following Caleb realizing his inheritance, showing *the WHOLE of that upon which the reward of the inheritance was based:*

"Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb... because that he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel" (Josh. 14:14).

NOW, with a base provided by the previous introductory material (Chs. 1-3), we're ready to begin a study of the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen.

4

Parable of the Sower

Sowing, Fruit-Bearing, the Kingdom in View

“And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow;

And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up:

Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:

And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up and choked them:

But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some, sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.

Who hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Matt. 13:3-9).

The parable of the Sower, the first of four parables which Christ gave outside the house, by the seaside, is comprised of four parts.

Each part has to do with *EXACTLY the same thing: fruit-bearing, with the kingdom of the heavens in view* — a kingdom about to be offered (during the future time covered by this parable) to a people other than Israel (*to the new creation “in Christ,”* about to be brought into existence).

Israel — the nation to whom the kingdom of the heavens was still being offered at the time Christ gave the parable of the Sower, outside “the house” (*referencing the house of Israel, left desolate in the previous chapter*), by “the seaside” (*referencing the Gentiles*) — *is subsequently represented in Matthew’s gospel by a barren fig tree* (Matt. 21:18, 19; cf. Joel 1:7).

The tree had leaves, but *NO fruit*. And, because of the fruitless condition of the tree (representing the fruitless condition of Israel), Christ pronounced a curse on the tree. He said, “Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever [*lit. ‘henceforward with respect to the age’*].” And the fig tree, by the next day, had “withered away,” showing that which was about to happen to the nation of Israel (vv. 19, 20; cf. Mark 11:13, 14, 20, 21).

The parable of the Sower *looks out ahead to God’s activity during an entirely separate dispensation*, following the removal of the kingdom from Israel and a new nation being brought forth to bear fruit (Matt. 21:33-43).

Israel, because of the nation’s barren condition, was to be set aside for a dispensation; and, throughout the dispensation, God would deal *with a different nation with respect to fruit-bearing and the kingdom of the heavens*.

This is that “holy nation,” a “peculiar people” to which Peter referred, who “in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy” (I Peter 2:9, 10).

This is *the new creation* “in Christ,” taken from both of the former two creations (both Jew and Gentile [*but mainly Gentile, shown by “the seaside”*]), though neither of the former two creations (neither Jew nor Gentile) exists within this new creation (Eph. 2:12-15).

“In Christ,” all distinctions of the human race seen in both of the former two creations simply do not exist (in both Jew and Gentile [Gal. 3:26-29]).

The new creation “in Christ” is EXACTLY what the name implies — an entirely NEW creation in the human race (II Cor. 5:17). This is WHY Scripture, following this time, divides the human race into three separate and distinct segments:

“Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God” (I Cor. 10:32).

The parable of the Sower was given with a view to this new creation *NOT ONLY* being brought into existence *BUT ALSO* being extended the opportunity to bring forth fruit for the kingdom. The parable of the Sower looks out ahead to that time when the kingdom would be taken from Israel (because of the nation’s failure to produce fruit) and given to a nation which would produce “the fruits thereof” (Matt. 21:43).

In the first three parts of the parable though, individuals comprising *the one new man* fail to bring forth fruit, as those in Israel had done relative to the proffered kingdom. Rather than overcoming and bearing fruit, they are instead overcome (through various means) and bear *NO* fruit.

But in the last part of the parable, *THAT expected of the one new man during the present dispensation is shown*. Unlike barren Israel, overcoming and fruit-bearing are seen.

Thus, it is revealed at the beginning, before God even brought this new creation into existence, *that NOT all those comprising the one new man — NOT all Christians — would bring forth fruit*.

Fruit-bearing is seen in ONLY one part of the parable, in the last part. In the first three parts, individuals are shown to have been overcome through various means, resulting in barrenness.

ALL of these things are set forth in the parable itself. But, after responding to the disciples’ question concerning why He was speaking to the multitudes in parables (vv. 10-17; ref. Ch. II in this book), Christ provided them with interpreta-

tive help to further explain the parable of the Sower (vv. 18-23). Christ went back over the four parts, briefly explaining each part.

(The reason Christ provided additional interpretative help for the parable of the Sower is obvious. This parable is *foundational* to the other six which Christ subsequently gave. Correctly understanding the six parables which followed *would be contingent on correctly understanding the introductory parable.*

A properly laid foundation will allow one to properly build on the foundation. *BUT*, lay the foundation improperly, and the inverse of that would be equally true.)

Then, after giving both the parable of the Sower and interpretative help for this parable, Christ gave the second, third, and fourth parables, apart from any explanation (vv. 24-33). But, after going back inside the house, Christ, responding to another question asked by the disciples, concerning the second parable, provided additional interpretative help for this parable as well (vv. 36-43).

And, once back inside the house, Christ then gave the fifth, sixth, and seventh parables (vv. 44-48), providing a very brief explanation concerning several things in the seventh and closing parable (vv. 49, 50).

ALL seven parables have to do with a people other than Israel (v. 1; ref. Ch. II in this book), with the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens (v. 11), with "the Word of the Kingdom" (vv. 19-23), and with "fruit-bearing" (vv. 8, 23).

ALL seven parables, accordingly, have to do with the gospel of the glory of Christ, NOT the gospel of the grace of God. And they have to do with those to whom the kingdom is being offered during the present dispensation, following Israel's rejection and the kingdom being taken from the nation.

Thus, ALL seven parables have to do with a time following the rejection of the kingdom by Israel and the removal of the kingdom from Israel.

And, accordingly, they have to do with *the new entity, the new creation, called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected.*

And further, though Christ reentered the house prior to giving the last three parables, there is *no change* in the identity of those in view, those being dealt with. *The Church continues center-stage.*

The last three parables depict God's summary dealings with respect to two things:

1) *His previous dealings with Christians* (throughout the dispensation and at the judgment seat).

2) *His future redemptive action* (redemption of the inheritance, resulting in the marriage of Christ to His bride [a bride previously singled out and revealed at the judgment seat]) and *the subsequent separation of Christians* (immediately preceding and leading into the Messianic Era, based on previous decisions and determinations at the judgment seat).

(Different facets of the preceding are dealt with throughout this book, in material covering all seven parables.)

Whether dealing with the parable of the Sower, the parable of the wheat and tares, or any of the other parables, the message of salvation by grace through faith is simply *NOT in view. Rather, fruit-bearing, with respect to the kingdom, is in view.*

These parables have to do with God's complete dealings with an entirely new creation, about to be called into existence to bear fruit where Israel had failed.

Since this is the case, there is really *NOTHING* in the parables which has to do with the unsaved, their eternal destiny, etc.

EVERYTHING has to do solely with the saved, with a view to the Messianic Era, when Christ will sit on His throne in the heavenly Jerusalem and co-heirs will exercise power with Him (cf. Rom. 8:16-19; Rev. 2:26, 27; 3:21).

EVERYTHING — the four divisions in the first parable, the two divisions in the second parable, an unnatural growth in the third parable, the whole becoming leavened in the fourth parable, redemption of the inheritance and marriage in the fifth and sixth parables, and the separation of the good and bad in the seventh parable — has to do with the SAVED alone.

Manner of Sowing

“The Sower” in the parable (the Greek text has a definite article before “Sower” — *a particular Sower*) is identified in the explanation to the second parable as *the Son of Man, a Messianic title* (v. 37; cf. Ps. 8:4-6; Dan. 7:13, 14; Matt. 16:13-16).

And also, in this explanation, the place where the sowing occurs is revealed *to be in the field, in the world* (v. 38). In the parable itself, this sowing occurs different places in the field, different places in the world.

And that which the Sower — the Son of Man, Christ — sows out in the world is revealed *to be individuals, NOT “seeds”* per se (note that the word “seeds” in the text is in italics [v. 4], indicating that it is not in the Greek text, but supplied by the translators).

In the second parable though, there is a sowing of “seed.” “Good seed” (vv. 24, 27) are sown by Christ in the field (which is really the same sowing seen in the first parable), but these “good seed” represent individuals. They are identified as “the children [‘sons’] of the kingdom” in the explanation (v. 38).

Thus, there is no problem retaining the word “seeds” in the English text of the parable of the Sower as long as it is

understood that these “seeds” represent individuals. This is not only in line with the second parable but also in line with the correct rendering of *FOUR different verses in the explanation to the four parts of the first parable as well* (vv. 19, 20, 22, 23).

The latter part of *verse NINETEEN*, explaining the sowing in the first of the four parts of the parable (v. 4), should read, “This is he which was sown by the wayside.”

The beginning of *verse TWENTY*, explaining the sowing in the second of the four parts of the parable (vv. 5, 6), should read, “But he that was sown into stony places...”

The beginning of *verse TWENTY-TWO*, explaining the sowing in the third of the four parts of the parable (v. 7), should read, “He also that was sown among the thorns...”

And the beginning of *verse TWENTY-THREE*, explaining the last of the four parts of the parable (v. 8), should read, “But he that was sown into the good ground...”

The Sower (the Lord Jesus Christ) has sown individuals (Christians) different places in the world, with a view to *ONE thing — fruit-bearing*.

And this fruit-bearing has to do with *ONE thing* as well — *the kingdom of the heavens*.

(In Mark’s and Luke’s accounts of the parable of the Sower [Mark 4:13-20; Luke 8:4-15], both *the Word* [“the Word of the Kingdom,” as seen in Matthew’s account] and *individuals* [as also seen in Matthew’s account] are sown different places out in the world, with a view to *fruit-bearing* [as seen in Matthew’s account as well].

There is, of course, no conflict in *the Word* being sown and *individuals* being sown, for the Word cannot be sown apart from a saved individual [in Luke’s account, “seed” is sown (v. 5), but this “seed” is identified as *the Word* (v. 11)]. The Word is actually sown within the individual who has been sown. He hears, receives the Word [Matt. 13:19-23; Mark 4:14-20; Luke 8:11-15].

The whole of the matter is described different ways in the three different accounts, presenting one complete, composite picture of that occurring within Christendom during the present dispensation.)

Understanding this is *foundational* if one would properly understand that which should be the central focus of all activity in the lives of Christians in the world today. And, understanding this is *foundational* as well if one would properly understand that which is the central focus of all activity surrounding the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the world today — the search for the bride (Gen. 24; cf. chs. 23-25).

Activity in the lives of Christians and activity in the ministry of the Spirit go hand-in-hand in this respect. They, of necessity, *MUST*.

The gospel of the grace of God though, as it has to do with both those sown in the field and the present work of the Spirit, is another matter entirely. An individual *MUST* pass “from death unto life” before he can be extended the opportunity, find himself in a position, to bring forth fruit for the kingdom. He *MUST* become a child of the Owner before he can possess any association with the inheritance awaiting Christ and His co-heirs (John 5:24; Rom. 8:17; Eph. 2:1-5).

Thus, unsaved man *MUST* first hear the gospel of the grace of God (from those sown in the field). And the work of the Spirit *MUST*, correspondingly, begin at this point (as seen in the foundational pattern in Gen. 1:2b-5). Unsaved man *MUST* pass “from death unto life” before he can be dealt with relative to the inheritance out ahead.

And the Spirit of God is in the world today, *FIRST of all*, to do a work in unsaved man in this respect. He is present in the world to breathe life into the one who is without life, effecting *spiritual life* in that individual (cf. Gen. 2:7; Ezek. 37:1-10; John 5:24; Eph. 2:1, 5, 8).

ONLY then can the Spirit deal with man in relation to

that which is seen in the parable of the Sower, or any of the other six parables in this chapter. And *ONLY then* can the Spirit, as well, bring to completion the central purpose for His presence in the world today — to search for, find, and remove the bride for God's Son (Gen. 24:33, 36, 58-67).

Places Where Sown

The explanation to the parable of the Sower begins with the statement, "When anyone heareth the word of the kingdom..." (v. 19a). Then, in each of the four parts to the explanation, the expression is shortened to simply, "the word" — referring to the previously mentioned Word, "the word of the kingdom" (vv. 20-23).

This is a reference to a message surrounding *the SAME kingdom which was being offered to Israel* (Matt. 3-12). And the reference is set within a context having to do with a message surrounding this kingdom being offered *to a people OTHER THAN Israel*.

It is simply called "the word of the kingdom" in the explanation to the parable of the Sower, *for it would be COMPLETELY obvious from BOTH the text and context EXACTLY what message was being referenced*.

The message in view is *EXACTLY what the text states*, and it could hardly be stated any plainer. The message has to do with *the kingdom*, *NOT with salvation by grace through faith*. And the response of different individuals throughout the parable has to do with *the kingdom* as well, *NOT with eternal verities seen in the gospel of the grace of God*.

EVERYTHING in the parable of the Sower revolves around two things:

- 1) *"The Word of the kingdom."*
- 2) *Fruit-bearing, or barrenness, on the part of those hearing this message.*

To read salvation by grace through faith *into ANY part* of this passage, as so many individuals do, *BOTH corrupts and destroys*.

It CORRUPTS one facet of the good news, the gospel of the grace of God, by bringing things over into this gospel which do not belong there; and it DESTROYS the other facet of the good news, the gospel of the glory of Christ, by removing things having to do with this gospel through misapplying them elsewhere.

1) Ones Sown by the Wayside

Comparing the parable and the explanation (vv. 4, 19), the ones sown by the wayside represent individuals (Christians) who hear “the Word of the Kingdom” but fail to understand the message. And their failure to understand the message allows the “fowls,” representing “the wicked one [Satan],” to simply come along and *do away* with the message, thus *devouring* the person (cf. vv. 4, 19; I Peter 5:6-9).

Those sown by the wayside, having this type experience in relation to “the Word of the Kingdom,” would probably represent the majority of Christians hearing this message today. Though they have a capacity to understand the message (they possess spiritual life), they show little to no interest, allowing Satan to perform his *destroying* and *devouring* work.

In Israel, when Christ was on earth the first time, the religious leaders had misled the people (Matt. 12:9-32; 15:1ff; 16:1ff; 23:13, 15). And, as a result, the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled in the actions of the Israelites of that day:

“For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed...” (Matt. 13:15a; cf. Isa. 6:9, 10).

The Jewish people were NOT ONLY in possession of the written Word of God BUT were also capable of spiritual perception. They were perfectly capable of understanding this Word.

But the religious leaders in Israel (centrally, the fundamental religious leaders, the Pharisees) had misled the people. Resultingly, when the Jewish people heard the message, their reaction was no different than the reaction of those described in the first part of the parable of the Sower.

Thus, the whole of the matter, seen almost two milleniums ago in Israel, *is EXACTLY the same as that which can be seen in Christendom today. The religious leaders misled the people then, and the religious leaders are misleading the people today.*

And this is something which can be seen mainly in so-called fundamental circles, the counterpart to the past Pharisaical religious leadership in Israel.

The final state of Christendom during the dispensation — seen in both the chronology of the first four parables in Matt. 13 and the seven Churches in Rev. 2, 3 — *is complete corruption and rejection in relation to “the Word of the Kingdom.”*

That is, insofar as this message is concerned (the message seen throughout the parable of the Sower), *the whole of Christendom* (fundamental and liberal segments alike) will be as the Church in Laodicea at the end of the dispensation, *completely leavened* (cf. Matt. 13:33; Rev. 3:14-20).

Those in the Laodicean Church, as those in Israel at Christ's first coming, are seen in possession of the Word of God and capable of spiritual perception. But those in this Church are also seen *in EXACTLY the same condition* as those in Israel, described in Isaiah's prophecy (see previous page):

“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (v. 17).

Israel, in the nation's blinded condition, *DIDN'T* heed the message; and the Church in its blinded condition *is NOT* going to heed the message either.

But a number of individuals in Israel did heed the message, and their eyes were opened (*cf.* Matt. 13:15b, 16; Luke 24:16, 31). And a number of individuals in the Church too have heeded and continue to heed the message, and their eyes too have been/are being opened (*cf.* II Cor. 3:14-18; Rev. 3:18).

2) *Ones Sown into Stony Places*

Comparing the parable and the explanation (vv. 5, 6, 20, 21), the ones sown into stony places represent individuals who hear the Word, understand the Word, and receive it joyfully. These are individuals who get excited about that which they have heard and learned. *There is new-found joy and excitement in their lives, because of "the word of the kingdom" (v. 20).*

BUT, before they can become sufficiently grounded in this Word (they have no "deepness of earth," they have no "root"), "tribulation or persecution" takes its toll. They endure "for awhile"; but, in the symbolism of the parable, when "the sun ['tribulation or persecution']" begins to beat down in all its strength, because of their lack of root (maturity in the faith), *they wither away* (vv. 5, 6, 21).

In the text, "tribulation or persecution" occurs "because of the word," because of individuals hearing and receiving "*the Word of the Kingdom.*"

This is the ONE MESSAGE in Scripture, unlike ANY OTHER message, which will cause Satan to marshal his forces.

The reason: This message centers around A CHANGE in the governmental administration of the earth.

Satan and his angels presently rule over the earth, within the existing kingdom of the heavens; but a new order of Sons, of Rulers, is about to be brought forth — Christ and His co-heirs. Satan and his angels are to be put down, with Christ and His co-heirs then taking the kingdom.

“The Word of the Kingdom” is a message which has *this END* in view. It is a message having to do with *Christ ruling the earth in THAT coming day*, ruling in the stead of Satan; and it is a message having to do with *Christians occupying positions as co-heirs with Christ in THAT day*, ruling in the stead of angels presently ruling with Satan.

And this is something which Satan will do *EVERYTHING within his power* to prevent. Thus, one could only expect a message dealing centrally with this subject to come under attack *AS NO OTHER message, which is EXACTLY the way Scripture presents the matter*.

In Eph. 3:1-11 this message is seen as something presently being made known “by [*lit.*, ‘through’] the Church” to “the principalities and powers in heavenly places [Satan and his angels]” (v. 10). The message being made known has to do with the fact that Satan and his angels are about to be replaced, and it has to do with individuals presently responding in a positive manner to the invitation (being extended by the Holy Spirit in the world) to have a part with Christ, in His administration, in that coming day (*cf.* Gen. 24:36, 58).

And in Eph. 6:10ff a spiritual warfare is seen raging because of that which is presently being made known through the Church to Satan and his angels.

Satan will, first of all, do everything within his power to *prevent* Christians from hearing this message; and, should Christians hear this message, he will then do everything within his power to *do away with, destroy* this message, *devouring* Christians.

At this point, Satan brings about “tribulation or persecution” in the life of the one hearing and understanding the message. And note again the wording of the text. Tribulation or persecution arises in the life of such an individual “because of the word,” *because of “the Word of the Kingdom.”*

He has heard and joyfully received *THIS Word, with tribulation or persecution following*. And this tribulation or persecution invariably comes *from other Christians*.

Unsaved man out in the world *can have NOTHING to do with all of this*. He is “dead in trespasses and sins,” *completely incapable of operating in the spiritual realm*. And not only does this tribulation or persecution come from other Christians, but many times it comes more specifically from those in positions of leadership, *EXACTLY as in Israel* when this offer was open to the nation almost two millenniums ago (e.g., John 9:22).

The person, through this tribulation or persecution, is “offended [Gk., *skandalizo*, ‘scandalized’]” (v. 21). That which he has heard, understood, and accepted is associated with error, cultism, etc. And, *because of his lack of maturity in the faith, he is overcome. He simply gives up; he quits; he falls away*.

And Satan wins the victory in his life.

3) Ones Sown Among Thorns

Comparing the parable and the explanation (vv. 7, 22), the ones sown among thorns represent individuals who hear the Word, but, because of worldly involvement, they become “unfruitful.” They “go forth” (Luke 8:14), apparently enduring for awhile, but are then overcome by the enemy.

That used to bring about their fall is revealed to be “the care of this world [‘age’], and the deceitfulness of riches.” Then Luke, in his account of this parable, adds a third — the “pleasures of this life” (Luke 8:14).

These individuals — whether through immaturity, neglect, letting their guard down, or any number of other things (we’re simply not told) — allow various things within the present world system, under Satan, to bring about their fall (cf. I John 2:15-17). Satan uses these things against them in the spiritual warfare.

They fail to heed the Lord's admonition and warning concerning where Christians are to fix their attention and keep it fixed. Christians, in the race of the faith, are to look "unto Jesus [*lit.*, 'from, unto Jesus']" (Heb. 12:1, 2). They are to look "from" the things of this present world system "unto" Jesus. *They are NOT to look back; they are NOT to look around; BUT they are to keep their eyes fixed straight out ahead, on Christ, on the Author and Finisher of their faith.*

And Christians are *NOT ONLY* to fix their attention on Jesus, *BUT also on EXACTLY* the same thing Christ fixed His attention as He endured the sufferings and shame surrounding Calvary. Christ fixed His attention on "the joy that was set before him" as He "endured the cross, despising the shame [considering the sufferings and shame of little consequence compared to His coming glory and exaltation]" (Heb. 12:2; cf. Matt. 25:21, 23; I Peter 2:21).

Christians are to "escape to the mountain" (*signifying the coming kingdom under Christ*), *apart from looking back, apart from remaining in the plain (signifying the present world system, the present kingdom under Satan)*. And if they don't, they will be consumed along with the things in the plain (Gen. 19:17; cf. Gen. 19:26; Luke 9:62; 17:32, 33).

Christians are to fix their attention on *the King and His Kingdom* — *NOT looking back, NOT looking around* — considering present sufferings (tribulation or persecution), or the things of this world (care of this age, riches, pleasures of life), *of little consequence* compared to the proffered glory and exaltation lying ahead. And *IF they DON'T*, Satan will use one or all of these things in his unceasing efforts to bring about their fall.

4) Ones Sown into Good Ground

The fourth part of the parable presents matters after an entirely different fashion. Those sown "into good ground"

(vv. 8, 23) represent individuals *who hear the Word* (first part of the parable); *they understand the Word* and refuse to allow “tribulation or persecution” to deter them as they progress toward maturity in the Word (second part of the parable); and *they keep their eyes fixed on the goal out ahead*, rather than on the things of this present world system (third part of the parable).

They hear, understand, and grow in the Word (*cf.* Acts 20:32; James 1:21; I Peter 2:2). Tribulation or persecution doesn’t stop them; and they do not allow themselves to become sidetracked by the “care of this age,” the “deceitfulness of riches,” or the “pleasures of life.” These are individuals who refuse to become entangled “with the affairs of this life,” knowing that a crown lies out ahead *for those who “strive lawfully”* (II Tim. 2:4, 5).

Thus, these are individuals who overcome and bring forth fruit. These are individuals who overcome *the world* (I John 5:4), *the flesh* (Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5), and *the Devil* (James 4:7; I Peter 5:9), rather than being overcome by one or all three. And, as a result, they bring forth fruit. They are the only ones who do bring forth fruit among the four groups mentioned, and they bring forth fruit in varying amounts — “some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.”

These individuals are the only ones who fulfill the purpose for their very existence — bringing forth fruit where Israel had failed, qualifying them to occupy positions with Christ in the coming kingdom of the heavens. These are the ones who will be allowed to ascend the throne with Christ in that coming day, occupying positions *EXACTLY commensurate with their fruit-bearing*.

Outcome of Sowing

Positions in the coming kingdom of Christ are to be

earned, not passed out in any type indiscriminate manner (Matt. 20:21-23). Individuals appearing before Christ in that day will receive *EXACTLY what each, through fruit-bearing, has earned*. Each will receive “his own reward according to his own labor” (I Cor. 3:8).

(The word translated “reward” in the N.T. is from the Greek word *misthos* [*misthapodosia*, a cognate word, in Hebrews], which has to do with “payment,” or “wages” for services rendered. And it will be *EXACT*. The payment will be *EXACTLY commensurate with services rendered*.)

Individuals bringing forth no fruit will receive no payment. There will have been no fruitful labor, and, consequently, wages will not be forthcoming. Instead, they will “suffer loss” (I Cor. 3:15).

On the other hand, individuals bringing forth fruit will receive payment. There will have been fruitful labor, and, consequently, wages will be forthcoming. Each will “receive a reward” (I Cor. 3:14). There will be “a just recompense of reward [‘a just payment, justly earned wages’]” (Heb. 2:2; 11:26).

Mention is made in the parable of the Sower of individuals bringing forth fruit in varying amounts — “some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold” (vv. 8, 23). And payment for the varying amounts, seen in another parable, the parable of the pounds in Luke 19:11-27, would be *EXACTLY commensurate* with their individual fruitfulness.

In the parable of the pounds, ten servants were each given one pound. Each was given a portion of his Lord’s business to use during the time of his Lord’s absence, in order that he might be accorded the opportunity to bring forth an increase.

One servant brought forth a tenfold increase; and the Lord, upon His return, gave him authority over ten cities.

Another servant brought forth a fivefold increase; and the Lord, at this time, gave him authority over five cities.

But a third servant failed to use that entrusted to him, and he was not only denied governmental authority but he was also severely rebuked by his Lord.

This is *NOT ONLY* the way Scripture plainly presents the matter *BUT* this is also what God's perfect justice and righteousness demands. *IF* matters had occurred any other way, God *would NOT* be perfectly just and righteous in His judgmental dealings with His servants to whom He had entrusted His business during His time of absence.

(God's future judgmental dealings with His servants, *providing EXACT payment for services rendered*, will be in *complete keeping* with the unchangeable laws of the harvest, which He Himself established:

1. *A person ALWAYS reaps what he sows.*

The one sowing "to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption," and the one sowing "to his Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting [Gk., *aionios* life, referring, in the text, to 'life in the coming age' (Gal. 6:7, 8)]."

2. *A person ALWAYS reaps more than he sows.* Sow "the wind" and reap "the whirlwind" [Hosea 8:7], but remain faithful over "a few things," and one will be made "ruler over many things" [Matt. 25:21, 23].

3. *And there is a PERIOD of TIME between the sowing and the reaping.* One sows during the present dispensation; but the reaping, whether good or bad, dependent wholly on the sowing, awaits the coming dispensation.

Fruit-Bearing — Genesis 1, Isaiah 5, Matthew 13

Fruit-bearing, whether relative to *Adam* and his descendants in the beginning, *Israel* during the past dispensation, or *Christians* during the present dispensation, has to do with *LIKE producing LIKE in relation to the KINGDOM* (ref. Ch. I in this book.)

And *THIS* would be true even in a passage such as Gen. 9:1, where *ONLY* the first three parts of the mandate given to Adam in Gen. 1:28 are given to Noah and his sons following the Flood (“Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish [‘fill’] the earth.”), with the last two parts not repeated (“and subdue it [the earth], and have dominion [‘rule’]...”).

The last two parts of the mandate, as given to Adam, *could NOT* be repeated to Noah and his sons following the Flood, *for man was NOW in a fallen state and in NO position to subdue and rule the earth. BUT*, nonetheless, the first three parts of the mandate given to them *were with a view to redemption (both man and the earth), with man one day being able to act in relation to these last two parts.*

Fruit-bearing, as seen in the complete mandate (Gen. 1:28) or in a part of the mandate (Gen. 9:1) *is NOT viewed as fruit-bearing at all UNLESS ultimately carried through to completion.*

That is to say, the first two words in the mandate (“Be fruitful” [one word in the Hebrew text]) *CANNOT be realized APART from the matter being carried through to completion* (placing the individual in a position to *BOTH* “subdue” and “rule” the earth).

Note Paul’s words in I Cor. 3:6-9, outlining the method which God uses to bring matters to pass in the preceding respect:

“I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.”

As seen in this passage, viewing the whole panorama of salvation in relation to fruit-bearing, *one person plants* (foreshadowed by redemptive work on day one in Gen. 1), *another person waters* (foreshadowed by redemptive work during the next five days in Gen. 1), *with the Lord giving the increase* (overseeing matters throughout and carrying matters into that foreshadowed by rest on the seventh day).

Or, I Cor. 3:6-9 could be looked upon as relating to events beginning beyond salvation by grace, with the whole of that seen — the planting, the watering, and God giving the increase — *having to do SOLELY with the saved, with Christians and fruit-bearing, paralleling the parable of the Sower in Matt. 13.*

BUT, in either case, UNLESS the planting and watering faithfully continue throughout ALL six days, THAT which could have been fruitfulness on the seventh day, will result in barrenness.

Then note Christ's statement regarding the same matter, while in Samaria, in John 4:35-38:

"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal ['with respect to life for the age']: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.

I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours."

Thus, note the responsibility of the one who waters to the one who plants, or the one who reaps to the one who sows (which may very well be numerous individuals throughout).

The latter individual(s) does one of two things.

He, through responsible labor, enters into the previous labor of another and brings fruit-bearing to completion.

OR, he, through irresponsible labor, either ignores matters or enters into and negatively impacts the previous labor of another, rendering fruit-bearing null and void.

On the latter, insofar as the person's salvation is concerned (foreshadowed by work seen on day one in Gen. 1), that remains unchanged. *BUT, insofar as the PURPOSE for the person's salvation is concerned (foreshadowed by work seen on days two through six, with a view to rest on the seventh day in Gen. 1, 2), the person(s) who waters, or the person(s) among the reapers, has NOT carried matters through to its proper and complete end, doing away with fruit-bearing and rendering null and void the PURPOSE for the individual's salvation.*

Again, *there is NO such thing as fruit-bearing apart from the matter being carried through to completion. It is EITHER ALL OR NOTHING (cf. Matt. 12:30).*

Note how this is seen in the third part of the parable of the Sower, comparing Christ's explanation of the account in both Matt. 13:22 and Luke 8:14.

Note the account in Luke first:

"And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection."

Then note the parallel account in Matthew:

"He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful."

Luke's account indicates that fruit-bearing had occurred, though *NO fruit* was brought to "perfection" (*brought to the end of that foreshadowed by work on days two through six in Gen. 1*).

Then, in Matthew's account, because *NO fruit* was brought to "perfection," the person "becometh unfruitful."

Because of the PURPOSE for fruit-bearing (foreshadowed by events of the seventh day), again, it is EITHER ALL OR NOTHING. Fruit NOT brought to “perfection” — unripe fruit, at the end of that foreshadowed by six days of work — is seen as NO fruit at all.

It can be NO other way!

And this should be perfectly understandable, for fruit NOT brought to “perfection” is NOT bringing about the PURPOSE for fruit-bearing. And consequently, this can ONLY result in a failure to bring about the PURPOSE for a man’s salvation.

In short, this is a failure to understand and act upon that introducing both the Old Testament in Genesis and the New Testament in John. This is a failure to properly lay the SEPTENARY foundation set at the beginning of both Testaments, subsequently building apart from THIS foundation.

And THIS type Biblical interpretation is rampant in today’s Christianity.

EVERYTHING moves toward placing redeemed man in a REGAL position on the seventh day.

In THIS respect, things relating to the SEVENTH day, the 1,000-year reign of Christ over THIS present earth can ONLY be seen as SERIOUS matters, VERY SERIOUS.

THESE things were seen in the mind of the triune Godhead “from the beginning,” prior to the creation of the present heavens and earth. And THIS is the direction toward which ALL Scripture moves, NOT toward the new heavens, the new earth, and the eternal ages BUT toward the present heavens, the present earth, and the SEVENTH of a SEPTENARY sequence of 1,000-year periods.

*(Refer to the author’s book, *From the Beginning*.)*

Viewing the way that the WHOLE of Scripture deals with THIS seventh day, this seventh 1,000-year period, is it any wonder that ALL fruit borne in relation to THIS future time, the Lord’s Day, occupies the position of EITHER HAVING BEEN brought to “perfection” (to a realization of its PURPOSE) OR NOT existing at all?

5

Parable of the Wheat, Tares

Satan Sowing Tares, to STOP Fruit-Bearing

(This second of the seven parables in Matt. 13, like the first, has to do with *Christians and fruit-bearing*.

Matters having to do with the unsaved are *NOT* dealt with in *THIS* parable or *ANY* of the other six parables, many notwithstanding.

These parables have to do with “the Word of the Kingdom,” with the proffered “kingdom of the heavens” [vv. 11, 19-24, 31, 33, 38, 41, 43-45, 47, 52], NOT with salvation by grace.)

“Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of the heavens is likened [has become like] unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? From whence then hath it tares?

He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn” (Matt. 13:24-30).

The parable of the wheat and tares continues with the same subject matter introduced in the previous parable, the parable of the Sower.

The central focus in the parable of the Sower was fruit-bearing; and different things were presented which, on the one hand, prevented fruit-bearing (vv. 4-7, 19-22), or, on the other hand, resulted in fruit-bearing (vv. 8, 23).

And the central focus in the parable of the wheat and tares, as well, centers around fruit-bearing (v. 26). But this parable does not cover fruit-bearing from the same broad spectrum seen in the previous parable. Rather, continuing the thought from the previous parable, the parable of the wheat and tares limits itself to ONE realm. It limits itself to that part of the parable of the Sower which dealt with the ones sown into the good ground, who brought forth fruit (cf. vv. 8, 23, 24, 26).

Those failing to bring forth fruit in the first three parts of the previous parable are NOT dealt with among those viewed as "good seed" in this parable.

ALL of the "good seed" — "wheat," "sons of the kingdom" — in the parable of the wheat and tares are seen bringing forth fruit (cf. vv. 24, 26, 37, 38, 40-43). This is simply a continuation and elaboration of the fourth and last part of the previous parable.

Then something *NEW* is introduced. The parable of the wheat and tares centers around those bearing fruit from the previous parable in order to reveal something additional, something not revealed in the parable of the Sower.

Thus, the parable of the wheat and tares moves *a step beyond that revealed at the end of the previous parable*, the parable of the Sower.

This second parable continues with the same thought but then reveals *a concentrated attack against those individuals bearing fruit*. It reveals the *METHOD* which Satan uses as he goes about seeking to *STOP that which is occurring*.

Satan seeks to *PREVENT* fruit-bearing through a number of means (revealed in the first three parts of the parable of the Sower). And, throughout the dispensation he has been successful in his confrontation with the vast majority of Christians. He has succeeded in preventing most from bearing fruit.

BUT, the preceding has NOT been true of ALL Christians.

Some Christians have been victorious over Satan's methods and schemes. They have overcome the world, the flesh, and the Devil. And, as a result, they have brought forth and continue to bring forth fruit.

And it is these Christians, the ones bearing fruit, that Satan is seen directing his attack against in the parable of the wheat and tares, seeking to *STOP that which is occurring*.

The Kingdom of the Heavens Is Likened unto...

The parable of the wheat and tares and the subsequent five parables begin after a similar fashion: "The kingdom of the heavens is likened [or, 'is like'] unto..." (cf. vv. 24, 31, 33, 44, 45, 47).

This though is in the English translation (KJV). The Greek text, in its wording, reveals Christ sharply distinguishing between the way in which He began the parable of the wheat and tares and the way in which He began each of the remaining five parables.

1) Has Become Like, Is Like

The expression in question, in the English text, reads, "is likened" in the second parable and "is like" in the remaining five. Thus, the English text does not show a distinction between the way that any of the six parables are introduced.

The word translated “likened” or “like” in the Greek text is the same in each instance (*homoioo* [a verb] or *homoios* [a noun]).

Introducing the parable of the wheat and tares, *the verb form of this word is used (homoioo)*; and introducing the remaining five parables, *the noun form of this word is used (homoios), with a verb following*. And the structure of the noun and verb in each of these five remaining parables is identical.

Homoioo and *homoios* are used in the Greek New Testament to show a likeness between different things, or to compare one thing with another. For example, “This is like...” Our English word, “homo” (like), prefixed to numerous English words, comes from the Greek prefix forming these two words. Thus, the words “likened” or “like” in the English translation accurately convey the meaning of *homoioo* or *homoios*.

Christ used the verb form of this word to convey one thing in the parable of the wheat and tares; but, continuing with the subsequent parables, He used the noun form to convey something quite different.

In these remaining five parables, the English text does not properly convey the manner in which they are introduced. The problem lies, not in the meaning of the words (*homoioo* or *homoios*), but in the translator’s failure to show the distinction which Christ made when He used these words after entirely different fashions.

The verb, *homoioo*, is used introducing the parable of the wheat and tares after a manner which should be translated, “it has become like.” Accordingly, this parable should begin with the statement, “The kingdom of the heavens has become like...”

But this same translation — “has become like” — *should NOT be repeated* in the remaining five parables. Rather, using the noun *homoios*, with a verb following, the translation, “the kingdom of the heavens is like...” (introducing

each of the remaining parables) is probably as accurate as it can be rendered.

But this translation, introducing the last five parables, *MUST* be understood in the light of the way in which the whole matter is introduced in the parable of the wheat and tares. *It MUST be understood in the sense of "CONTINUES like."*

That is, moving from the parable of the Sower to the parable of the wheat and tares, the kingdom of the heavens "*BECAME like...*"; *THEN*, in the remaining five parables, the kingdom of the heavens "*CONTINUES like...*"

Thus, in this respect, the opening statement in each of these succeeding parables — "the kingdom of the heavens is like..." — must, contextually, be understood in the sense, "*the kingdom of the heavens CONTINUES like...*" There is a chronological continuity of thought after this fashion as one moves through these parables, something *which MUST be recognized* if the parables are to be properly understood.

2) *The Kingdom of the Heavens*

"The kingdom of the heavens" *is a realm*. And, in relation to this earth, the expression would refer simply to "the rule of the heavens over the earth."

Satan and his angels presently rule from a heavenly sphere over the earth. And this heavenly sphere is that realm in which Christ and His co-heirs will reside during the coming age when they rule from the heavens over the earth, following Satan and his angels being cast out (Rev. 12:4, 7-9; *ref. the author's book, The Most High Ruleth*).

Thus, the kingdom of the heavens *BECOMING* as described in the parable of the wheat and tares, or *CONTINUING* as described in the subsequent five parables, *CANNOT* be a reference to *the realm* of the kingdom per se. The realm itself doesn't change. *ONLY certain things* about the kingdom can change (*e.g.*, the message about the kingdom).

The complete parabolic section in Matthew chapter thirteen is introduced and concluded after a similar fashion. And seeing how this is done, the thought inherent in the use of the expression, “the kingdom of the heavens,” in the second through seventh parables can be easily ascertained.

In the parable of the Sower, setting the stage for the remaining parables, “the Word of the Kingdom” is in view (vv. 19-23). This is a message pertaining to Christian faithfulness during the present dispensation, resulting in fruitfulness, with a view to occupying positions as co-heirs with Christ in the kingdom of the heavens during the coming age.

And these positions *are* REGAL. “The Word of the Kingdom” *is a message about the realm presently occupied by Satan and his angels, which Christ and His co-heirs will one day occupy.*

Then, concluding all seven parables, Christ stated relative to these parables, “Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of the heavens is like unto...” (v. 52).

Again, “the Word of the Kingdom” is in view. The instruction to which Christ referred is instruction in *EXACTLY the same thing seen in the introductory parable, the parable of the Sower — i.e., instruction in “the Word of the Kingdom.”*

And *EXACTLY the same thing is in view through the use of the expression, “the kingdom of the heavens,”* introducing the succeeding six parables.

It's not *the realm* of the kingdom of the heavens which *has become like and continues like* that described in these parables. Such would be impossible. Rather, *it's the proclamation, offer, and reception or rejection* of the kingdom of the heavens (referred to both before and after these six parables) *which has become like and continues like that described in the parables.*

(The same thing can be seen in the offer of the kingdom to Israel by John, Jesus, the Twelve, and the Seventy. The kingdom of the heavens was “at hand [‘had drawn near’]” [Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 10:7].

The realm itself hadn't drawn near. *The realm remained unchanged. BUT the prospect of Israel moving into and occupying that realm, based on national repentance, had drawn near* [cf. Matt. 6:33; 11:12; 21:43].)

"Sons of the Kingdom," "Sons of the Wicked One"

Only two types of individuals are seen in the parable of the wheat and tares. They are referred to by the expressions "wheat [or, 'good seed']" and "tares" (vv. 24, 25).

The wheat, the good seed, are identified as "the children ['sons,' Gk., *huioi*] of the kingdom," and *the tares* are identified as "the children ['sons,' Gk., *huioi*] of the wicked one" (v. 38).

The One sowing the good seed is identified as "*the Son of man*," a Messianic title (v. 37; cf. Ps. 8:4; Dan. 7:13, 14).

And *the one sowing the tares* is identified as "the enemy," "the devil," *the incumbent ruler in the kingdom* (v. 39).

EVERYTHING about this parable has to do with a particular work of God (relative to the kingdom) and with a particular countering work of Satan (also relative to the kingdom).

God has placed individuals out in the world, *with a view to their bringing forth fruit*; and this fruit would, in turn, be in relation to the proffered kingdom.

And Satan has placed contrary minded individuals (v. 41) in the midst of those who are bearing fruit, *seeking to COUNTER and STOP that which is occurring*.

ONLY through THIS means could Satan envision ANY hope at all of retaining his present ruling position.

(The word "tares" is a translation of the Greek word *zizanian*, which refers to a troublesome sprout appearing in grainfields, resembling wheat, though it is NOT wheat.)

NOW, put ALL of this together for the COMPLETE picture of something which has been occurring throughout the dispensation, which has gone almost completely unrecognized.

This parable has to do, *NOT with HOW Satan seeks to PREVENT fruit-bearing* (that was seen in the first three parts of the previous parable, the parable of the Sower), *BUT with HOW Satan seeks to STOP fruit-bearing* — something *NOT seen* in the previous parable, or really *NOT seen* in this same fashion in any of the subsequent parables.

This parable reveals Satan's attack against a SELECT group of Christians, against FRUIT-BEARING Christians.

And it is among THESE Christians that Satan goes about seeking to thwart God's plans and purposes through sowing that which RESEMBLES wheat, though it is NOT wheat.

Satan knows that *fruit-bearing* is that which God requires of those who are to ascend the throne with His Son in that coming day (cf. Matt. 21:18, 19, 43; Heb. 6:7-9). And he will, first of all, *do everything within his power to PREVENT Christians from bearing fruit* (seen in the first three parts of the parable of the Sower).

BUT, when Christians begin bearing fruit (seen in the fourth part of the parable of the Sower), *THEN he will do everything within his power to STOP them from bearing fruit*. And it is among the latter group of Christians — those bearing fruit — that Satan is seen sowing counterfeits (*in relation to fruit-bearing, individuals producing counterfeit fruit, false teachers producing other false teachers* [Matt. 7:15-20]).

1) The Wheat — “Sons [Gk., *Huioi*] of the Kingdom”

The “goodseed,” *individuals, sown by the Lord out in the world* are specifically referred to by the expression, “the children [‘sons’] of the kingdom.” And, beyond that, the title used to identify the Sower is “the Son of man,” *a Messianic title*.

The significance of their identification as “sons” lies in the fact that Christians are presently “sons of God” *awaiting the adoption* in one respect, but “children of God” *with a view to sonship* in another respect.

Note how Paul dealt with this matter in Rom. 8:14-23:

“For as many as are led [*lit.*, ‘are being led’] by the Spirit of God, they are the sons [Gk., *huioi*] of God.

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

The Spirit itself [‘Himself’] beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children [Gk., *tekna*] of God.

And if children [Gk., *tekna*], then heirs: heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together...

...even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption [meaning ‘son-placing’], to wit, the redemption of our body [‘waiting for the adoption, (*WHICH IS*) the redemption of our body]” (vv. 14-17, 23b).

In this chapter in Romans, as also in Galatians chapters three and four and in Hebrews chapter twelve, reference is made to Christians being “sons” *in a present sense, preceding the adoption* (Rom. 8:14, 15; Gal. 3:26; 4:5-7; Heb. 12:5-8, 16, 17, 23). And these instances would correspond to the way that the matter is handled in Matthew chapter thirteen.

“Sonship” implies *rulership*. *ONLY sons* can rule in God’s kingdom. But, as will be shown, *ONLY firstborn sons* can rule within the human realm in God’s kingdom.

All “angels” — fallen or unfallen — are *sons of God* because of their special, individual creation. And angels occupy various positions of delegated power and authority in God’s kingdom (*cf.* Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7).

“Adam” was *a son of God* because of a special creative act of God (Luke 3:38).

BUT, Adam’s descendants were not sons of God. Rather, they were sons of the one from whom they descended. They were sons of Adam (Gen. 5:3ff).

Thus, Adam, before the fall, being *a son of God*, was in a position to rule the earth. *BUT* the fall resulted in his disqualification. Though he was still a son of God, he, following the fall, was *NO longer* in a position to take the sceptre.

And Adam's descendants were *NOT in a position* to take the sceptre, for *TWO reasons*. *NOT ONLY* were they fallen creatures (a position inherited from Adam), *BUT* they were *NOT* sons of God. Rather, they were sons of Adam, sons of a fallen creature.

a) *Israel, Sonship, Rulership*

Two thousand years later God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees for purposes which had been lost in Adam. Through Abraham's lineage, God set about to bring forth *a separate creation (a son of God)*, one which He could adopt as *His firstborn son*. And, with provided redemption, *THIS would allow a segment of mankind, for the FIRST time since Adam's fall, to be in a position to rule the earth*.

This special creation was performed in the person of Abraham's grandson, Jacob (Isa. 43:1); and this special creation was of a nature which allowed it to be passed on through the genes, through Jacob's twelve sons.

And this ultimately resulted in a nation recognized as separate and distinct from all the other nations (sonship, non-sonship; thus, the distinction between Jew and Gentile [Num. 23:8-11]).

THEN, once God had a separate nation of this nature — which would be viewed as *a SON* because of the special creation in Jacob — *He ADOPTED this nation into a firstborn status* (Ex. 4:22, 23), *REDEEMED those comprising this nation* (Ex. 12:1ff), and *CALLED this nation out of Egypt under Moses to rule at the head of the nations in a land previously covenanted to their forefathers* (cf. Gen. 12:1-3; 15:18-21; 26:1-4; 28:3, 4, 12-14; Ex. 2:23-25; 3:7-12; 15:17, 18; 19:5, 6).

That is, a redeemed people, recognized as *God's firstborn son*, was being called forth to rule in a part of the complete kingdom which Adam had previously been created to rule.

(As previously seen [ref. Chs. I-III in this book], Adam, at the time of his creation, was given a mandate. He was told *to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth*, resulting in an earth filled with individuals of like-mind and purpose. *THEN*, these individuals *were to subdue and rule the earth* [Gen. 1:28 (ref. the typology of Saul and David, Satan and Christ)].

Israel, at the time of the nation's inception, had fulfilled the first three parts of this mandate while in Egypt, a type of the world [*they had been fruitful, multiplied, and filled the land with individuals of like-mind and purpose*]. And this newly-formed nation, following their national Passover, was *THEN* called out of Egypt to subdue and rule a part of the earth, the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Ultimately subduing and ruling *the ENTIRE earth, from BOTH heavenly and earthly spheres*, was in the offing [for Israel, through Abraham, had previously been made the repository for *BOTH* (Gen. 14:18-20; 22:17, 18; 26:3, 4; 28:11-15)].

BUT, Israel went in a contrary direction, ultimately relinquishing the earthly sphere of the kingdom because of disobedience; then, beyond that, Israel refused the heavenly sphere of the kingdom when it was offered [again, ref. Chs. I-III in this book].)

But coming on down into modern times, Israel, though still retaining the nation's position *as God's firstborn son*, is presently scattered among the nations, *in unbelief*. And the remnant presently in the land *is there NOT ONLY in unbelief BUT in disobedience*.

A remnant of Jews (above 6,000,000) has sought to circumnavigate God's plans and purposes for scattering the Jewish people among the nations, returning to an "empty, swept, and garnished house," *BEFORE the time*.

This remnant, returning in this manner, has sought to emancipate themselves from exile, apart from their Messiah, and establish a Jewish nation with its own government in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (though many of them are atheists, disclaiming belief in the God who made this covenant with their fathers).

Thus, Israel, in this state (whether in or out of the land), though still God's firstborn son, *is in NO position to rule.*

The nation MUST FIRST exercise belief (following national repentance). The nation, as seen in Ex. 12, *MUST FIRST be redeemed. They MUST FIRST, through belief, apply the blood of the Paschal Lamb Whom they slew 2,000 years ago.*

And, once this has been done and the nation has been restored to their land — having previously multiplied and filled the earth through being fruitful — *they can THEN subdue and rule the earth (though from the earth ALONE, NOT from the heavens [the latter has been forfeited; Matt. 21:18-43]).*

b) The Church, Sonship, Rulership

And the Church — *a SEPARATE creation* from either Jew or Gentile, *the PRESENT repository* of heavenly promises and blessings — *is LIKEWISE in NO position to rule.*

Though those comprising the Church *are new creations* (“in Christ” [II Cor. 5:17]), *can be viewed as sons, and are saved (unlike those comprising the nation of Israel today), they have NOT been adopted (as the nation of Israel was adopted in past time).*

Prior to ascending the throne with Christ, *Christians MUST FIRST be adopted.* And this is what Rom. 8, Gal. 3, 4, and Heb. 12 are about.

Christians are presently *Sons*, (because of their standing as *new creations*), awaiting the adoption (their present status); and consequently, although Christians are presently “sons,” *they are in NO position to rule. ONLY adopted sons* (the Christians' future standing) can rule.

Thus, *sonship*, portending *rulership*, is seen in Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews in relation to *BOTH adoption and inheritance (BOTH future)*.

The matter can be illustrated quite easily from Romans.

Romans 8:1-13 deals with Christians either living after the flesh or putting to death the deeds of the flesh.

Then verse fourteen, presenting Christians in a *present respect* as “sons,” deals with individuals being led by the Spirit of God (contextually, individuals under the leadership of the Spirit putting to death the previously mentioned deeds of the flesh), and these individuals are said to be “the sons [Gk., *huioi*] of God,” with adoption mentioned in connection with sonship in the next verse (v. 15; cf. v. 23).

BUT, then the following verse (v. 16) *specifically states that Christians are also presently “children [Gk. tekna] of God.”*

However, though Christians are presently seen as both “sons” and “children,” *NO Christian is presently seen as a firstborn son. THAT standing awaits a future time, a time following the adoption.*

Contextually, Rom. 8:14-16 should be understood in the light of Heb. 12:5-8, where Christians are seen undergoing *child-training as sons (seen as children of God who are being child-trained as sons of God), with a view to adoption into a firstborn status* (vv. 16, 17, 23).

Thus, Rom. 8:14-16 would have to be understood in the sense of Christians presently being led by the Spirit of God (undergoing *child-training as sons*), who will be manifested as *firstborn sons in that coming day, following the adoption, occupying positions as joint-heirs with Christ in His kingdom* (vv. 17, 19).

THAT is the subject of the whole passage.

And *EXACTLY* the same thing can be seen through the use of the expression, “sons [Gk., *huioi*] of the kingdom,” in Matt. 13:38, for *THAT* is the subject of the whole passage there as well.

(For additional information on the preceding, refer to the author's book, *God's Firstborn Sons*, Chapter III, pp. 25-33.)

"The sons of the kingdom" in Matt. 13:38 are *the good seed*, the ones bringing forth fruit. They, as the ones in Rom. 8:14 (actually, the "sons" both places are the same), are the ones who will be manifested as "the sons of God," in the kingdom, in that coming day (Rom. 8:19).

Though *ALL* Christians can presently be viewed as *sons* because of creation, *NOT ALL Christians are being referred to in Matt. 13:38 by the expression, "sons of the kingdom."*

NOR are ALL Christians being referred to in Rom. 8:14 by the expression "sons of God." The SPECIFIC reference in Matthew is to those Christians bringing forth fruit, and the SPECIFIC reference in Romans is to those Christians following the leadership of the Spirit.

And, again, the two are different facets of the SAME thing.

Fruit-bearing CANNOT be realized apart from following the leadership of the Spirit; and following the leadership of the Spirit WILL invariably result in fruit-bearing.

It is the Son of Man who sows Christians out in the world, with a view to fruit-bearing, which is with a view to the kingdom.

EVERYTHING points ahead to the kingdom:

The Son of Man (the Sower, described through the use of a Messianic title).

The sons of the kingdom (those sown, described through the use of an expression portending rulership).

And fruit-bearing (a bringing forth, *LIKE* producing *LIKE*, with a view to the kingdom).

2) The Tares — "Sons [Gk., Huioi] of the Wicked One"

The "tares" though present the other side of the picture. As previously shown, the tares present Satan's efforts to *STOP*

fruit-bearing, to put a STOP to that presently occurring, in the various places where it is occurring.

And, as also previously shown, Satan is seen carrying out his activities on two fronts:

1) *He is seen seeking to PREVENT Christians from bringing forth fruit* (described in the first three parts of the parable of the Sower).

2) *He is then seen seeking to STOP Christians from bringing forth fruit* (described in the parable of the tares, forming a commentary on the fourth part of the parable of the Sower).

IF Satan can *PREVENT* Christians from bringing forth fruit, the matter will be settled at that point, and a continued work will be unnecessary.

BUT, IF he can't prevent Christians from bringing forth fruit, *THEN* he has to *STOP* them.

It is *HERE* that he is revealed sowing tares. He sows them right in the midst of Christians who are bearing fruit.

And this is done with *ONE goal in mind*. It is done in an effort to *STOP*, through *ANY means possible*, the continuance of fruit-bearing by these Christians.

a) Identity of the Tares

EXACTLY WHO are those whom Satan sows among fruit-bearing Christians in an effort to stop them from bearing fruit?

The answer is easy to ascertain.

These parables were given by Christ at His first coming, at a time when the kingdom of the heavens was being offered to the nation of Israel; but these parables had to do with events beyond that time, occurring during a time when the kingdom of the heavens would be offered to a separate and distinct entity, *the one new man* "in Christ."

And, whether during that time when the kingdom was offered to Israel, or during that time when the kingdom would be offered to *the one new man "in Christ," any realization of the offer was contingent on ONE thing — FRUIT-BEARING* (cf. Matt. 13:3-33; 21:18-43).

Israel failed to bring forth fruit (Matt. 21:18-43). And note who was responsible for the nation's failure in this realm. It was *the religious leaders of that day*, mainly the Scribes and Pharisees, seated "in Moses' seat," who controlled the religious life of the nation (Matt. 23:2).

THEY were the ones who followed Christ about the country seeking, at every turn, to speak out against the Messenger and His message.

THEY were the ones *directly responsible* for the nation's rejection of the King and kingdom.

THEY had "shut up the kingdom of the heavens against men ['in the presence of men']" (Matt. 23:13).

And, *BECAUSE of THIS*, they experienced a rebuke and condemnation at Christ's hands unlike that experienced by any other religious group in Israel (vv. 14ff).

Bringing this over into Christendom, *WHO* would Satan use during the present dispensation to either prevent or stop fruit-bearing relative to the kingdom?

In the light of the past offer to Israel, there is ONLY one possible answer. It would have to be the SAME as that seen in Israel when the SAME offer was open to the nation almost 2,000 years ago.

It was Jewish religious leaders THEN, and the counterpart would HAVE to be Christian religious leaders NOW.

Those outside the nation — the unregenerate world — *had NOTHING* to do with the matter then; *NOR* can those outside the Church — the unregenerate world — have anything to do with the matter now. *It was THOSE WITHIN which Satan used in Israel in the past, and it is THOSE WITHIN which he uses in the Church today* (cf. Matt. 15:1ff; 16:1ff; Acts 20:29, 30).

But how could Christians be identified by the expression, “sons of the wicked one” (Matt. 13:38)?

Note several references in Scripture relative to Israelites acting in similar capacities and the answer will become evident.

In John chapter eight, *Jews*, who were acknowledged by Christ to be “Abraham’s seed” (vv. 33, 37), were also, *because of their works*, said to be of their “father the devil” (vv. 39-44).

In Matthew chapter sixteen, Peter, because he stated relative to Christ’s sufferings, death, and resurrection on the third day, “Lord: this shall not be unto thee,” *was associated directly with Satan*. Jesus said to Peter — *NOT to Satan, BUT to Peter* — “Get thee behind me, Satan” (vv. 21-23; cf. John 6:70).

Then in Matt. 23:15, the Scribes and Pharisees — those having “shut up the kingdom of the heavens” (v. 13) — were said to have made their proselytes “twofold more the child of hell [*lit., ‘twofold more a son of Gehenna’*]” than themselves.

Their *sonship*, because of that which they had done, was associated with *Gehenna* (the place of refuse) rather than with the kingdom.

With all these things in mind — seeing a counterpart in Israel to that existing in Christendom — viewing the expression, “sons of the wicked one” in Matt. 13:38 *as a reference to the saved, NOT the unsaved*, would, contextually, *be the ONLY natural way in which the matter could be viewed*.

And, that this is the correct way to view this part of the parable can be shown through other means as well.

Seeing the tares, the sons of the wicked one, as those within the Church, not without, is in complete accord with *ALL facets of the matter*.

It is in COMPLETE accord with the history of the offer to Israel, it is in COMPLETE accord with (and the ONLY thing which

can possibly adequately explain) that which can easily be seen occurring throughout Christendom today, and it is in COMPLETE accord with that which can be seen when one moves on into the third and fourth parables in Matthew chapter thirteen.

Then there is *ONE other thing* which will preclude viewing the matter after any other fashion. *THAT* which the text reveals about *God's future dealings with the wheat and the tares* should resolve all doubts which anyone might have concerning their identity.

b) Judgment of the Wheat and the Tares

Both the wheat and the tares are seen being dealt with *at the SAME time and place*. And the Lord's dealings with both after the fashion seen in the parable *is with a view to entrance into or exclusion from the kingdom*.

ALL those represented by the wheat are gathered into the barn. *BUT*, the matter is quite different for those represented by the tares. They are seen being gathered and burned (vv. 30, 40-43 [note that *metaphors* are used throughout]).

BUT, again, note something, and note it well.

Salvation by grace is NOT being dealt with in this parable. Rather, the subject is FRUIT-BEARING, with a view to the KINGDOM (a message for the saved ALONE).

As well, aside from the preceding, Scripture *NEVER* presents the Lord dealing with the saved and unsaved *at the same time and place after the fashion seen here*. The saved and unsaved *being dealt with together in this fashion* would have the Lord dealing with both in relation to *FRUIT-BEARING, with a view to the KINGDOM — an impossibility*.

NOR are the unsaved even dealt with prior to the Millennium. Their judgment and the outcome of this judgment *has NOTHING to do with the Millennium*.

Accordingly, ALL of God's judgmental dealings with ALL of the unsaved FOLLOWS the Millennium.

EVERYTHING stated about the Lord's dealings with those represented by the wheat and the tares *is in COMPLETE accord with Scripture elsewhere relating to that which will emanate out of issues and determinations at the judgment seat* (cf. Matt. 24:45-51; 25:19ff; John 15:1-6; I Cor. 3:12-15; Heb. 6:7-9).

And the *PRECEDING*, along with particularly the *TIMING* of unsaved man's judgment, would be *COMPLETELY out of line* with *ANY thought* that the tares represent unregenerate individuals.

c) *Leave Them Alone*

Then there *is ONE other thing* which needs to be considered about those whom Satan has sown in the midst of fruitful Christians, seeking to stop them from bearing fruit. And the importance of following Christ's instructions in this respect *CANNOT be overemphasized*.

WHAT is to be the fruitful Christian's attitude toward those whom Satan has placed in their midst, *to STOP them from bearing fruit?*

WHAT is the fruitful Christian to do about antagonism exhibited by other Christians toward their fruitfulness and the reason why fruit is being borne?

The question is asked and answered in verses twenty-eight through thirty of the parable.

"Wilt thou then that we go out and gather them [the tares] up?

But he [Christ] said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers [angels (v. 41)], Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."

Those standing in the way of one's interest in having a part with Christ in His kingdom are to be dealt with *after ONLY one fashion*.

They are to be left ALONE!

"Leave them ALONE!" (Matt. 15:14). Simply IGNORE them, CONTINUE doing that which the Lord has called you to do, and let the Lord take care of the matter in His Own way and time.

6

Parable of the Mustard Seed

Conditions Eventually Produced by the Tares

“Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of the heavens is like [continues like] to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:

Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof” (Matt. 13:31, 32).

The parable of the mustard seed continues with *the SAME central thoughts* set forth in the previous parable, the parable of the wheat and tares. *Fruit-bearing*, though not directly mentioned in this third parable, *contextually (subject of the previous two parables, leading into this one, continuing like...)*, *can ONLY remain at the forefront (v. 31), with Satan continuing to STOP Christians from bearing fruit.*

And the METHOD which Satan uses as he seeks to stop Christians from bearing fruit, revealed in the previous parable, is through sowing tares among the wheat.

THEN, the parable of the mustard seed reveals that which would result from this activity of Satan. And, in this respect, the parable of the mustard seed is simply a commentary on the previous parable, providing additional explanatory help.

In the true sense of the definition of a parable and why the Lord used parables — *to provide additional information pertaining to previously revealed truths* — the parable of the mustard seed was given to help explain the parable which had previously been given, the parable of the wheat and tares.

And *the SAME thing* could be said concerning why the Lord gave the parable of the wheat and tares. It was given to help explain a part of the parable given prior to this one, the parable of the Sower.

Then, looking ahead to the parable following the parable of the mustard seed — the parable of the leaven — *the SAME thing* can be seen. This parable was given to provide additional explanatory help for the preceding parable(s).

That's the evident, Divinely designed interrelationship which exists between the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen.

The parable of the Sower, the first parable spoken outside the house, by the seaside, *introduces the matter*; and the succeeding three parables spoken outside the house, by the seaside, *simply build, after a successive fashion*, on that introduced in the first parable.

Thus, Satan's success in stopping fruit-bearing would be contingent on his success in preventing the continuance of a natural growth of the mustard seed. One would go hand-in-hand with the other.

The mustard seed in the parable represents, not individuals per se, *but an entity made up of individuals — the good seed, the sons of the kingdom* from the previous parable. And a *natural or unnatural growth* of the mustard seed would represent *an ultimate natural or unnatural development* of those comprising the good seed.

Should Satan be *unsuccessful* in his efforts to prevent a *natural development* of those comprising the mustard seed, *growth* would eventually result in that which God had intended; and *fruit-bearing* would go hand-in-hand with their growth and development.

BUT, should Satan be *successful* in his efforts to prevent the continuance of a natural development of those com-

prising the mustard seed, *growth* would eventually result in something other than that which God had intended; and barrenness would ensue.

And the latter is *EXACTLY* what is seen in this parable. The mustard seed, following a period of normal growth (which, if not interfered with, would result in “the greatest among herbs”), is seen experiencing an abnormal growth and becoming “a tree.”

And *NOT ONLY* did this abnormal growth ensue, *BUT* the mustard seed is seen developing so abnormally that it *NOT ONLY* grew into a tree, *BUT* the nature of this tree allowed “the birds of the air,” individuals doing the work of Satan, to find a lodging place in its branches (v. 32; cf. vv. 4, 19).

Thus, the third parable, continuing the thought from the second parable, *presents the tares being quite effective*. They are seen deceiving fruit-bearing Christians to the degree that they bring about an unnatural spiritual growth among these Christians, which could *ONLY* result in unfruitfulness, barrenness.

And the matter is carried to the point that, *in the end*, the tares are able to simply settle down in that which they had produced, finding ready acceptance among those whom they had deceived.

False Teachers

This work of Satan — producing an unnatural growth, resulting in barrenness — *could ONLY* have been accomplished through *ONE* means.

It could ONLY have been accomplished through the promulgation of false doctrine. *It could ONLY* have been accomplished through Satan placing false teachers in the midst of fruit-bearing Christians, leading them *AWAY* from the truth of the Scriptures, leading them *AWAY* from an adherence to the faith.

And this is *EXACTLY* the way Scripture elsewhere reveals that the matter occurred.

There are multiplied warnings numerous places in Scripture concerning false teachers who would arise and teach “perverse things,” particularly relative to “*the faith*,” “*the Word of the Kingdom*.”

And these false teachers would arise, *NOT from the world, BUT from within Christendom itself*. These false teachers would arise *from the ranks of Christians, from within the Churches* (Acts 20:29-32; cf. I Tim. 4:1-3; II Tim. 2:8, 18; 3:7, 8; 4:1-4; II Peter 2:1ff; Jude 3ff).

As it was surrounding Christ’s first coming and the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel, so would it be surrounding Christ’s second coming and the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Christians.

Jewish religious leaders were responsible for that which happened in the past dispensation surrounding the proffered kingdom at Christ’s first coming, and *Christian religious leaders are responsible* for that which is happening during the present dispensation surrounding the proffered kingdom and Christ’s second coming.

The religious leaders in Israel followed Christ about the country and sought, at every turn, to speak against that which was being seen and heard. Christ’s ministry centered around *supernatural signs, which pointed to that which Israel could have — supernatural healing, supernatural provision — IF the nation would repent*.

BUT, the religious leaders would have *NO part in the matter; and they MISLED the people, resulting in the nation’s rejection of the proffered kingdom and the subsequent crucifixion of the nation’s King*.

And the situation relative to the proclamation of “the Word of the Kingdom” throughout the present dispensation has been *NO different*. *Christians down through the years have been MISLED, NOT by those in the world, BUT by their own religious leaders. Scripture is very clear on this matter*.

1) At the Beginning of the Dispensation

The message of the hour at the beginning of the dispensation — one proclaimed throughout Christendom — centered around “the faith,” “the saving of the soul,” “the Word of the Kingdom.”

This was the message which Paul referred to as “my gospel” (Rom. 16:25), “our gospel” (II Cor. 4:3), and “the glorious gospel of Christ [lit., ‘the gospel of the glory of Christ’]” (II Cor. 4:4); this was the message which Paul had been called to proclaim to Christians throughout the Gentile world (Acts 9:15; Gal. 1:11, 12, 16; 2:7); and this was the message which Paul and others, during the first few decades of the existence of the Church, “preached to every creature which is under heaven” (Col. 1:5, 6, 23).

(The reference to “every creature which is under heaven” in Col. 1:23 would, contextually, refer to *the saved ALONE, NOT to the unsaved. THIS* would be a reference to *ALL of the saved* having heard the message which saved individuals are to hear following their salvation — “the Word of the Kingdom.”

The unsaved *CANNOT* be in view in this passage, for the *ONLY* message which they are to hear is the good news that Christ has died for their sins. *ONLY* after they have heard this message and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ are they in a position to hear the message referenced in this verse in Colossians, which has to do with the *PURPOSE* for their salvation, the *REASON* why they have been saved.

Ref. Appendix I in this book, “The Gospel That Paul Proclaimed.”)

Thus, during the first century of the Church’s existence, the message surrounding the proffered kingdom was something universally proclaimed throughout Christendom. *And this message could ONLY have been well-known and understood by Christians everywhere*, resulting in at least a segment of Christendom continuing to develop in a natural fashion, with these Christians, correspondingly, bearing fruit.

It was within a setting of this nature that Satan sowed tares among the wheat, seeking to *STOP* the natural growth and development of the seed which had been sown; and success in stopping this natural growth and development would, in turn, over time, ultimately result *in a barren condition of the plant*.

Now, note the problem which Satan faced at the beginning of the dispensation.

He faced the problem of countering a message which was being proclaimed and received throughout Christendom. Christians who had received the true message were *developing after a proper fashion* (growing from immaturity to maturity), with *a corresponding fruitfulness*.

And to counter the true message, Satan simply placed individuals proclaiming a false message in the midst of those Christians who had received the true message.

THEN, over time, the false message progressively took root and did its damaging work, accomplishing its purpose.

This false message, once received, resulted in an improper development in Christendom (an improper growth from immaturity to maturity). And, *developing after an improper fashion, a corresponding barrenness ensued*.

And Satan's work in this manner is how Scripture reveals that he stops fruit-bearing. *He places individuals with a false message relative to the kingdom among those bearing fruit for the kingdom*.

The false message takes root, growth becomes progressively unnatural, and fruit-bearing is stymied.

THEN, the false message continues to take hold UNTIL the point is reached where growth becomes so unnatural that fruit-bearing can NO longer exist.

a) The Messengers

Both Peter in his second epistle and Jude begin their

epistles by exhorting Christians to strain every muscle of their being in the present race of the faith (II Peter 1:2-11; Jude 3); and that which necessitates this exhortation, in both epistles, *is the presence of false teachers in their midst* (II Peter 2:1ff; Jude 4ff).

These are *the SAME false teachers* to which Christ had referred in the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen, *who would produce an unnatural growth among fruit-bearing Christians*.

And these are *the SAME false teachers* to which Paul subsequently referred, *who would arise among Christians, take truths concerning "the Word of the Kingdom," and distort and twist these truths* (Acts 20:30, 31).

These are *the apostates*, dealt with extensively in Scripture — a type individual identified by the meaning of the word itself.

Our English word, "apostasy," is simply *an Anglicized form of the Greek word apostasia*. This is a compound word comprised of *apo* ('from') and *stasis* ('to stand'). The word means "to stand away from"; and the word refers to *a person standing away from a place which he had previously occupied*.

The apostasy in view has to do with "the faith" (cf. II Tim. 2:18; 3:8; Jude 3). Thus, *true apostates relative to "the faith" can ONLY be individuals who, at one time, HAD received the message concerning "the faith"; BUT then, at a later time, they HAD departed from an adherence to this message*.

These are individuals who had initially *heard, understood, and received the truth; BUT, THEN they had apostatized*.

They had "stood away from" the truth. They had turned from the truth, had begun to speak out against the truth, and, in the process, had taught that which was untrue.

These are the type individuals referred to in Paul's warnings in both Acts and his epistles, as well as Peter's and Jude's warnings in their epistles. These are the type individuals — those quite familiar with the matter which they were

speaking against — whom Satan knew that he could use *the most effectively*, whom Satan knew that he could use *to do the most damage*.

Thus, Satan simply began to place individuals of this nature in the midst of those Christians bringing forth fruit. And they began to “draw away disciples” *after themselves* (Acts 20:30). They began to reproduce *after their kind* (cf. Gen. 1:11), resulting in fruit also *after their kind*, an “evil fruit” (Matt. 7:15-20; cf. vv. 13, 14, 21-23).

Aside from Paul’s identification of these individuals in Acts 20:30 — “of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things...” — note Peter’s identification of them in II Peter 2:18-20:

“For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.

While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.”

Note particularly the word “knowledge” in verse twenty. These individuals had escaped the “pollutions of the world” through the “knowledge [Gk., *epignosis*, ‘mature knowledge’] of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

They had come *into a mature knowledge* of the things in view — things surrounding “the Word of the Kingdom.” And having come into a mature knowledge of these things, *they TURNED AWAY from these things and BEGAN to teach perverse, contrary things*.

That these were saved individuals is evident, *for an unsaved person CANNOT even come into a rudimentary knowledge of these things* (I Cor. 2:14 [*gnosis*, the regular Greek word for “knowledge,” appears in this passage]), much less the mature knowledge seen in II Peter 2:20.

Thus, the text *can ONLY have to do with saved individuals turning from the central message of that day, distorting and twisting the truth as they taught false doctrine relative to “the Word of the Kingdom.”*

Satan used this type individual — after this manner, during the opening decades of the Church’s existence — to do his bidding, to stop Christians from bearing fruit. And though the ones whom Satan used were also Christians, they were doing the works of Satan; and doing works of this nature, they were identified with Satan, referred to as “tares,” “sons of the wicked one” (*ref.* Chapter V in this book).

b) Their Message

The teaching of the apostates is spoken of as “damnable heresies [*lit.*, ‘destructive heresies’ or, ‘heresies that lead to destruction’]” (II Peter 2:1). And the destruction in view has *NOTHING* to do with salvation by grace through faith.

The destruction has to do *SOLELY* with “*the Word of the Kingdom,*” *the subject matter at hand*. The apostates taught heresy of a nature which led Christians *to a destructive end relative to the proffered kingdom, NOT relative to salvation by grace*.

(Numerous statements are given concerning the teaching and action of the apostates [*cf.* II Peter 2:1-3, 10ff; Jude 4, 8ff]. But one thing in Peter’s second epistle stands out above everything else. There is a septenary structure to Peter’s second epistle, with a particular reference to and emphasis upon Christ’s return within this structure [1:16-18; 3:4-8].)

The apostates are seen “walking after their own lusts [‘their own desires’ — desires which would be *soulical*, *NOT spiritual*, *NOT that which the Lord would desire*]” (3:3; cf. 2:18). And, within this type walk, they are seen proclaiming a message *which would strike at the heart of all sound Biblical teaching surrounding Christ’s return and the Messianic Kingdom*:

“Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were *from the beginning of the creation*” (3:4).

Then the verses which follow (vv. 5-9) — answering the apostates false message through referring to events beginning with the opening verses of Genesis — make matters very clear that *the heart of the apostates’ message had to do with denying Christ’s return at the end of six thousand years, with attendant destruction on the one hand and attendant blessings on the other*. They had willingly allowed the things surrounding this entire panorama of teaching to escape their attention, and they are seen infiltrating the ranks of fruit-bearing Christians everywhere, seeking to promulgate their false doctrine.

The misleading, destructive doctrine proclaimed by the apostates *is seen taking numerous forms*. But *the foundation upon which all their false teaching rested is seen taking ONLY one form*.

All their false teaching is seen resting on *a totally perverted form of the foundation set forth at the beginning in Gen. 1:1-2:3* — the God-established foundation upon which all subsequent Scripture rests.

And in all the various forms that their false teaching took, they sought to do away with two things:

1) *The septenary structure of Scripture as set forth in the beginning, in Gen. 1:1-2:3.*

2) Teachings surrounding Christ's return within the framework of this septenary structure (at the end of six days, at the end of 6,000 years).

Then, building on a totally perverted foundation of this nature, the apostates sought to spread all types of destructive heresies relative to the various facets of "the Word of the Kingdom" among fruit-bearing Christians. And, over time, as seen in the parable of the mustard seed, they were quite successful.

The mustard seed germinated and grew, normally for a time, but then in an abnormal manner; and, over time, it became something which it was not supposed to become at all.

It BECAME a tree. And NOT ONLY did it become a tree, BUT the false teachers eventually took up residence in the branches of the tree, continuing their destructive work FROM within.

Proper growth can come ONLY from that which has NOT been corrupted (I Peter 2:1, 2). And the converse of that is equally true. ONLY improper growth can result when corruption has occurred.

Thus, to bring about improper growth, the false teachers simply proclaimed a corrupted form of the ONLY thing which God had provided for the nourishment and well-being of the spiritual man. And through so doing, they went back to and began with *the very heart of the matter — the foundation itself, in the opening two chapters of Genesis.*

It was *the work of the apostates* which brought about the conditions seen in the parable of the mustard seed. A *corrupted and improper diet of spiritual food resulted in a corrupted and improper growth.*

And a growth of this nature, over time, ultimately resulted in *barrenness. THEN the false teachers simply took up residence within that which they had produced, ASSURING that conditions would remain in a corrupted and barren state.*

2) *At the End of the Dispensation*

Near the end of the dispensation (today), relative to “the Word of the Kingdom,” conditions throughout Christendom are seen to have become completely turned around from the way that they existed at the beginning of the dispensation. After almost two millennia, “the Word of the Kingdom” — taught and understood throughout the Churches at the beginning of the dispensation — *is seldom even heard in Christian circles*. And, with the message not being proclaimed, *Christians throughout the Churches of the land, correspondingly, have little to no understanding of truths surrounding the coming kingdom*.

Thus, during the present day and time, Satan has *little need* for apostates to infiltrate and settle down within the ranks of Christians. *Christendom is too far gone for any type overall change or recovery to occur*.

And, beyond that, though little infiltration of apostates need exist on Satan’s part today, he would undoubtedly be hard-pressed to even find very many Christians that he could turn into true apostates during the present time.

For a person to be a true apostate, he would, first of all, have to come into an understanding of “the Word of the Kingdom” before he could apostatize. And those having a *conversant knowledge* of this message today — the only ones in a position to apostatize — are far and few between.

That which exists in Christendom today *is the aftermath, the end result*, of Satan sowing tares among the wheat, of Satan bringing about an abnormal growth of the mustard seed. In general, in relation to “the Word of the Kingdom,” because of that which has occurred in the past, *a corrupted Christendom presently exists, a VERY corrupted Christendom*.

Those occupying the pulpit are silent on the subject, and those occupying the pew, accordingly, know little to nothing about the matter. And, should the subject ever emerge — as

it sometimes does — those occupying the pulpit are usually quick in their attempts to squelch the message.

This message encompasses things which are out of line with the training which they received in the theology schools of the land; and they, accordingly, view the message after an erroneous fashion.

In this respect, the effectiveness of the false teachers at the beginning of the dispensation is evidenced by two things near the end of the dispensation. It is evidenced by *the condition of Christian leadership in particular and the consequent condition of the Church in general*.

Thus, a completely different situation exists in Christendom during the present day and time than existed during the first several centuries of the dispensation. There would be some need for true apostates, for there are individuals — one here, and one there — who believe “the Word of the Kingdom” and are bringing forth fruit. But such a need would be minimal.

In this respect, with conditions as such, Satan could concentrate his efforts on bringing to completion that which he began almost two millennia ago. He could concentrate *on maintaining the status quo as he continues his efforts to produce TOTAL corruption*.

And, as will become evident in the completion of the parables given outside the house, by the seaside (the parable of the leaven), *TOTAL corruption is EXACTLY the picture which these parables (and Scriptures elsewhere) present of conditions in Christendom at the end of the dispensation*.

A Tree

The particular type abnormal spiritual growth seen resulting from the false message of the apostates is something that can be seen in both Church history throughout

the course of the dispensation and in the Church of today near the end of the dispensation.

The abnormal growth of the mustard seed in history resulted *in a tree*, in which those who had brought about its abnormal growth are, in the end, seen resting in its branches; and the tree remains to this day, with its roots sinking ever deeper into the earth, with Satan's emissaries continuing to rest in its branches.

1) *Symbolism of a Tree*

To fully comprehend and understand that which is in view, note the symbolism *of a tree* in Scripture. A "tree" is used in Scripture to symbolize *a national power*.

In Judges 9:8-15, which relates the oldest known parable in the world, "trees" are seen symbolizing *nations* which had sought to elect a king to reign over them.

Daniel, in his prophecy, refers to the vision of "a tree in the midst of the earth," which "reached unto heaven." And this "tree" is said to symbolize *the kingdom of Babylon* (Dan. 4:10-12, 20-22).

Israel is referred to in Joel's prophecy by a "fig tree" (1:7). And Christ not only referred *to Israel* through the symbolism of a "fig tree" during his earthly ministry but He also referred *to the surrounding Gentile nations* through the symbolism of "all the trees" (Matt. 21:18, 19; 24:32; Luke 21:29).

There can be no question concerning Scripture using "trees" in a symbolic sense *to signify national powers*. And, remaining within the confines of the symbolism which Scripture itself provides, there can, as well, be no question concerning that which *is in view through the mustard seed germinating and eventually becoming a tree*.

The teaching, through the symbolism given, is clear. That represented by the mustard seed germinated and eventually *became a national power — something which it was*

NOT supposed to become at all during the present dispensation, something reserved for the coming dispensation.

It became a national power *DURING* the time Satan ruled within the kingdom of the heavens; it became a national power within the *PRESENT* kingdom of Satan.

And *ANY* Biblical thought of Christians exercising power in the world was to be reserved for a *FUTURE* day, a time *AFTER* Satan had been put down and Christ had taken the sceptre; power of this nature was to be exercised *SOLELY* within the *FUTURE* kingdom of Christ.

(In short, Satan, through his action as seen in the parable of the mustard seed, caused Christendom, forming the Church, to grow into a national power which would be under his control and sway.

Satan, throughout Man's Day, following man's fall, has ruled the earth through the nations [once national powers had been brought into existence]. This though would exclude Israel [once the nation had been brought into existence], for Israel was *NOT* to be "*reckoned among the nations*" [Num. 23:9].

This type rule by Satan is revealed in Dan. 10:12-21, with Satan and his angels ruling through the nations, but with Israel occupying a position separate from the nations and Satan's rule in this respect

[Ref. the author's books, *The Most High Ruleth* and *The Spiritual Warfare*, for additional information on this subject.

Also see Appendixes III-V in this book.]

Through Satan's efforts—producing an abnormal growth in Christendom, resulting in that symbolized by a tree—he sought to make Christendom a national power during the time when he rules through national powers, with his emissaries finding ready acceptance in this national power [the birds of the air lodging in the branches of the tree]. Satan sought to make Christendom a national power, similar to or like the nations, through which he and his angels could exert rulership and control.)

2) In History, During the Present Day

During the early part of the first century, when the apostates first infiltrated the ranks of fruit-bearing Christians, Christianity was looked upon in the Roman world as *an illegal religion*. And, in some quarters, Christians were looked upon by the Romans as being *guilty of treason*.

Rome practiced emperor worship, and, within this practice, “religion” and “state” *became one entity*.

Christians, on the other hand, were monotheistic and spoke of a King other than Caesar and of a Kingdom other than Rome.

Thus, it is little wonder that the Romans looked upon Christianity and Christians *in an illegal and a treasonous sense*.

It was these basic differences which resulted in all of the Roman persecution, lasting several centuries.

But something else also happened during this time. The apostates progressively broke down the barriers separating the Roman Empire and Christianity, until the day came, near the end of the fourth century, when these barriers no longer existed.

And this was followed by a merger of Church and State.

Constantine, during the opening years of the fourth century put a stop to the persecution of Christians, and he himself later embraced Christianity (for reasons upon which historians differ).

And all of this set the stage for that which was to follow.

In the year 380 A.D., Theodosius I issued an edict that made Christianity *the exclusive state religion*; and, in the year 395 A.D., Christianity was finally recognized as *the official and only religion of the Roman Empire*.

At this point, Christianity found itself completely enmeshed within a world power in the sphere of governmental authority over which Satan exercised control, completely out of line with God’s plans and purposes for the new creation “in Christ.”

This condition of Christendom though did not result from the previous Roman persecution. The previous persecution had only resulted in Christian growth.

As Tertullian, a Christian living during the period of Roman persecution, said, *"The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church."*

That which ultimately occurred in Christendom was caused by the apostates, the tares.

Their attack was NOT centered upon the entity itself (as was Rome's attack) BUT upon that which brought the entity to a fruit-bearing stage. They went back to that upon which the entity was fed and nourished, introducing corruption and destruction at this point.

And the end result of this indirect approach was *EXACTLY as Christ had foretold*. The mustard seed germinated, grew normally for awhile, then took an abnormal growth, and eventually *became a tree*.

The abnormal growth, over time, ultimately resulted in *barrenness*; and Christians found themselves occupying a position which they were not supposed to occupy during the present dispensation at all. They found themselves *associated with Gentile world power within the present kingdom of Satan*.

The work of Satan and his angels, by sowing tares among the wheat (second parable, continuing from the first parable) and eventually taking Christendom into the very realm which Satan and his angels occupied (world government among the nations [third parable]), *NOT ONLY STOPPED fruit-bearing BUT ultimately brought matters into the state seen in the next parable, the fourth parable — a COMPLETELY leavened Church that has crossed all denominational barriers, liberal and fundamental alike*.

That seen ultimately resulting in the Parable of the Mustard Seed is a condition from which *Christianity has NEVER recovered*, down to the present day. Though Rome

has long since passed off the scene, Christians can still be found involving themselves in activities associated *with the tree* in Matt. 13:32.

They can be seen on every hand involving themselves in the present government after all types of fashions, attempting to exert some type power in the present kingdom under Satan.

BUT, THIS is NOT the day when Christians are to rule and reign. *THAT day lies in the future, after Christ has taken the kingdom and Christians have been placed in positions of power and authority.*

The entire present system is in its *death-throes* and is to be destroyed by Christ when He returns.

Christians having works associated with the present system will one day see their works suffer the same fate which the system is about to suffer. Such works *will be destroyed, burned "in fire"* at the judgment seat; and even though these Christians will be "saved; yet so as by ['through'] fire" (I Cor. 3:11-15), *they will be left with NOTHING of value in relation to the coming kingdom of Christ. And they will consequently be REJECTED for regal positions with Christ.*

But for those Christians *who will NOT have allowed* the pseudo form of Christendom enmeshed within the present world system to govern their lives, things will be different.

Their works *will NOT* suffer the same fate as those having works associated with the present world system. They will possess works which will endure the fire, and they will be left *with something of value in relation to the coming kingdom of Christ.*

THESE are the ones who will have waited to exercise regal power and authority.

THESE are the ones who will rule as co-heirs with Christ in His kingdom.

7

Parable of the Leaven

Conditions Ultimately Produced by the Tares

“Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of the heavens is like [continues like] unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened” (Matt. 13:33).

The parable of the leaven is the last of the four parables which Christ gave outside the house, down by the seaside.

This parable reveals the conclusion of matters surrounding events covered by the first three parables; and this conclusion is revealed prior to Christ going back inside the house, where He gave three additional parables (with all seven, together, revealing *an entire sequence of events extending FROM the inception of the Church TO the beginning of the Messianic Kingdom*).

This parable contains the first mention of “leaven” in the New Testament, and Christ used the word in a symbolic sense, in an unexplained manner, *knowing that it could be understood ONLY one way*.

The Old Testament symbolism surrounding “leaven” and the flow of thought seen in the three parables preceding the first use of this word in the New Testament *left NO room for those hearing these parables to question HOW the word was to be understood*.

Leaven was a *foreign substance* added to dough, causing the dough to rise. And the Old Testament, using leaven in a symbolic sense, *ALWAYS* used the word *ONLY one way*. The Old Testament *ALWAYS* used the word to symbolize *that which caused corruption and deterioration*.

The Mosaic Law forbade the use of leaven in offerings made by the priests in Israel (Lev. 2:11).

In this respect, the absence of leaven (the absence of a foreign substance) pointed *to purity*, as seen in the first usage of this word in Scripture (Gen. 19:3 [*establishing, through the way "leaven" is introduced in Scripture, the manner in which this word would be used throughout the remainder of Scripture*]).

However, there were two exceptions in the Mosaic Economy to that stated in Lev. 2:11, forbidding the use of leaven in offerings. Both Lev. 7:13 and Lev. 23:17 mention offerings where leaven was to be included; and Amos, centuries later, mentioned an offering which was to include leaven as well (4:5).

But in all three of these instances where leaven was to be included, other offerings are also mentioned; and, in two of these instances, the other offerings are specifically stated to include *blood sacrifices*, to atone for man's sins. And, in the one offering where blood is not specifically mentioned (Amos 4:5), blood could only be inferred from the other offerings where blood is mentioned (Lev. 7:1-14; 23:5, 27 [*cf. Ex. 12:1ff; Lev. 16:1ff*]; Amos 4:4).

In the light of both the context and corresponding Scripture elsewhere, leaven could only have been included in these offerings *to show man's sin*. Leaven was included *to show corruption within*, as an offering without leaven was used *to show purity within*.

This can be illustrated by referring to God's command surrounding the second of the festivals in Lev. 23 — the festival of unleavened bread. Beginning with the day immediately following the death of the firstborn and the application of the blood (the first festival), the Israelites were commanded to refrain from eating anything containing leaven for "seven days," *for a complete period of time* (Lev. 23:5, 6).

This pointed to God's truth surrounding the fact that those who had appropriated the blood were then to keep themselves pure for a complete period of time, for the entire duration of their lives which followed.

This was true for the Israelites at the time these festivals were instituted, it was true for the Israelites down through the centuries, and it remains true for Christians today. It has been and it remains true for God's people *throughout ALL time* (I Cor. 5:6-8).

And within the continuing symbolism shown by these festivals, God instituted a day of atonement. This was the sixth of the seven festivals, and it had to do with *shed blood to atone for man's sins* — the sins of those who had previously applied the blood of the paschal lambs (which was immediately followed by God's command to not partake of that containing leaven).

The day of atonement had to do with a covering provided for failure — a failure to remain separated from sin — for those having previously applied the blood of the paschal lambs. This festival had to do with their failure to continuously keep themselves separated from that symbolized by leaven.

And *EXACTLY* the same thing can be seen today through viewing the Christians' present state in the world and Christ's present high priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary.

Christians have applied the blood of the Paschal Lamb and have been commanded to keep themselves pure.

But Christians, possessing a body of death, as the Israelites in the past dispensation, experience failure; and, as in the camp of Israel, provision is made for failure.

Christ is presently ministering in the heavenly sanctuary, on the basis of His Own blood on the mercy seat; and His ministry in this respect is on behalf of Christians who sin, providing cleansing.

Cleansing though is not automatic. Rather, it is conditional. Cleansing is dependent on the Christian acknowledging his sins.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (I John 1:9; cf. Heb. 4:13-16; 9:23ff; 10:19ff; I John 2:1, 2).

In the light of the way in which leaven is *ALWAYS* used in the Old Testament, Christ could use the word in a symbolic sense — as He did in Matt. 13:33, and in Matt. 16:6, 11 — *and His disciples would know EXACTLY what was meant* (Matt. 16:12).

Or, also in this respect, Paul could use the word in this same symbolic sense in his epistles — as he did in I Cor. 5:6-8, and in Gal. 5:9 — and the recipients of these epistles *would also know EXACTLY what was meant*.

But an added feature about the way leaven is used in Matt. 13:33 is seen in the context leading into the use of this word.

The context of the passage itself reveals how this word is to be understood, which is *the SAME way* leaven is used and understood elsewhere in the New Testament. *Every place* leaven appears in the New Testament, the context *ALWAYS* clearly shows the word being used *ONLY one way* — *showing corruption and deterioration — in complete keeping with its Old Testament usage*.

In Matt. 13:33, the context leading into the use of leaven has to do with *fruit-bearing and with the method Satan uses to STOP Christians from bearing fruit*. The preceding two parables reveal *Satan introducing false doctrine*, with a progressive corruption and deterioration following. And the parable of the leaven *simply reveals the conclusion of the matter*.

That is to say, the corruption introduced by the leaven has to do with the false message proclaimed by the tares, bringing matters to a conclusion, showing the end result.

According to the parable of the leaven, the message surrounding the proffered kingdom during the present dispensation would, near the end of the dispensation, become *COMPLETELY* leavened. *Corruption introduced at the beginning of the dispensation would progressively permeate the WHOLE of Christendom UNTIL that having to do with the proffered kingdom would be COMPLETELY corrupted* (cf. Matt. 16:5-12).

This is HOW, according to this parable, the dispensation would end.

Three Measures of Meal

“Three” is the number of *Divine perfection*. This number shows *Divine perfection within that which is in view*. “Three measures of meal” — three measures of ground grain, used to make *bread* — are in view.

The reference is to *the Word of God* (Matt. 4:4; cf. Isa. 55:1, 2), though not the Word in a general sense. Rather, the reference, contextually, is to *the Word in a specific sense, a specific part of the Word, a specific teaching in the Word*.

The subject at hand has to do with “*the Word of the Kingdom*.” It has to do with how the message surrounding the coming kingdom of Christ would begin to be proclaimed in Christendom and how this message would *progressively change BECAUSE of something (a foreign substance) placed within the message* (vv. 19-24, 31, 33).

The reference to leaven placed in the three measures of meal, as previously shown, is simply a reference to that introduced in the preceding two parables. *It is a reference to taking THAT which is false and placing it within THAT which is Divinely perfect. It is a reference to a corrupting agent being placed within the Divinely perfect God-breathed Word*.

And, again, it is *THAT part of this Divinely perfect revelation having to do with “the Word of the Kingdom” which is in view*.

Satan simply began placing those proclaiming a false message about the kingdom among those bearing fruit for the kingdom. The false message took root and began to spread, resulting in the ONLY thing that could result — corruption and deterioration.

Then, continuing the explanation in the third parable, because of this false doctrine, a completely unnatural spiritual growth in Christendom followed. The mustard seed in this parable is seen germinating, *growing normally for a time, then experiencing abnormal growth and becoming a tree — something that it wasn't supposed to become at all.*

And NOT ONLY did it grow and develop after this fashion, BUT the end result was so unnatural that those responsible were able to find a home within that which they had wrought.

And that, contextually, is *WHAT continues in view — the ONLY thing that can continue in view — by Christ using the symbolism of a woman taking leaven and hiding it in three measures of meal.*

In keeping with the definition of a parable, Christ simply provided additional truth placed alongside previous truth to help explain the previous truth. *This parable provides additional truth placed alongside the preceding two parables to help explain these parables.*

Understanding the parable of the leaven is THAT simple.

This parable has to do with the progressive, continuing deterioration seen in the preceding parable, the parable of the mustard seed; and this preceding parable, in turn, has to do with how Satan went about curtailng and stopping fruit-bearing in the parable which preceded it, the parable of the wheat and tares.

It has to do with a corrupting agent placed within that part of God's Divinely perfect revelation referred to as "the Word of the Kingdom." And it has to do with *this corrupting agent working "TILL the whole [the message surrounding the coming kingdom of Christ]" had become corrupted.*

Till the Whole...

The reason for the state in which Christendom presently finds itself is shown by the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen, with the fourth parable, the parable of the leaven, depicting the end of the matter. This parable shows a progressive deterioration UNTIL the point of total corruption had been reached.

Near the end of the dispensation, when “the Word of the Kingdom” has been completely corrupted, that which Jesus foretold in this parable would be fulfilled. In those days, at that time, the true message surrounding the coming kingdom of Christ WILL NOT be — it CANNOT be — heard throughout the Churches of the land.

The move in Christendom FROM conditions depicted by the Church in Ephesus TO conditions depicted by the Church in Laodicea, seen in Revelation chapters two and three, will THEN be complete.

The Church will NOT ONLY have left its “first love” (Rev. 2:4), BUT the Church will ultimately be brought into a state described as “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (Rev. 3:17b).

And one need only look around today to see this EXACT state of affairs existing in Christendom — in fundamental and liberal circles alike.

In relation to “the Word of the Kingdom,” one segment is JUST as leavened as the other. In relation to “the Word of the Kingdom,” EXACTLY the SAME conditions exist in BOTH. Neither proclaims this message, and neither will have anything to do with it.

This is the ONE thing which both the fundamentalists and the liberals (as both are known and referred to) have in common today. NEITHER will proclaim or have anything to do with the central message which Christians are to hear.

When Christ was on earth the first time, there were two main religious parties in Israel — the Pharisees and the Sadducees (the fundamentalists and the liberals of that day).

These two religious parties *were worlds apart* in different things in their theology, *but they were ONE in their attitude toward the message surrounding the proffered kingdom. NEITHER would have anything to do with it.*

And *EXACTLY* the same situation exists in Christendom today, immediately preceding Christ's return.

There are two main divisions among Christians — the fundamentalists and the liberals. These two religious groups are *worlds apart* in different things in their theology, but they are *ONE in their attitude toward the proffered kingdom. NEITHER will have anything to do with it.*

1) From Ephesus...

Revelation chapters two and three record seven short epistles to seven Churches in Asia. These epistles were given in a certain order, beginning with the Church in Ephesus and ending with the Church in Laodicea. And a longer epistle to one of the seven exists elsewhere in the New Testament — to the first Church mentioned, the Church in Ephesus.

Reference is made in Col. 4:16 to an epistle in connection with the Church in Laodicea. But this is not stated to be an epistle written to that Church (though if it were, it would have to be viewed as a non-canonical epistle which was not preserved and passed down). Rather, it is simply an unidentified epistle (possibly one which Paul had written from this location); and this epistle, in possession of the Christians in Laodicea, was to be obtained by the Christians in Colossae from those in Laodicea.

Paul had spent three years ministering to the Christians in Ephesus (Acts 20:31). When he came to Ephesus the first time, he was accompanied by Aquila and Priscilla (whom,

it is apparent, he had instructed *in the faith*). He remained in Ephesus an unrevealed period of time, reasoning with the Jews in the synagogue. Then he left Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus in order to return to Jerusalem (Acts 18:18-21).

It was during Paul's second visit to Ephesus that he spent most of the three-year period which he mentions in Acts 20:31 (*cf.* Acts 19:10ff). On this second visit, Paul found disciples who were not familiar with events relating to Israel and the kingdom beyond the offer of the kingdom to Israel in the gospels. These disciples knew only "the baptism of John," something which they had apparently learned from Apollos before he received further instruction in the matter from Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 19:1-7; *cf.* Acts 18:24-26).

And Paul began his ministry in Ephesus at this time by providing further instruction for these individuals, as Aquila and Priscilla had provided for Apollos.

Then Paul continued his ministry in Ephesus by going "from house to house," *teaching the people, keeping nothing back that was not profitable for them* (Acts 20:20). In this respect, Paul's ministry in Ephesus would seemingly form a pattern concerning the manner in which his entire ministry in the Gentile world was to be conducted.

Paul had earlier been converted and subsequently taken aside — apparently into Arabia, then evidently into the Lord's presence in heaven — where the Lord personally revealed to him what is called in Scripture, "the mystery" (II Cor. 12:1-7; Gal. 1:11, 12, 16, 17; Eph. 3:1-11).

"The mystery" had to do with the new entity, *the new creation* "in Christ," *the Church*; it had to do with both Jews and Gentiles being joint-heirs together, in one body; and it had to do with those comprising this new entity being the recipients of the kingdom which Israel had rejected — the kingdom of the heavens (*cf.* Matt. 21:33-43; I Peter 2:9, 10).

This is the message which Paul had been taught by the Lord, and this is the message which he was to carry throughout the Gentile world.

This though was a message for Christians, NOT a message for the unsaved; and there were very few Christians in the Gentile world when Paul went out with this message.

Thus, Paul, in the process of carrying out his ministry, had to proclaim a dual message.

Paul, among the unsaved, had to proclaim *the good news pertaining to the grace of God*. Then, once individuals had been saved, Paul could proclaim *the good news pertaining to the coming glory of Christ*.

And the latter, rather than the former, is that which is seen forming the heart of Paul's ministry throughout his epistles.

This is why Scripture presents Paul's ministry — outlined in the latter half of the Book of Acts, and in his epistles — as dealing *FAR more extensively* with things pertaining to "the mystery" than with things pertaining to the simple gospel of the grace of God.

It is plain from Paul's last meeting with the elders in the Church in Ephesus that "in every city" which he entered (which included Ephesus) he proclaimed "the gospel of the grace of God."

BUT, it is also clear that Paul, in these same cities, then went on to proclaim "the kingdom of God" to those who had been saved under the simple preaching of the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24, 25).

And the three years Paul spent in Ephesus are specifically said to be time which he spent *instructing Christians in the faith* and *warning them about false teachers who would arise in their midst* (Acts 20:28-32).

Note the preceding sequence in Paul's ministry, seen in these verses in Acts 20:24-32:

“But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I received of the Lord Jesus Christ, to testify *the gospel of the grace of God*.

And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching *the kingdom of God*, shall see my face no more.

Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.

For I have not shunned to declare unto you *all the counsel of God*.

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.”

Then, the epistle which he later wrote to those in Ephesus, shows *the depth* to which he had previously instructed the Christians in that city.

This epistle begins (apart from foundational teachings, and really, apart from any introductory teachings) with a discussion of the things which would be realized “in the dispensation of the fulness of times” — adoption, redemption, and an inheritance (1:3-14).

Thus, this epistle begins and continues *with the assumption that the Christians in Ephesus were well-grounded in the faith*.

Paul could begin and continue this way because of the apparent spiritual maturity of these Christians, resulting

from his previous lengthy ministry in their midst. And Paul's unceasing prayer for these Christians at the time he wrote this epistle was that God would give them *WISDOM* and a *MATURE KNOWLEDGE* (Gk., *epignosis*) concerning the things he was writing about (things which he had previously taught them), referred to as "the hope of his calling," and "the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints" (1:16-18).

Then Paul continues in chapter two, *showing the PURPOSE for their salvation, the REASON these Christians in Ephesus had passed "from death unto life"* (vv. 1-10). And the thought of saved Jews and Gentiles, seen together in one body in this chapter (vv. 15, 16), merges into a discussion of "the mystery" in chapter three (vv. 1-11).

And Paul, calling attention to "the mystery," continues with the thought of an *INHERITANCE* set before Christians, *for a future inheritance is what the mystery has to do with*. It has to do with Gentiles being "fellowheirs" with Jews, "of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel" (v. 6).

And Paul refers to the whole of the message surrounding the mystery as "the unsearchable riches of Christ," and "the manifold wisdom of God" (vv. 8, 10) — something which the writer of Hebrews presented as realized in that which he called "so great salvation" (Heb. 2:3), or which Peter referred to as "the greatest of precious promises," connected with Christ's "greatest [regal] magnificence" (II Peter 1:4, 16 [literal translation]).

In the first part of chapter four, Paul dealt with the reason for gifted leaders and teachers in the Church.

Simply stated, God had placed gifted leaders and teachers in the Church in Ephesus, and elsewhere, to guide Christians as they moved from immaturity to maturity; and this was *with a view to the future adoption, redemption, and inheritance awaiting Christians* (cf. Eph. 4:11-14, 30).

Then the Christians' walk comes into view as individuals move from immaturity to maturity. And this takes up the remainder of the epistle, with a warning at the end to clothe oneself with "the whole armour of God" because of the ongoing spiritual warfare against Satan and his angels (6:10ff).

The Church in Ephesus *could ONLY have been filled with Christians who were well-versed in "the Word of the Kingdom."*

And well they should have been, for Paul had spent a great deal of time with them, going "from house to house," teaching them — something which had allowed him to be able to later write a letter to these Christians and simply begin discussing "the deep things of God" (I Cor. 2:10), *completely apart from introductory, foundational teachings.*

And it was *this Church* which the Lord chose to use in His revelation to John in order to show the state of Christendom at the beginning of the dispensation.

This was a time when the true message surrounding the coming kingdom of Christ was proclaimed throughout Christendom, when this message was received and understood by Christians throughout the Churches (Col. 1:5, 6, 23).

During these early years, this was *the message of the hour* when Christians met. *This was the central message proclaimed by Paul and other ministers of that day, the central message of all the letters (epistles) written to the different Churches and individuals during that time.*

And Christians during these days gathered to talk about the things having to do with the coming kingdom of Christ, *encouraging and exhorting one another relative to the hope set before them (Heb. 10:23-25).*

BUT, something happened!

A foreign substance was placed in the three measures of meal. And it wasn't long before things began to go awry, even in the Church in Ephesus.

Note that which Scripture states in this respect, as recorded in Rev. 2:2-4:

"I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, *because thou hast left thy first love.*"

The corruption which Satan introduced *BEGAN* and *CONTINUED* to cause deterioration in Christendom. It *BEGAN* in the manner depicted in the first of the seven Churches in Rev. 2, 3, the Church in Ephesus; and it would *CONTINUE UNTIL* it had brought about conditions in Christendom as depicted in the last of the seven Churches in these two chapters in the Book of Revelation, the Church in Laodicea.

2) To Laodicea

From a Biblical standpoint, *ONE thing about Christendom is CERTAIN! And this ONE thing CANNOT be denied!*

Christendom, near the end of the dispensation, is going to appear in the world in a COMPLETELY leavened state.

This is something which Christ revealed to His disciples BEFORE the Church was ever brought into existence, and this is something which He revealed again to John at a time AFTER the Church had been brought into existence.

The record of Church history was given BEFORE the dispensation had even begun, and the record of Church history was given once again DURING the early years of the dispensation.

And man today — living during the closing years of the dispensation, viewing both the history and current state of

Christendom — can know *EXACTLY* why the *WHOLE* of Christendom exists in its present condition.

According to the clear teaching of the Word of God, relative to any proclamation of “the Word of the Kingdom” near the end of the dispensation, ALL Christendom will have become completely saturated with leaven, with that which is false. Relative to any proclamation of this message near the end of the dispensation, ALL Christendom will have become completely corrupted.

THIS is what the unchangeable Word of God has to say about the final state of Christendom during Man’s Day. And, for those believing what the Word of God has to say on the subject, THIS has to be the END of the matter.

THIS is NOT something open for discussion or debate. THIS is a settled matter, clearly revealed by Christ at two different places in Scripture where a history of Christendom is given. And THIS revealed history of Christendom is recorded these two times, in two different places and ways, for ALL to see.

In the second of these two times — in Revelation chapters two and three — as previously seen, the Lord revealed this final state of Christendom through referring to conditions in the Church in Laodicea, a Church which had become completely corrupted even before the end of the first century.

And, if one desires to study about the Church of today (whether fundamental or liberal), he need only turn to Rev. 3:14-21. This is a description given by Christ Himself; and this description, in complete keeping with that seen in the parable of the leaven in Matt. 13:33, *vividly depicts the true nature of the Church at the end of the dispensation* — “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (v. 17b).

But, again, bear one thing in mind. This *does NOT* picture Christendom at the end of the dispensation in a general sense. Rather, something *SPECIFIC* is in view.

This presents Christendom at the end of the dispensation in relation to *an outlook on a PARTICULAR facet of Biblical doctrine* — the attitude of Christians throughout the Churches toward that which very few of them seem to know anything whatsoever about, *“the Word of the Kingdom,” that upon which the leaven is seen to have centered its attack.*

And this whole overall thought of the leaven centering its attack at this point is something easily seen throughout the seven epistles to the seven Churches in Rev. 2, 3. Each epistle is structured *EXACTLY the same way, centering around works, with a view to overcoming.*

Thus, the statement to each Church is twofold in this respect:

- 1) *“I know thy works...”* (2:2, 9, 13, 19; 3:1, 8, 15).
- 2) *“To him that overcometh...”* (2:7, 11, 17, 26-28; 3:5, 12, 21).

These are the two inseparable and interrelated things around which “the Word of the Kingdom” centers — *works, with a view to overcoming.* And all of the overcomer’s promises project matters *out into the Messianic Era.*

And when the Lord called attention to the Laodicean Church as being “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked,” *He was presenting a picture of the Church at the end of the dispensation in relation to that which was in view — works, with a view to overcoming.*

And the counsel which the Lord gave the Church in this condition was quite clear:

“I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see” (Rev. 3:18).

Thus, the Church near the end of the dispensation, in relation to teachings surrounding “the Word of the Kingdom,” *will be in the condition depicted by the Laodicean Church.*

It will be COMPLETELY corrupted.

And ALL one needs to do to see the truth of the matter is go into practically any Church throughout the country today — fundamental or liberal, it makes NO difference — and listen for ANY reference to teachings surrounding “the Word of the Kingdom.”

One will listen in VAIN, for the message is simply NOT being taught. The leaven has done its damaging work too well.

If Any Man...

So, what is the Christian who understands “the Word of the Kingdom” to do in surroundings of this nature today? He finds himself in the midst of Christians who know little to nothing about the subject; he finds himself in the midst of Christians who reject, or make light of “the Word of the Kingdom.” And he can’t really leave and go elsewhere, for the leaven, working for almost two millennia, has brought the whole of Christendom into this same state.

Because of this, the answer concerning that which he is to do is given at the end of the short epistle to the Church in Laodicea. *The Lord knew EXACTLY how conditions would exist at the end of this leavening process. And, with THIS in view, those in the Laodicean Church were exhorted to follow a particular course of action within this Church.*

Note Christ’s closing words to these Christians:

“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To him that overcometh...” (vv. 19-21a).

In relation to *the central message* which Christians are to hear throughout the dispensation, Christ, at the end of the dispensation, is pictured *outside the Church, knocking, seeking admission to those inside*. And the invitation that Christ extends at this time *is to individual Christians* rather than to the Church as a whole, for the Church will have been permeated through and through with a leavening substance *which can ONLY continue its deteriorating work*.

The invitation, seen in this passage, extends to *ANY individual* in the Church:

"If *ANY man* hear my voice, and open the door..." (v. 20a)

The person is not told to leave the Church, for, again, *there is NO place for him to go; the WHOLE will have become leavened*.

Rather, *the person is to REMAIN where he is and heed the Lord's message. THEN, the Lord will come inside, to that individual, with fellowship in the Word following*.

There will be fellowship between Christ and that individual ("...and will sup with him"), and there will be fellowship between that individual and Christ ("...and he with me" [v. 20b; cf. I John 1:3]).

But for the other Christians in the Church, Christ will remain *outside the door, though the invitation will remain open*.

And one need only look at *Christianity in the world today* to see the Church in the condition set forth by the end result of the progression of that depicted in the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen or in the seven Churches in Revelation chapters two and three.

The Church today, in relation to *the proclamation of "the Word of the Kingdom,"* finds itself in *an evident completely leavened state, with Christ outside the door, exhorting individual Christians to heed the truth of that which Satan has fought so hard to destroy*.

8

“Some Shall Depart”

A Departure of Christians from the Faith

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons;

Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth” (I Tim. 4:1-3).

God’s creation of “the heavens and the earth” (a province in God’s universal kingdom) and His establishment of the earth’s government preceded the creation of man by at least one age, possibly by a number of ages. The length of this period of time is completely unrevealed in Scripture, and the only events occurring throughout this period which God has seen fit to reveal to man in His Word are events having a direct bearing upon the reason for man’s existence on the earth.

However, *NONE of these things* preceding man’s creation were dealt with in the opening verses of Genesis (with one possible exception, depending on *HOW* Gen. 1:2a is understood [dealt with in data on the next two pages of this chapter]).

Scripture begins with the simple statement that God, at a beginning point in time, created the heavens and the earth.

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

This is then followed by an equally simple statement regarding a subsequent ruin of this creation — both the heavens and the earth (the heavens associated with the earth [*ref. Appendix II in this book*]).

“And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep [‘upon the face of the raging waters’]” (1:2a).

And this is then followed by a rather lengthy statement regarding the restoration of the heavens and the earth, man’s creation, *and the PURPOSE for BOTH*.

“And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters...” (Gen. 1:2b-2:3).

EVERYTHING regarding events between God’s creation of the heavens and the earth and His beginning restoration of a ruined heavens and earth (1:1, 2b), *EXCEPT possibly the reference to the ruin itself in 1:2a*, is left for later Scripture. It is left for the prophets.

In this respect, is Gen. 1:2a a reference to the ruin of the heavens and the earth at the TIME this ruin occurred? OR is this verse referring to the CONDITION of the heavens and the earth at a LATER TIME, at the TIME of the subsequent restoration?

(A great deal has been written and stated over the years about the proper understanding and translation of the Hebrew word *hayah*, a verb of being, translated “was” in Gen. 1:2a.

“And the earth was without form and void...”

Should this verb be translated “was” or “became”?

In one sense of the word, the matter would be immaterial. *IF* translated "was," this statement would show the condition of the earth at the time God began His restoration work; *IF* translated "became," this statement would reference an unknown and unrevealed prior time in history when this destruction occurred.

And in keeping with the fact that *NOTHING* else is revealed at this opening point in Genesis about events between the creation of the heavens and the earth [1:1] and the beginning restoration of a ruined heavens and earth [1:2b], it would probably be best to *NOT* attempt to place anything about events regarding the darkened heavens and the destruction of the earth in this period either.

That is, it would probably be best to simply understand *hayah* as "was," seen in almost any translation of Genesis. This would then allow the verse to show the condition of the heavens and earth at the time when God began His restorative work rather than showing events prior to this time [which translating the word as "became" would do].

It is *NOT* necessary to contend that *hayah* should be translated "became" in this verse in order to show a prior destruction of the heavens and the earth. *THAT* is shown elsewhere in Scripture, along with this verse [with *hayah* understood and translated either way, "was" or "became"], when comparing Scripture with Scripture.)

Subsequent Scripture reveals God's original establishment of the earth's government (a province in God's universal kingdom [Ezek. 28:14]), the fall and disqualification of the earth's first ruler (Isa. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:15), and both the immediate and far-reaching results of the fall and disqualification of this ruler (*cf.* Isa. 14:15-17; Jer. 4:23-28; Ezek. 28:16-19).

The immediate result *was a ruined kingdom* — a kingdom *becoming* "without form, and void," with *darkness* covering "the face of the deep ['raging waters' covering the darkened, ruined kingdom]" (Gen. 1:2a).

And the far-reaching results — still future today — will be *a removal* of the incumbent ruler from his appointed position of power and authority and his eventual *consignment* to a prepared “lake of fire” (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10).

God revealed these things about Satan and the earth in order that man would be able to clearly see and understand the reason for his existence.

God’s creation of “the heavens and the earth,” His establishment of the earth’s government, the subsequent fall and disqualification of the earth’s ruler within this established government (the fall of Satan, with a segment of his angels), and the resulting ruin of his kingdom, *ALL preceded and anticipated man’s creation.*

And *NOT ONLY* has God revealed these things, *BUT* He has also revealed the end of the matter. He has also revealed that which will occur relative to Satan and his kingdom *after* man takes the sceptre.

But, viewing the matter from the beginning, man was not to rule over a kingdom lying in ruins. The earth, which *had become* “without form and void” when God’s original appointed ruler sought to exalt his throne (Gen. 1:2a), was *restored* immediately prior to man’s creation (Gen. 1:2b-25).

God restored the ruined material creation with a view *to a new provincial ruler* — man — taking the sceptre. And this is something which He revealed immediately following the earth’s restoration:

“Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and *let them have dominion...*” (Gen. 1:26; cf. vv. 27, 28).

Thus, God *NOT ONLY* clearly revealed His reason for the restoration of the ruined material creation *BUT ALSO* His reason for the creation of man. The material creation had been restored for man, and man was about to be brought into existence to replace the incumbent ruler and those rul-

ing with him (Satan and his angels).

And, with God's statement to this effect, note two *established, unchangeable facts* concerning man, revealed immediately preceding his creation:

1. *Man was to be brought into existence to rule the earth.*

2. *This rule would be realized in conjunction with a woman, who would be formed from a part of the man following His creation.*

God said, prior to man's creation, "...let *THEM* have dominion [*the MAN and the WOMAN together*]..." (vv. 26-28).

THEN, Genesis chapter two provides a number of details concerning man's creation (v. 7), the removal of a rib from Adam which God used to make the woman (vv. 21, 22), and the relationship of the woman to the man (vv. 23, 24).

This is the way God established matters in the beginning, and that which God established in the beginning *DOES NOT change, it CANNOT change, as one moves through Scripture.*

At *ANY point in Scripture*, following that which God established and revealed in the opening two chapters of Genesis, the man and the woman are seen occupying *this SAME inseparable relationship together — a regal relationship, having to do with the government of the earth.*

It matters not whether it's a man and his wife in their fallen state, God and Israel, or Christ and the Church, *THIS established relationship holds.*

It MUST hold, for God Himself established THIS relationship.

The man and his wife are to presently be "heirs together of the grace of life" and foreshadow, within this God-established relationship existing during Man's Day, the future relationship which will exist between Christ and His wife in the Lord's Day (Eph. 5:21-33; I Peter 3:7).

God took Israel as *His wife* in the Old Testament theocracy. God had to possess a wife in order to reign in the theocracy, for that is the manner in which He Himself established matters in the beginning.

God later divorced Israel because of harlotry. But, in the future restored theocracy, God will have remarried a repentant and restored Israel (cf. Isa. 1:21-2:5; Jer. 3:1ff; Hosea 2:2, 3; 14:1ff; Rev. 19:1-6).

After the same manner, Christ will one day take a wife. The Spirit of God is in the world today *searching for a bride for God's Son, for the Son CAN'T reign apart from possessing a wife.*

Again, this is a matter established by God in the beginning, and it CANNOT change (Gen. 24:1ff; Eph. 5:21-33; Rev. 19:7-9).

Understanding this established relationship will explain both Satan's initial action and Adam's resulting subsequent action in Genesis chapter three.

Satan knew full-well the reason man had been created, with the woman removed from the man; and he also knew full-well the relationship existing between the man and the woman.

He knew that Adam *COULDN'T* rule apart from Eve. And, knowing this, he directed his efforts toward the woman, seeking to bring her into a state in which she *COULDN'T* rule.

Satan deceived Eve into eating fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, contrary to God's command. And once Eve had disobeyed God, *she was NO longer in a position to rule with Adam, which meant that Adam COULDN'T rule.*

A part of Adam's very being — *bone of his bones, and flesh of his flesh* (2:23) — *was NO longer in a position to rule, PREVENTING him from ruling.*

Thus, Adam, in this condition — *an incomplete being* — *was left with only ONE choice. Eve had to be redeemed. And there was ONLY ONE way in which this could be done.*

Adam, taking *the ONLY course available*, partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as well (*Adam could ONLY drop to Eve's level, NOT she rise to his*). And Adam did this with a view to *redemption* and his one day being able to occupy, *as a COMPLETE being* (the man and the woman together), the position for which God had created man.

Comparing type and antitype, all of this can be clearly seen.

The second Man, the last Adam, found His bride in the same fallen state; and He took *the ONLY course available*. He Who knew no sin was made sin for us "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Cor. 5:21).

AS the first man, the first Adam, *COULDN'T* reign apart from the one in a fallen state — his wife — *NEITHER CAN* the second Man, the last Adam. And *SINCE* man is to ultimately realize the purpose for his creation in the beginning, *it MUST be recognized that both the first Adam and the last Adam took the ONLY course available as it pertained to the reason for man's existence and the sin question.*

To properly understand the actions of either Adam in Eden or Christ at Calvary, *one account MUST be studied in the light of the other. That is to say, type and antitype MUST be studied together.*

Man's redemption — *wrought through Christ's finished work at Calvary* — has its direct connection *with that revealed in Genesis surrounding the reason for man's creation, Eve's subsequent fall because of Satan's deception, and Adam's resulting subsequent act.*

"Salvation" in Scripture is connected *with REGALITY, NOT as man often presents the matter, with a rescue or deliverance from the lake of fire.*

Though the lake of fire *does await* individuals rejecting Christ's finished work at Calvary, viewing salvation with respect to a deliverance from the lake of fire is really *NOT the correct Biblical approach.*

The lake of fire was prepared for “the devil and his angels,” *NOT for man* (Matt. 25:41). It was prepared for the ones originally ruling the earth *who rebelled against God’s supreme REGAL power and authority*.

In this respect, the lake of fire has its connective origin *with REGALITY as it pertains to the EARTH — the SAME as the PURPOSE for man’s salvation*. And this connective origin of the lake of fire *with REGALITY and the EARTH is WHY man, rejecting God’s remedy for sin, will end up in this place*.

Fallen man will have rejected that *which has to do first and foremost with REGALITY and the EARTH*. He will have rejected *a salvation which finds its revealed purpose in the REASON for man’s creation and subsequent fall*.

And man, rejecting a salvation of this nature, is doing little more than *rebellng against God’s supreme REGAL power and authority — the same as Satan and his angels had done, though after a different fashion*.

Thus, though the lake of fire was originally prepared for angelic beings who had rebelled *against God’s supreme REGAL power and authority*, unsaved man, also rebelling in a manner which has to do *with REGALITY and the EARTH*, will be cast therein as well.

(Note also an associated usage of “the lake of fire” in connection with *non-overcoming Christians* [cf. Rev. 2:11; 21:7, 8].

Unlike the unsaved, non-overcoming Christians *WILL NOT be cast into the lake of fire*. Rather, in the words of Rev. 21:8, they “...shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

That is, *they WILL BE “hurt of the second death”* (Rev. 2:11), associated with “the lake of fire” in Rev. 21:8 (cf. Rev. 20:14, 15).

Relative to Christians, this usage of “the second death” and “the lake of fire” could only be similar to how “Gehenna” and “the outer darkness” are used as well [Matt. 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 22:13, 14; 25:30].

[For information on "Gehenna" and "the outer darkness" in connection with the second death, refer to the author's book, *I Know Thy Works*, Chapter II].

But note something about "the second death" in Rev. 2:11. *NOT* being hurt by "the second death" is the second of seven overcomer promises in Rev. 2, 3. And these promises are *Millennial* in their scope of fulfillment, having to do with occupying positions with Christ in His kingdom.

Thus, they are REGAL in their scope of fulfillment.

And the non-overcoming Christian, saved to have a part with Christ in this kingdom, will have spurned or forfeited the proffered position [*"forfeited"* by the vast majority of Christians in today's world, for, in the present completely leavened, Laodicean Church, *FEW* would have ever heard the message, finding themselves in *NO* position to "*spurn*" the offer (as Israel did 2,000 years ago)].

And having spurned or forfeited this position, the non-overcoming Christian will have done essentially the same thing that unsaved man rejecting God's offer of salvation has done/is doing.

The SAME regality in the SAME kingdom is in view for BOTH, regardless of how the matter is seen. And the SAME second death in connection with the SAME lake of fire MUST be in view for BOTH as well, though after an evidently different manner for each.)

Doctrines of Demons

The "doctrines of demons" in the text from I Tim. 4:1-3 would involve a counterfeit parallel *to the truth* presented in the Word of God.

God has His deep things, and Satan has his deep things (I Cor. 2:10; Rev. 2:24). And the latter, as it is presented in Scripture, is simply *a corruption* of the former. It is taking the former, remaining within the same framework as the former, and producing *a counterfeit, a corrupted parallel*.

For example, *Scripture BEGINS with a septenary, founda-*

tional framework (Gen. 1:1-2:3), providing an unchangeable pattern for the whole of that which God was about to lay out in His Word (Gen. 2:4ff).

And Satan begins at the SAME point, providing a corrupted parallel to that which God has laid out in His Word (II Peter 3:3-8).

Satan NOT ONLY has his corrupted parallel relative to salvation by grace through faith (Gen. 1:2b-5), BUT he has his corrupted parallel relative to present and future aspects of salvation as well — the salvation of the soul (Gen. 1:6ff).

And, as God in His Word places the emphasis on present and future aspects of salvation (foundationally in Gen. 1:1-2:3, necessitating a continuance in the remainder of Scripture), so does Satan in his counterfeit parallel. And, as God in His Word reveals a specific goal for man's salvation (foundationally in Gen. 1:1-2:3, necessitating a continuance in the remainder of Scripture), Satan seeks to entirely corrupt this teaching in his counterfeit parallel.

Satan places the emphasis where God has placed the emphasis, and he seeks to set forth a counterfeit at the same points God has set forth the truth (cf. Isa. 14:13, 14). He has taken God's truth and introduced corresponding error in his efforts to mislead the masses.

(A good counterfeit will approximate the original as closely as possible; and, as with any good counterfeit, it is easier to mislead the masses in this manner [cf. II Cor. 11:13-15].)

Then note that God's Word is directed to the saved, NOT the unsaved. The unsaved are "dead in trespasses and sins" and CANNOT understand this Word (Eph. 2:1; cf. I Cor. 2:14).

And so it is with Satan and his counterfeit parallels. These counterfeit teachings have been designed for those who have spiritual life, have been "quickened." Those "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1, 5) are in NO position to understand spiritual issues — whether "corrupted" (emanating from Satan)

or "uncorrupted" (emanating from God).

Both fall completely outside the realm of the natural (the soulical).

Such a corruption of the truth, received by the saved, can easily be seen in the text from I Timothy, where Paul sounded a warning.

Paul foretold a departure from "the faith" where some Christians would begin giving heed to "seducing spirits" rather than to God's Word; and these seducing spirits would teach that which was untrue, specifically referred to in the text as the "doctrines of demons."

These Christians' spiritual awareness would become seared (Gk., *kausteriazō*; Eng., "cauterize" — to burn, as with a hot iron, to the point of destroying that being burned), resulting in a departure from "the faith."

And, relative to "the faith" from which they had departed, they would begin proclaiming that which was false, that which was in line with the "doctrines of demons." *They would begin proclaiming a message opposed to that which the Word of God had to say about two things in I Tim. 4:1-3:*

1. *Marriage.*

2. *Meats.*

"Marriage" points to a work occurring during Man's Day (with the truth surrounding the matter established at the time of man's creation), which would be brought to fruition and realized in the future Lord's Day

And "meats" has to do with that part of Biblical doctrine which centers around this overall subject (vv. 6, 13, 16).

And those seen being misled in I Tim. 4:1-3, "in the latter times" by "seducing spirits," resulting in their proclaiming "doctrines of demons," are seen, "standing in the way of marriage..." (literal thought from the Greek text [v. 3a]) and are referred to as *apostates*.

Further, a misleading of individuals after this fashion is presented in a very *SPECIFIC* and *LIMITED* sense in Scripture. It is presented *SPECIFICALLY* as and *LIMITED* to an apostasy from the faith — *NOTHING* more, *NOTHING* less.

1) Apostasy from the Faith

“Apostasy” has to do with *standing away from a position previously held*, and “the faith” is an expression which encompasses the *WHOLE* of a *SPECIFIC* part of the Word of God (actually, the *CENTRAL* teaching) — “the Word of the Kingdom.”

The Spirit of God, revealing through Paul *the central message* which Christians were to be taught, explicitly singled out that which would occur “in the latter times” in Christendom relative to this central message.

In short, *there would be a departure from this central message; and that associated with the doctrines of demons would, instead, be taught.*

a) Apostasy

The word “depart” in I Tim. 4:1 is a translation of the Greek word, *aphistemi*, which is the verb form of the Greek noun, *apostasia*. And *apostasia* is the word from which our English word “apostasy” is derived.

“Apostasy” is simply an Anglicized form of the Greek word *apostasia*. Accordingly, to understand that which is meant by “apostasy,” the Greek word needs to be referenced.

Apostasia is a compound word comprised of *apo* and *stasis*. *Apo* means “from,” and *stasis* means “to stand.” Thus, the literal meaning of the word is “to stand away from.”

An apostate, in the true sense of the word, is simply *someone standing away, departing, from a previously held position.*

In I Tim. 4:1, the departure from the previously held position is specifically stated to pertain to “the faith.” That is, seducing spirits, promulgating the doctrines of demons, are

seen *LEADING* individuals adhering to "the faith" (of necessity, Christians, *NOT* unsaved individuals [I Cor. 2:14]), *AWAY FROM* this position.

b) The Faith

The central thrust surrounding the truth of the matter, derived from the Word of God, *has to do with "the faith."* And *the central thrust* surrounding that which is false, derived from the doctrines of demons, *ALSO has to do with "the faith."*

One emanates from "the deep things of God," and the other emanates from "the depths [same wording in the Greek text as the previous verse; *lit.*, 'the deep things'] of Satan" (I Cor. 2:10; Rev. 2:24). *The former is the Truth; the latter is a corrupted, parallel counterfeit to the Truth.*

"The faith" is an expression peculiarly related in Scripture to the overall scope of "*the Word of the Kingdom,*" *to the mystery revealed to Paul, to the gospel of the glory of Christ, to the salvation of the soul.* This is the manner in which the expression appears in numerous New Testament references — in the Gospels, in the Book of Acts, and in the Epistles (Pauline, Hebrews, and General).

Christ, during the course of His earthly ministry, at His first coming, looked 2,000 years ahead to His second coming, and, through a question, called attention to a solitary fact concerning *the central message of the New Testament.*

Christ asked, "...when the Son of man [a Messianic title] cometh, shall he find faith ['the faith'] on the earth?" (Luke 18:8).

And the manner in which the question is worded in the Greek text designates a *NEGATIVE* response.

The Son of Man *will NOT* find "the faith" being taught in Christendom at the time of His return. The leaven which the woman placed in the three measures of meal in Matt. 13:33 (having to do with the doctrines of demons, that taught by

the tares sown among the wheat) will have taken care of that.

In this respect, note HOW the expression, "the faith," is understood by those comprising "fundamental Christendom" today.

It is commonly taught by those comprising this group that "the faith" refers to "the complete body of Biblical truth" (the complete body of revealed truth seen throughout both Testaments). And, holding to "this complete body of truth," they see themselves holding to "the faith" (which is *WHY* they are seen as "fundamentalists").

"Fundamentalism" is presently a *MAJOR* force in *Christendom*; and the expression, "the faith," understood in the preceding manner, would, accordingly, be held and proclaimed throughout a rather large segment of Christendom.

In fact, *it is actually a growing force in numerous quarters*. Millions of Christians in this country alone would fall within the mainstream of fundamentalism and adhere to this body of Biblical doctrine.

BUT, a MAJOR problem exists. IF "the faith" is to be understood as a reference to "the complete body of Biblical truth," as commonly held by "fundamental Christians," THEN conditions in Christendom are currently in a state (i.e., NOT completely leavened) which would PREVENT Christ from returning during the present time (cf. Matt. 13:33; Luke 18:8; Rev. 3:17).

But the preceding is really neither here nor there, for, when one looks to Scripture for its own definition of "the faith," something completely different is seen.

Scripture uses this expression in a very limited sense. Scripture uses this expression in contexts having to do with "*the Word of the Kingdom*," NOT in contexts having to do with "the complete body of Biblical truth."

Defining "the faith" as "the complete body of Biblical truth" *has to do with NOTHING more than HOW man has attempted to explain this expression, NOT with HOW Scripture deals with the expression.*

And anyone doing this — *particularly with THIS expression, which strikes NEGATIVELY at the heart of ALL Biblical teaching regarding "the Word of the Kingdom" — can ONLY be seen, unknowingly, promulgating the doctrine of demons (cf. John 8:37-44).*

Scripture is *ALWAYS* to be interpreted in the light of Scripture (I Cor. 2:9-13). And this is *EXACTLY* the way in which the expression, "the faith," *MUST be understood.*

Scripture *MUST be allowed to explain that which is meant by this expression* — an expression which is used over and over in Scripture. And an interesting thing about the whole matter is that Scripture *NOT ONLY* clearly explains what is meant by "the faith," *BUT it does so in numerous instances.*

Paul, for example, in his first letter to Timothy, following his warning concerning the apostates, said:

"Fight the good fight of [*the*] *faith*, lay hold on eternal life [*lit.*, 'Strive in the good contest of *the faith*, lay hold on life for the age'], whereunto thou art also called..." (6:12).

And, in Paul's second letter to Timothy, a similar usage is again seen:

"I have fought a good fight [*lit.*, 'I have strived in the good contest'], I have finished my course, I have kept *the faith*:

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness..." (4:7, 8).

Or, when Jude sought to write an epistle relative to "the common salvation" (i.e., salvation by grace through faith, *a subject which NONE of the epistles centers on*), *the Spirit of God led him to write on an entirely different subject.*

The Spirit of God led Jude to write an epistle exhorting Christians to "earnestly contend [*lit.*, 'earnestly strive'] for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints [the good

news concerning salvation in relation to the coming glory of Christ, something seen as central in the subject matter of *ALL the epistles*]” (v. 3).

The words “fight” (I Tim. 6:12), “fought” (II Tim. 4:7), and “contend” (Jude 3) are translations of the same word in the Greek text — *agonizomai*, the word from which our English word, “agonize,” is derived.

In Jude though, the word has been intensified through the writer prefixing the Greek preposition *epi* to the word, forming *epagonizomai*. Thus, the correct translation would be, “earnestly strive...”

In all three of the preceding passages, the thought, through the use of *agonizomai*, has to do with *straining EVERY muscle of one’s being relative to “the faith.”*

In the first two references (from I, II Timothy), the picture is that of an athletic contest. Christians are to *strain EVERY muscle of their being in the present race of “the faith” in which they find themselves engaged.*

Then Jude, in the face of apostasy relative to “the faith,” also remaining within the thought of an athletic contest, *intensified the word.*

Jude, because of *apostasy* among Christians relative to “the faith” — Christians giving heed to seducing spirits, teaching the doctrines of demons (something also spoken of by Christ, Paul, and Peter) — *intensified* the thought of striving in his exhortation. He, in essence, exhorted Christians, while running the race of “the faith,” *to be ESPECIALLY and PARTICULARLY on guard because of the apostates.*

And it is apparent that Jude, *with a view to the apostates*, intensified this word because of the specific nature of apostasy, because of the realm in which the apostates had centered their teachings — *seeking to mislead Christians relative to “the faith,” seeking to draw Christians away from the central teaching of Scripture.*

And the preceding would form only a few examples of the way that the expression, "the faith," is used in the New Testament.

Other examples would be:

The conversion of priests in Israel during the re-offer of the kingdom, who were then "obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7).

Disciples exhorted "to continue in the faith" *relative to entrance into the kingdom* (Acts 14:22).

Paul proclaiming "the faith" which he had once sought to destroy (Gal. 1:23; cf. Eph. 6:16; Phil. 1:27; Col. 1:23; 2:7; I Thess. 5:8; II Thess. 1:4, 11; I Tim. 1:2, 19b; 5:8; 6:10, 21; II Tim. 2:18; 3:8; 4:7).

And the usage of the expression in Hebrews and the general epistles (cf. Heb. 12:2; James 1:3; 2:14, 17, 18, 20, 22, 26; I Peter 1:7, 9).

"Faith" is *articular in the Greek text in each of the preceding references.*

Thus, there is a uniform usage of this expression throughout the New Testament. And, though it doesn't have to do with "the complete body of Biblical truth" held by those forming "fundamental Christendom," and others, it does have to do with a body of Biblical doctrine.

It has to do with that body of Biblical doctrine rejected by Christendom at large — rejected by those in fundamental and liberal circles alike.

It has to do with that body of Biblical doctrine referred to various ways in Scripture — *the Word of the Kingdom, the mystery, Paul's gospel, the gospel of the glory of Christ, or just the word "gospel" itself in the Pauline epistles.*

(And, seeing *HOW* this expression is used throughout the N.T., the misuse of *the expression can ONLY be looked upon ONE*

way. As previously seen, regardless of how those misusing the expression understand the matter, it can *ONLY* be looked upon as something aligned with the doctrine of demons [cf. Matt. 12:30].

Like so many other things in Scripture which are treated in a similar manner by Christians today, *that dealt with in the text has been replaced with something NOT dealt with in the text.*

And, because of *WHERE* Satan has centered his attack, *that being replaced in the text with something NOT dealt with in the text, something foreign to the text, invariably occurs in some facet of "the Word of the Kingdom."*)

The "doctrines of demons," promulgated by the apostates, *is the MOST dangerous and deadly teaching that has ever been proclaimed or ever will be proclaimed in Christian circles, for the complete panorama of this false doctrine centers on a leavening of ALL truth pertaining to "the faith."*

2) Marriage, Meats

Foundational principals and Biblical doctrine surrounding the marriage relationship have forever been set forth in the opening chapters of Genesis.

And, any time one finds the man and the woman together beyond this point — whether during Man's Day or during the coming Lord's Day — *RULERSHIP would have to be in view.*

Or, to present the truth of the matter from another perspective, turn the statement around.

Any time one finds *RULERSHIP in view* beyond the opening chapters of Genesis (relative to man), a husband-wife relationship *would also have to be in view.*

THIS is WHY Israel is seen *as the wife of Jehovah* in the Old Testament theocracy — a wife later seen *as an adulterous wife*, resulting in God divorcing Israel, with God then, *of necessity*, ending the Old Testament theocracy (cf. Jer. 3:1-14; Ezek. 9:3; 10:4, 18; 11:22, 23).

And THIS is also WHY, BEFORE a theocracy can be established on the earth yet future, Israel HAS to be cleansed and restored to her former place, as the wife of Jehovah.

A Husband-wife relationship MUST exist at this time.

THIS is also WHY Christ is to have a wife yet future.

IF Christ is to reign over the earth as the second Man, the last Adam, He MUST have a consort queen to reign with Him.

This is WHY a marriage MUST occur prior to the time He reigns.

A Husband-wife relationship MUST exist at THIS time.

And further, *THIS is WHY the husband-wife relationship today, during Man's Day, is dealt with in Scripture in connection with an heirship together* (I Peter 3:7). There is *a present reigning in life*, seen in the marriage relationship; and *THIS is at the heart of that which Paul refers to as "a great mystery" relative to "Christ and the Church" in Eph. 5:21-33.*

a) Two Old Testament Books on the Subject

There are two books in the Old Testament which bear the names of women. One is "Ruth," and the other is "Esther."

And, interestingly enough, no one knows who wrote either book. The Book of Ruth presents one aspect of this overall matter, and the Book of Esther presents the other.

The Book of Ruth *has to do with a Gentile who marries a Jew, with a redeemed inheritance in view. Ruth, in her marriage to Boaz, sets forth truths surrounding Christ and His wife yet future.*

And the entire Book of Ruth sets forth the overall scope of the matter from beginning to end, *with the husband-wife relationship, in connection with the inheritance, being brought to the forefront in the end.*

The Book of Esther then presents the matter as it relates *to God and Israel.*

Esther was a Jew whom King Ahasuerus (who was not a Jew [note that it is God's Son Who is a Jew and will so remain

throughout eternity, not the Father]) had taken as his wife following the former queen's (Vashti's) refusal to fulfill her role as the king's wife (1:9ff).

Then the remainder of the book revolves around *Israel in the latter days (Haman typifying Antichrist), the end of Gentile world power, and Israel restored to the nation's rightful place as the wife of Jehovah, with an inheritance in view (2:17ff).*

(For additional information on the preceding, refer to the author's books, *Ruth* and *Esther*.)

b) Subject Permeating the Whole of Scripture

Thus, the whole of that seen in the marriage relationship beyond Gen. 1:26-28 (along with that revealed in chapter two) rests on these foundational verses in Genesis. The husband-wife relationship today has its basis in the past (Gen. 1:26ff) and points to the future (Rev. 19:7ff).

And whether it is Israel on the earth or the Church in the heavens, *there can be NO future reign over the earth APART FROM this relationship existing between God and Israel and between Christ and the Church.*

Ministry of the Spirit Today

Understanding the preceding will allow one to clearly understand that which God revealed concerning *Israel and the Church* in Genesis chapters twenty-two through twenty-five.

In these four chapters, God, through Moses, revealed things concerning *BOTH the wife of Jehovah and the wife of Christ*; and this was based on that revealed in the first three chapters of Genesis, but with a view to the goal of the matter in the future Lord's Day. And God set all of this forth long before He brought either Israel or the Church into existence (cf. Isa. 46:9, 10).

The ministry of the Spirit during the present dispensation is seen in Genesis chapter twenty-four, about nineteen hundred years before it even began. Events in this chapter — Abraham sending his eldest servant into the far country to obtain a bride for His son, typifying God sending the Spirit into the world to obtain a bride for His Son — *occurred FOLLOWING the offering of Isaac (ch. 22) and the death of Sarah (ch. 23), BUT BEFORE the remarriage of Abraham (ch. 25).*

That is to say, the ministry of the Spirit during the present dispensation occurs *FOLLOWING* the events of Calvary (ch. 22) and the setting aside of Israel (ch. 23), *BUT BEFORE* the time God restores Israel as His wife (ch. 25).

And, further, the ministry of the Spirit in the world today, as seen in the type in Genesis chapter twenty-four, is clearly revealed *to be THAT of obtaining a bride for God's Son.*

And, in line with the preceding, any facet of the Spirit's work during the time of His mission — whether it be among the unsaved (effecting life, based on the finished work of the Son) or among the saved (leading saved individuals "into all truth," from *gnosis* to *epignosis* [from immaturity to maturity]) — *MUST center around His REVEALED mission during the present dispensation, as seen in Genesis chapter twenty-four.*

The reason *WHY* God sent the Spirit into the world to accomplish such a mission is easy to see and understand if one keeps in mind the God-established issues surrounding the husband-wife relationship.

The Son MUST have a wife IF He is to reign. And Christians as well — anticipating the Son's reign — CANNOT reign apart from this SAME relationship.

The coming millennial reign of the Son will be a theocracy wherein *God the Father will have a wife on earth* (seen in the type in Gen. 25) *and the Son will have a wife in the heavens above the earth* (a wife presently being procured through the work of the Spirit, seen in the type in Gen. 24).

And in order for any individual from the human race to rule and reign in that coming day, *that person will HAVE to be a part of EITHER the wife of Jehovah on the earth OR the wife of the Son in the heavens.*

There can be NO rule and reign for anyone — man, or God's Son — apart from this established, Husband-wife relationship.

The preceding is why “marriage” and “meats” are singled out in I Tim. 4:3.

The marriage relationship today is based on that which God established in past time, and reflects on that which will ultimately be brought into full fruition during future time. And it matters not whether the word “marriage” in this verse is understood in a literal sense (referring to the marriage relationship today) or in a spiritual sense (referring to Christ and His wife yet future), *the SAME thing is STILL being dealt with.*

A husband-wife relationship today is based on that which God established in the past and directly reflects on that which He will bring to fruition yet future. It directly reflects on Christ and His wife yet future.

And the preceding is *WHY* any corruption of the marriage relationship by man (adultery, homosexuality, etc.) is dealt with so severely in Scripture.

ANY deviation from that which God established is a corruption, with far-reaching ramifications.

Marriage, as established by God, has to do with *regality*; and *THIS regality is to be realized in its ultimate sense during the coming Messianic Era.*

And *ALL of man's corruptions in this realm* are simply offshoots of Satan's attempted, multi-faceted corruption surrounding the whole panorama of Biblical doctrine (“meats”) pertaining to the marriage relationship.

9

Christ and the Church

Seen in the Typology of Boaz and Ruth

“Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess...

And Boaz said unto the Elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi.

Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife...

So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife..." (Ruth 4:5a, 9, 10a, 13a).

A major, necessary key to understand the fifth and sixth parables in Matthew chapter thirteen (vv. 44-46), which Christ gave once He had reentered the house (v. 36), is seen in understanding *marriage* as it occurs in both type and antitype in Scripture.

1. As it occurred with Boaz and Ruth.
2. As it will occur with Christ and His bride.
3. As it occurred with Ahasuerus and Esther.
4. As it will occur when God again takes Israel as His wife.

(This subject was dealt with in a general way in the last chapter of this book, it will be dealt with in relation to Christ and the Church in this chapter [from the Book of Ruth], and it will be dealt with in relation to God and Israel in the next chapter [from the Book of Esther].)

Thus, understanding the typology of both Ruth and Esther (particularly Ruth, as matters pertain to both the redemption of the inheritance and marriage), is vitally necessary in order to properly understand the next two parables in Matthew chapter thirteen.

That seen in the fifth parable, the parable of the treasure, is foreshadowed by events in Ruth chapter four — Boaz's redemption of a forfeited inheritance belonging to Elimelech's family (*with Ruth, through this redemption, becoming his wife*), typifying Christ's redemption of a forfeited inheritance (*with the Church, through this redemption, becoming His wife*).

In the type, *these things occurred ONLY AFTER*:

1. *Ruth had BECOME a member of Elimelech's family (ch. 1).*
2. *Ruth had GLEANED in Boaz's field FROM morning UNTIL evening, FROM the beginning TO the end of the barley harvest (ch. 2).*
3. *Ruth had PREPARED herself for an appearance on Boaz's threshing floor at MIDNIGHT (ch. 3).*

And so it is in the antitype. *ALL of these things precede the redemptive act seen in chapter four — type or antitype.*

The Family Relationship (Chapter One)

The Book of Ruth begins with a Jewish family (a father [Elimelech], a mother [Naomi], and their two sons [Mahlon and Chilion]) leaving Bethlehem because of a famine in the land, sojourning in Moab. The family dwelled in Moab for awhile; then the father died. This left Naomi, the mother, and her two sons, Mahlon and Chilion (vv. 1-3).

The sons then took wives of the women of Moab. Mahlon married Ruth, Chilion married Orpah, and they dwelled in the land together for about ten years.

Naomi's two sons then died, which left Naomi with only her two daughters-in-law (vv. 4, 5).

After this, Naomi received word that the famine had ended in her own country; and she made the necessary preparations to leave Moab and return to Bethlehem (v. 6).

She departed on the journey toward Bethlehem, with Ruth and Orpah. But, while en route, Naomi urged her two daughters-in-law to return to the people which they had left rather than accompany her the remainder of the way.

Orpah, at this point in the journey, chose to turn back; but Ruth chose to continue the journey (vv. 7ff).

Ruth, in her determination to continue the journey with Naomi, said:

“Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:

Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me” (vv. 16, 17).

Then Naomi, seeing that Ruth *was determined* to continue on to Bethlehem with her, “left speaking to her.” And the two of them continued the journey together (vv. 18ff).

Thus, the family relationship was established at the very beginning of the book, with the remainder of the book providing numerous details concerning this relationship.

And three particulars are presented about this family relationship in the first chapter:

1. *Ruth and Orpah were taken from the Gentiles.*
2. *Ruth and Orpah were joined to a Jewish family.*
3. *A division later occurred within this family relationship — Ruth went on with Naomi, Orpah turned back.*

All of this, of course, is typical of events occurring within God's economy during the present dispensation.

God is presently *removing from the Gentiles* "a people for his name" (Acts 15:14; cf. Rom. 11:25). Israel has been set aside for a dispensation, while the Spirit of God *acquires a bride* for God's Son. And this Gentile bride, as Ruth, *MUST possess a Jewish relationship*. *There can be NO journey to Bethlehem, the House of Bread, apart from an association with the Jews.*

Four thousand years ago God called one man out of the human race to be the channel through whom the remainder of the human race *would be blessed*.

God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, gave him a land through an unconditional covenant, and promised that through this one man and his seed (through Isaac, Jacob, and his lineal descendants, through his twelve sons) all the Gentile nations of the earth would be blessed (Gen. 12:1-3; cf. Gen. 13:14-18; 15:18-21; 22:17, 18).

Beyond this point in Scripture, *ALL spiritual blessings* (salvation, or any other blessing) coming to mankind *could come ONLY through Abraham and his descendants, through the lineage of Isaac and Jacob*.

THIS is the way God ESTABLISHED matters very early in His revelation to man, THIS is the way they PRESENTLY exist, and THIS is the way they will ALWAYS exist, whether in time or in eternity.

(Actually, God had previously established matters in this respect beginning with Shem [Gen. 9:25-27]; then Abraham, a descendant of Shem, was singled out about five hundred years later as the one through whom that seen beginning with Shem would be fulfilled.)

Salvation for Gentiles today (or for Jews) can be effected *ONLY through Divine power and ONLY through that which God has brought to pass through the Jewish people*.

Note two verses of Scripture in this respect:

"Salvation is of the Lord" (Jonah 2:9b).

"Salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22b).

Both *MUST* be true. Salvation *MUST be of the Lord* because unsaved man is "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). Unsaved man *is completely incapable* of acting in the spiritual realm. *He is spiritually dead*, and Another must act on his behalf *in order to effect life where no life exists*.

And this is accomplished through the Spirit of God breathing life into unregenerate man, *on the basis of the finished work of God's Son, a Jew*.

Thus, *salvation is BOTH "of the Lord" and "of the Jews."* Individuals passing "from death unto life," through the work of the Spirit during the present dispensation (cf. John 5:24; Eph. 2:1, 5) are, positionally, "in Christ," *Abraham's Seed*. And since Christ is *Abraham's seed*, they too, because of their position "in Christ," are also *Abraham's seed* (Gal. 3:16, 29).

Those who, in time past, were "aliens from the commonwealth [citizenship, having to do with *regal activity*] of Israel" have been "made nigh ['brought near']"; and, through being "Abraham's seed," are now "heirs according to the promise [*heavenly, NOT earthly*]." They, through being *Abraham's seed*, have the prospect of one day participating *in regal activity in the heavens with the greater Son of Abraham, the Lord Jesus Christ* (Gal. 3:26-29; Eph. 2:12, 13).

But, going back to the type, note the difference which Scripture presents between Ruth and Orpah after they had become members of the family and had begun the journey to Bethlehem, the House of Bread.

Ruth determined within herself to complete the journey. But not so with Orpah. She turned back.

And so it MUST BE on the one hand and IS on the other with Christians today. ALL Christians ARE in a position to begin the journey toward the House of Bread, BUT NOT ALL begin

or complete the journey. Some, like Ruth, leave the country from which they were called and go on (*ref.* the fourth part of the parable of the Sower in Chapter IV of this book); but others either never really begin the journey or, like Orpah, turn back after beginning the journey (*ref.* the first three parts of the parable of the Sower).

In the typology of Gen. 24:57, 58, Ruth, as Rebekah — in response to the question, “Wilt thou go with this man?” — said, “I will go.” *And Ruth WENT on with Naomi, TOWARD the House of Bread.*

Orpah though *DIDN'T* respond in this manner. *Instead, she TURNED back.*

At the time of the journey, Ruth and Orpah were related to Naomi *through death* (though the prior death of their husbands had terminated the marriage relationship itself).

And, in the antitype, Christians are also members of the family *through death*. Christians are Abraham's seed *through death, the death of Another*.

But, though Orpah, *after turning back*, remained just as much a member of the family as Ruth, *there is NO mention* of her in the Book of Ruth beyond the point of *her turning back*, just as *there is NO mention* of Lot's wife in the Genesis account beyond the point of *her looking back* [Gen. 19:26].

Christ's admonitions and warnings in this respect are clear; note Luke 9:62; 17:32:

“No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

“Remember Lot's wife.”

Gleaning in Boaz's Field (Chapter Two)

Once Naomi and Ruth had arrived in Bethlehem, attention is called to two things:

1. *They had returned at the beginning of barley harvest.*
2. *Naomi had a kinsman (through her deceased husband), Boaz, in whose field Ruth could glean grain.*

And this is where Ruth found herself — gleaning in Boaz's field (1:22-2:3).

Boaz, “a mighty man of wealth,” took note of Ruth gleaning in his field, inquired of her, *instructed her to NOT glean in any other field, and then instructed his workers in the field to purposefully LEAVE handfuls of grain for her to glean.*

And Ruth gleaned in Boaz's field after this fashion FROM morning UNTIL evening, FROM the beginning TO the end of the harvest (2:4-23).

ALL of this is a picture of the Christian in the race of “the faith,” gleaning in the field of the One Whom Boaz typifies.

A “field” is used in Scripture to typify *the world* (Matt. 13:38; cf. Gen. 37:15), and “gleaning” in the field has to do with *bringing forth fruit* while in the world.

The “length” of the gleaning (from morning until evening, from the beginning to the end of the harvest) has to do with *a never-ending work, extending throughout the dispensation.*

A Christian is to SET his sights on the goal out ahead, and he is to be BUSY throughout the course of the dispensation, in his Master's field. And he is to CONCERN himself with ONE thing. He is to CONCERN himself with THAT provided for him to glean, NOT with that provided for another to glean.

Boaz instructed his workers to purposefully leave handfuls of grain behind for Ruth to glean. Thus, *Boaz provided THAT which Ruth was to glean, giving his workers instructions that it was to be left specifically for her. And all she had to do was glean THAT which the workers, at Boaz's instructions, had left.*

And so it is with Christians bringing forth fruit today. *The Lord of the harvest has provided for each and every Christian. And Christians are to simply glean THAT which the Lord has provided*

for *THEM, PERSONALLY, to glean.* And they are to do this through working in *THAT part of the field where the Lord has placed them, NOT in another Christian's part (Matt. 13:18-23).*

Then *the length of time* in which they are to be busy in the Master's field, after this fashion, is simply stated. It is "until even" on the one hand, and it is "unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest" on the other (2:17, 23).

It is a *NEVER CEASING work, and it is to continue UNTIL the end of the present dispensation.*

And another thing relative to the harvest stands out in the text—something of utmost importance and significance. Ruth, after she had gleaned in the field throughout the day, "beat out that she had gleaned," leaving "about an ephah of barley" (2:17). That is, she *DIDN'T* confine her work to just one part of the task — gathering the grain which had been left for her.

Rather, after gathering the grain, she worked with that which she had gleaned, removing the grain from the stalk. She worked with that which she had gleaned *UNTIL the valuable part ALONE remained.*

And so it is with Christians today. They *are NOT* to confine themselves to just one part of the task. They, for example, *are NOT* to cease their work following the proclamation of the message of salvation by grace through faith. Rather, once a person has been saved, *they are THEN* to continue their work with that which has been taken from the field. *They are THEN* to provide instruction concerning why the person has been saved. *They are THEN* to proclaim all the various facets of the message surrounding the coming glory of Christ. *And they are to provide this instruction UNTIL a certain revealed time.*

Remaining within the framework of the type, they are to reap stalks of grain from the field. *THEN*, they are to continue the harvest, working with that which has been gleaned from the field.

And they are to continue this work *UNTIL that which is worthless has been separated from that which is of value*. They are to continue this work *UNTIL individuals have been brought from immaturity to maturity* (from *gnosis* to *epignosis*), *UNTIL they have been grounded in "the faith"* (Eph. 4:11-15).

Note *HOW* Paul conducted his ministry along these lines (cf. Acts 20:20-32; Col. 1:1-29).

And note *Paul's COMMAND* along these same lines in his second epistle to Timothy:

"But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (4:5).

The word "evangelist" (Gk., *euaggelistes*) means, *a proclaimer of the gospel, a proclaimer of the good news*. The word is *NOT* used in *Scripture* in the narrow sense in which it is often used in Christendom today — one proclaiming *ONLY* the good news as it pertains to salvation by grace.

Scripture uses this word in a much broader sense. Timothy, being told to "do the work of an evangelist," was simply *being told to proclaim the good news*.

What good news was he to proclaim? The context itself has to do with the good news of the coming glory of Christ (cf. 3:15; 4:1, 7, 8). Thus, contextually, this facet of the good news would be foremost in view.

But there is another facet to the good news — a preceding facet — the good news of the grace of God. And the command to Timothy *could NOT preclude this facet of the good news, THOUGH the context deals with the other*.

In other words, if Timothy was dealing with the unsaved, he was to proclaim the good news of the grace of God. He couldn't proclaim anything else to them, for they were still "dead in trespasses and sins." They were incapable of spiritual discernment (I Cor. 2:14).

But, *ONCE* they had been “quickened,” made alive (Eph. 2:5), *he was NO longer* to proclaim the good news of the grace of God to them. Such would be meaningless, for they had already heard and responded to this message. *He was THEN to proclaim the good news of the coming glory of Christ, for NOW they could understand spiritual truth* (1 Cor. 2:9-13).

Either way though *he would be doing the work of an evangelist*. That is, he would be proclaiming good news, whether relative to salvation by grace or the coming glory of Christ.

And placing this within the framework of the type in Ruth chapter two, the same person proclaiming the good news of the grace of God to the unsaved is then to proclaim the good news of the coming glory of Christ to those responding.

And he is to continue the latter UNTIL the wheat has been separated from the chaff, ELSE the Lord of the harvest will, Himself, have to make this separation at the judgment seat.

(In the preceding respect, there is often an unBiblical distinction made between an “evangelist” and a “pastor-teacher,” as seen in Eph. 4:11. In actuality, their message is *the same*. It involves both *the gospel of the grace of God and the gospel of the glory of Christ*.

The difference in their ministries would lie more in the fact that a pastor-teacher has a flock entrusted to him, which means that the emphasis in his ministry would undoubtedly fall more into the latter category than the former. But the fact remains. Both the evangelist and the pastor-teacher are to proclaim *the WHOLE of the good news*, with circumstances determining where the emphasis is to be placed.)

Preparation for Meeting Boaz (Chapter Three)

Chapter three in the Book of Ruth presents two main

things. This chapter presents *Ruth preparing herself for a future meeting with Boaz, and the necessary details concerning that meeting. And the WHOLE of the matter — how Ruth was to prepare herself for this future meeting, on Boaz's threshing floor — was TOLD to her by Naomi.*

That would be to say, Ruth, a Gentile, *learned EVERYTHING she knew* about how to prepare herself for the future meeting with Boaz, along with details concerning the actual meeting itself, *FROM a JEW.*

And *IF* Christians in the antitype today would know anything about present preparation for a future meeting with Christ, on His threshing floor, along with details concerning that meeting, *they will have to learn these things from that which God gave TO and THROUGH ISRAEL. They will have to learn these things FROM a JEWISH book, which relates the story of a JEWISH Saviour.*

“He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel.

He hath not dealt so with any nation [any Gentile]: and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord” (Ps. 147:19, 20).

1) Preparation

Naomi, speaking to Ruth, set forth three things which she was to do by way of preparation prior to going forth to meet Boaz.

Naomi told Ruth:

“Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor...” (3:3a).

Ruth prepared herself after this threefold fashion, and she then met Boaz on his threshing floor. And this, resultingly, set a sequence of events in motion which are seen brought to a conclusion in the fourth chapter of the book.

a) *Wash Thyself*

“Washing” has to do with *cleansing*, and the overall thought in Ruth 3:3 has to do with the necessity of Ruth presenting herself *CLEAN* in Boaz presence.

And, brought over into the antitype, *EXACTLY* the same thing is seen — the necessity of Christians presenting themselves *CLEAN* in Christ’s presence, in that future day.

Cleansing in this typical sense, as presented in the Book of Ruth, can be seen numerous places throughout Scripture.

Old Testament priests, for example, were given a complete bath upon their entrance into the priesthood (a one-time event, never to be repeated [Ex. 29:4; 40:12-15]); and then, subsequent provision was made for repeated washings of the priests’ hands and feet as they became defiled in the process of carrying out their ministry (Ex. 30:19-21).

These latter washings were that which Christ dealt with when washing the disciples’ feet in John 13:8-10. A washing of the complete body had already occurred. Thus, only washings of parts of the body were now necessary.

And that pictured by these latter washings when Christ washed the disciples’ feet is also the same type washing dealt with in Ruth 3:3. Ruth washed herself *as a MEMBER of the family, NOT to become a MEMBER of the family.*

Water, as used in these various washings different places in Scripture, *can NEVER take away sin. BUT*, a washing of the complete body and subsequent washings of parts of the body, after the fashion presented, *point to that which can — Christ’s shed blood.*

In the Old Testament sacrifice, shed blood *covered sin*. The sin itself actually still remained, though God didn’t see the sin. Rather *He saw ONLY the blood which covered the sin.*

BUT, the shed blood of Christ, to which all of the Old Testament sacrifices pointed, goes a step further. The shed blood of Christ does away with sin. Rather than cover sin, *Christ’s shed*

blood completely removes sin, with the sin no longer even existing.

A Christian, by means of Christ's blood, has been cleansed completely. Within the typology seen in the Old Testament, his complete body has been washed, never to be repeated (a cleansing which has to do with the past aspect of salvation, the salvation of his spirit).

But, also within the typology seen in the Old Testament, defilement occurs in the process of the Christian carrying out his ministry in the field, necessitating repeated cleansings of parts of the body, as they become defiled (cleansings which have to do with present and future aspects of salvation, the salvation of the soul). And that's what the present high priestly ministry of Christ is about.

Christ's present high priestly ministry is being performed in the heavenly sanctuary, *on the basis of His shed blood on the mercy seat, to provide a present cleansing for the kingdom of priests which He is about to bring forth.*

It is being performed *for Christians (MEMBERS of the family), so that they can be properly prepared for an inevitable future meeting, a meeting with Christ on His threshing floor.*

And it is being performed so Christians can appear in His presence, in that future day, *in a clean manner* (cf. I John 1:7-2:2).

b) Anoint Thee

"Oil" was used in the Old Testament to anoint prophets, priests, and kings. And there was a connection between the use of oil after this fashion and the Holy Spirit coming upon an individual to empower him for the office to which he was being consecrated.

The anointing of Saul and David would be two such examples (I Sam. 10:1, 6; 16:13). The Spirit came upon each following their being anointed, to empower them for the regal tasks which they were to perform.

Then the parable of the ten virgins sets forth matters as they would exist relative to the Holy Spirit and Christians during the present dispensation. *ALL ten virgins had oil in their vessels, BUT ONLY five possessed an extra supply of oil.*

That would be to say, *ALL Christians have that spoken of in the parable through the use of oil, BUT NOT ALL Christians possess an extra supply of oil.* That is, *ALL Christians are indwelt by the Spirit, BUT NOT ALL Christians are filled with the Spirit.*

And, AS Ruth COULD NOT be properly prepared for meeting Boaz apart from being anointed, NEITHER CAN a Christian be properly prepared for meeting Christ apart from being filled with the Spirit.

This will become more evident through viewing the third part of Naomi's command concerning proper preparation.

c) Put Thy Raiment Upon Thee

Ruth was going forth to meet the Bridegroom, and so are Christians in the antitype. And an individual going forth to meet the Bridegroom *MUST NOT ONLY be properly prepared through that shown by the washing and the anointing BUT ALSO through that shown by the raiment.*

And in view of that which lay ahead and that which Scripture elsewhere has to say about this matter, *ONLY one thing can be in view in this part of Naomi's command to Ruth, as it relates to Christians. ONLY the wedding garment can possibly be in view.*

This apparel, according to Rev. 19:7, 8, is made up of "the righteousness [*lit.*, 'righteous acts'] of saints." This is something which Christians progressively weave for themselves, over time, as they glean in the field and beat out the grain.

And to do this work in a proper manner, with the wedding garment being progressively woven, an extra supply of oil is necessary.

That is, *being filled with the Spirit for the task at hand is an absolute necessity, for ONLY through being filled with the Spirit can a work in the spiritual realm be effectively accomplished.*

Appearing in Christ's presence in that future day *without a wedding garment* is the central issue in the parable of the marriage feast (Matt. 22:1-14) and is a central issue in the letter to the Church in Laodicea (Rev. 3:14-21).

Relative to the man appearing *without a wedding garment* and the subject at hand in Matt. 22:1-14 — the wedding festivities — the man was cast into the darkness outside the banqueting hall (v. 13).

And relative to an entire Church appearing *naked in Christ's presence* and the subject at hand in Rev. 3:14-21 — ruling from His throne (v. 21) — Christ said, "I will spue thee out of my mouth" (v. 16).

CLEAR instructions concerning the necessary preparation have been given, and clear warnings have been sounded concerning THAT which will occur IF the instructions are NOT followed.

ANY Christian presently in possession of the Word of God — presently in possession of these instructions and warnings — who does NOT follow, ignores, THIS revelation and one day finds himself/herself in Christ's presence, in an unprepared manner, will be WITHOUT excuse.

2) On the Threshing Floor

The threshing floor was the place where the grain was taken to be beaten out and separated from the chaff. This is the place where *that of value was separated from that which was worthless.*

John the Baptist connected the threshing floor with Christ's future judgment of His people (Matt. 3:12), and he could only have drawn this thought from that set forth in the Old Testament types. This is the place where "the chaff" *will be burned "with unquenchable fire,"* which could only

have been what Paul had in mind in his first letter to those in Corinth (3:12-15).

Ruth appeared on Boaz's threshing floor *in a PARTICULAR manner, at a PARTICULAR time.*

She appeared in a PREPARED manner, at MIDNIGHT.

"Midnight" in Scripture is always used in connection with *JUDGMENT*. That's the manner in which the word is first used in Scripture (Ex. 11:4), *establishing a first-mention principle, which can NEVER change.* And, with the usage of the word set in this manner, any subsequent place in Scripture where the word is used, *JUDGMENT has to always be in view* (e.g., Job 34:20; Ps. 119:62; Matt. 25:6).

("Midnight" is a translation of two words in both the Hebrew and Greek texts [also, at times, a compound word in the Greek text] — *lit.*, "the middle of the night," either Hebrew or Greek.)

Thus, both "the time" and "the place" of Ruth's appearance in Boaz's presence *speak of judgment.* *BUT*, Ruth herself, passing through that connected with judgment, was *BLESSED* (3:10); and the reason is obvious. Ruth was *PROPERLY prepared* for this appearance. Ruth was *PROPERLY prepared* for that which lay ahead.

NOT ONLY had Ruth washed herself, anointed herself, and put on raiment, BUT she had also threshed that which she had gleaned from the field prior to her appearance in Boaz's presence.

Had she brought the grain which she had gleaned from Boaz's field with her to the threshing floor, *there would have been NOTHING more for Boaz to do with it, for it had already been threshed. That which was of no value had already been removed.*

In the light of I Cor. 11:31, 32, Ruth had brought matters to pass in such a manner *that events on the threshing floor could have had NO affect on that which she had gleaned from the field.*

Or, in the light of I Cor. 3:11-15, there could have been NO “wood, hay, stubble” threshed from her gleanings. This had already been removed.

Ruth was prepared *in EVERY way possible* for the meeting with Boaz, on his threshing floor. *Thus, ONLY blessings could possibly have ensued.*

Redemption of the Inheritance (Chapter Four)

The redemption seen in Ruth chapter four, chronologically, occurred *AFTER all the events depicted in chapters one through three had been completed*. This redemption had to do with a work which occurred *FOLLOWING events on the threshing floor, and this work had to do with two things:*

1. *Boaz's redemption of a forfeited inheritance belonging to Elimelech's family, belonging more particularly to Naomi following Elimelech's death (4:3, 5).*

2. *Ruth, through Boaz's redemptive work, becoming his wife (4:5, 9, 10).*

And once the inheritance had been redeemed, *with Ruth becoming Boaz's wife, the inheritance THEN belonged to THEM.*

This, of course, in the antitype, has to do with *a redemptive work to be performed by Christ, on behalf of Christians, FOLLOWING events at the judgment seat.*

(Note the “timing” of events surrounding the judgment seat in the preceding respect.

Most Bible students see events surrounding the judgment seat occurring either preceding the Tribulation or concurrently with events during the Tribulation — the judgment seat in the heavens and the tribulation here on earth.

Then, some Bible students see events surrounding the judgment seat occurring after the Tribulation, here on earth, following Christ's return.

BUT, WHAT does Scripture say about the matter?

Typology from the Book of Ruth has these events occurring *BEFORE* the Tribulation. Ruth appears on Boaz's threshing floor (ch. 3) *BEFORE* the redemption of the inheritance (ch. 4).

And the Book of Revelation, in complete accord with the Book of Ruth, *has these events NOT ONLY occurring BEFORE the Tribulation, BEFORE the redemption of the inheritance, BUT ALSO occurring in the heavens.* Events surrounding the judgment seat are seen in the first four chapters, with the redemption of the inheritance seen in subsequent chapters (chs. 5ff).

WHY do SO MANY Bible students go SO WRONG on the "timing" of the rapture?

Remaining within material in the preceding two paragraphs, the answer is simple. They have ignored the types, and they have ignored how the Book of Revelation is structured ["signified," stated in the opening verse].

The preceding simply relates two ways parts of Scripture have been structured — "typically," and "signified." Allow Scripture [after the manner in which it has been structured (cf. Heb. 1, 2)] to interpret Scripture [after the manner in which it has been structured].

You will be right and come out ahead every time!

Then, to complete matters, once the forfeited inheritance has been redeemed, *the one typified by Ruth will have become the wife of the One typified by Boaz, with the inheritance belonging to THEM.*

(For additional information on Christ's dealings with the Church, as presented in this chapter, refer to the author's book, *Ruth*.)

The redemption of the inheritance and the bride, through this redemption, becoming Christ's wife form the central subject of the fifth and sixth parables in Matthew chapter thirteen, dealt with in Chapters XI, XII in this book.

For additional information on this subject, see the author's book, *The Time of the End*, Chapters VIII, IX.)

10

God and Israel

Seen in the Typology of Ahasuerus, Vashti, and Esther

“If it please the king, let there be a royal commandment from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, that it be not altered, That Vashti come no more before king Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she...

And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head and made her queen instead of Vashti...

After these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes...

Then the king Ahasuerus said unto Esther the queen and to Mordecai the Jew, Behold, I have given Esther the House of Haman, and him have they hanged upon the gallows, because he laid his hand upon the Jews...

And the king Ahasuerus laid a tribute upon the land, and upon the isles of the sea.

And all the acts of his power and of his might, and the declaration of the greatness of Mordecai, whereupon the king advanced him, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia?

For Mordecai the Jew was next unto king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed” (Esther 1:19; 2:17; 3:1; 8:7; 10:1-3).

The Books of Ruth and Esther are companion books in Scripture, presenting two overall chronologies of interrelated events *having to do with the MARRIAGE relationship as it pertains to REGALITY*.

The book of Ruth presents a history of *Christ and the Church*, culminating with the Son possessing a wife to rule as consort queen with Him.

The Book of Esther presents a history of *God and Israel*, culminating with the Father possessing a restored wife to rule as consort queen with Him.

Both books *begin in past time*, carry the reader through events occurring *during present time*, and culminate *at the same point in future time*.

These are the only books in Scripture named for women, and no one knows who wrote either book. They both stand together in this respect.

But they also both stand together in a far greater and more significant respect.

These two books, together, relate the COMPLETE story of BOTH the Father and the Son as it pertains to a REGAL principle within the MARRIAGE relationship, set forth very early in Scripture:

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and *let them have dominion...*” (Gen. 1:26a).

Man, created in the image and likeness of God, was created to rule the earth. But man *could NOT rule alone*. The woman, formed from a part of the man, was to rule as consort queen with him. She was *bone of his bones, and flesh of his flesh*. And the man *could NOT rule as a complete being apart from the woman* (Gen. 1:27, 28; 2:23, 24).

This will explain Adam’s act after Eve had partaken of the forbidden fruit. *Adam could NOT have eaten of the tree of life following Eve’s sin* (the tree which would have provided the wisdom and knowledge to rule and to reign), *for he could*

NOT have ascended the throne as a complete being.

Eve had to be brought back into the position which she had occupied prior to the fall in order for Adam to rule and to reign, *as a complete being.*

Thus, Adam had *NO choice* other than to partake of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, *with a view to redemption.*

And redemption would be *with a view to BOTH the man and the woman, TOGETHER, one day being in a position to eat of the tree of life and ascend the throne, as God intended when He created man and formed the woman from a part of the man.*

The sequence of events set forth through Adam's act forms a type of the second Man, the last Adam, finding His bride — a part of His very being — in a fallen state and being made sin, *with a view to redemption* (II Cor. 5:21; Eph. 5:30-32; cf. vv. 21-29).

And redemption in the antitype is the same as in the type. It is *with a view to Christ and His bride (His wife) one day ascending the throne TOGETHER, as God intended for man in the beginning, at the time of man's creation.*

Thus, Christ, the second Man, the last Adam, *CANNOT reign apart from a redeemed bride* (to be His wife), who is presently being formed from a part of His body, His very being.

To do so would violate an established Biblical principle. *The Son, during the coming Messianic Era, MUST have a wife if He is to ascend the throne and rule the earth.*

And, understanding this, the present ministry of the Spirit of God in the World — seeking a bride for God's Son (Gen. 24) — can easily be understood as well.

God has set aside an entire dispensation, lasting 2,000 years; and, at the beginning of this dispensation, God sent His Spirit into the world to acquire a bride for His Son — a work nearing completion today.

But there is another facet to this principle set forth in the opening chapters of Genesis, and this is what the Book of Esther is about.

Abraham had a natural seed, through Isaac and Jacob, which was *NOT ONLY* established in a theocracy on earth during Old Testament days *BUT* will be reestablished in a theocracy on earth during the Messianic Era.

And two things should be noted about Abraham's natural seed, the nation of Israel, during the Messianic Era:

1. *This nation will NOT form part of Christ's wife.*
2. *In order to rule, this nation will have to occupy the SAME type relationship with Another (with God) as the Church will occupy with Christ — a Husband-wife relationship.*

The latter is the reason Israel is seen in the Old Testament as *the wife of Jehovah*. This is a position which the nation *HAD to hold* in order to reign in the Old Testament theocracy, and this is a position which the nation *WILL HAVE to hold* in order to reign when the theocracy is restored.

There *HAD to be* such a relationship for Israel to rule and reign during Old Testament days, and there *WILL HAVE to be* such a relationship for Israel to rule and reign during the Messianic Era.

A relationship of this nature *HAD to exist* in the past and *WILL HAVE to exist* in the future *because of the God-established relationship between the man and the woman as it pertains to REGALITY* in Gen. 1:26.

Man simply CANNOT fulfill the reason for his creation apart from this relationship.

During the coming Messianic Era, the theocracy will have two parts — *heavenly and earthly*. *The wife of the Son*, acquired during the present dispensation, will rule *from the heavenly part*; and *the wife of Jehovah*, restored from the past dispensation, will rule *from the earthly part*.

And, as the Book of Ruth dealt with the former (*the heavenly*), the Book of Esther deals with the latter (*the earthly*).

The entire present dispensation, having to do with the Spirit's search for a bride for God's Son, is NOT dealt with at all in the Book of Esther. It is passed over entirely, for this book has to do with God and Israel.

And dealing with God and Israel after this fashion, the Book of Esther covers events surrounding both Israel's past rejection and the nation's future acceptance.

The emphasis in the book though is on the latter, not the former.

Most of the book deals with *events leading into and having to do with Israel's future acceptance, NOT with events surrounding Israel's past rejection.*

Vashti — Rejected

Israel's past rejection is seen in the experiences of Vashti, the queen. This is the manner in which the Book of Esther begins, following a brief introduction of the king and his kingdom (1:1-9).

Vashti *refused* to heed King Ahasuerus' command, and, because of the far-reaching ramifications of her refusal, the king became enraged. Through her actions, Vashti *had NOT ONLY* committed a transgression against the king *BUT ALSO* against all the people of the provinces under his command as well.

And, resultingly, *the king rejected Vashti as queen*, with a view to "her royal estate" being given to another (1:10-19).

This part of the Book of Esther covers a history of Israel extending from the days of Moses to that future time when God once again turns to Israel and begins to deal with the nation.

This part of the book covers 3,500 years of human history.

1) *From Moses to John*

Israel's history, in one respect, can be traced back to God's statement to Satan pertaining *to the Seed of the woman* at the time of man's fall (Gen. 3:15) — a reference to "Christ," Whom Israel, 4,000 years later, brought forth.

The nation's history, in another respect, can be traced back to Noah's words concerning *Shem* (Gen. 9:26). Of Noah's three sons, from whom the entire human race descended, *Shem ALONE was revealed to have a God. And so it is with the descendants of Shem through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob* (Eph. 2:12, 13).

Then, in the preceding respect, the nation's history can be traced back to God's command and promise *to Abraham* (Gen. 12:1-3). Abraham was the one called out of Ur to be the channel through which the nation of Israel and the Messiah would come. And it was through Israel, the nation bringing forth the Messiah, that God promised *to bless ALL the nations of the earth* (Gen. 12:3; John 8:37; Gal. 3:16).

And the nation's history, in still another respect, can be traced back to God's actions as they pertained *to Jacob* (Isa. 43:1-10). It was in the person of Jacob that God performed a special creative act, *setting his lineal descendants forth as separate and distinct from all the surrounding nations*.

BUT, the beginning of the nation *in relation to the theocracy was not seen UNTIL Moses' day* (Ex. 12:2). It was *ONLY* during Moses' day that a nation existed, with which God could deal *on a national basis, in relation to the theocracy, as it pertained to sonship and the rights of primogeniture* (cf. Ex. 4:22, 23; 19:5, 6; 40:34-38).

A nation was born the night of the Passover in the land of Egypt. Death had occurred through sacrificial lambs, blood had been applied (showing a substitutionary death), and the Lord had passed over those households where the blood had been applied.

The Passover, in this respect, marked “the beginning of months” for the nation of Israel (Ex. 12:2ff).

Burial then occurred in the Red Sea, and the nation subsequently stood on the eastern banks of the sea in resurrection power.

And Israel under Moses, having left Egypt (a type of the world in Scripture), was to ultimately dwell in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, within a theocracy.

God Himself was to rule in the midst of His people, and this rule was to extend throughout the entire earth, with all the nations of the earth being blessed because of and through Israel.

The extent to which Israel was to rule and be a blessing (wherein the nation refused to heed the King’s command) is that which is in view in the extent to which Vashti’s actions reached (wherein she refused to heed the king’s command).

Vashti’s refusal in the type had far-reaching ramifications which extended NOT ONLY to the king BUT to everyone in the kingdom as well (Esther 1:1, 11, 12, 16).

And Israel’s refusal in the antitype had the SAME far-reaching ramifications. Such a refusal extended NOT ONLY to the King BUT to everyone in the kingdom as well (Gen. 12:1-3; Isa. 43:1-10).

The nations of the earth were to be blessed through Israel, as Israel occupied her God-ordained place in the theocracy (Gen. 12:3; Ex. 19:5, 6). *And ANY refusal by Israel to occupy this place would have NEGATIVE repercussions (Lev. 26:14ff; Deut. 28:15ff; Hosea 1:9).*

Through such a refusal, there would be a failure to bring matters to pass concerning the King’s decreed manner in which the nations were to be blessed, and this would result in these blessings being withheld.

Thus, such a transgression on Israel’s part would be directed NOT ONLY toward God Himself BUT toward the Gentile nations of the earth as well.

And a transgression of this nature on Israel's part is EXACTLY what is seen in Old Testament history.

The theocracy reached its heights during the days of David and Solomon (some four centuries following Moses and Joshua). But even during this period, conditions within the theocracy were still far removed from that which God had intended when He called the Israelites out of Egypt under Moses.

Then, following Solomon's death and the division of the kingdom, *things began to go even further awry. Matters progressively deteriorated, and the voice of the prophets went unheeded* (cf. Matt. 23:34-37; Acts 7:51, 52).

And this *ultimately* resulted in God allowing Gentile nations to come in and carry His people captive into the very nations which those being taken captive had previously been called forth to bless.

God allowed the Assyrians to come down in 722 B.C. and carry away the northern ten tribes.

Then He allowed the Babylonians to come over in 605 B.C. and carry away the southern two tribes. And once the entire nation found itself under Gentile dominion, that period in Scripture known as "the times of the Gentiles" began.

"The times of the Gentiles" has to do with that period during Man's Day when the Gentile nations exercise regal power and authority in the world. *This time began when the theocracy was taken from Israel, and it will end when the theocracy has been restored to Israel.*

The Times of the Gentiles will come to a close *ONLY* at that future time when God concludes His dealings with Israel, at the end of the coming Tribulation, at the end of Daniel's unfulfilled Seventieth Week.

And it will be at THAT time, NOT before, that the theocracy will be restored to Israel.

2) From John Until...

But even after “the times of the Gentiles” began, God did not cast Israel aside. His promise to Solomon four hundred years earlier *remained just as true then as it had always existed, or as it always will exist*:

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (II Chron. 7:14).

Two climactic points, following the captivity, can be seen in Israel’s history in this respect — one past, and the other future. The former occurred over six hundred years after the Times of the Gentiles began, and the latter will occur at the end of the Times of the Gentiles.

Almost two thousand years ago (over six hundred years after the Times of the Gentiles began), when God sent His Son the first time, Israel was given opportunity to repent; and this was done in association with events and circumstances of a nature never before seen in the nation.

Messiah Himself was present, the kingdom of the heavens was offered to Israel (which, if the nation had accepted, would have necessitated the restoration of the earthly segment of the theocracy as well), *and there was a manifestation of signs (associated with the proffered kingdom) unlike anything previously seen in Israel*.

John the Baptist appeared as the forerunner of the Messiah, calling for Israel’s repentance, declaring that *the kingdom of the heavens* was “at hand” (Matt. 3:1ff).

Then Israel’s Messiah Himself appeared, calling for the nation’s repentance, extending the same offer of the kingdom to the Jewish people (Matt. 4:17ff).

But though numerous Jews heeded the message, the nation at large continued in the same nonrepentant way

which had marked Israel's actions so much during the days of the Old Testament theocracy (*cf.* Matt. 12:14, 22-24; 23:13; John 9:14, 33, 34; 12:9-11; 19:5-14).

Others were sent to the nation at this time — the Twelve, then the Seventy (Matt. 10:1ff; Luke 10:1ff).

BUT, a refusal on Israel's part continued. And Israel climaxed this refusal by crucifying the very One Whom John the Baptist had initially gone before and proclaimed to the nation — the One Who had taken up the message following John's imprisonment, the One Who had commissioned and sent the Twelve and the Seventy, Messiah Himself.

Then following the death, burial, and resurrection of Israel's Messiah, a re-offer of the kingdom was made by the apostles and others (detailed in the Book of Acts).

BUT, Israel still refused, continuing to persecute and even kill those sent to proclaim the message (Acts 4:1-21; 5:17-40; 7:51-60; 8:1ff; *cf.* Matt. 23:31-36).

And the nation, following this re-offer of the kingdom, was then set aside while God called out from among the Gentiles "a people for his name" (Acts 15:14). Israel was set aside for a dispensation, allowing the Holy Spirit — sent at this time in one respect, already in the world in another — *to procure a bride for God's Son from among the Gentiles*.

All the preceding actions surrounding Israel can be seen in the experiences of Vashti in the Book of Esther. Vashti, in her experiences, *forms the type*; and Israel, in the nation's experiences, *forms the antitype*.

But Vashti's experiences form only part of the story, *that of disobedience and rejection*. There is another part to the story, a part which *has to do with obedience and acceptance*.

And this part is seen in the experiences of Esther.

Esther — Accepted

At the end of the present dispensation when God turns

once again to Israel, His actions will be with a view to *Israel's repentance*, followed by *His acceptance and the subsequent restoration of the nation*. *Repentance will be effected; and there will then be acceptance on God's part, with restoration following.*

Chapter one in the Book of Esther has to do with *Israel's rejection*, and chapter two has to do with *Israel's acceptance*. Vashti, typifying Israel past and present, *was rejected* (1:19); and Esther, typifying Israel yet future, *was accepted* (2:17).

Then the remainder of the book presents a number of details surrounding Israel immediately preceding and at the time of the nation's acceptance, with the end of the matter being seen in the experiences of both Esther and Mordecai.

In the chronology and typology of Esther, *God views Israel as already restored to her rightful place* (cf. 2:17; 5:2, 12; 7:1, 5, 7, 8) *prior to the occurrence of certain events which actually precede this restoration* (3:1-9:14).

Haman and his ten sons typify Antichrist and his ten-kingdom confederacy.

And Israel's repentance in the antitype, followed by God's acceptance and restoration of the nation, will not actually occur *UNTIL* very near the end of the Tribulation, extending into events which will be brought to pass following Christ's return immediately following the Tribulation.

THAT which will bring about Israel's repentance is *centered in the actions of those typified by Haman and his ten sons*.

THEN, Israel being accepted and exalted is *seen in the experiences of both Esther and Mordecai after Haman and his ten sons had been removed from the scene*.

The fact that Esther is seen married to the king and crowned in the book prior to and during the events surrounding Haman and his ten sons — which seemingly would be out of line with a proper chronology in the antitype — is perfectly aligned with the way God often presents things in His revelation to man.

God often presents matters in His revelation as having already occurred before they have actually been brought to pass (*e.g.*, the crucifixion of His Son “from the foundation of the world,” four thousand years before it occurred in human history [Rev. 13:8]; or His viewing Satan’s “fall from heaven” two thousand years before it actually does occur [Luke 10:18]).

And also, God often provides a complete chronology of events in His revelation prior to providing details for things within this chronology (*e.g.*, in Revelation chapter twelve, the first six verses provide a complete chronology of events, with the remainder of the chapter [vv. 7-17] simply providing a commentary for these events).

(Actually, the whole of Scripture is structured in the preceding fashion.

Genesis 1:1-2:3 provides a complete chronology of events covering 7,000 years of time.

Then, the remainder of Scripture is simply a commentary on these opening verses, providing all the numerous and necessary details.)

The account in Esther combines both of the two preceding ways God often presents things in His Word. First, the matter of Esther being made queen is seen as having occurred; and then a complete chronology of events is given, providing a commentary surrounding Esther being made queen.

God views the complete matter of Israel’s past and present rejection in chapter one, along with the complete matter of the nation’s future acceptance in chapter two. Then, the remainder of the book (chs. 3ff) forms not only a commentary on chapter two — providing necessary details — but, throughout this commentary, God continues to view Israel as occupying the exalted position in which the nation is seen in chapter two (*e.g.*, 5:2, 12; 7:1, 5, 7, 8).

And, with these things in mind, note the commentary which God has provided — eight chapters (chs. 3-10), which all reflect back on the fact that Esther had been made queen/ that Israel will be made queen (2:17).

And this fact is continuously kept in view throughout the commentary.

("Time" is *relative*, not a constant. And God can easily move through time, going back in time or forward in time, bringing events occurring anywhere in time into the present.

Note God's actions in this respect as seen in Eccl. 3:15:

"That which hath been is now [the past is present]; and that which is to be hath already been [the future, seen as past, which is present]; and God requireth that which is past ['God seeks that which has been pursued'].")

Haman — Defeated

Chapters three through ten in the Book of Esther, forming a commentary on the second chapter, begin by introducing Haman, not seen in the book prior to this time. And, from the point he is introduced, Haman and his family occupy a place at the forefront of events seen throughout the remainder of the book, save the final chapter.

Revelation concerning Haman begins with the king promoting and placing him in a prominent position of power and authority in his kingdom. The king "advanced Haman and set his seat above all the princes that were with him" (3:1).

And, because of Haman's exalted position, all the king's servants were commanded to accord him honor (such honor, reverence, was normally shown in that day through falling to the knees and touching the ground with the forehead).

But one individual *refused*. Mordecai, the Jew, *refused to accord Haman such honor*.

Mordecai "bowed not, nor did him reverence" (3:2, 5).

And this infuriated Haman to the extent that he sought “to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus.” And Haman, seeking to destroy all the Jews throughout the kingdom, directed his efforts *particularly against Mordecai, who had refused to accord him honor* (3:3-6).

But matters, through God’s sovereign control of all things, were brought to pass in such a way that *Haman was the one who found himself on the road to ruin and destruction, rather than Mordecai or the rest of the Jewish people* (3:7ff).

And, once Haman found himself on this road, *the matter occurred EXACTLY as previously stated by both his wise men and his wife, Zeresh:*

“If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him” (6:13b).

Once Haman had turned against the Jewish people he found himself forced into situations and circumstances completely beyond his control, situations and circumstances which brought about events completely contrary to that which he had sought to effect.

He found himself *NOT ONLY* being forced to exalt Mordecai, whom he had sought to put down, *BUT*, he also, in the end, found himself impaled on the very gallows which he had built for Mordecai (6:1-7:10).

THEN, if that wasn’t enough, his ten sons were subsequently slain and impaled on the same gallows (9:10-14).

And all of this brought an end to “the house of Haman,” allowing the Jewish people to occupy their rightful, prominent place in the kingdom.

This sequence of events, in type, foreshadows that which will one day occur in the kingdom of Antichrist, and beyond, seen beginning with the breaking of the first seal of

the seven-sealed scroll in Revelation chapter six (vv. 1, 2).

The King Himself will promote Antichrist and place him in the position of power which he is destined to occupy, as Ahasuerus did with Haman. It is God alone Who rules in "the kingdom of men" through His sovereign control of matters. He is the One Who establishes and removes rulers, giving the kingdom "to whomsoever he will" (Dan. 4:17-26; 5:18-28).

And, in his exalted position of power, "above all the princes," Antichrist will command the same honor accorded Haman (Rev. 13:2-8). He will have previously made a covenant with "*many, those forming the Jewish nation, not with the Jews elsewhere in the world*" (Dan. 9:27a). And, in the light of the type in Esther, many Jews, possibly both within and without the nation, may very well reject this man making the covenant, refusing to accord him honor.

Then, in line with both the type and corresponding anti-type, Antichrist, in his wrath, after three and one-half years, will turn against the Jewish people "throughout the whole kingdom [worldwide]" and seek their complete destruction, *EXACTLY as seen in Haman's actions* (cf. Dan. 9:27b; Matt. 24:15ff; Luke 21:20ff; II Thess. 2:3ff).

But once Antichrist has turned against the Jewish people, *he will have placed himself on the same road of no return previously traveled by Haman*. It will be a downward path, *leading to the destruction of NOT ONLY himself BUT ALSO his ten-kingdom confederacy* (wherein Gentile world power will be centered in that day), seen in the destruction of Haman and his ten sons in the type (cf. Dan. 2:33-35, 40-45; 7:7-12, 23-28; Rev. 19:11ff).

Once Antichrist turns against the Jewish people, a period of progressively intensifying trouble will ensue. This period will begin with the breaking of the second seal of the seven-sealed scroll in Revelation chapter six (vv. 3, 4) and will continue until the last of the judgments wrought through

the breaking of the seals on the seven-sealed scroll have been brought to pass — the judgments depicted through the breaking of the seventh seal, the sounding of the seven trumpets and the pouring out of the seven vials (Rev. 8:1ff; 16:1ff).

And conditions in Antichrist's kingdom will progressively deteriorate throughout this period until the point is reached where, except for the Lord's intervention, mankind would literally destroy itself:

“And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved...” (Matt. 24:22a).

This is what lies in store, in the immediate future, for the enlightened world system in which man finds himself today. This is how Man's Day will end after 6,000 years of human history and so-called advancement.

Mordecai — Exalted

But, just as the Book of Esther doesn't end with the destruction of Haman and his ten sons, neither does Scripture end with the destruction of Antichrist and his ten-kingdom confederacy. Scripture brings matters to a conclusion in this respect the same way in which the Book of Esther foreshadows these same events and brings them to a conclusion in the type — *the Jewish people exalted in a kingdom, following the destruction of their enemies* (cf. Deut. 30:1-10; Isa. 2:1-4; Joel 3:12-21).

Though Antichrist will be seeking the destruction of the Jewish people, God, through His sovereign control of all things, will use Antichrist's efforts to bring about the very thing which He Himself desires. God will use this man, who will be responsible for the without-parallel-in-history judgments which will befall those on the earth during this

coming time of trouble, to bring His people to *the place of repentance* (Rev. 17:16, 17).

The matter will be *EXACTLY* as seen in another type — the *Israelites in Egypt during Moses' day*.

They, because of the severity of the bondage under an Assyrian ruler, were brought to a place where they were left with no choice other than to call upon the God of their fathers. God used the vain efforts of this Assyrian ruler to bring His people to the end of themselves (Ex. 9:15, 16).

God heard His people's cry, He remembered His "covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob," and He then sent Moses back to deliver them (Ex. 2:23-3:10).

And EXACTLY the same thing will occur yet future.

The Jewish people, because of the severity of the trouble which will ensue under another Assyrian ruler, will be brought to the place *where they will have NO choice other than to call upon the God of their fathers*. God will use the vain efforts of this Assyrian ruler to bring His people to the same end as seen during Moses' day.

And God, as in Moses' day, will hear His people's cry; and He will remember His "covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob," and He will then send Jesus back to deliver them (cf. Deut. 30:1-3; Ezek. 36:16-28; Matt. 24:29-31).

When matters were brought to a close in the Book of Esther, the king gave *Esther* "the house of Haman" (8:1, 7), which she placed under Mordecai's control (v. 2); and also, when matters were brought to a close in this book, the king advanced *Mordecai* in the kingdom, with Mordecai then holding a position of power next unto the king himself (10:2, 3).

Esther and Mordecai, together, present the complete picture of restored Israel in that future day.

NOT ONLY will God give Israel the worldwide kingdom of Antichrist *BUT* the nation will be elevated into a position of power on earth next unto God Himself (cf. Zech. 8:23).

Deliverance for Israel occurred during Moses' day, *with a KINGDOM in view*

Deliverance for Israel occurred during Esther and Mordecai's day, *with a KINGDOM in view*

And deliverance for Israel will occur yet future, at the end of Man's Day, during the Lord's Day, *with a KINGDOM in view.*

God, in His sovereign control of ALL things, will bring ALL events to pass, EXACTLY as foretold by the prophets. NOTHING will fail of fulfillment.

And Israel, in the end, will occupy her God-ordained place relative to both God and the nations of the earth, as the restored wife of Jehovah, within a theocracy.

(For additional information on God's dealings with Israel, as presented in this chapter, refer to the author's book, *Esther*.)

11

Parable of the Treasure

Redemption of the Inheritance

“Again, the kingdom of the heavens is like [continues like] unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field” (Matt. 13:44).

The last three parables in Matthew chapter thirteen, unlike the first four, *were given ONLY AFTER Christ had reentered the house*. The first four were given *OUTSIDE the house, by the seaside*; and the last three were given *back INSIDE the house* (vv. 1-3, 36).

Beginning with the fifth parable, an entirely different situation existed in the subject matter Christ was covering in these parables. *Israel is brought back into the picture*.

Thus, Christ HAD to reenter the house prior to giving these last three parables.

The first four parables *cover the ENTIRETY of the present dispensation, as matters relate to the proclamation of “the Word of the Kingdom” among Christians*. And, in relation to the proclamation of this message, as seen in these four parables, the dispensation will end *with Christendom in a COMPLETELY leavened state* (v. 33).

Because of the working of the leaven during the course of the dispensation — *i.e.*, the working of the tares in the second parable, producing a continuing deterioration in Christendom throughout the dispensation (as seen in the third and fourth parables, also Rev. 2, 3) — conditions at the end of the dispensation will be as depicted by the Church in Laodicea (Rev. 3:14-21).

In relation to the proclamation of and adherence to “the Word of the Kingdom” at the end of the dispensation, the Church as it will exist at this time, because of the previous working of the leaven throughout the dispensation, is described in Rev. 3:17 as “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”

This is simply a description of the same conditions which Christ had previously called attention to during His earthly ministry:

“...when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith [‘the faith’] on the earth?” (Luke 18:8b).

And the manner in which this question is worded in the Greek text designates *a negative response*. The Son of Man *will NOT* find “the faith” (an expression peculiarly related to “the Word of the Kingdom”) being taught throughout the Churches of the land at the time of His return.

“The Word of the Kingdom,” taught universally throughout the first century Church at the beginning of the dispensation, will be COMPLETELY absent in teachings throughout the Church at the end of the dispensation.

Instead, unknowingly (cf. Rev. 3:17a), that more closely aligned with the “doctrines of demons” will be taught (I Tim. 4:1-3; ref. Chapter VIII in this book).

The working of the tares, with the leavening result *gradually permeating the WHOLE of Christendom throughout the dispensation* (second, third, and fourth parables), will have wrought this change, *bringing matters to a terminal point at the end of the dispensation, leaving Christendom COMPLETELY leavened in relation to “the Word of the Kingdom.”*

In this respect, the first four parables carry an individual *throughout the COMPLETE present dispensation*. And, moving on to parables five through seven, that being dealt with has to do with events *BEYOND the present dispensation*.

These last three parables have to do with events occurring *AFTER* the Church has been removed from the earth (the rapture) and *AFTER* God has resumed his national dealings with Israel.

Thus, these parables *could NOT* have been given by the seaside, as the previous four. At this point in time, relative to events depicted by these parables, God will have completed his work of removing “a people for his name” *from among the Gentiles* (a work symbolized by that which followed His previous *departure from “the house”* and *going down by “the seaside”* [depicted in the first four parables]).

These last three parables *HAD to be given back inside the house*, for God, at this time, will have finished His dispensational dealing with the Church and will have resumed His dispensational dealings with Israel (Acts 15:14-17).

But, though that dealt with in these parables is intimately associated with Israel on the earth and cannot be brought to pass apart from God’s resumption of His dispensational dealings with His covenant people, these parables, as well, *have an inseparable connection with the Church, which will be in the heavens at this time.*

In the preceding respect, these last three parables *have to do with a continued sequence of events pertaining to “the Word of the Kingdom.”* Though Israel is now brought back into view, these last three parables simply continue a sequence of events from the preceding four parables.

All seven of these parables have to do with that taken from Israel — *the kingdom of the heavens* (Matt. 21:43). And, since the Church was called into existence to be the recipient of that which had been taken from Israel, the closing three parables (as the first four), of necessity, *CANNOT be separated from God’s dealings with the Church* (though, as previously seen, the Church, during the time covered by events in these parables, will no longer be on earth).

(The preceding will become clear as the matter is further developed in the current and next two chapters of this book.)

The Treasure, The Field

The first parable which Christ gave after He had reentered the house had to do *with a treasure* which a Man found and hid in a field. And following this, *the Man went out, sold all that He had, and bought the field where He had hidden the treasure.*

This parable reaches back into past events in order to establish a framework and foundational basis for dealing with future events — the central issue of the parable, *the purchase of the field* where the treasure was hidden.

The things leading into and allowing for the purchase of the field have to do with past events, occurring at Christ's first coming.

BUT, the purchase of the field itself has to do with events yet future, events which will occur during the coming Tribulation and immediately following Christ's return at the end of the Tribulation.

The purchase of the field occurs *AFTER Christ has reentered the house, AFTER Israel has been brought back into the picture. And this purchase forms the CENTRAL thrust in the parable.*

All of the things stated in the first part of this fifth parable, along with the preceding four parables, form background material so *one can properly understand and place THIS purchase within its correct Biblical framework.*

In the progression of that revealed in the seven connected parables in Matthew chapter thirteen, the "field" is specifically stated *to be the WORLD* (v. 38); and, through comparing Scripture elsewhere, the "treasure" *can ONLY be identified as ISRAEL* (Ex. 19:5, 6; Ps. 135:4).

When Christ came the first time, He came *ONLY* to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," offering to the people

comprising this nation *the kingdom of the heavens* (Matt. 4:17-25; 10:5, 6; 15:24).

However, *Israel spurned the offer, and the kingdom of the heavens was taken from the nation.*

THEN, Israel was set aside, with a view to an entirely new entity (*the one new man* “in Christ”) being called into existence, to be the recipient of that which had previously been offered to, rejected by, and taken from Israel (Matt. 21:33-43; I Peter 2:9, 10).

The Man FINDING the treasure, HIDING the treasure, and SELLING all that He had *can ONLY be a reference to three events occurring in the past:*

1. *Christ coming to and ministering to Israel — FINDING the treasure.*
2. *Israel being set aside — HIDING the treasure.*
3. *Christ’s finished work at Calvary — the Man SELLING all that He had.*

But note that Christ, FOLLOWING His finished work at Calvary, DIDN’T purchase the treasure (ISRAEL). RATHER, He is seen purchasing the field (the WORLD) where He had hidden the treasure.

And this purchase CANNOT, as commonly taught, be a reference to Christ’s purchase of salvation for all those in the field, in the world, through His finished work at Calvary. Christ selling all that He had is NOT synonymous with His purchase of the field. Such a teaching would make the parable deal centrally with salvation by grace through faith, something UNSEEN in ANY of these parables.

These parables, rather than dealing with salvation by grace through faith, are about “the Word of the Kingdom,” the Kingdom of the Heavens — something stated in each of the seven parables, leaving NO room for anyone to ever misunderstand the subject matter being dealt with.

And an erroneous view of Christ's purchase of the field—making this purchase synonymous with His finished work at Calvary—NOT ONLY completely removes the parable from its contextual setting BUT ALSO from the clearly stated subject of the parable.

Comparing Scripture with Scripture, that involved in the purchase of the field in this parable becomes clear:

THIS PRESENT EARTH will form the INHERITANCE to be possessed by Christ and His wife during the coming age (cf. Ps. 2:6-9; Rom. 8:17-23; Rev. 2:26, 27; 3:21). And THIS is what MUST be purchased, redeemed prior to a new order of Sons being brought forth to rule from the heavens over the earth during the last 1,000 years of its existence. (cf. Rom. 8:18-21; Heb. 2:5, 10; II Peter 3:7-12).

The purchase of the field in the parable of the treasure has to do with a REDEEMED INHERITANCE—the REDEMPTION of the EARTH, presently under a curse (Gen. 3:17).

THIS is a future work of Christ, made possible because of His past, completed work at Calvary (Rev. 5). Calling attention to Israel (the treasure), the world (the field), and Christ's finished work at Calvary (the man giving all that he had) was necessary PRIOR TO any mention of the redemption of the inheritance (the field, the world).

ALL of these things set the stage for and lead into Christ's statement concerning His future redemptive work in this respect.

This will all become clear through viewing a number of things from three different books, which will comprise the material in the remainder of this chapter.

Three Books

The Books of Revelation and Daniel are often looked upon as companion books in Scripture, with one book shedding light upon and helping to explain the other.

And this association between these two books is correct. Daniel and Revelation do form companion books, with Scripture from one helping to explain Scripture from the other. One book cannot be properly understood apart from the other.

However, *Daniel is NOT the ONLY book in the Old Testament carrying this type relationship to the Book of Revelation. Rather, Daniel is ONE of SEVERAL Old Testament books carrying a relationship to the Book of Revelation of this nature.*

Exodus, for example, could be looked upon as *The Apocalypse of the Old Testament.*

The Book of Exodus, throughout — in a type-antitype framework — covers *EXACTLY* the same period of time covered in the first twenty chapters of the Book of Revelation. *BOTH books* cover that period of time beginning with the present dispensation and ending with the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom.

And since both deal with *the SAME thing*, though from different perspectives, *one will shed light upon and help explain the other.*

But, for purposes of this chapter, discussion along these lines *will be limited to two other books in the Old Testament which also carry this same type relationship to the Book of Revelation. And those are the Books of Ruth and Esther.*

The Book of Ruth deals with the Church and a redeemed inheritance in EXACTLY the SAME manner seen in the Book of Revelation.

And the Book of Esther deals centrally with Israel in the Tribulation and beyond, in EXACTLY the SAME manner as also seen in the Book of Revelation.

ONLY through viewing that seen in the Books of Ruth, Esther, and Revelation *TOGETHER* can the purchase of the field in the parable of the treasure in Matt. 13:44 be properly understood.

And *NOT ONLY* is the preceding the case for a proper understanding of the fifth parable, *BUT ALSO* for that seen in the sixth parable as well — the purchase of the pearl.

That seen in the Books of Ruth and Esther are *both* seen *TOGETHER* in the Book of Revelation. Each of these books *MUST* be studied in the light of the other two. *ONLY* through viewing the Books of Ruth, Esther, and Revelation in this respect *can the fifth and sixth parables in Matthew chapter thirteen be properly understood.*

That would be to say, events covered by the things in view in the fifth and sixth parables in Matthew chapter thirteen *are seen in different parts of the Books of Ruth, Esther, and Revelation.*

In relation to that which is dealt with in these two parables:

The Book of Ruth deals with a wealthy Jew who redeems an inheritance and, through this redemptive process, takes a Gentile as his wife.

The Book of Esther deals with the latter days of Gentile world power and the restoration of Israel as the wife of Jehovah following the overthrow of Gentile world power, which will be headed up under Antichrist and his ten-kingdom confederacy in the end time.

And the Book of Revelation puts these different things from both Ruth and Esther together, providing additional details.

The Spirit of God used *TWO* books in the Old Testament (Ruth and Esther) to show both sides of the matter.

THEN, in the New Testament, the Spirit of God placed that which is in both Ruth and Esther *together in ONE* book — the Book of Revelation.

And possibly the best way to understand this is to go to the Book of Revelation, present that which is in this book, and then refer back to the Books of Ruth and Esther, allowing these two books to form commentary and tie matters together.

1) Revelation Chapters One through Four

The first four chapters of the Book of Revelation deal with the Church — throughout the present dispensation (chs. 2, 3), at the judgment seat following the dispensation (chs. 1b-3), and in relation to regality immediately following decisions and determinations rendered at the judgment seat but preceding the Tribulation (ch. 4).

In the first part of chapter one, following introductory remarks concerning Christ (vv. 1-8), the Church is seen at a time yet future. The Church is seen at the end of the dispensation, at the time of the rapture, removed from Man's Day on earth and placed in the Lord's Day in heaven (v. 10).

Then the remainder of chapter one presents the Church in Christ's presence, in heaven. Christ is seen as *Judge* (vv. 13-16), and *the COMPLETE Church (ALL Christians) — ALL seven Churches from chapters two and three, with the number "seven" showing COMPLETENESS* — is seen appearing in Christ's presence to be judged (vv. 12, 13, 20).

Then chapters two and three continue that revealed in chapter one, depicting the actual judgment itself.

Note that each short epistle in these two chapters is *structured EXACTLY the SAME way — works, with a view to overcoming or being overcome. And each of the overcomer's promises is Messianic within its scope of fulfillment.*

And that seen in these opening three chapters in the Book of Revelation relative to the removal of Christians into the heavens to appear before Christ at His judgment seat at the end of the dispensation is *EXACTLY what Scripture elsewhere reveals about the matter.*

(Interpreting the opening three chapters of the Book of Revelation in the preceding manner, note that the book has been structured a particular way, revealed at the outset [1:1].

Refer to the author's article, "Signified.")

Following the removal of Christians from the earth, Christians will find themselves being judged *on the basis of works, with a view to EITHER overcoming OR being overcome*.

And that which is in view relative to *ITHER overcoming OR being overcome is seen having to do with EITHER occupying OR being denied positions with Christ in His kingdom* (cf. Matt. 16:24-17:5; 24:45-51; 25:14-30; Luke 12:42-46; 19:11-27; I Cor. 3:11-15; II Cor. 5:9-11; I Thess. 1:5-10; 4:16-5:9; II Thess. 1:5-11).

Also, chapters two and three, viewed from another perspective, present a history of the Church throughout the dispensation, synonymous with that seen in the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen.

Both sections of Scripture present *a history of the Church in relation to "the Word of the Kingdom."* Both sections of Scripture reveal the dispensation beginning *with Christians producing acceptable works* (fruitfulness [Matt. 13:8, 23; Rev. 2:2, 3]) *BUT ending with Christendom seen in a completely leavened, fruitless state* (Matt. 13:33; Rev. 3:15-17).

Then chapter four begins once again at the same point as previously seen in chapter one — with the Church being removed from the earth into the heavens (vv. 1, 2).

But this repetition of the same event occurs *in order to reveal something subsequent to events at the judgment seat* (chs. 1b-3), *which precede events having to do with the Tribulation* (chs. 5ff). *It is to reveal the twenty-four elders relinquishing their crowns by casting them before God's throne* (4:4, 10, 11).

This event is significant beyond degree and will occur immediately following decisions and determinations at the judgment seat, as shown by the rainbow encircling the throne of God (v. 3).

The rainbow in Scripture *appears after judgment has occurred, after judgment is past*. This is the manner in which the rainbow is first seen in Scripture (Gen. 9:11-17), establishing an unchangeable, first-mention principle which governs its use at any subsequent point in Scripture.

The rainbow encircled throne in Rev. 4:3 tells the reader that events at the judgment seat (chs. 1b-3) *are past*.

Then, the remainder of the chapter relates something intimately associated and connected with the decisions and determinations which will have been rendered at the judgment seat — the twenty-four elders arising from their thrones and casting their crowns before God's throne.

Overcoming Christians, ruling with Christ over the earth during the coming age, are to wear crowns having to do with the domain over which they rule — crowns having to do with the government of the earth. And these crowns have existed since time immemorial, since God established the government of the earth in the beginning.

These crowns were originally worn by all angels ruling under Satan in his unfallen state. However, since his rebellion against God's supreme power and authority, these crowns have been worn by two segments of angels — those originally ruling with Satan, but refusing to go along with him in his attempted coup; and those who did go along with him, continuing to rule with him.

One segment — the former, which can only be identified with the twenty-four elders (two-thirds of the original contingent of angels under Satan, represented by two sets of twelve crowned rulers) — will relinquish their crowns willingly.

But the other segment — the latter, seen in Rev. 12:4 (the other one-third of the angels under Satan, which would be represented by a third set of twelve crowned rulers) — will not relinquish their crowns willingly, resulting in their crowns having to be taken by force.

(Note that "twelve" is the number of *governmental perfection*, and "three" is the number of *Divine perfection*. Three sets of twelve crowned rulers would show *Divine perfection* in God's original establishment of the government of the earth.

This is something which has not existed since Satan's attempted coup [since those angels ruling under him (represented by the two sets of twelve) separated themselves from the other angels ruling under him (which could only be represented by a third set of twelve)].

But a restored Divinely perfect form of governmental rule over the earth will exist once again during the Messianic Era when crowns from all three sets of twelve — crowns from the complete, original contingent of angels ruling with Satan over the earth — are brought together once again and given to man.)

Those relinquishing their crowns willingly will do so immediately following events at the judgment seat. For, at this time, *for the first time in man's history, a contingent of individuals from the human race will have been shown qualified to wear these crowns. And, correspondingly, also for the first time in man's history, these angels can relinquish their crowns, with a view to others wearing them during the Messianic Era* (Heb. 2:5).

Those angels continuing to reign with Satan though will *NOT relinquish their crowns UNTIL the time of Christ's return*. Their crowns will be taken by force, for the time will be at hand. *For the FIRST TIME in man's history, a contingent of individuals from the human race will be ready to ascend the throne, having been shown qualified to wear these crowns.*

(A principle of Biblical government necessitates that an incumbent ruler, though disqualified to continue ruling [or placed in a position such as that seen by the twenty-four elders], retain his crown and position *UNTIL his replacement is NOT ONLY on the scene BUT ready to take the sceptre and ascend the throne.*

For a full discussion of the preceding, refer to the author's articles, "Saul and David, Satan and Christ" and "Crowns Cast Before God's Throne.")

2) Revelation Chapters Five through Nineteen

Revelation chapter five marks a major turning point in the closing book of Scripture. Material preceding this has to do directly with the Church, covering the complete dispensation (chs. 2, 3), but centering on events at the end of the dispensation (chs. 1b-4). These first four chapters center on events which begin with *the removal of the Church* (1:10; 4:1, 2), continue with *events surrounding the judgment seat* (chs. 1b-3), and end with *the twenty-four elders casting their crowns before God's throne* (4:4, 10, 11).

The removal of the Church *will occur at the end of the dispensation, PRECEDING events at the judgment seat*; and the twenty-four elders casting their crowns before God's throne *will occur FOLLOWING events at the judgment seat, before the beginning of the Tribulation.*

(Again [ref. Ch. IX, pp. 179, 180 in this book], note the timing and place of events surrounding the judgment seat — *NOT in the heavens during the time that the Tribulation is occurring on earth, NOT on the earth following Christ's return after the Tribulation, BUT in the heavens preceding the Tribulation.*)

Then, once all these events have occurred and all matters pertaining to these events have been taken care of, *attention in the book is immediately directed to the redemption of the forfeited inheritance.* Events in chapter five introduce the matter, and events in chapters six through nineteen provide numerous details of this redemptive work (*cf.* Rom. 8:20-22).

There is an EXACT parallel between the sequence of events seen in the first six parables in Matthew chapter thirteen and the sequence of events seen in the first nineteen chapters of the Book of Revelation.

In the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen, Christ's dealings with the Church in relation to "the Word of the Kingdom," down by the seaside, are seen in the first four parables.

THEN, as Christ reenters the house, matters in the last three parables turn back to Israel and the redemption of the inheritance (though the Church is equally in view relative to this redemption).

In the Book of Revelation, Christ's dealings with the Church in relation to "the Word of the Kingdom" are seen in the first four chapters.

THEN, beginning in chapter five, matters turn back to Israel and the redemption of the inheritance (though, again, the Church is equally in view relative to this redemption).

THEN, the same thing is seen when comparing the Books of Ruth and Esther with the Book of Revelation, or with the first six parables in Matthew chapter thirteen.

The first three chapters of the Book of Ruth provide the background and foundational material (paralleling Rev. 1-4, or the first four parables in Matt. 13); and Boaz's redemptive act in chapter four has to do with his purchase of the field, his redemption of the inheritance (paralleling Rev. 5-19, seen beginning with the fifth parable in Matt. 13).

Then the Book of Esther points to the fact *that Israel ALSO has to be involved in the matter* (paralleling Rev. 6-19, and the fifth and sixth parables in Matt. 13 [cf. Jer. 30:7; Dan. 9:24-27]).

And, as the first three chapters of the Book of Ruth cannot be separated from the fourth chapter, or as the first four parables in Matt. 13 cannot be separated from the last three, or as that seen in the Book of Esther cannot be separated from the whole of the matter, neither can the first four chapters of the Book of Revelation be separate from the chapters which follow.

Revelation chapter five simply continues from chapter four, and the Church (though absent) remains just as much in view as Ruth (though absent) remained in view while Boaz was performing his redemptive act in Ruth chapter four.

And matters MUST be viewed EXACTLY the same way in the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen. Though Christ is back inside the house beginning with the fifth parable, the Church MUST remain in view relative to the redemption of the inheritance.

a) *The Search for One Found Worthy*

In the Book of Ruth, Boaz was a near kinsman who was able to redeem. And he is the one seen performing the required redemptive act, paying the required price, following a nearer kinsman relinquishing his right to redeem.

Boaz performed this redemptive act:

FOLLOWING Ruth becoming a member of the family (ch. 1).

FOLLOWING Ruth gleaning in Boaz's field and beating out that which she had gleaned throughout the time of the harvest (ch. 2).

FOLLOWING Ruth preparing herself to meet Boaz, a meeting which occurred on his threshing floor at midnight (ch. 3).

These first three chapters of the Book of Ruth cover the entirety of the present dispensation and events immediately beyond, paralleling the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen and the first four chapters of the Book of Revelation (viewed from both vantage points — *a history of the Church during the present dispensation, and the Church in heaven at the end of the dispensation, appearing on Christ's threshing floor*).

Then, Boaz's redemptive act finds its parallel with events beginning in Revelation chapter five, events which parallel the purchase of the field in the parable of the treasure.

The search in this fifth chapter of Revelation centers around *One able to redeem* — *One worthy to break the seals of the seven-sealed scroll seen in God's right hand, effecting the redemption of the inheritance, the redemption of the earth.*

A “strong angel” proclaims *in a loud voice*, “Who is worthy to open the book [‘scroll’], and to loose the seals thereof?”

And NO one “in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth” was found worthy, UNTIL attention was called to “the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David” (vv. 2-5).

One seen “in the midst” of God’s throne (an allusion to the source of all power, the center of all power, the place from which all power emanates), now described as “a Lamb,” rather than “the Lion of the tribe of Judah,” comes and takes the scroll out of the right hand of His Father.

He ALONE was found worthy, and the reason He was found worthy is given in both His description and that which is stated in the verses immediately following.

Specific attention is called to His being “a Lamb,” which can only be *a reference to His past work at Calvary*.

Then, after He had taken the scroll from the right hand of His Father, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before “the Lamb [note, *NOT the Lion, BUT the Lamb*],” having harps and vials filled with odors, “which are the prayers of saints” (vv. 6-8).

Then the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders sang a new song, saying:

“Worthy art thou to take the book [‘scroll’], and to open the seals thereof: *for thou wast slain [as the Lamb]*, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation,

And madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they shall reign upon [‘over’] the earth” (vv. 9b, 10, ASV).

A great multitude of angels then appeared “round about the throne and the beasts [‘living creatures’] and elders,” with their number described as “ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.”

And this great multitude proclaimed, “with a loud voice”:

“Worthy is *the Lamb that was slain* to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessings” (vv. 11, 12).

And, following this, attention is called to “every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them” making a similar proclamation, in unison:

“Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto *the Lamb* forever and ever” (v. 13).

Note the continued reference to “the Lamb,” rather than to “the Lion of the tribe of Judah.”

Why is this the case?

The reason is obvious.

It is on the basis of His work as “the Lamb” that He is found worthy to take the scroll from His Father’s right hand and break the seals on the scroll.

REDEMPTION is in view, and it is because of His work as “the Lamb” (past) that He is found worthy to perform this redemptive work, a redemption of the forfeited inheritance (future).

And THIS is the reason that THIS matter is dealt with in the parable of the treasure (He sold all that He had [past]) PRIOR to purchasing the field, PRIOR to redeeming the inheritance (future).

EVERYTHING is based on His past work as “the Lamb.” APART FROM this past work, there can be NO future redeemed inheritance awaiting Christ and His co-heirs.

(Redemption is always seen being effected *through the Lamb*, NOT *through the Lion*. Christ is referred to as “the Lion” ONLY once in the Book of Revelation, but He is referred to as “the Lamb” twenty-eight times throughout the course of this book.)

b) *Redemption of the Purchased Possession*

The actual redemptive work, pertaining to the inheritance, begins with events in Revelation chapter six and carries through to events at the end of chapter nineteen.

THEN, events in chapter nineteen *ALSO* have to do with another facet of this redemptive work. They have to do with the bride becoming Christ's wife, portended by the marriage festivities (vv. 7-9) *occurring immediately preceding Christ's return to complete His work surrounding the redemption of the inheritance* (vv. 11-21).

And, *EXACTLY* as seen in the type in the Book of Ruth — Ruth becoming Boaz's wife through his redemptive work (Ruth 4:1-10) — *NOT ONLY* will Christ redeem the inheritance, *BUT*, through this redemptive work, the bride will become the Lamb's wife.

Judgments seen throughout the time of the Son's redemption of the inheritance are presented in the Book of Revelation under three sets of sevens — seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials.

As previously shown, "three" is the number of *Divine perfection*; and "seven" is a number showing *the completeness of that which is in view*.

Thus, the seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials show *Divine perfection within these judgments*, which would be to say that they show *Divine perfection within the Son's redemption of the inheritance*.

The search in chapter five was *ONLY* for One found worthy to break *the seals*. *NOTHING* is said in this chapter about a search for One worthy to sound the trumpets or to pour out the vials, and the reason for this is evident. The judgments seen through the sounding of the trumpets and the pouring out of the vials are contained within the scope of the judgments under the seven seals.

The trumpet and vial judgments emanate from the breaking of the seventh seal (8:1, 2), with the seven vial judgments seen as a further description of the seven trumpet judgments, providing additional details (cf. Rev. 10:1-7; 11:15-19; 15:1ff).

Thus, both the trumpet and vial judgments lie under the seventh seal, *placing ALL of the judgments — the COMPLETE redemption of the inheritance — within the scope of the seven-sealed scroll.*

Christ, loosing the seals, *will bring ALL THINGS in this entire redemptive process to pass.*

The inheritance will be redeemed, through judgment (chs. 6-19); and the bride — having previously been singled out and revealed at the judgment seat (chs. 1b-3) — will, at the completion of this redemption, have become Christ's wife, ALL EXACTLY in accord with the type in Ruth chapter four.

(For more information on the redemption of the inheritance — as seen in the Books of Ruth and Esther, the Matt 13 parables, and the Book of Revelation — refer to the next chapter in this book, Chapter XII.

For a more exhaustive treatment of this subject, refer to Chapters VIII, IX of the author's book, *The Time of the End.*

Then, Chapters X-XIX in this book [covering Rev. 6-10, 11b, 15, 16] deal with the judgments brought to pass through a breaking of the seals of the seven-sealed scroll [from Rev. 5], *providing SPECIFIC information showing EXACTLY HOW the inheritance will be redeemed.)*

12

Parable of the Pearl

Saved for a Purpose, Realizing an Inheritance

“Again, the kingdom of the heavens is like [continues like] unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:

Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it” (Matt. 13:45, 46).

The parable of the pearl continues the thought of *redemption* from the previous parable, the parable of the treasure.

The “Man” in both parables is *the Lord Jesus Christ*, and this Man selling all that He had in both parables is also the same, *pointing to Christ’s past, finished work at Calvary*.

BUT, the PURCHASE which the Man made — *something different in each parable* — is separated in time from His work at Calvary. *The purchase in each parable, seen as a redemptive act in each, FOLLOWS His work at Calvary.*

That is, *NEITHER the purchase of the field in the previous parable NOR the purchase of the pearl in the present parable is synonymous with or occurred at the same time as His finished work at Calvary.*

Thus, in the chronological sequence of events in these two parables, Christ’s purchase of *BOTH the field and the pearl is seen occurring FOLLOWING His selling all that He had, i.e., FOLLOWING the events surrounding Calvary.*

And, as will be shown, the purchase of *BOTH “the field” and “the pearl” occur at the SAME time, through the SAME redemptive work.*

Within the chronological framework of all seven parables, *THIS dual purchase is seen occurring at a time FOLLOWING the present dispensation. And, in this respect, two millenniums lie between Christ's finished work at Calvary and the purchase seen in BOTH of these parables (ref. Chapter XI in this book).*

Christ's finished work at Calvary has to do with man's presently possessed salvation, and there is NO present or future work of Christ in this realm. EVERYTHING is past.

(Christ, following His finished work at Calvary, "sat down on the right hand of God."

There was no chair in any part of the earthly tabernacle, for the sacrificial work of the O.T. priests was NEVER finished. They could NOT sit down.

BUT, Christ, relative to His sacrificial work, could sit down in the heavens, showing that this work was FINISHED.)

"And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God" (Heb. 10:11, 12; cf. John 19:30).

However, the blood of that sacrifice, presently on the mercy seat of the heavenly sanctuary, is another matter. There is a PRESENT work of the Son in connection with His blood having been placed on the mercy seat. BUT, THIS is a work on behalf of those who have already been saved, on the basis of His past, sacrificial work at Calvary.

The present work of the Son is that of High Priest [Heb. 9:11, 12; 10:19ff]. He, on the basis of His Own blood, NOW on the mercy seat in the heavenly sanctuary [I John 1:7-2:2], is providing a cleansing for Christians who sin.

And THIS is a cleansing provided for those who are already saved, with a view to the One doing the cleansing bringing "many sons unto glory" at a future time [Heb. 2:10; cf. I John 1:5-2:2].)

There though, of necessity, *is a present work* being carried on within the Godhead pertaining to man's eternal salvation.

BUT, this is NOT a work being carried on by the Son after any fashion. This is a work performed by the Spirit. The Spirit presently breathes life (spiritual life) into the one who has no life, based on the Son's past, finished work.

And through this complete work — *the PAST work* of the Son, and *the PRESENT work* of the Spirit — *man, "dead in trespasses and sins" has NOT ONLY been "quickened," made alive* (cf. Gen. 1:2; 2:7; Ezek. 37:1-10; Eph. 2:1, 5), *BUT NOW finds himself in a position to one day realize "that which is really life"* (I Tim. 6:19b, literal translation).

The last words of Christ prior to His death at Calvary were, "It is finished [*lit., 'It has been finished'*]" (John 19:30). Christ used a perfect tense of the Greek verb *teleo* (*tetelestai*), which means to bring something "to an end," or "to completion." The perfect tense points to action completed in past time, with the results of this action existing during present time *in a finished state*.

EVERYTHING necessary to effect man's eternal salvation had been finished at that point, and Christ used this one Greek verb (*teleo*) in a perfect tense (*tetelestai*) *to call attention to this fact*.

THEN, He simply "gave up the spirit [*lit., He 'breathed out'*]" (Luke 23:46), for there was *NO need* for Him to continue the sufferings which He was undergoing.

EVERYTHING had been completed, allowing the Spirit to NOW breathe life into the one having no life (man dead in trespasses and sins) ON THE BASIS OF the Son's past, finished work.

But, as previously noted, the two purchases seen in the parables of the treasure and the pearl in Matt. 13:44-46 point *to a work of the Son BEYOND His work on Calvary*.

Thus, this latter work (a work actually subsequent to His work in the heavenly sanctuary) can have *NOTHING* to do with man's presently possessed salvation, for that is based on

the Son's past, finished work. Rather, this latter work (as His present work in the heavenly sanctuary) has to do with *the PURPOSE for one's salvation, the REASON one has been saved.*

(In the preceding respect, *there is a past, finished work of the Son at Calvary; and, because of this past, finished work, the Son can perform a present work in the heavenly sanctuary [on the basis of His shed blood on the mercy seat].*

THEN, also because of His past work at Calvary, there can be a future work with respect to that seen in the symbolism of the purchase of BOTH "the field" and "the pearl" in Matt. 13:44-46 — a work which His present ministry in the sanctuary anticipates.)

In the first of these two parables, in verse forty-four, the treasure points to *ISRAEL*. *Israel* is God's "peculiar treasure" (Ex. 19:5, 6; Ps. 135:4).

Then, in the second of these two parables, in verses forty-five and forty-six, *the CHURCH* comes into view.

Pearls are found *in oysters, which come from the sea.* And the oyster, a species found in the water which lacks fins and scales, *would be unclean to an orthodox Jew* (Lev. 11:9-12).

The fact that the pearl comes from a species considered unclean by the orthodox Jew, as well as the fact that the oyster bearing the pearl is found in the sea (which refers to the Gentiles), the pearl *could NOT be another reference to Israel* (continuing, in this respect, from the parable of the treasure). *Rather, the pearl would have to refer to another entity within God's dealings with man.*

The identity of the pearl, unlike the identity of the treasure in the previous parable, is not really given anywhere in Scripture in so many words per se.

BUT, nonetheless, the intended symbolism through the use of the pearl can easily be determined. Through comparing Scripture with Scripture, the "pearl" can easily be seen *as a reference to the Church (more specifically, to the bride).*

Christ gave these parables after He had gone back inside the house, and *the treasure (Israel) comes into view first because God will be dealing with Israel during this time, completing His dealings with the nation during Daniel's Seventieth Week.*

But Christ is not seen purchasing *the treasure* in the first of these two parables, as He is seen purchasing *the pearl* in the second. Rather, in the first parable, *He is seen hiding the treasure in the field and THEN purchasing the field.*

Thus, Christ purchases *the field* in the first of these two parables; *THEN, He purchases the pearl in the second.* And the fact that these parables *are about the kingdom of the heavens — necessitating Christians* (the present recipients of the offer of the kingdom) being in view in relation to the redemption of the forfeited inheritance — will, *ALONE*, reveal that “the pearl” has to be identified *with the Church.*

The parable of the treasure shows *one facet* of the purpose for man's salvation, and the parable of the pearl shows *the other.*

The purchase of the field (the world) seen in the parable of the treasure has to do with *Christ's future work of redeeming the forfeited inheritance* (seen in Rev. 6-19); and the purchase of the pearl is a reference to the bride (saved through His finished work at Calvary and *revealed through decisions and determinations made at the judgment seat* [Rev. 1-4]) *becoming His wife* (portended by the marriage festivities in Rev. 19:7-9), *whom He PURCHASES through redeeming the inheritance.*

And all of this occurs on the basis of Christ being found worthy to perform this redemptive work — found worthy solely on the basis of His past, finished work as “the Lamb” (Rev. 5:6ff).

These two parables, along with most of the Book of Revelation, draw from a somewhat simple type in the Old Testament — a type set forth in the fourth chapter of the Book of Ruth.

In this fourth chapter of Ruth, *Boaz is seen redeeming a forfeited inheritance and, at the same time, purchasing Ruth as his wife through this redemptive act* (vv. 5-10). And this chapter relates the complete story of events seen relative to the purchases in the parables of the treasure and the pearl, along with that seen in Revelation chapters five through nineteen.

NONE of these things in Matthew's gospel or in the Book of Revelation can be properly understood APART FROM understanding this one type in the Old Testament.

God provided the numerous types seen throughout the Old Testament for a REASON. These types have been placed there *to help explain the subsequent antitypes*. And these types are IMPORTANT beyond degree, for they will, numerous times, *open up and cast a flood of light on the various antitypes*.

And this particular type in the Book of Ruth is ONE case in point, which can only become increasingly evident to anyone who begins to mine the treasures contained therein.

The Type — The Antitype

Events in the fourth chapter of the Book of Ruth, where Boaz's redemptive act is seen, *MUST be understood within context*.

These events occurred:

1. *AFTER Ruth had become a member of the family (ch. 1).*
2. *AFTER Ruth had gleaned in Boaz's field throughout the time of harvest and had beaten out that which she had gleaned (ch. 2).*
3. *AFTER Ruth had prepared herself for meeting Boaz (ch. 3a).*
4. *AFTER Ruth had met Boaz on his threshing floor at midnight (ch. 3b).*

And moving these things over into the antitype, Christ's redemptive act, seen in this fourth chapter of Ruth (typified by Boaz's redemptive act), will occur at *EXACTLY the SAME time*.

It will occur:

1. *AFTER individuals have become members of the family (have become Christians).*

2. *AFTER those in the family have gleaned in the field (in the world) throughout the time of harvest and have beaten out that which they have gleaned.*

3. *AFTER they have prepared themselves for meeting Christ.*

4. *AFTER they have met Christ on His threshing floor at midnight (met Christ at His judgment seat, at the termination of the present dispensation).*

(The "threshing floor" and "midnight" both refer to judgment — one to *PLACE*, and the other to *TIME*.

See Chapter IX in this book.)

Thus, Christ's finished work at Calvary is *NOT dealt with per se in the fourth chapter of Ruth*. Rather, matters surrounding Christ's finished work at Calvary was dealt with back in chapter one where Ruth and Orpah found themselves members of the family *through death*. The death of their husbands had dissolved the marriage relationship itself, *and they were then members of the family through death ALONE, the death of others*.

And Christians are members of the family *EXACTLY the SAME way — through death ALONE, the death of Another*.

This is why Paul, when first going to Corinth and finding a city filled with unsaved Gentiles, limited himself to one simple message — "Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (I Cor. 2:2).

It was Christ Who had died for their sins (I Cor. 15:3; I Thess. 5:10), *and the ONLY way they could become members of the family was through the death of Another*.

Thus, the message surrounding that which had occurred at Calvary is seen in chapter one of the Book of Ruth, *NOT in chapter four*. The redemptive act seen in chapter four — type or antitype — is a subsequent work on behalf of those who are already members of the family (*though NOT a work for all family members*). Ruth *ALONE* is seen in Boaz's redemptive act. Orpah, also a member of the family through death, had turned back (*cf.* Luke 9:62; 17:32).

And this redemptive work is *seen occurring AFTER the dispensation has run its course (Ruth 2, 3a) and those who have gone on, like Ruth, have been singled out (Ruth 3b)*.

1) The Nearer Kinsman

Different kinds of legal matters within the Jewish economy at the time events in the Book of Ruth occurred were carried on at the gates of the various cities scattered throughout the land, at the entrance way into these cities.

Elders of a particular city would gather at the gate of that city and await anyone in the city who might have a legal matter to carry out or resolve.

City gates, in effect, served as their courthouses.

This is the reason chapter four begins with the statement, "Then went Boaz up to the gate..." (4:1).

And, as seen in Gentile cities of that day as well, this is the apparent reason that Lot was seen seated in the gate of Sodom when the two angels entered Sodom in Gen. 19:1. Lot was apparently among those at the gate (among the elders of the city) who were there to carry out or to help resolve legal matters on behalf of those in the city.

Boaz, at the gate, first stopped a nearer kinsman who had come by, and he instructed the nearer kinsman to sit in a certain place (v. 1). Boaz then singled out ten elders who were at the gate, took them aside, and instructed them to sit in the same proximity as the nearer kinsman (v. 2).

Boaz then explained the matter at hand, directing his remarks to the nearer kinsman, but making sure that the ten elders heard as well. He needed *ALL* of them to hear that which he had to say, for *ALL* of them had to act — the nearer kinsman first, then the ten elders.

The subject surrounded an inheritance belonging to Naomi, which had been forfeited. Boaz wanted to pay the required price and redeem this inheritance, but there was a nearer kinsman who had to be given first opportunity to act in this capacity.

And the nearer kinsman, after hearing about this forfeited inheritance as Boaz explained the matter, said that he would redeem the inheritance (vv. 3, 4).

However, Boaz wasn't through explaining all that was involved.

Boaz then said:

“What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance” (v. 5).

The one who redeemed the inheritance, whether the nearer kinsman or Boaz, would also, at the same time, be redeeming (purchasing) Ruth; and Ruth, through this redemptive process, would become his wife. This was something which would *automatically occur* within the process of redeeming the forfeited inheritance, redeeming the field.

Ruth, through this redemptive process, was also being redeemed (purchased), and *would automatically* become the wife of the one performing this redemptive act (Ruth 4:9, 10).

Much controversy has surrounded the identity (with respect to the antitype) of the nearer kinsman. However, there should be *NO* controversy, for the nearer kinsman *was able to redeem*. And the *ONLY One able to redeem* in the antitype is the One Who shed His blood at Calvary (Rev. 5:1ff).

And though it was the Son Who shed His blood and died at Calvary, this was, as well, *the blood of God* (Acts 20:28). This was *the day God died*.

Thus, just as there were two (*only two* [v. 4b]) who were able to redeem in the type (insofar as that shown by the account is concerned), there are also Two (*only Two*) Who are able to redeem in the antitype. And these Two in the antitype are the Father and His Son, though the Father has placed all redemptive work in the hands of His Son.

Seeing the type foreshadowing God the Father in this respect will explain the apparent reason why the nearer kinsman couldn't redeem the inheritance and take Ruth as his wife. As seen in the antitype, the nearer kinsman, though able to redeem, wasn't free to take Ruth as his wife.

Though a divorce decree presently exists between God and Israel, God, nevertheless, is committed to Israel relative to restoration and remarriage.

Thus, whether in the type (past) or in the antitype (future), the Nearer Kinsman wasn't free/won't be free to perform the redemptive act. Such an act would have "marred ['destroyed,' 'ruined']" (type), would "mar ['destroy,' 'ruin']" (antitype), the Nearer Kinsman's Own inheritance.

2) Boaz's Work

There was a law in Israel concerning the nearer kinsman either refusing or forfeiting his right to redeem an inheritance. And a central feature of this law had to do with the nearer kinsman relinquishing His right through removing his shoe and handing it to the kinsman next in line to redeem (*cf.* Deut. 25:7-10).

Thus, in keeping with this law, when the nearer kinsman couldn't redeem Naomi's inheritance (though, through no apparent fault of his own), he removed his shoe and handed it to Boaz (Ruth 4:7, 8).

This act showed to everyone present (in this case, Boaz and the ten elders) that he had relinquished his redemptive rights to the kinsman next in line. He had relinquished his rights to Boaz.

Thus, *ONCE this had been done*, Boaz was free to redeem the forfeited inheritance. And the ten elders were also free to recognize Boaz as the one now able to act in this capacity, along with recognizing the price which he was to pay as legal and binding.

And, *NOT ONLY* was this the case, *BUT* once the complete transaction had been carried out, *it would ALSO be recognized that Ruth was Boaz's wife. Ruth automatically became Boaz's wife through this legal transaction carried out at the gate of the city, witnessed by ten elders, among others present.*

“And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi.

Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye are witnesses this day” (vv. 9, 10).

This was followed by all those who were present recognizing that which had occurred, along with their pronouncing a blessing on the union which had resulted from this transaction — that of Boaz and Ruth (*with ONLY Boaz present*).

And the remainder of the chapter, bringing the account to a close, records the genealogy of Boaz through this union (vv. 11ff).

“...Boaz begat Obed,

And Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David” (vv. 21b, 22).

Boaz and Ruth's great grandson was King David. And David, in his reign over Israel, typifies Christ in His coming reign over the earth as the greater Son of David (*cf.* II Sam. 7:12-14; Matt. 21:9, 15; Luke 1:27, 31-33).

And, as David reigned over Israel in Saul's stead, following a time of rejection, Christ will reign over the earth in Satan's stead, following a time of rejection.

And, just as those who were faithful to David during his time of rejection were elevated to positions of power with David when he ascended the throne, so will it be when Christ ascends the throne. Christ will elevate those faithful to Him during His time of rejection to positions of power with Him when He ascends the throne.

EVERYTHING about Ruth chapter four is MESSIANIC within its scope of fulfillment.

This chapter deals:

1. *With the redemption of a piece of land, which would be a field, pointing to the world in the antitype.*
2. *With Ruth becoming Boaz's wife, which, in the antitype, would point to the bride becoming Christ's wife.*
3. *With the mention of David, pointing to the greater Son of David in the antitype.*

The Book of Ruth ends *EXACTLY* where the opening section of Scripture in Genesis ends (Gen. 1:1-2:3) — detailing events having to do with the seventh day, the Messianic Era out ahead.

The inheritance (a field), once it had been redeemed, *THEN* belonged to Boaz and Ruth (*NOW* his wife) in the type.

And the inheritance (the world), once it has been redeemed, WILL belong to Christ and His Bride (THEN His wife) in the antitype.

And, in the antitype, Christ as King (as the greater Son of King David), with His wife as consort queen, will rule over the redeemed domain.

The Bride Becomes His Wife

The future marriage of Christ and His bride will occur *EXACTLY in accord with the type set forth in Ruth chapter four, NOT in accord with the way things are done in the modern world, whether in the East or in the West.*

As Boaz purchased Ruth through the process of redeeming a forfeited inheritance, so will Christ purchase His bride through the process of redeeming a forfeited inheritance (forfeited by the first Adam in Genesis chapter three [cf. Rom. 8:20-22]).

And, as Ruth *automatically* became Boaz's wife through this redemptive process, *so will it be with Christ and His bride.*

The bride (having previously been revealed at the judgment seat) *will automatically become Christ's wife through His redemption of the forfeited inheritance.*

1) Redemption Completed

The redemption of the forfeited inheritance is seen occurring in Revelation chapters six through nineteen.

The seven-sealed scroll in Revelation chapter five contains *the redemptive terms for the forfeited inheritance* (the earth), and chapters six through nineteen reveal *the seals being broken and these terms being carried out* (ref. Chs. X, XI in this book).

Once these redemptive terms have been carried out, the bride will THEN be Christ's wife. Through a redemptive work having occurred throughout the preceding seven years and completed with events seen in Rev. 19:11-21, Christ will NOT ONLY have purchased the field (the earth — fifth parable) BUT He will ALSO have purchased the pearl as well (the bride, NOW His wife — sixth parable).

He will have purchased the bride, for whom the Spirit had searched during the previous dispensation (Gen. 24), as His wife, through purchasing the field.

In anticipation of the completion of this redemptive work, allowing the bride to become Christ's wife, note the wedding festivities in Revelation chapter nineteen immediately preceding Christ's return:

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage ['marriage festivities'] of the lamb is come, and his wife ['bride'] 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 ['righteous acts'] of saints.

And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper ['marriage banquet,' 'marriage feast'] of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God" (vv. 7-9; cf. Rev. 21:9).

And note the immediately preceding reference to the reverential awe and excitement in heaven surrounding the redemption of the forfeited inheritance at this point in the redemptive process, which leads into the wedding festivities and the completion of the redemption of the inheritance.

The twenty-four elders, along with the four living creatures, "fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia" (v. 4).

THEN, "a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great" (v. 5).

Following THIS, a voice was heard, described as that of "a great multitude... many waters... mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth" (v. 6).

And even John, having seen all this, *could do little more than fall at the feet of the one showing him these things* (v. 10).

Thus, the Book of Revelation, up to this point in the book, deals with the Church more extensively than is often realized.

THIS book BEGINS with the Church removed into the heavens and judged, followed by the twenty-four elders casting their crowns before God's throne (chs. 1-4).

THEN the book CONTINUES with the search for One found worthy to loose the seals of the seven-sealed scroll—containing the redemptive terms of the forfeited inheritance (ch. 5).

And, in SUCCEEDING chapters, covering Daniel's unfulfilled Seventieth Week, leading into events surrounding Christ's return, the book deals with the inheritance being redeemed (allowing the bride to become Christ's wife).

The redemption of the inheritance in chapters six through nineteen *has to do with the domain which Christ and His wife, His consort queen (ch. 19), will rule over during the succeeding Messianic Era (ch. 20).*

And it is in the preceding respect that events in these chapters, dealing with Israel and the nations on earth, *ALSO have to do with the Church in heaven.*

(Again, for more information on the redemption of the inheritance, refer to Chapters VIII, IX in the author's book, *The Time of the End.*)

2) The Marriage Festivities

When Scripture deals with the "marriage" of Christ and His bride, as in Rev. 19:7-9, or a parable such as the one in Matt. 22:2-14 (refer to the next four pages [pp. 234-237] for comments on this parable), the reference is *ALWAYS to festivities surrounding the marriage, NOT to the marriage itself.*

As previously shown, *there will be NO marriage per se, as we think of marriage in our modern-day culture.*

There WASN'T one in the type, and there WON'T be one in the antitype either. And this is an easy matter to see in both the type (Ruth 4) and the antitype (Rev. 5-19).

The wedding festivities surrounding the marriage of God's Son will occur in heaven *immediately before* the completion of the redemption of the forfeited inheritance. Though these festivities immediately precede the completion of the redemption of the inheritance, *the ENTIRE redemptive process MUST be carried out BEFORE the bride can become Christ's wife.*

And completing this order of events can be clearly seen beginning in Rev. 19:7-9, where these festivities are seen occurring *immediately preceding* Christ's return to the earth to finish His work surrounding the redemption of the inheritance (19:11ff).

a) *Anticipated in a Parable.*

Near the end of Christ's earthly ministry, He related a parable concerning a whole panorama of events surrounding these marriage festivities, seen in Matt. 22:2-14. And this parable had to do with the *OFFER of the kingdom of the heavens, FIRST to Israel, THEN to the Church.*

This parable begins with a King arranging all the various festivities for the wedding of His Son, a royal affair (v. 2).

Following these preparations, the King sent forth His servants to call those who had been invited; and *NOT ONLY* would they *NOT* come (v. 3) *BUT* they *ALSO* slew the King's Son; (Matt. 21:33-39).

THEN, another call was issued, but those who had been invited *STILL* would *NOT* come.

And *NOT ONLY* did they reject this second call, *BUT* they made light of the whole matter, even going so far as to mistreat and even kill those extending the offer (vv. 4-6).

And when the King heard what had happened, His anger was such that He sent forth His armies to both destroy those individuals and to burn their city (v. 7).

THEN, the call was sent forth to an entirely different group of individuals. Some from this group heeded the invitation, but others paid little to no attention.

And, in the end, two types of individuals are seen — “both bad and good.”

Those spoken of as “bad” hadn’t prepared themselves to attend the wedding festivities, *and they, resultingly, DIDN’T possess wedding garments*; but those spoken of as “good” had prepared themselves, *and they, resultingly, DID possess wedding garments* (vv. 8-10).

And the end result of this invitation is then presented. Those who had heeded the call and made proper preparations, *possessing wedding garments, were allowed to participate in the marriage festivities.*

But those who had disregarded or rejected the call, NOT having made proper preparations, NOT possessing wedding garments, were NOT allowed to participate in the marriage festivities.

They were NOT even allowed within. Instead, they found themselves in the darkness outside (vv. 11-14).

b) *That to Which the Parable Refers*

This parable in Matt. 22:2-14 covers the whole panorama of that seen in the New Testament, from Matthew chapter one through the first part of Revelation chapter nineteen; this parable covers *God’s complete dealings, throughout the New Testament, with both Israel and the Church in relation to the kingdom of the heavens*; and it extends up to and includes the marriage festivities in Rev. 19:7-9, preceding the Messianic Era.

The kingdom of the heavens was extended to Israel throughout the gospel accounts, Israel rejected the offer, slew the One making the offer, and the kingdom was taken from Israel (Matt. 21:33-43).

THEN, in the opening chapters of the Book of Acts, another entity (the Church) was called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected (Acts 2:1ff; cf. Matt. 16:16-19).

BUT, as in the parable, there was a re-offer of the kingdom to Israel, something seen throughout the Book of Acts. The one now in possession of the kingdom (the infant Church, among others [Jews who had heeded the message]) re-offered the kingdom to Israel, beginning in Acts chapter two (33 A.D.) and ending in chapter twenty-eight (about 62 A.D.).

However, as in the parable, rejection once again occurred; and the servants extending the offer were mistreated, and even killed (Acts 4:17-21; 5:40, 41; 7:54-60).

And, because of this, the same thing again occurred as seen in the parable. Between 66 and 70 A.D., Titus and his Roman legions were allowed by the Lord to come against the Israelites in Jerusalem after a manner which resulted in the slaying, uprooting, and dispersion of the Jewish people, along with the destruction of their city.

A few years prior to the siege and destruction of Jerusalem though (at the end of the Acts period [Acts 28:28], about 62 A.D.), *the call BEGAN to be extended ONLY to those seen in the parable as OTHER THAN the Jewish people*, those out in “the highways” (*mainly saved Gentiles, though saved Jews included*).

This latter part of the parable is covered in the New Testament by the epistles, though some of the epistles were written during the Acts period when the offer was still open to Israel (with the offer *ALSO* open to saved Gentiles throughout this period as well). And, as in the parable, some would heed the call, others wouldn’t.

(The epistles — *ALL of them* — center around the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Christians during the present dispensation. And these epistles, consequently, provide various facets of information surrounding this offer.)

And, as in the parable, the end of the matter will witness some Christians prepared to attend these festivities and others unprepared to attend (*ref. next chapter in this book*).

Proper or improper preparation is given in both Matt. 22:10-12 and Rev. 19:7, 8. *It has to do with the possession or nonpossession of a wedding garment.*

Those properly dressed will be allowed to participate in the festivities, looking forward to that which lies out ahead — the Son's coming reign over the earth, with His consort queen.

But those improperly dressed will be denied entrance into these festivities and be left in the darkness outside, with NOTHING to look forward to during the Son's coming reign, for they will occupy NO place in His kingdom.

They will occupy NO place among those forming the Son's wife, His consort queen (sixth parable in Matt. 13), at the completion of the redemption of the inheritance (fifth parable in Matt. 13).

(The symbolism used in the reference to "outer darkness" in the parable in Matt. 22:2-14 had to do with a lighted banquet hall where festivities were occurring, with a darkened courtyard outside. The person appearing without a wedding garment, wrongfully on the inside where the festivities were occurring, was bound "hand and foot," then cast outside into the darkened courtyard.

And referencing the only other places where the expression, "outer darkness," is found in the N.T. [two other places, also in Matthew's gospel], *the SAME type separation is seen, beginning with events surrounding the judgment seat [Matt. 25:30] and extending into the millennial reign itself [Matt. 8:12].*

Events surrounding the marriage festivities in Matt. 22 and Rev. 19 occur between these two points.

Thus, "a LIKE separation" between those Christians forming the bride, Christ's co-heirs, and those NOT forming the bride extends throughout the complete panorama of events which begins following the rapture and continues throughout Christ's millennial reign.

ONLY AFTER the present heavens and earth have passed out of existence and a new heavens and earth have been brought into existence will conditions change [Rev. 21:4, 5; 22:1, 2].)

Because of what Satan *has done with “the Word of the Kingdom” over the course of the dispensation relative to that revealed in the fifth and sixth parables of Matt. 13, seen carried out in the first four parables*, a few comments would appear to be in order to tie matters together.

As seen, the fifth and six parables deal with the heart of that which Satan has spent two millennia seeking to destroy. And, according to the first four parables, for all practical purposes, he has been quite successful.

Sowing tares among the wheat at the beginning of and throughout the dispensation (vv. 24-26), *he has brought the Church into its present, seemingly completely leavened state* (v. 33; cf. Rev. 3:14-21).

Different facets of “the Word of the Kingdom” *have been made to be something OTHER than what the text and context clearly state*. And, as a result, “the deep things of Satan” (Rev. 2:24), the “doctrine of demons” (I Tim. 4:1), rather than “the deep things of God” (I Cor. 2:10) *are, unknowingly, being taught throughout the Churches of the land*.

And much of this is being done under the guise of “fundamentalism,” *which ONLY adds to the deceptive nature of that being carried out*.

Satan has brought all of this about *in such a manner* that it goes completely unrecognized, with Christians, caught up in this deception, *left believing that conditions are just the opposite of how they actually exist* (Rev. 3:17).

The lesson from history — the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel 2,000 years ago and the part which the fundamental religious leaders of that day (the Scribes and Pharisees) played in Israel’s rejection of the kingdom (Matt. 23:1ff) — *has NOT been learned*.

THUS, the lesson from History can ONLY be/is being repeated in the Church today, with the SAME type religious leaders, the SAME subject, and the SAME outcome (cf. Rom. 11:11-21).

13

Parable of the Net

Purpose for Salvation Realized, Not Realized

“Again, the kingdom of the heavens is like [continues like] unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:

Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

So shall it be at the end of the world [‘age’]: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,

And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 13:47-50).

The last of the seven parables in Matthew chapter thirteen, the parable of the net, begins by briefly mentioning events occurring throughout the present dispensation (v. 47); then the parable in the three succeeding verses (vv. 48-50) immediately moves to and centers around events occurring *at the END of the age, AFTER the dispensation has run its course* (seen in the first four parables) *and AFTER the inheritance has been redeemed and the bride has become Christ’s wife* (seen in the fifth and sixth parables).

The “net, that was cast into the sea” (v. 47) is a reference *to God’s work among the Gentiles throughout the present dispensation*. The “sea” refers *to the Gentiles*, and the “net” cast into the sea, drawing from the sea (cast out among the Gentiles, drawing from the Gentiles) refers *to God working among and removing from the Gentiles “a people for his name”* (Acts 15:14).

AFTER Israel had rejected the proffered kingdom of the heavens, ANOTHER nation, separate from Israel, was called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected (Matt. 21:33-43; I Peter 2:9-11).

A nation, *which was neither Jewish nor Gentile*, was called into existence to be accorded the opportunity to bring forth fruit where Israel had failed. And this new nation, comprising a new creation “in Christ,” was to be taken from both of the prior two creations — from both the Jews and the Gentiles — though mainly from the Gentiles.

God set aside an entire dispensation, lasting two days, 2,000 years, during which time He would remove *from the Gentiles* “a people for his name,” though “a remnant according to the election of grace [believing Jews]” was to be included as well (Rom. 11:5).

And, according to the parable of the net, the removal of these people *had to do with the kingdom of the heavens, NOT with salvation by grace.*

Again, ALL seven parables have to do with the SAME subject. ALL seven have to do with the announced subject seen in the beginning parable, “the word of the kingdom,” and continues throughout the remaining six parables (“the kingdom of the heavens has become like [second parable]...continues like [remaining five parables]).

This removal from the sea is likened to a net which was cast out among the Gentile nations, and those removed from the Gentiles via the net (having become part of the new creation “in Christ”) are seen being removed for a PURPOSE.

Their removal, as previously seen, has to do with the kingdom of the heavens. Their removal is with a view to their occupying positions in the proffered kingdom, the kingdom previously rejected by and taken from Israel.

Thus, the removal from the sea itself is NOT the subject of the parable. IF THIS were the subject, that would make the

parable deal with salvation by grace, something OTHER than the announced subject, something OUTSIDE the text and context of the passage.

Rather, information pertaining to their removal from the sea was given in order to introduce the subject — *the PURPOSE for their removal from the sea, a PURPOSE which has its roots in the opening chapters of Genesis.*

All three of the parables which Christ gave after He had reentered the house draw from previous events — events occurring either *before or during* the present dispensation — but these parables center around events occurring *after* the dispensation has run its course. These parables have to do centrally with events occurring at the very end of the age, during and immediately following the time when God completes His dealings with Israel.

Events in these parables occur during the Tribulation and during the time immediately following Christ's return. In this respect, they occur during the last seven years of Man's Day and at the very first of the Lord's Day, which immediately follows (during Daniel's unfulfilled Seventieth Week [9:24-27] and during the seventy-five days immediately following, seen at the end of Daniel's prophecy [12:11-13]).

Events in the last of the three parables given back inside the house (parable of the net) *chronologically follow events in the preceding two parables* (parables of the treasure and pearl). As previously stated, *events in all three of these closing parables are seen in a chronology of this nature.*

Each of these parables begins by referring to events in past time. But the central subject of each parable is *NOT about these past events*. Rather, the central subject of each parable *RESTS on these past events* and has to do with *FUTURE events, events occurring AFTER the dispensation has run its course.*

ALL three of these parables have to do with the kingdom of the heavens, and ALL three have to do with events which

move toward *the SAME revealed goal — the end of the age and the beginning of the next age, the end of Man's Day and the beginning of the Lord's Day.*

The Separation

Those removed from the sea during the present dispensation (v. 47) are seen being dealt with at the end of the age after a revealed fashion. They are seen being separated into *TWO main categories and THEN dealt with according to the category in which they had previously been placed* (vv. 48ff).

Once those removed from the sea via the net had been brought "to shore," the picture in the parable relates a separation of "the good" from "the bad." And once separated, *the GOOD are gathered into vessels, but the BAD are cast away* (v. 48). Then the next verse reveals *HOW* this will be accomplished — *carried out by angels* (v. 49).

EXACTLY the same picture was presented earlier in this sequence of parables, at the end of the second parable, *the parable of the wheat and tares.*

There was a harvest, followed by a separation of the wheat and the tares. *The tares* were bound in bundles to be burned, *but the wheat* was gathered into the Master's barn (v. 30).

And after the Lord had gone back inside the house, prior to giving the last three parables, He gave the explanation to that which had occurred at the close of the parable of the wheat and tares, which would be *the SAME* as that occurring at the close of the three parables which He was about to give:

"As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world ['age'].

The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity" (Matt. 13:40, 41).

The preceding two verses *parallel* the two verses under discussion in the parable of the net (vv. 48, 49). These verses reveal a separation of “the wheat” from “the tares,” a separation of “the good” from “the bad.” And this separation will occur at “the end of this age.”

(Events occurring at the end of the age, depicted in both the parable of the wheat and tares and the parable of the net, are *the SAME*. These two parables simply present *TWO different pictures of the SAME thing*.)

Note that the things depicted in these two parables *do NOT have to do with events at Christ's judgment seat*. The things depicted in these parables *have to do with subsequent events, occurring at least seven years later, based on previous decisions and determinations rendered at the judgment seat.*)

1) Subject of the Parables

Again, bear in mind that the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen — all seven of them — have to do with *the kingdom of the heavens*. They have *NOTHING* to do with salvation by grace through faith (though salvation by grace through faith would be alluded to several places in these parables [e.g., in the last parable *through a removal from the sea*]).

Salvation by grace through faith is simply *NOT* the subject seen throughout these parables (also in Mark. 4 and Luke 8, 13). And when these parables deal with a separation (as seen in the second and seventh parables), along with the results of this separation, *everything stated MUST be taken at face value and RELATED to the subject at hand*.

And whether or not this lines up with man's ideologies or his doctrinal statements in the realm of eschatology (it seldom does) *is of NO moment whatsoever*. An omniscient God, Who sees and knows the end as well as He sees and knows the beginning, has spoken (Isa. 8:20; 46:9, 10).

God has established these parables, structured them a certain way, and positioned them in a particular order and place in His Word. And that which God has established, along with the manner in which He has established it, is *the END of the matter*.

In the closing parable, God Himself has revealed to man *the END of ALL that which had been dealt with in the preceding six parables, in complete keeping with the same end seen in the second parable*.

There will first be a separation of those taken from the sea (a separation of "the good" from "the bad," "the wicked" from "the just," "the wheat" from "the tares").

This separation will occur at the END of the age (which will FOLLOW events surrounding the judgment seat and the subsequent marriage festivities of the Lamb).

This separation will be CARRIED OUT by angels.

And this separation will occur in RELATION to entrance into or exclusion from the kingdom.

Thus, the subject of ALL seven parables *CENTERS* around the proffered kingdom of the heavens.

This subject is given at the beginning of each parable, something which CANNOT possibly be missed. And this subject MUST be kept in view throughout these parables, else the parables cannot be properly understood.

2) Those Being Dealt with in the Parables

Those being dealt with throughout the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen, as seen in previous chapters in this book, are *the saved ALONE*.

Scripture *DOESN'T* deal with the unsaved in relation to the message which pervades these parables — a message pertaining to *the kingdom of the heavens*. The unsaved, when dealt with regarding spiritual matters, are *ALWAYS* dealt with

ONLY in relation to the message of salvation by grace through faith, NEVER in relation to the message of the kingdom.

The message of the kingdom is for the saved ALONE, something which can be aptly illustrated from any of the seven parables.

But note the closing parable in this respect. Those dealt with in this parable are seen being removed from the sea via a net which had been cast out into the sea. That is, within the symbolism used, the parable pictures individuals being removed from the Gentiles; and their removal is *for a revealed PURPOSE — a purpose which, for part of them, would NOT be realized.*

They were removed from the sea *strictly on the basis of their having been in the net.* And, once removed, they were no longer associated with the sea. That would be to say, once removed, they were no longer associated with the Gentiles.

Thus, their removal from the sea is a metaphorical way of saying that they had been removed from the Gentiles. And, if removed from the Gentiles, within the time-frame seen in the previous six parables, there's only one group with which they could possibly have then been associated — *the "one new man"* (Eph. 2:15). They had become part of *the new creation "in Christ"* (II Cor. 5:17).

A person is either a Jew, a Gentile, or a Christian. And any terminology which fails to clearly distinguish between these three creations — *e.g., "Jewish Christian," "Gentile Christian," "professor"* (as opposed to "possessor") — emanates from man, NOT from the Scriptures. Scripture sees the matter as completely black or white, NEVER as a gray area lying between any two of the three.

A person is *EITHER a new creation "in Christ," or he is NOT. And, if he is NOT, then he HAS to be EITHER a Jew or a Gentile.*

The matter is THAT simple!

And, if this were understood, along with understanding that

all of the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen are about the kingdom of the heavens, there would be far less confusion when interpreting these parables.

(Though Scripture makes a clear distinction between *Jew*, *Gentile*, and *Christian*, Scripture sometimes refers to believing individuals removed from the Jews or the Gentiles through reference to their national origin — “Jew” and “Gentile” [e.g., Acts 28:28; Rom. 1:13, 16; 2:9, 10; Gal. 1:16; 2:2; Eph. 3:6, 8]. This was something seen during the re-offer of the kingdom to Israel [33-62 A.D.], allowing an identifying distinction to exist between believing Jews and believing Gentiles.

But Scripture *NEVER* refers to such individuals as *Jewish Christians*” or “*Gentile Christians*,” for Scripture *NEVER* brings two of the three creations together in this manner. And when “Jew” or “Gentile” is used after this fashion, the context is *ALWAYS* very clear that those being referenced are individuals removed from the Jews or the Gentiles, not Jews or Gentiles *per se*.

For additional information on the preceding, refer to the author's book, *The Study of Scripture*, Chapter VI, “Jew, Gentile, Christian.”)

And, in keeping with the preceding, Scripture *NEVER* pictures a mixture of saved and unsaved individuals through the use of a metaphor such as that seen in the parable of the net — individuals removed from the sea, removed from the Gentiles.

The picture explains itself, if allowed to so do.

(A similar picture is presented by the seven Churches in Rev. 2, 3. *Christians ALONE* are being referenced and dealt with throughout the messages to *ALL* seven Churches.

The word “Church” is the translation of a Greek word which means *called out* [Greek, *ekklesia*, a compound word from *ek*, “out” and *kelsis*, “to call”]. *ONLY* the saved have been called out; *ONLY* the saved can comprise a Church.

Thus, referring to a Church as being comprised of both saved and unsaved individuals, would be *an oxymoron*.)

ALL in the net had been removed from the sea, and *ALL* those who had been removed from the sea were *NO longer* associated with that which the sea represented. They were *NO longer* associated with the Gentiles. Rather, they were associated *with an entirely separate and distinct creation — the new creation, “in Christ.”*

And their removal, along with everything which followed, was *with a view to the kingdom of the heavens*.

Eternal verities are NOT seen in their removal from the sea. They CAN’T be seen. Such would be an impossibility.

Their eternal destiny was a settled matter at the *TIME* they were removed from the sea. And, had it *NOT* been settled, there could have been *NO* removal. They could *ONLY* have remained in the sea.

The Furnace of Fire

ONLY one group of individuals — though separated into two classes — could possibly be in view through the use of the expressions, “good” and “bad,” or “just” and “wicked” (vv. 48, 49).

ALL had been removed from the sea; ALL had been removed from the Gentiles. Thus, NO room could possibly exist for an inclusion of unsaved individuals in this parable. By the very nature of the subject matter (the kingdom of the heavens) and those being dealt with in this parable (those removed from the sea), ONLY the saved could possibly be in view.

And, viewing that to which this parable refers, these saved individuals are seen being dealt with on the basis of prior decisions and determinations — decisions and determinations *which could have been made ONLY one place, at the judgment seat.*

And these decisions and determinations, emanating from the judgment seat, will have been based on prior faithfulness to one's calling (judgment will be on the basis of "works," but the works being judged will have resulted from *faithfulness*, or *unfaithfulness* [I Cor. 3:12-15; cf. Heb. 11:17-19, 31; James 2:21-25]).

But seeing *the saved ALONE* being dealt with in this parable presents major problems for numerous Christians, for some of those in the parable are cast into "the furnace of fire." And these same Christians, who would never consider thinking along the lines of Christians being cast into such a place, are invariably forced into an erroneous position, resulting in an erroneous interpretation.

They are forced into the position of seeing *saved and unsaved individuals* ("good" and "bad") *being dealt with in the parable, along with seeing these individuals being dealt with together, at the same time, in relation to eternal life or eternal damnation.*

Some form of *the different things* seen in the preceding paragraph, though *ALL* are completely contrary to Scripture, would be widely held by Christians today. And the reason for that can be explained from that revealed in the first four of the seven parables in Matt. 13.

(Note in the preceding respect *HOW far astray the tares have taken the wheat over 2,000 years of time.*

The subject matter is *NO longer the kingdom BUT eternal life or eternal damnation.*

Resulting from this type thinking, as previously stated, the saved and unsaved are seen *being judged together, at the same time, relative to eternal verities, preceding the millennium.*

BUT, the text and context deal with the kingdom of the heavens, NOT with eternal verities; NOR are the saved and unsaved EVER judged together; NOR are the unsaved EVEN judged preceding the Millennium.

The unsaved are judged *ONLY FOLLOWING the Millennium, for their judgment has NOTHING to do with the Millennium, ONLY with the unending ages beyond.*)

The fact that those described as “bad” and “wicked” are cast into “the furnace of fire” *MUST be understood textually and contextually. This MUST be understood relative to BOTH THOSE who are being dealt with and THAT which is being dealt with — CHRISTIANS, and the KINGDOM.*

Thus, to deal with this parable on the basis of eternal verities, with the unsaved being cast into the lake of fire, is *COMPLETELY outside the scope of the subject matter seen in any of these seven parables.* Such a teaching, derived from these parables, as previously seen, is *BOTH textually and contextually destructive.* Consequently, any thought of dealing with any of these parables after this fashion, from a Scriptural standpoint, *could NOT even be open for discussion.*

IF the text is dealt with in a literal sense, apart from metaphors, *ONLY one possible conclusion can be reached.* At the end of the age a segment of the saved, a segment of Christians, is going to be cast into what is called in this parable, “the furnace of fire.”

And *THAT is EXACTLY* what Christ had previously stated within His explanation of the parable of the wheat and tares:

“The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things which offend, and them which do iniquity;

And shall cast them [*i.e.*, the offensive and lawless ones, the tares in this parable, those doing the works of Satan] into a [‘the’] furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 13:41, 42).

Then, note the same thing in the parable of the net, the present and concluding parable:

“So shall it be at the end of the world [‘age’]: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them [the wicked] into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth” (vv. 49, 50).

So, *EXACTLY* what is being dealt with through these two references to “the furnace of fire”? Should the expression be looked upon in a literal sense, referring to an actual furnace of fire? Or, is this a continuation of the metaphorical language seen earlier in the parables, describing something related to but apart from a literal understanding of the reference?

When a person begins studying related Scripture having to do with “Gehenna,” “the outer darkness [‘the darkness outside’]” and “the lake of fire” *he will find EXACTLY the same teaching as seen in these two parables.*

That seen in Matt. 13:42, 50 is *NOT something peculiar to the parable of the wheat and tares and the parable of the net.* Rather, it is merely part of *the SAME teaching seen so many places elsewhere in the New Testament* (cf. John 15:1-6; II Thess. 1:5-10; Heb. 6:7-9; 10:26-31; Jude 20-23).

In this respect, note how teachings concerning *Gehenna, the outer darkness, and the lake of fire* appear in Scripture.

1) *Gehenna, The Outer Darkness*

Gehenna is an Anglicized Greek word (*Geenna* in the Greek text) used twelve times in the New Testament. The word appears eleven times in the three synoptic gospels (Matt. 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5) and once in the Epistle of James (3:6).

Christ alone used the word in the gospel accounts. And *He ALWAYS used the word in contexts having to do with entrance into or exclusion from the kingdom of the heavens.*

Then, in James, the word appears in a text having to do with the tongue — “...it [the tongue] is set on fire of hell [‘Gehenna’].” And, though the word is used in a somewhat

different sense in James, *it appears within a context having to do with the saving of the soul and the coming kingdom* (cf. 1:12, 21; 2:5, 14-26; 5:7, 8, 19, 20).

Gehenna (*Geenna*) is the Greek word for *Hinnom* from the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. *Hinnom* was the name given to a valley south of Jerusalem during Joshua's day, named for the son of a person whose name was "Hinnom" (Joshua 15:8; 18:16).

And, though this valley was used at times as a place where human sacrifices were offered during Old Testament days (II Kings 23:10; Jer. 7:31), the valley was no more than the place where the refuse from Jerusalem was discarded at the time Christ was on earth.

(The word, *Hinnom*, has simply been transliterated in the English text of the Old Testament; but the same thing has not been done with *Gehenna* [*Geenna*, for *Hinnom*] in most English texts of the New Testament. Rather, in most versions, *Gehenna* [*Geenna*] has been translated "hell" each of the twelve times that it appears in the New Testament, resulting in confusion.)

Thus, *Gehenna*, at the time Christ and James used the word, was simply the name of the place where those in Jerusalem discarded their refuse. Even dead bodies (criminals, etc.) were, at times, cast into this place; and the fires burned continuously.

In this respect, Christ was doing no more than referencing a place where the refuse from the city of Jerusalem was discarded. And James was associating the misuse of the tongue with this same place.

Remaining within the gospel accounts, being cast into *Gehenna* always carries an identical association and meaning. Textually, in the gospels, being cast into *Gehenna* is *ALWAYS associated with separation from regality within Christ's kingdom.*

It matters not which of the eleven references a person checks, *he will find EXACTLY the same thing each time.*

Gehenna is NEVER used in the gospel accounts in a context dealing with the unsaved and eternal verities. Rather, the word ALWAYS appears in texts set within contexts having to do SOLELY with the saved in relation to the coming kingdom.

And “outer darkness” is used EXACTLY the same way in the three instances in which the expression appears, all in Matthew’s gospel (8:12; 22:13; 25:30). The use of outer darkness is simply another way in which the Lord dealt with the same issue among the same group of people (the Jewish people, in relation to the proffered kingdom).

Viewing the matter from one perspective, those denied positions with Christ in His kingdom will find themselves *in the place where the refuse from the city was discarded, OUTSIDE the city.*

And NOT ONLY was this place OUTSIDE the city BUT ALSO on the SOUTH side of the city, AWAY from the Lord’s presence, WHO resides in a place NORTH of the city (Lev. 1:5, 11; Ps. 75:6, 7; Isa. 14:13).

Viewing the matter from the other perspective, those denied positions with Christ in His kingdom will find themselves in a place separated from the One Who said, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12). With respect to occupying a position with Christ in His kingdom, they will find themselves *in a place OUTSIDE, a place associated with darkness instead of light — the darkness OUTSIDE.*

The use of *Gehenna* and the *outer darkness* are simply two metaphorical ways which Christ used *to call attention to EXACTLY the same thing.*

(These expressions — *Gehenna, the outer darkness* — were used in the gospel accounts during and immediately following that time when the kingdom of the heavens was offered to Israel at Christ’s first coming.

With Israel's rejection of the proffered kingdom, the kingdom was taken from Israel and an entirely new entity [*the one new man* "in Christ"] was called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected [Matt. 21:33-46; I Peter 2:9-11].

And with these events brought to pass, *Gehenna* and the *outer darkness*, as previously used relative to the Jewish people, would now be used relative to Christians.

These expressions are used in Scripture relative to *the recipients of the proffered kingdom [the kingdom of the heavens], whether Israel in past time or Christians during the present time.*

Refer to comments on "outer darkness" in the previous chapter of this book, Ch. XII, p. 237.)

2) The Lake of Fire

The description of "the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" in Rev. 21:8 is another way in which Scripture deals with *the SAME thing again*.

"The lake of fire" in this passage is described as *NOT ONLY* the place where unsaved man from the previous chapter (vv. 11-15) will spend eternity *BUT ALSO* the place where Christians who do not overcome (the world, the flesh, and the Devil) during the present dispensation will find themselves during the coming dispensation.

And this, of course, would be the same as Christians being cast into "the furnace of fire" in Matt. 13:42, 50.

The same thing is seen in the second of the seven overcomer's promises in Revelation chapters two and three.

These two chapters record seven short epistles to seven Churches, and there is an overcomer's promise at the end of each epistle. "To him that overcometh..." "He that overcometh..." (2:7, 11, 17, 26-28; 3:5, 12, 21).

These epistles are addressed *to saved individuals* (those in a position to overcome); and the Lord has set rewards, compensations, prizes before these individuals *as an incen-*

tive, encouragement, for them to run the present race of the faith in a manner which will allow them to overcome rather than be overcome.

And each of the overcomer's promises is *millennial* in its scope of fulfillment. That in view through overcoming, or not overcoming — as the case may be — will be realized during the 1,000-year Messianic Era.

The fact that these *are millennial in their scope of fulfillment* can be shown quite easily from the text itself. Note the overcomer's promises in Rev. 2:26, 27 and 3:21. *NO such scene as presented in these verses will exist beyond the Millennium.*

Christ and His co-heirs, beyond the Millennium, will no longer rule over the nations, as this rule is pictured in Rev. 2:26, 27. Rather, the Gentiles comprising these nations will be brought into positions of rulership themselves with Christ and His co-heirs, as this rule extends beyond the earth, out into the universe (Rev. 22:2, 5).

And the Son, beyond the Millennium, will no longer sit on His Own throne, as seen in Rev. 3:21. Rather, He will sit on "the throne of God and of the Lamb," from whence universal rule will emanate (Rev. 22:1, 3, 5).

It is the overcomer's promise to the Church in Smyrna which has to do with the lake of fire, something which, again, *can ONLY be millennial* within its scope of fulfillment. That is, the conditions alluded to for the nonovercomer in this promise will exist *ONLY for the duration of the Messianic Era, NOT throughout the eternal ages beyond.*

Scripture deals ONLY with millennial rewards and/or loss, NEVER with eternal rewards and/or loss.

This should be easy enough for anyone to understand, for if rewards are eternal, so is loss of rewards. And loss of rewards involves an association with *death* (Rom. 8:13), something which Scripture clearly reveals will be done away with at the beginning of the eternal ages beyond the Mil-

lennium (I Cor. 15:26; Rev. 21:4).

(Aside from the preceding, the whole of Scripture moves toward man realizing a seventh day of rest, a seventh 1,000-year period, *having to do with the PRESENT heavens and earth, PRECEDING their destruction, NOT with ages beyond, associated with the new heavens and earth.*

This is the way Scripture BEGINS in Genesis, showing, at the outset, the subject matter of the O.T.; and this is repeated in John's gospel, beginning the N.T., showing HOW the N.T. simply CONTINUES with the SAME subject matter from the O.T.)

The overcomer's promise to those Christians comprising the Church in Smyrna reads:

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death" (2:11; cf. Rev. 20:6).

There is a clear implication in this promise that those who do not overcome — i.e., have, instead, been overcome — *WILL be hurt of the second death. And ANY attempt to take this promise and make it mean something other than what it clearly states serves ONLY to destroy the promise, something which the Lord sounded a solemn warning against* (Rev. 22:18, 19).

The promise that those who DO overcome will NOT "be hurt of the second death" would be meaningless unless this promise is taken at face value and allowed to mean EXACTLY what it says, clearly implying that those who do NOT overcome WILL "be hurt of the second death."

"The second death" in the Book of Revelation is associated with *the lake of fire* (Rev. 21:8). And those who *do NOT overcome* (v. 7) are going to have "*their PART*" in this lake of fire (v. 8). That is, *they will "be HURT" of the second death by having a "PART" in the lake of fire.*

BUT, EXACTLY what is meant by a saved person being “*HURT*” of the second death and having a “*PART*” in the lake of fire in Rev. 2:11; 21:8?

Revelation chapter twenty-one moves beyond the Millennium into the eternal ages, and the first six verses provide the complete story concerning conditions as these ages begin.

Note the words, “It is done,” in the first part of verse six. This is the translation of a verb in the perfect tense in the Greek text, indicating that the matter has been brought to completion and presently exists in that finished state.

Then, beginning with the latter part of verse six and continuing through verse eight, overcoming and/or being overcome are again, for the last time, dealt with in this book. And this takes a person back to the same place seen in chapters two and three.

Then, the remainder of the book is simply a commentary for the eight verses which open and begin this section.

FIRST, a commentary is provided for the first part of this opening section. Revelation 21:9-22:5 forms a commentary for this part of the section (21:1-6a), which has to do with conditions beyond the Millennium. Note how this commentary in chapter twenty-two closes: “...and they shall reign forever and ever [throughout the endless ages]” (v. 5).

THEN, the remainder of chapter twenty-two (vv. 6ff) forms a commentary for the second part of this opening section, which has to do with conditions before and during the Millennium (21:6b-8).

And this will explain *WHY*, outside the gates of Jerusalem during the Messianic Era, one will be able to find “dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie” (22:15). This information is given to shed light on and provide additional detail for verses in the preceding chapter (vv. 7, 8), and the

information in these verses in the preceding chapter was given to shed light on the previous overcomer's promises, particularly the one to the Church in Smyrna dealing with "the second death" (2:11).

To distinguish between millennial and eternal conditions in this respect, note that those *outside the gates* during the eternal ages will be the Gentile nations, as the New Jerusalem rests on the new earth (21:24-27); but those *outside the gates* during the preceding Messianic Era, with the New Jerusalem in the heavens above the earth, will be the nonovercomers (22:14, 15). And the place which they will occupy is described at least four other ways in Scripture — through the use of *Gehenna*, *the outer darkness*, *the furnace of fire*, and *the lake of fire*.

The picture surrounding an association between *Gehenna* and *the lake of fire* appears unmistakable. As *Gehenna* was the place of refuse for the earthly city of Jerusalem, *the lake of fire* is seen as the place of refuse for the heavenly city of Jerusalem. And as *Gehenna* was on the opposite side of the city from that side where God dwelled (*south*, as opposed to *north* [cf. Lev. 1:11; Isa. 14:13]), thus will it be with the counterpart to *Gehenna* in the heavenly Jerusalem.

The lake of fire is used with respect to a place completely apart from Christ and His rule. And those "hurt by the second death" are seen occupying this place during the 1,000-year Messianic Era.

(*WHY* does Scripture associate nonovercoming Christians with the lake of fire in relation to Christ's millennial reign, in this manner? The answer would be the same as the reason *WHY* Scripture associates the unsaved with the lake of fire throughout the endless ages of eternity, following the Millennium.

The lake of fire *was NOT prepared for man*. Rather, it was prepared "for the Devil and his angels" [Matt. 25:41]. *It was*

prepared for those who had rejected God's supreme power and authority, as Satan sought to acquire power and authority above that which had been delegated [Isa. 14:13, 14].

Thus, in this respect, the lake of fire is connected with REGALITY.

And man, created to replace Satan and his angels, finds his connection with the lake of fire *on EXACTLY the same basis. Saved man*, ignoring the very reason for his salvation [*which is REGAL*], will find himself associated with the lake of fire during the Millennium [an association connected *with all that the lake of fire implies*].

And *unsaved man*, ignoring salvation and the reason for man's creation [which, again, *is REGAL*], will find himself associated with the lake of fire throughout the endless ages following the Millennium [an association connected *with all that the lake of fire implies*].

Refer to Ch. VIII, pp. 147-149 in this book for similar comments on this same material.)

But, relative to Christians and the coming kingdom of Christ, is Scripture dealing with something literal? Or is Scripture dealing with metaphors?

Note how Scripture uses metaphors to deal with this same thing elsewhere.

In John 15:6 and Heb. 6:8, saved individuals are spoken of in a metaphorical sense, *where a burning with fire is referenced*. And the context both places has to do with *EITHER bearing fruit OR not bearing fruit, which is EXACTLY the same thing seen in the Matthew thirteen parables (or, as the matter is expressed in Revelation chapters two and three, either overcoming or being overcome)*.

And the negative side of the matter is expressed at least two other ways in Scripture — being cast into *Gehenna* (a reference to the place of refuse outside the city walls of Jerusalem at this time; Matt. 5:22, 29, 30; 23:15, 33) or being cast into *outer darkness* (Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30).

Overcoming or not overcoming and being unhurt or being hurt of the second death in Rev. 2:11 is expressed a slightly different way in Rom. 8:13:

“For if ye [a reference to ‘brethren’ in v. 12] live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify [put to death] the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”

Whether *Gehenna* or *outer darkness* in Matthew, a *burning with fire* in John and Hebrews, *being cast into a furnace or lake of fire* in Matthew and Revelation, or *suffering death in Romans*, or *being hurt of the second death* in Revelation, *DIFFERENT* facets of *EXACTLY the SAME thing* are in view.

ALL are used in contexts having to do with *SAVED* people in relation to *FRUIT-BEARING* and the *KINGDOM*.

Through comparing Scripture with Scripture, it is plain that these are simply different ways of expressing *the SAME thing*. And since a literal casting into outer darkness, *Gehenna*, or a furnace or lake of fire could not possibly be in view (for these different places could not possibly be looked upon as referring to the same place in a literal sense), *it is evident that metaphors are being used throughout*.

But relative to the unsaved and the lake of fire, this is simply *NOT expressed other ways* in Scripture as it is with the saved, leaving no room for any thought other than understanding the matter *as literal, NOT metaphorical*.

Aside from the preceding, it is clear *that ALL* Christians, faithful and unfaithful alike, will be in the kingdom. This is seen in type in Genesis chapters eighteen and nineteen.

BOTH Abraham and Lot, in the final analysis, are seen on the mount (a “mountain” in Scripture signifies a *kingdom*).

BUT, note the stark *DIFFERENCE* in the place which each occupied.

Abraham stood before the Lord, where he had always stood (18:22; 19:27).

Lot though found himself in a place separated from the Lord, in a place where he had ALSO always stood (19:1, 30).

The Kingdom

For the overcomers though, conditions during the Millennium will be entirely different — something not really dealt with in the parable of the net, though dealt with in the previous explanation to the parable of the wheat and tares (v. 43).

The promise to the overcomers is that *they will NOT be hurt of the second death, they will be allowed to ascend the throne with Christ, and they will rule as co-heirs with Christ over the nations* (Rev. 2:11, 26-28; 3:21).

Christ and His co-heirs (who will form His wife, His consort queen) will rule over the redeemed inheritance, and *this rule will last for 1,000 years*. It will last *UNTIL* Christ and His co-heirs have *put down* “all rule and all authority and power.” It will last *UNTIL ALL enemies* (which includes *death*) have been put “under his feet” (I Cor 15:24-28).

At THIS time, Matt. 13:43, referencing and having to do with Christ’s millennial reign, will be fulfilled:

“THEN shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

14

Instruction in the Kingdom

Understanding “the Word of the Kingdom”

“Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of the heavens is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old” (Matt. 13:52).

“The Word of the Kingdom” — the message surrounding *the kingdom of the heavens* (Matt. 13:11, 19, 24) — is the *CENTRAL message of the New Testament*. Whether studying the gospels, the Book of Acts, the epistles, or the Book of Revelation, an individual *will be studying Scriptures having to do, after some fashion, with THIS message*.

The person understanding this message *will possess a PROPER foundation to build upon as he studies different parts of the New Testament*.

However, if this message is *NOT understood, the converse of the preceding will be true*.

That person will possess an IMPROPER foundation to build upon; and his studies throughout any part of the New Testament will, accordingly, be adversely affected.

This is *WHY* an individual instructed in “the Word of the Kingdom” *can be likened to the householder in the text*.

NOT ONLY will he able to go to the Scriptures and bring forth things which are “old” (things he has already seen and understood) BUT he will ALSO be able, from the things which are “old,” to begin seeing and bringing forth things which are “new” as well (things he has not previously seen and understood).

And, according to the text, he will be able to do this *because he has been "instructed unto the kingdom of the heavens."*

He now possesses a *KEY* to the Scriptures, a *KEY* which will open numerous passages of Scripture to his understanding, passages which otherwise would have remained closed.

Such an individual, as he studies and learns new things about "the Word of the Kingdom," will progressively find himself being able to, more and more, take the "old" and see and understand that which is "new."

The latter, in this respect, is inseparably linked to and dependent on the former.

And the MORE that person comes into an understanding of "the Word of the Kingdom," the MORE he will see Scripture opening up to him in this fashion. THIS is what an understanding of "the Word of the kingdom" will do for an individual in his quest for a knowledge of Scripture.

And, though this has been the experience and testimony of numerous Christians, *THIS is NOT* simply what they might have to say about the matter. Rather, *THIS is WHAT the unchangeable Word of God has to say about the matter.*

The Word of God clearly reveals that a person instructed in "the Word of the Kingdom" can go to the Scriptures and bring forth out of this storehouse of unlimited treasures "things new and old."

BUT, by the same token, apart from an understanding of "the Word of the Kingdom," though an individual may be able to see and understand certain truths, the same situation referred to in Matt. 13:52 *simply DOESN'T exist.*

The preceding will explain why this whole realm of teaching *lies center stage* in Satan's attack against the Word during the present dispensation. An understanding of "the Word of the Kingdom" *is the KEY to a PROPER understanding of Scripture as it relates to Christians. And Satan KNOWS THIS!*

He *KNOWS* that if he can corrupt or destroy that which will open the door to a proper understanding of the numerous other Scriptures bearing on the subject, he can best accomplish the purpose for his present work among Christians.

And Satan's *EFFORTS* toward this end are something easily seen in the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen. These four parables present a chronology of Satan's work as he seeks to subvert "the Word of the Kingdom," and this chronology covers the progressive results of his work in this respect throughout the entire dispensation.

Satan's attack in the first parable, *the parable of the Sower* (vv. 3-8, 18-23), was seen to be against *those hearing "the Word of the Kingdom."* He sought to stop the matter at this point, preventing individuals from understanding this message and subsequently bringing forth fruit.

Four types of individuals are seen responding to the message, with Satan being successful in his attack against three of the four.

Those seen in the first three of the four categories fell away and bore no fruit. But Satan's attack against those in the fourth category proved to be unsuccessful. They heard the Word, received and understood the Word, overcame Satan's attack, and bore fruit.

Then the next parable, *the parable of the wheat and tares* (vv. 24-30, 36-43), *centers around Satan's attack against the ones bearing fruit from the previous parable.* Satan placed those with a false message (false teachers) in the midst of those bearing fruit, seeking to subvert the message and stop that which was occurring. That is to say, *he sought to corrupt the true message through introducing a false message.*

And this was done *with a view to stopping that which had resulted from a proclamation of the true message.* This was done *with a view to stopping those Christians who were bearing fruit from doing so.*

Then the next parable, *the parable of the mustard seed* (vv. 31, 32), *shows that which happened in Christendom over the course of time because of this false message.*

The mustard seed germinated and took a natural growth for awhile. But then something happened, which caused it to take an unnatural growth and eventually become *a tree*.

And after this unnatural growth had occurred — after the mustard bush had become a tree, something which it wasn't supposed to become at all — *the birds of the air (ministers of Satan, seen in the first parable [v. 4]) found a lodging place therein.*

And the fourth parable, *the parable of the leaven* (v. 33), *completes the picture.* The false message introduced near the beginning of the dispensation is likened to leaven placed in three measures of meal (“three” is the number of *Divine perfection*, and “meal” is that which is used to make *bread*. Leaven [a corrupting substance] was placed in the meal [resulting in corruption in the bread]).

And this leaven would continue to work (this false message would continue to permeate and corrupt the true message) *UNTIL the whole had been leavened (UNTIL the whole had been corrupted).*

THIS is the revealed direction which Christendom would take relative to the true message concerning “the Word of the Kingdom” following the introduction of the leaven, following the introduction of a false message concerning “the Word of the Kingdom.”

THESE four parables together show a history of Christendom throughout the dispensation in relation to “the Word of the Kingdom.”

THIS message — the central message of the New Testament — was universally taught throughout the Churches during the first century.

BUT, the introduction of a false message resulted in changes. Christendom itself took an unnatural growth; and this unnatural growth was such that the false teachers eventually found themselves welcomed within that which they, through their false message, had corrupted.

Corruption though DIDN'T stop at this point. The working of the leaven NOT ONLY continued BUT it would continue UNTIL this false message had permeated ALL of Christendom. This corrupting process would continue, according to the text, "till the WHOLE" had been leavened.

And, viewing the matter SOLELY from the standpoint of that which can be seen in the world today, WHAT has been the end result of the working of the leaven? As the dispensation draws to a close, WHERE does the Church find itself today?

The answers are easy to ascertain. All one has to do in order to see and understand that which has happened is to go into almost any Church of the land (fundamental and liberal alike) and listen for any mention of things having to do with "the Word of the Kingdom."

A person will listen in vain. Because of the working of a leavening process which is in its final stages, the true Biblical message surrounding Christians and the coming kingdom is practically nonexistent throughout Christendom today.

This leavening process recognizes NO bounds or barriers. Fundamental Christendom finds itself just as permeated with the leaven, relating to "the Word of the Kingdom," as does liberal Christendom. From the theology schools to the pulpits of Churches to the pews in these Churches, the WHOLE of Christendom finds itself in EXACTLY the same state insofar as that revealed throughout the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen is concerned.

The fundamentalists, not understanding the true nature of the leavening process, look upon themselves as having escaped this corruption.

BUT, NOT so!

Fundamental segments of Christendom invariably live up to their name and claim relative to particular areas of Biblical study (e.g., inspiration of Scripture, salvation by grace, etc.).

BUT, when it comes to “the Word of the Kingdom”...

Insofar as any understanding and proclamation of “the Word of the Kingdom” is concerned, the fundamental groups find themselves in *EXACTLY the SAME state as the liberal groups. They find themselves permeated through and through with EXACTLY the same corrupting leaven.*

There is absolutely *NO difference* between the two groups in this respect. Neither understands nor proclaims this message.

In fact, the fundamentalists, more so than the liberals, are often quick to condemn and fight against this message.

Seminaries — fundamental and liberal alike — are training students *in everything BUT the ONE message which will OPEN the Scriptures to their understanding.*

And these same seminaries are turning out graduates who are filling the pulpits of Churches *with a message completely void of any reference to “the Word of the Kingdom.”*

These seminary graduates don’t know the truth of the matter, and, as a result, *their entire ministries are negatively affected. The various flocks which the Lord has entrusted to their care are NOT being properly fed; and, in reality, for the most part, Christians under their ministries are slowly starving to death.*

Christians throughout the Churches today are *simply NOT hearing the one message, above all other messages, which they should be hearing.*

And the reason is given in the first four parables of Matthew chapter thirteen. The working of the leaven over almost two millennia of time has produced *a corruption extending throughout Christendom which has all but destroyed the message surrounding “the Word of the Kingdom.”*

And, as a result of this corruption, the Bible, for the most part, *remains a closed book for the vast majority of Christians.*

The preceding is why a person, untrained in the theology schools of the land, but understanding “the Word of the Kingdom,” often has *a better grasp of the whole of Scripture* than many of those who are trained by or even teaching in the theology schools.

The person having an understanding of “the Word of the Kingdom” possesses a KEY to Scripture which a person without this understanding does NOT possess. He can go to the Scriptures and bring forth BOTH things “new and old”; BUT, the same thing CANNOT be said for those who lack this understanding.

Why?

WHY will instruction in “the Word of the Kingdom” open the Scriptures to a person’s understanding like nothing else?

WHY is an understanding of this message so vital if a person is to possess a correct and proper grasp of Scripture?

The answer could be looked upon in a twofold respect.

FIRST, an understanding of “the Word of the Kingdom” is *the ONLY thing which will provide the TRUE Biblical picture surrounding the PURPOSE for the Christian life.*

WHY did God bring *the new creation* “in Christ” into existence?

WHY is God taking an entire dispensation to do a work among the Gentiles?

WHY is the Holy Spirit presently in the world performing *a work among Christians?*

And SECOND, an understanding of “the Word of the Kingdom” is *the ONLY thing which will provide the true Biblical picture surrounding DIRECTION for the Christian life.*

WHAT is the goal toward which everything moves as it pertains to *the new creation* “in Christ”?

WHAT is the spiritual warfare about?

WHAT is the race of the faith about?

WHAT will be the end result of victory or defeat as it pertains to the warfare or the race?

An understanding of “the Word of the Kingdom” will answer questions surrounding the Christian life *unlike anything else in the Word of God*.

THIS is the ONLY thing which will present the complete Biblical picture in its correct fashion. *ONLY out of this teaching* can all the issues surrounding the Christian life be properly addressed, and *ONLY out of this teaching* can one find the true motivation for Godly Christian living.

BUT, IF all the preceding is true — and it is — then *WHY* is this message so rejected and fought against in Christian circles today, particularly fundamental circles? It would appear that *acceptance* rather than *rejection* would be the norm.

Such though is *NOT* the case at all. Rather, with rare exceptions, *rejection* is invariably the norm. And, again, the reason is seen in Satan sowing tares among the wheat and the corresponding working of the leaven in Matt. 13:25, 33.

The negative attitude of Christians toward “the Word of the Kingdom” is simply the END RESULT of a work of Satan which has been going on for almost 2,000 years.

1) Purpose of...

The overall picture of “the Word of the Kingdom” in the New Testament begins with the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel in the gospel accounts.

Israel spurned this offer, the offer was taken from Israel, and an entirely new entity was then brought into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected (Matt. 21:33-43; I Peter 2:9-11).

The one new man, the new creation “in Christ” (II Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:15) was brought into existence to bring forth fruit where Israel had failed.

And, since Israel had spurned the offer, God, in relation to this one new man, turned to the Gentiles.

God set aside an entire dispensation, lasting two days, 2,000 years, during which time He would perform and complete a work with an entirely new creation. And this would be accomplished through removing “a people for his name” from among the Gentiles, though with “a remnant according to the election of grace [believing Jews]” being included (Acts 15:14; Rom. 11:5).

And, in order to carry out His purposes surrounding this new creation, God sent the Holy Spirit into the world. Throughout the present dispensation, the Spirit of God is in the world performing a work in the antitype of that seen in Genesis chapter twenty-four.

As Abraham in this chapter sent his eldest servant into the far country to procure a bride for his son, God has sent the Holy Spirit into the world to procure a bride for His Son.

And, as in the type, so in the antitype — the search occurs among those in the family.

The Spirit of God is conducting His search among those comprising the one new man, for THIS one new man forms the body of Christ, and the bride is to be taken FROM the body (cf. Gen. 2:21-25; 24:2-4, 9; Matt. 22:14).

And once the search has been completed, events will THEN occur EXACTLY as seen in the type.

As Rebekah was removed from Mesopotamia, so will Christ’s bride be removed from the earth; as Isaac came forth to meet Rebekah, so will the Son come forth to meet His bride; and as Rebekah went with Isaac to his home, where she became his wife, so will the bride go with Christ to His home, where she will become His wife (Gen. 24:61-67; I Thess. 4:16, 17; Rev. 19:7-9).

2) *Direction for...*

The GOAL toward which everything pertaining to the new creation "in Christ" moves is *EXACTLY* the same as the GOAL set forth in the beginning, in the opening two chapters of Genesis. The point out ahead toward which ALL things move is the earth's coming Sabbath, foreshadowed by the Sabbath in Gen. 2:1-3, which followed six days of restorative work (Gen. 1:2b-25).

And it matters not whether one is viewing the reason for the existence of the one new man, the reason for the present dispensation, or the reason for the Spirit of God having been sent into the world, *the point toward which EVERYTHING moves is ALWAYS the SAME. It HAS to be the SAME, for this is the WAY matters were set forth and established at the beginning of God's revelation to man (Gen. 1:1-2:3).*

And properly understanding the spiritual warfare and the present race of the faith is contingent on properly understanding things surrounding *the GOAL which lies out ahead.*

It is contingent on properly understanding *the REASON God has brought the one new man into existence, the REASON God has set aside an entire dispensation to deal with this new man, and the REASON God has sent His Spirit into the world to perform a work during the dispensation.*

Christians are engaged in a warfare against powerful spirit beings in the heavens, which is part and parcel with the race of the faith in which they find themselves engaged; and whether Christians do or do not understand all the various things about this warfare and race, Satan knows every one of these things all too well. And he is ever lying in wait to defeat the Christian in the warfare or sidetrack him in the race.

And the end result will be EITHER victory OR defeat.

An individual will EITHER overcome in the warfare and race OR he will be overcome.

And note what is at stake in either victory or defeat — *the greatest thing God has ever designed for redeemed man.*

The Spirit of God is presently in the world opening the Word of God to the Christians' understanding, calling their attention to one central fact:

Christians are being offered positions as co-regents with Christ in His kingdom, forming the bride, who will reign with the Son as consort queen.

THAT'S what is at stake!

And knowing this:

Is it any wonder that Satan, the incumbent ruler in the kingdom, very early in the dispensation, set about to accomplish the things outlined in the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen?

Is it any wonder that he has done and continues to do everything within his power to corrupt and destroy the true message surrounding Christians and the coming kingdom?

From Genesis to Matthew to Revelation

As previously seen in this book, *several things MUST be kept in mind when studying the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen.*

The first four were given outside the house, by the seaside; and the last three were given after Christ had reentered the house. This fact, often overlooked, is significant beyond degree if one is to understand these parables correctly.

Then, a chronology is seen in the parables which carries the reader from the beginning of the present dispensation to the future Messianic Kingdom.

As previously shown, the first four parables (given outside the house, by the seaside) present a history of Christendom as it relates to "the Word of the Kingdom"; and this history covers the entirety of the dispensation.

Thus, to understand *WHY* conditions in Christendom are as they presently exist, *one has to go back in history and follow the course of events leading into the present, existing situation.*

And going back in history after this fashion *can ONLY be done ONE WAY. It can ONLY involve going to the Scriptures to see what the Word of God reveals about the matter, NOT what the various Church history books written by man reveal.*

All of man's writings on Church history might as well be categorized as "secular" insofar as this aspect of Church history is concerned. That which man has written simply doesn't deal with Church history in this respect, *though this is the main crux of the matter seen within the way Scripture deals with the subject.*

The earliest period of Church history is dealt with in the Book of Acts, following the inception of the Church. This period covers that time when the kingdom was being re-offered to Israel (from 33 to about 62 A.D.). And, accordingly, the message seen throughout this book centers around *the proffered kingdom.*

The epistles (some written during the Acts period, some following) deal centrally with the same message seen in Acts — *one having to do with the kingdom.* These epistles simply form *different facets of instructions written to Christians surrounding the SAME central message.*

And these epistles, as the Book of Acts, provide information surrounding early Church history.

Both the Book of Acts and the epistles deal with the Church during the first century only. But there are two places in Scripture which deal with a history of the Church throughout the dispensation.

One is in the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen, before the Church was even brought into existence; and the other is in Revelation chapters two and three, at a place in the book where the Church is seen being dealt with at the

judgment seat in the heavens following the dispensation (though the record itself was given during the early years of the dispensation and has to do with a history of the Church during the dispensation as well).

Thus, one complete history is seen in Scripture *at a time preceding the dispensation* (Matt. 13), and the other is seen in Scripture *at a time after the dispensation had begun* (Rev. 2, 3).

In Matthew chapter thirteen, before the dispensation began, a history of the Church — in relation to “the Word of the Kingdom” — is seen in the first four parables.

And, in Revelation chapters two and three, a history of the Church — in relation to “the Word of the Kingdom,” dealt with relative to overcoming or being overcome — is seen in the seven letters (seven epistles) to the seven Churches.

The first presents a history of the Church *in relation to “the Word of the Kingdom”* from the perspective of the Lord using parables; the second presents a history of the Church *in relation to “the Word of the Kingdom”* from the perspective of the Lord using epistles to seven existing Churches in Asia, written in a particular form — “signified” (Rev. 1:1).

BOTH show EXACTLY the same thing. The Church is revealed to have begun one way (a mustard bush, an entity laboring for Christ’s sake [Matt. 13:32; Rev. 2:2, 3]), but the Church is seen ending another way (a tree, a completely leavened entity, one neither cold nor hot, one described as “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” [Matt. 13:32, 33; Rev. 3:15-17]).

THEN, all of this is inseparably connected with God’s original structure of His Word at the beginning.

The parables in Matthew chapter thirteen and the seven epistles in Revelation chapters two and three are structured after a fashion which is in complete keeping with the way God set matters forth at the very beginning of His revelation to man, in the opening chapters of Genesis.

And this is easy to understand, for the latter rests upon and is inseparably linked to the former.

Scripture begins *with a septenary, foundational framework upon which the whole of subsequent Scripture rests* — six days of restorative work (a restoration of the ruined material creation [four days, then two days; *ref.* Appendix II in this book], with man created at the conclusion of this work, on the sixth day), followed by a seventh day of rest, a Sabbath day. And the preceding relates the story of the whole of Scripture beyond this introductory framework.

Man, following his creation, fell. And he, through this fall, became a ruined creation, bringing about not only his own ruin but the ruin of the restored material creation once again as well.

And God, following this ruin, again set about to perform six days of restorative work — which *NOW* had to do with both man and the material creation.

And this latter restorative work will be followed by a seventh day of rest — a Sabbath rest awaiting the people of God, the coming Messianic Era (Heb. 4:4-9) — *in EXACT keeping with the pattern set forth at the beginning.*

Each day in the former restoration was twenty-four hours in length, including the Sabbath; and each day in the latter restoration has been/will be 1,000 years in length, including the Sabbath (*cf.* Matt. 16:28-17:5; II Peter 1:16-18; 3:1-8).

All Scripture beyond the foundational framework in the opening two chapters of Genesis rests upon and forms additional information for this framework.

And it matters not whether an individual is dealing with the framework set forth at the beginning or with subsequent Scripture, *ALL restorative work can be seen moving toward the SAME goal — a coming Sabbath of rest.*

(Note also that exactly *the SAME septenary structure* beginning the Old Testament in the opening two chapters

of Genesis is seen in the opening two chapters of John's gospel as well [which, in this respect, should be the gospel beginning the New Testament, paralleling Genesis beginning the Old].

As well, with respect to everything moving toward the seventh day, the subject matter is the same throughout both books. In Genesis, this is accomplished mainly *through the use of types*; and in John, this is accomplished mainly *through the use of signs*.

The former [Genesis] has to do with the restoration of a ruined material creation, occurring during six days time, with a seventh day following [a day of rest following].

The latter [John's gospel] has to do with the restoration of another ruined creation, ruined man, occurring during six days time, with a seventh day following [a day of rest following].

Thus, if John's gospel occupied its proper place in the Canon of Scripture — set at the beginning of the four gospels — *each Testament would be introduced by this septenary structure.*)

Then, with the preceding in mind, note the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen. Events in these parables form one facet of a commentary on that which occurs during the two days immediately preceding the Sabbath, which covers the entire present dispensation.

And, viewing events in the remaining three parables, which move beyond the present dispensation and progress on into the Messianic Era, it's easy to see and understand how all these parables move toward this same goal — the same goal set forth at the beginning of Scripture, the coming Sabbath.

EVERYTHING moves toward THIS goal.

And *EXACTLY the SAME thing* can be seen in the seven epistles to the seven Churches in Revelation chapters two and three. This sequence of epistles simply forms another facet of a commentary on that which occurs during the two days immediately preceding the Sabbath.

And, from the overcomer's promises, along with that which is revealed in Revelation chapters one and four, it's easy to see and understand that all of this (*EXACTLY as the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen*) has to do with the Church in relation to "the Word of the Kingdom" and the coming Sabbath.

Again, EVERYTHING moves toward THIS goal.

Thus, it should be a simple matter to see that *ANYTHING in the New Testament which has to do with the Church centers around things having to do with the coming kingdom.*

And though man may write his history books completely separate from this message, Scripture CENTERS its revealed history of the Church COMPLETELY around this message.

During the first century, Christians would have understood a history of the Church in keeping with Scripture, for "the Word of the Kingdom" was universally taught throughout the Churches of the land.

Today though, the situation has become completely reversed. Because of the working of the leaven over almost two millenniums of time, the message surrounding "the Word of the Kingdom" has become so corrupted that two things would be evident:

First, it is highly unlikely that a Church historian would know enough about "the Word of the Kingdom" to even include it within his account in the first place, much less ascribe a central place to this message in his account.

Second, even should a Church historian write about the place which "the Word of the Kingdom" occupies in Church history, Christians wouldn't be able to understand it. Because of the working of the leaven over almost two millenniums of time, the truth about the matter has become so corrupted that it would be completely alien to their way of thinking.

And that's where we are in a supposedly enlightened twentieth century Christendom, immediately preceding Christ's return for the Church.

We're living during a time when *there is far more material available for Bible study and research than has ever existed in the history of the Church — everything from the extensive computer study and research programs to new books being printed every day.*

But we are also living during a time when *the birds of the air are freely lodging in the branches of the tree (third parable), with its roots sunk deep into the earth, where the heaven is completing its final work (fourth parable).*

Warning

The parables in Matthew chapter thirteen deal *FAR more extensively with the negative than they do with the positive.*

More space is given in the first parable to those who fail to bring forth fruit than is given to those who do bring forth fruit (in three of the four parts). And the emphasis in the second, third, fourth, and seventh parables is on different facets of this same work of Satan as well.

Only the fifth and sixth parables, which have to do with Christ's redemptive work as it relates to the earth and to His bride, form an exception.

Thus, these parables are centrally negative rather than positive. They have to do centrally with exposing the work of Satan throughout the dispensation in relation to "the Word of the Kingdom," along with revealing where this will lead, both during and following the dispensation.

As the dispensation draws to a close and Satan's corrupting work nears its final stage, the whole matter goes completely unrecognized in Christendom.

And the reason for this is easy to see and understand.

The leavened state of Christendom is being viewed by those who have themselves been adversely affected by the leaven.

They are, in this respect, as the two disciples en route to Emmaus, who were walking alongside the resurrected Christ and didn't even recognize Him. Their inability to recognize the Christ of the Old Testament Scriptures — the Word which had become flesh, the Old Testament Scriptures which had been manifested in a Person — resulted from their inability to properly understand these same Scriptures.

It was only after these Scriptures had been opened to their understanding, followed by Christ breaking bread, that their eyes were opened.

And Christians today, viewing a leavened Christendom and not seeing or understanding its true condition, are simply not viewing matters from a correct Biblical perspective.

Their inability to recognize the true condition of the Church stems from their inability to understand that which Scripture reveals about the matter. And, if their eyes are to be opened to the truth of the existing situation, such will occur only through the truth of the Word being presented to them and being accepted by them.

BUT, WILL such occur during the present dispensation?

WILL the truth about the coming kingdom EVER be proclaimed in such a manner that it will be accepted, allowing the eyes of Christians to be opened?

One here and one there will hear and understand the message, *BUT NOT the Church at large.*

Conditions can *ONLY continue to deteriorate* in the latter respect. Such was assured, the pattern was set, when the woman placed leaven in the three measures of meal.

And conditions can ONLY continue to deteriorate, UNTIL the WHOLE has been leavened.

OR, IF the WHOLE has ALREADY been leavened, it can ONLY remain in this condition UNTIL the END of the dispensation.

Appendix I

The Gospel That Paul Proclaimed

*The Central Message Throughout the Pauline Epistles
A Message Corresponding with the Matt. 13 Parables*

“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, *let him be accursed.*

As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, *let him be accursed.*

For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gal. 1:6-12).

The use of the word “gospel” [Gk., *euaggelion*], meaning *good news*, *MUST ALWAYS be understood contextually, for there is NOTHING in the meaning of the word itself which relates the nature of the good news.*

Despite the preceding, the word “gospel” is used in Christian circles today, far more often than not, *as somewhat of a synonym for the message pertaining to salvation by grace. And the whole of the N.T. is THEN interpreted accordingly.*

As an example of the preceding, note *HOW* “the gospel of Christ” in the seven verses beginning this chapter is invariably understood by Christians today.

The word “gospel” is used five times in these verses, with NOT ONLY the whole of that stated having to do with this gospel BUT the nature of the “good news” in view is plainly stated (vv. 11, 12).

In spite of the preceding though, in spite of Paul’s explanation concerning which facet of the good news was in view — *which was OTHER than the gospel of grace* — Christians invariably miss it, seeing only *ONE* thing. They see these verses referencing the good news pertaining to salvation by grace.

HOW has the Church come into such a state — all segments, liberal and so-called fundamental alike — where a simple reading of a text within its context can’t be properly handled?

For anyone wanting to know, the answer to that question can be found in the first four parables of Matt. 13 and/or the letters to the seven Churches in Rev. 2, 3.

BUT, the preceding raises another issue, presenting another problem. *IF* Christians can’t read and understand a simple, straightforward text like Gal. 1:6-12, *HOW* are they going to understand something more complex like the parables in Matt. 13 or the letters to the seven Churches in Rev. 2, 3?

The Pauline Epistles, the New Testament As a Whole

Something not understood at all and something which would surprise, probably shock, a lot of Christians would be to find out *EXACTLY HOW* Paul used the word “gospel” throughout his epistles, *WITHOUT* exception.

Paul, throughout his epistles, ALWAYS used this word in a completely opposite respect to the way that it is invariably used in Christian circles today.

Paul ALWAYS used this word in a completely UNIFORM manner, ONLY ONE WAY — as a reference to the good news which had been delivered to him by “the revelation of Jesus Christ,” following his conversion (e.g., II Cor. 4:3, 4; Gal. 1:7-12; Eph. 3:1-6).

And THIS good news had NOTHING to do with salvation by grace. THIS good news was for those who had ALREADY been saved by previously hearing and responding to the good news concerning salvation by grace.

And Paul used the verb form of this word [Gk., euaggelizo, often translated “preach,” or “preach the gospel”] EXACTLY the SAME way.

(Paul used the noun form of this word [euaggelion] sixty times and the verb form [euaggelizo] twenty-two times in his epistles, more times than used in all the remainder of the N.T. books combined.

And the use of these two words in the gospels, Acts, general epistles, and Revelation is completely consistent with HOW Paul used the words in his epistles, needing NO explanation at any point concerning which aspect of the “gospel” was being referenced, for, from the contextual usage throughout, NONE would be necessary.

The complete N.T. — the gospels, Acts, epistles, Revelation — uses these two words in the same consistent manner:

In the GOSPELS, the words are used referencing the kingdom offered to Israel.

In ACTS, the words are used referencing the kingdom being re-offered to Israel and, at the same time, being offered to the one new man “in Christ.”

In the PAULINE and GENERAL EPISTLES, the words are used referencing the kingdom [taken from Israel] being offered to the one new man “in Christ.”

Then in REVELATION [10:7; 14:6; the only two places where the words are used], the words are used after the same consistent manner as previously seen elsewhere.)

Thus, as previously seen, *Paul used both of these words ONLY ONE WAY throughout his epistles. He used these words to reference the main crux of his ministry — the good news pertaining to that encompassed within the mystery, which had been delivered to him, which he, in turn, had been called to proclaim to Christians throughout the Gentile world (Eph. 3:1-11; Col. 1:25-29).*

And the Christians to whom Paul ministered would have easily understood his use of these two words from the context of that which he had either previously proclaimed or written.

And, since this was the message of the hour, something which Paul had proclaimed to Christians throughout the Gentile world, something which Christians understood and would expect Paul to reference, they would easily know what he meant by his extensive use of the word “gospel.”

1) Central Thrust of Paul's Ministry

This *central thrust* of Paul's ministry becomes *self-evident* as one reads through the Book of Acts and the Pauline epistles. Paul proclaimed both *the gospel of the grace of God* and *the gospel of the glory of Christ*, and he proclaimed the good news pertaining to *the grace of God* with a view to then being able to proclaim the good news pertaining to *the glory of Christ*. Paul explained to individuals *HOW they could be saved*, with a view to subsequently being able to explain to them *WHY they had been saved*.

For example, note how plainly the matter is outlined in Paul's final message to the Christians in Ephesus, through their elders (Acts 20:24-32).

Or, for that matter, *note also how plainly the matter is outlined in Paul's epistle to the Christians in Ephesus (2:1-22). And similar verses can be seen in other epistles, NOT ONLY in the Pauline epistles BUT in Hebrews and the general epistles as well.*

(*BUT*, note that the Spirit's work among the unsaved, a passing from death unto life [Eph. 2:5], is sparingly dealt with in Paul's epistles. *And, evidently to avoid possible confusion, Paul NEVER dealt with salvation by grace in connection with the noun or verb forms of the word for "gospel."*)

The epistles are simply NOT about the gospel of grace. The epistles have been written to saved individuals, to those who have already passed from death unto life, relating and dealing with a continuing aspect of the salvation message, with a view to that which lies out ahead.

[This, for example, is completely in line with how Scripture deals with Abraham's salvation and calling.

Scripture has to do with the things pertaining to Abraham's calling, NOT with things pertaining to his prior salvation.

In fact, Scripture *DOESN'T* even deal with Abraham's prior salvation. Rather, Scripture, following a reference to Abraham marrying Sarah, begins with Abraham's call, at the age of seventy, continuing from that point. And verses such as Gen. 15:6, often used as a reference to Abraham's salvation, years following his calling (usually using Rom. 4:3), should be understood accordingly (cf. Gen. 11:27-12:3; Ex. 12:40, 41; Gal 3:8, 17, 18)].

2) Gospel of Grace Referenced, Dealt with, *BUT*...

Though the gospel of grace is, at times, referenced and dealt with in Paul's ministry, the word "gospel," *throughout Paul's entire recorded ministry, is ONLY used ONE time to reference the gospel of grace* (Acts 20:24). And Paul is careful in this section of the Book of Acts to clearly distinguish between the gospel of grace and the gospel which he had been taught by the Lord and called to proclaim throughout the Gentile world (cf. vv. 25, 26).

Some type distinction or explanation of this nature would, of course, have been completely unnecessary throughout the Pauline epistles. As previously stated, the Christians, with

whom he dealt, were quite familiar with the main focus of his ministry and would need no clarifying explanation.

As also previously seen, *the word “gospel” (in its noun or verb form) is NEVER used in the Pauline epistles to reference the gospel of grace. Paul used these two words ONLY ONE WAY throughout his epistles, which is a way that would have been understood by the recipients of his epistles in the first century.*

Paul used these words to reference the message taught to him by the Lord, which he had been called to proclaim throughout the Gentile world (cf. Col. 1: 5, 6, 23), *NOT as a reference to the gospel of grace.*

Thus, when you see the word “gospel” in the Pauline epistles, *KNOW that Paul is NOT referencing the gospel of grace. Rather, Paul is referencing the on-going aspect of the “good news.” KNOWING and ADHERING to the preceding will prevent ALL types of interpretative errors and problems in this realm.*

Existing Confusion

Because of the dual nature of I Cor. 15:1-4 *relative to the complete gospel message*, this passage will be used to illustrate *Paul’s ministry as it pertained to the gospel which he proclaimed.*

This whole passage is invariably used in an erroneous respect by Christians, not in a dual sense, but in a singular sense — *as a reference ONLY to the gospel of the grace of God.*

BUT, as will be shown, this passage begins, NOT with a reference to the gospel of grace BUT, a reference to the gospel of the glory of Christ (vv. 1, 2), then briefly moves back to the gospel of the grace of God (v. 3 [apart from the use of the word “gospel”]), and then comes back to where it began, to the gospel of the glory of Christ (v. 4) — providing the complete gospel message, covering past, present, and future aspects of salvation.

Paul, in this passage, *BEGAN with the CENTRAL message which he had been called to proclaim (vv. 1, 2).*

THEN he briefly moved back to the message of the gospel of the grace of God, which, of necessity, he had proclaimed to them "FIRST" (v. 3).

THEN he came back to the message which was to be proclaimed to individuals once they had heard the gospel of the grace of God — the CENTRAL message which he had been called to proclaim throughout the Gentile world (v. 4).

The problem emerges when a person attempts to *NOT ONLY* make Paul's reference to "the gospel" in verse one a reference to the gospel of the grace of God *BUT ALSO* make that stated in *ALL* three of the continuing verses refer to the gospel of grace as well.

Verses one and two, as evident from a plain reading of the text, *CANNOT possibly have to do with the gospel of grace.*

NOR can that seen in verse four, the burial and resurrection of Christ.

It is the "death" of Christ *ALONE, in verse three, which pertains to the gospel of the grace of God.*

The "burial" and "resurrection" of Christ move beyond this and have to do with things pertaining to the continuing good news, *the gospel of the glory of Christ* (from vv. 1, 2).

Note the type beginning in Exodus chapter twelve.

"Death" *ALONE* is seen in this chapter. "Death" had been decreed upon the firstborn, but God provided a way for this death to be carried out *in a vicarious manner.*

And it is EXACTLY the same today.

"Death" has been decreed upon the firstborn, but God has provided a way for this death to be carried out *in a vicarious manner.*

In the type, *this was done through the death of paschal lambs and the application of the blood from these lambs, reflecting back on "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8).*

In the antitype, *THIS is done EXACTLY the same way.* The Paschal Lamb has died in the stead of the firstborn, but the

blood *MUST be applied* (through believing). The individual being “quickened,” made alive (Eph. 2:5), occurs *at THIS point*.

“Burial” and “resurrection” though move *BEYOND* this in the type — the Red Sea passage (burial), and emergence from the Sea on the eastern banks (resurrection [cf. Ex. 14:13-15:19; John 3:3-5; I Cor. 10:2]).

And it is EXACTLY the same in the antitype (Col. 2:12; 3:1ff).

(Note from the preceding that God has established His foundational truths *in the types, beginning with Moses*.

In this respect, *anyone NOT beginning with or ignoring the types can ONLY find himself building a superstructure [dealing with all subsequent Scripture] apart from a foundation upon which the structure can rest.*

And with the disdain for or little attention paid to the types today, is it any wonder that the Church finds itself in its current position, described in Matt. 13:33 and Rev. 3:17!)

1) I Corinthians 15:1, 2

The opening two verses, then commentary:

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.”

As previously seen, verses one and two refer to the good news (the gospel) which Paul had previously proclaimed to those in Corinth, which they had accepted and upon which they presently stood.

In verse two, this good news is clearly seen having to do with *present and future* aspects of salvation (*NOT past*, as seen in the gospel of the grace of God), it has to do *with holding fast* to that which had been proclaimed (with the possibility

that there could be *loss*), and it has to do with Christians in Corinth *EITHER believing OR NOT believing* the message with reference to a *purpose (or cause)* in view.

The present and future aspects of salvation in this gospel are shown by the words, “By which also ye are saved [*lit.*, ‘...ye are being saved’],” referring to the Christians in Corinth.

Holding fast to the message proclaimed is shown by the words, “if ye keep in memory [*lit.*, ‘if ye hold (are holding) fast’] what I preached unto you.”

And *believing or not believing* the message with reference to a *purpose or cause* in view is shown by the words, “unless ye have believed in vain [*lit.*, ‘...believed apart from a purpose in view,’ or ‘...without a cause in view’].”

The present and future aspects of salvation have to do with *the salvation of the soul* (cf. James 1:21; I Peter 1:4-9). The salvation which we presently possess — *the salvation of the spirit*, wherein man passes from death unto life (Eph. 2:5) — places man in a position *where he can realize the salvation of his soul*.

And these two aspects of salvation *MUST ALWAYS be kept completely separate and distinct, one from the other*.

The thought of Christians *holding fast* to the things being proclaimed can be seen in the second and fourth warnings in the Book of Hebrews. The same word appearing in the Greek text of I Cor. 15:2 appears twice in the second warning (3:6, 14) and once in the fourth warning (10:23).

Holding fast in the second warning is with reference to “the heavenly calling” and “the hope” set before Christians (vv. 1, 6); and *holding fast* in the fourth warning is with reference to this same hope — “the profession of our faith [*lit.*, ‘the confession of the hope’]” (vv. 23-25).

Then, the thought of Christians *believing WITHOUT a PURPOSE (or CAUSE) can ONLY* be a reference to the fact that *a person has been saved for a REVEALED PURPOSE* — a purpose seen, in its entirety, in the gospel of the glory of Christ. And that purpose is the same as the purpose pertaining to man's creation in the beginning — "...let them have dominion" (Gen. 1:26-28).

Man has been saved *with a view to his one day occupying a position of power and authority with Christ in His kingdom, which has to do with realizing the present aspect of salvation at a future date — the salvation of his soul.*

Believing *WITHOUT a PURPOSE (or CAUSE) in verse two leads a person NOWHERE.*

An individual has been saved for a PURPOSE, which can be seen and understood ONLY through believing the gospel which Paul referred to in the previous verse.

And THIS is a PURPOSE which can one day be realized ONLY through presently governing one's life accordingly, set forth in verse two.

2) I Corinthians 15:3, 4

THEN, a continuation from verses one and two, OR...:

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures;

And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures"

Paul's statement in verse three *is NOT at all* a continuation of the subject matter from the first two verses.

And this is really *self-explanatory*. Paul states this in so many words.

Note again *HOW* verse three begins: *"For I delivered unto you FIRST OF ALL THAT which I ALSO received..."*

THAT which he is about to reference is something which he had proclaimed unto them *FIRST* (prior to proclaiming the good news to which he had previously referred, in verses one and two).

And *THIS* is something which he had *ALSO* received (that is to say, he had received *THIS* in *ADDITION* to the good news referred to in verses one and two).

The message which Paul proclaimed unto those in Corinth *FIRST* can be seen by going back to I Cor. 2:1, 2:

“And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”

Paul, when he *first* went to Corinth, couldn't begin with a message pertaining to the gospel of the glory of Christ, referred to in I Cor. 15:1, 2 (and also in I Cor. 2:1, preceded, as in I Cor. 15:1, 2, by a proclamation of the gospel of the grace of God [2:2; 15:3]).

When Paul *FIRST* went to Corinth, he found a city filled with unsaved Gentiles. And *he had to FIRST* minister to those in Corinth on this basis.

He had to FIRST proclaim the simple message pertaining to the gospel of the grace of God unto them. *He had to BEGIN* with “Jesus Christ and him crucified.” *He COULDN'T begin* elsewhere.

BUT, once individuals had believed, once individuals had been “quickenened,” made alive, *THEN Paul could move beyond this message*.

(Verse three, in actuality, deals with a dual aspect of the matter, seen first in the preaching of the cross to the unsaved, then to the saved [*ref.* the author's article, “The Preaching of the Cross”].

The word “first” [v. 3] would show that the subject matter at this point had to do with the unsaved; but the context in which verse three is placed would also show that the subject matter has to do with the saved as well.)

Paul, in the preceding respect, spent one and one-half years in Corinth “teaching the word of God among them [among those who had been saved under the preaching of the simple message pertaining to the gospel of the grace of God]” (Acts 18:11; cf. I Cor. 2:3ff).

And this is why Paul, in I Cor. 15:1, 2, could allude to these things through simply calling their attention to “*the gospel [‘the good news’] which I preached unto you...*” They would know *EXACTLY* what he meant, for he had previously spent *an extensive period of time* teaching them things pertaining to this gospel.

And they would *ALSO understand* the distinction when he moved back in time and referred to that which he, of necessity, had proclaimed to them “*first of all,*” which could *ONLY have been the gospel of the grace of God* (v. 3).

But, though moving back in this manner, Paul then came back to where he had begun — *continuing to reference things pertaining to the central message which he had been called to proclaim throughout the Gentile world* (v. 4).

(As previously seen, Paul, throughout his epistles to individuals and different Churches, used the word “gospel,” time after time, *in a singular respect*. Paul repeatedly used the word “gospel” to reference a message — *good news* — *directed to Christians, NOT a message directed to the unsaved*.

In this respect, *it would make NO sense whatsoever* to see Paul opening an epistle such as his letter to the Christians in Rome by referencing the gospel of grace. Paul, opening this letter, expressed a desire to travel to Rome in order to proclaim *the gospel — the continuing aspect of the good news — to the recipients of his letter, the Christians in Rome, to those who had*

already heard and responded to the gospel of grace [vv. 7-16].

And *EXACTLY* the same thing is seen in Galatians chapter one through Paul's reference to a gospel other than the one which he had proclaimed to them. Paul thought enough of this message that he pronounced *a curse* upon any who would pervert this message, whether men or angels.

During Paul's day, this message — this gospel, this good news — was proclaimed to Christians in Churches scattered throughout the Gentile world (cf. Col. 1:5, 6, 23).

THIS was the message of the hour, the central message proclaimed; and the contents of this message would have been familiar to practically any Christian.

And Satan's emissaries perverting this message would also have been an ever-present danger, particularly because of the central content of the message — *Christ and His co-heirs one day replacing Satan and his angels in the kingdom.*

Today though, the situation in the Churches has completely reversed itself. It would be extremely rare to even hear this message taught to Christians today.

Thus, there is really no existing message to pervert.

And the vast majority of the Bible teachers of the land find themselves keeping it that way by squelching any mention of the subject, calling it heresy, etc.

The curse in Gal. 1:8, 9 has to do with those perverting an existing gospel during a past day.

It will be left for the reader to make any application concerning the almost universal substitution of the gospel of grace for Paul's gospel in Gal. 1:6-12.)

Paul's Gospel, Hebrews, General Epistles

The epistles (Pauline, Hebrews, and General) were written by at least five, probably six, different men (the author of Hebrews being unknown); and certain individual distinguishing qualities and characteristics of the writers can be seen in their writings.

In Paul's case, his extensive use of the word "gospel" — *HOW and WHY* he used this word — forms a major trait which makes his writings uniquely different from those of any other writer of a New Testament book.

Paul, for evident reasons, appeared almost *obsessed* with this word, *using it far more extensively than any of the other writers.*

And he used the word both alone and through qualifying it various ways (e.g., "gospel," "my gospel," "gospel of God," "gospel of Christ," etc.), usually referring to the same facet of the overall gospel message, though possibly with different emphases.

Paul's writings comprise slightly less than one-third of the New Testament, but of the one hundred thirty-two times that the word "gospel" appears throughout the New Testament — in both its noun and verb forms (*euaggelion* and *euaggelizo* respectively) — almost two-thirds of these occurrences are found in the Pauline epistles.

The word appears twenty-three times in the three synoptic gospels, seventeen times in the Book of Acts, six times in the general epistles, and three times in the Book of Revelation.

BUT, Paul used the word eighty-two times throughout his epistles.

WHY did Paul use this word so extensively? The writer of Hebrews only used the word twice; James didn't use the word at all; Peter only used the word four times; John didn't use the word in either his gospel or his epistles, though he used it three times in the Book of Revelation; and Jude didn't use the word in his epistle.

Invariably, as previously seen, individuals want to associate the word "gospel" with *ONLY one thing* — *the good news pertaining to Christ's finished work at Calvary.* They see the word "gospel" in Scripture, and this is what comes to mind (particularly in the epistles, but often in the gospels as well).

And, looking at the word after this fashion, they seek to understand almost any portion of Scripture where this word appears, at least after some fashion, *SOLELY* in the light of the gospel of the grace of God.

And, interpreting Scripture after this fashion, they invariably end up with a perversion, *for the word "gospel" is simply NOT used this way throughout the New Testament.*

And erroneously understanding the word "gospel" to refer to Christ's finished work at Calvary, in a text where it doesn't, will *NOT ONLY* do away with that which the text does deal with *BUT* it will also often result in a perversion of the message pertaining to the simple gospel of the grace of God.

As previously seen, an example of this misunderstanding and misuse of the word "gospel" would be the manner in which I Cor. 15:1-4 is usually understood.

And the *SAME* thing seen in this passage would be true numerous places in the Pauline epistles when the exact wording of the text and the context are ignored and the word "gospel" is made to refer to something which the text doesn't refer to at all.

Paul's extensive use of the word "gospel," particularly his extensive use of this word to refer to something other than the gospel of the grace of God, goes back to his experiences at the outset of his ministry.

Before Paul ever launched out on the ministry to which he had been called — *to carry the good news rejected by Israel to the Gentiles* — the Lord took him aside and taught him all the various things about the message which he was to proclaim.

And after this, as Paul went about fulfilling his calling, it was only natural for him to use the word "gospel," meaning *good news*, to refer to the good news (which the Lord had personally taught him) which he had been called to proclaim to Christians throughout the Gentile world.

This “good news” had to do with *the mystery* revealed to Paul by the Lord (evidently after he had been taken to Arabia, then into heaven [II Cor. 12:1-7; Gal. 1:11-17]).

This “good news” had to do with believing Jews and believing Gentiles being placed together in “the same body” as “fellowheirs [‘joint-heirs’]” (Eph. 3:1-11); and these Jewish and Gentile believers (Christians), together, possessed the “hope” of one day occupying positions of honor and glory with Christ in “his heavenly kingdom” (*cf.* Col. 1:25-28; II Tim. 4:17, 18; Titus 1:2; 2:12, 13; 3:7).

(Note particularly Titus 2:13 among the previous references in connection with the misuse and abuse of Scripture by expositors these days, associating “that blessed hope” *with the rapture*.

BUT, that’s NOT what the text CLEARLY states. And making the text say and teach something that it DOESN’T say and teach, DOES AWAY with what the text DOES say and teach.

Note that Titus 2:13 has two parts:

“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

In the first part of the verse, “the glorious appearing” is a further description of “that blessed hope” (“that blessed hope,” which is “the glorious appearing”).

And in the second part of the verse, “our Saviour Jesus Christ” is a further description of “the great God” (“the great God,” Who is “our Saviour Jesus Christ”).

The preceding is not only seen in the construction of the Greek text but it can be seen in the English text as well.

The Book of Titus, as a whole, has to do with *things surrounding Christ’s return in all His glory, NOT with the rapture*.

And the reference to His return in all His glory in 2:13 is part and parcel with being “made heirs according to the hope of eternal life [‘age-lasting life’ (the millennial age)]; 1:2; 3:7], *which has to do with Christians having a part as co-*

heirs with Christ in that coming day.

BUT, as seen, Titus 2:13 is almost universally taught in Christendom to be a reference to the rapture, resulting in “that blessed hope” from the verse being extensively used as somewhat of a synonym for the rapture.

Note what glossing over this verse and ignoring the exact wording of the text, along with the context and the subject matter of the book as a whole, does to that which is actually being dealt with in the verse.

Then note what this does relative to incorrect teaching being extensively spread throughout Christendom.

And note this particularly in the light of the high premium that the Lord places on the message in this text and other corresponding parts of the Book of Titus *being proclaimed throughout the dispensation in a completely uncorrupted form* [“If any man preach *ANY OTHER* gospel...” (Gal. 1:6-12)].

For additional information on Titus 2:13 and the Book of Titus as a whole, refer to Appendix I, “The Hope,” in the author’s book, *The Rapture and Beyond*.)

Again, as previously seen, in his epistles, Paul referred to *the good news* which he had been called to proclaim to Christians throughout the Churches in the Gentile world as “my gospel” (Rom. 16:25), “our gospel” (II Cor. 4:3), “the glorious gospel of Christ [*lit.*, ‘the gospel of the glory of Christ’]” (II Cor. 4:4), “the gospel of God” (Rom. 1:1; II Cor. 11:7), “the gospel of Christ” (Rom. 1:16; Gal. 1:7), etc.

Then, numerous times Paul simply used the word “gospel” alone to refer to *THIS good news* (Rom. 1:15; Gal. 1:6).

The fact that the mystery had been revealed to Paul, with Paul called to carry this message to the Gentiles (Gal. 2:2ff), is evidently *the reason WHY* he used the word “gospel” so often in his epistles. *It was ONLY natural* for him to refer to the message which he had been called to proclaim through the use of a word which meant “good news,” *for THIS message was good news.*

For the unsaved, Christ's finished work on Calvary was "good news." As unsaved individuals, THIS was THE BEST NEWS that they could ever hear.

BUT, once they had been saved, they were THEN to hear the "good news" about WHY they had been saved. And, as saved individuals, THIS was, as well, THE BEST NEWS that they could ever hear.

And Paul's ministry centered around the latter, NOT the former. Paul's ministry centered around proclaiming that which the Lord had revealed to him following his conversion, referred to as a mystery.

And the message contained therein dealt with the reason an individual had been saved (cf. Deut. 6:23); and THIS message was THE BEST NEWS redeemed man could ever hear, which was why Paul let NOTHING stand in the way of his proclaiming THIS message.

THIS "good news" had to do with the greatest thing God could offer redeemed man — positions as co-heirs with His Son, from a heavenly realm, in the coming kingdom.

To reference words which the writer of Hebrews used, it was "so great salvation" (Heb. 2:3).

And Paul's repeated reference to the message pertaining to this offer as "good news" is one of the distinguishing characteristics of his writings.

Appendix II

Beginning, Heavens, Earth

Thoughts on Genesis Chapters One, Two

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

“In beginning was the Word...” (John 1:1a).

“That which was from beginning...” (I John 1:1a).

As shown in the preceding English translations, there is no definite article before “beginning” in the Hebrew text of Gen. 1:1 or in the Greek text of John 1:1 and I John 1:1. Rather, there is an indefinite beginning opening each of these three books, *allowing for more than one beginning*.

Thus, this indefinite beginning in Gen. 1:1 *would allow for “the heavens and the earth” to have been created at a different time from that of the remaining material universe, with BOTH having beginnings (note Job 38:4-7 — the earth’s creation, with its rulers [cf. Job 1:6-2:7], seen separate from the remaining universe)*.

THEN, the special and particular place that “the heavens and the earth,” along with “man,” occupy in God’s plans and purposes *could ONLY add credence to the matter*.

BUT, let’s get some context from the WHOLE of Gen. 1.

“Heavens” in Genesis Chapter One

“Heavens,” as seen in Gen. 1:1 (Heb., *shamayim*), is a plural word throughout the Hebrew text of the O.T., in all of the more than four hundred times that it is used (ten times in Gen. 1, translated “air” three times [“fowl of the air,” “fowl of the *shamayim*”; vv. 26, 28, 30]).

The extent of the expanse referred to by “the heavens” *MUST be understood textually or contextually*.

On day one the *shamayim* covered the expanse that was darkened in connection with a destroyed earth (v. 2). Then, light was restored to this expanse (vv. 3-5).

On day two the *shamayim* covered the expanse between two bodies of water (v. 8).

Day three, kept within context, the *shamayim* evidently covered the same expanse as on day two (v. 9).

On day four, contextually, the *shamayim* had to do with the expanse between the earth and the sun and moon, with the stars mentioned, though not associated with the expanse (vv. 14, 15, 17 [on the “stars,” see parenthetical data on the next page]).

And on days five and six, the *shamayim* had to do with the expanse where the birds flew (vv. 20, 26, 28, 30).

(Note that the extent of the expanse, the *shamayim*, on day one was left indefinite, though later dealt with on day four — Scripture further explaining other Scripture.

The light brought into existence on day one [vv. 3-5] is seen enveloping the restored sun on day four [vv. 14-19], forming the sun’s exceeding brightness existing today.)

BUT, what about the expanse referenced by “heavens” in Gen. 1:1, preceding day one?

Little thought is invariably given to this expanse. The matter is usually glossed over and thought of, apart from the continuing context, as referencing the entire universe.

BUT, in continuing statements dealing with this expanse throughout the first chapter (statements in each of the six days, describing God’s restorative and creative work), the expanse is always dealt with in a quite limited extent.

On days two, three, five, and six the expanse had to do with the area close to and surrounding the earth; And on days one and four the expanse extended out to include the sun and moon in our solar system, but not beyond.

("The stars" mentioned on day four would seemingly be included in this expanse [English translation], *but NOT* so.

Note how verses 16 and 17, describing God's work on this fourth day, read:

"And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he *made* the stars also.

And God set them in the firmament of the heaven [‘the heavens’] to give light upon the earth."

The word "made" in v. 16 [Heb., *asah*, "to do," "to make"] has to do with the same type work previously seen in the preceding three days — *a restorative work*. And this work has to do with the sun and moon *ONLY*, *NOT* with the stars.

The word *asah* appears in the Hebrew text relative to the sun and moon *but NOT relative to the stars* [note that the word appearing in the English text relative to the stars is in italics, indicating that it is not in the Hebrew text].

The text should read, "...to rule the night, the stars also." That is, the moon and stars were to rule the night. But *NOTHING* is said about the stars being restored with the sun and moon. The English text, including the word "made" before "the stars," is a translator's interpretation.

The stars which one sees [only a minute percentage can be seen with the naked eye (far, far less than one percent)] are in our own galaxy and *would NOT* have been darkened. They *would NOT* have been affected by that which occurred on the earth and its associated heavens at the time Satan fell [described back in v. 2a]. Nor would any part of any other galaxy in the universe have been affected.)

In the light of how the word "heavens" is consistently used *ONLY* one way throughout God's work during the six days of Gen. 1:2b ff, unless interpretation is thrown to the winds, the word *could NOT* possibly be used any other way in Gen. 1:1, introducing the whole of the matter.

Scripture is to be interpreted in the light of its context, in the light of other Scripture, and in the light of the way Scripture has been structured (e.g., note previous understanding of the extent of the “darkness” on day one from God’s revealed restorative work on day four).

And, *IF* Scripture is interpreted in this manner when dealing with Gen. 1:1, then that meant by the extent of the expanse (the *shamayim*) will be self-explanatory.

BUT, IF this is not done...

Beyond the preceding, the Bible is about the present heavens and earth (the present earth, with its associated heavens), *NOT* about our galaxy or the estimated billions of galaxies forming the physical universe.

Nor is the Bible about the new heavens and new earth (the new earth, with its associated heavens).

In the preceding respect, note II Peter 3:7-12, where “the heavens,” along with “the earth,” will one day pass completely out of existence.

From understanding Gen. 1:1ff correctly, the passing from existence of the present heavens and earth in II Peter 3:7-12, along with the creation of “a new heavens and new earth” in Gen. 21:1ff, *can ALL be understood correctly*.

Other parts of our galaxy, or the universe at large, are *NOT in view*.

Again, compare Scripture with Scripture and simply allow Scripture to interpret itself.

God’s Universal Government

Then, in connection with the preceding, note God’s established government of the universe, which has to do with the whole of the matter seen in Genesis chapter one.

Scripture reveals that angels govern provinces (like the earth, governed by Satan), and these provinces evidently ex-

ist throughout these estimated billions of galaxies comprising the physical universe (Job 1:6-2:7). And as Satan governs his province from a place in the heavens above the province (Eph. 6:12) — as Christ and His co-heirs will do during the Millennium (Eph. 1:3-14; 2:6; 3:1-11; Heb. 3:1) — evidently other angels, governing provinces throughout the universe, rule their assigned kingdoms from the heavens above the provinces as well.

THEN, God rules from the heavens over ALL.

This is the universe which man, beyond the Millennium, on the new earth, will evidently have a part in governing from “the throne of God and of the Lamb” in Rev. 22:2-5.

Satan, insofar as we know or can know, was the only Messianic angel in the universe that sought to move outside of God’s established laws relative to his assigned position. And, apart from the one province over which he was placed in the beginning, Satan *has had NOTHING to do with God’s universal government* (though at a time in the distant past, he sought universal power and authority [Ezek. 28:12-19], *resulting in the destruction of the province over which he ruled*).

And, as seen, THIS past destruction did NOT extend out into the universe.

NOR will the future destruction be ANY different.

Again, the Bible is ABOUT the earth, from beginning to end, NOT the material universe.

(Our sun is a medium-sized star, with revolving planets, forming our solar system; and within our galaxy there are an estimated two hundred to five hundred billion other stars with many [possibly most], having revolving planets, together forming solar systems. And astronomers, with their powerful telescopes in use today, have been able to see these planets revolving around many of them [several thousand of them].

Then, astronomers estimate that billions of galaxies exist, each containing multiplied billions of stars [suns], with many evidently possessing revolving planets.

And these form the kingdoms which appointed angels have ruled, under God, since time immemorial.

And David could only see a very minute part of this in just one galaxy when he looked up into the heavens and said:

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet:

All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.

O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! [Ps. 8:3-9].)

Now, to Something Else in Gen. 1, 2

“Numbers” and their meaning, as seen beginning both Testaments, occupy a very significant place throughout Scripture.

1) After Four Days

On the restoration of the earth in Gen. 1, it is evident that God completed His restorative work pertaining to the material creation (the heavens and earth) at the end of the fourth day (Gen. 1:2b-19).

His work on days five and six (Gen. 1:20-28) *had to do with populating an ALREADY restored earth* (animals, then man).

And it is here, in the opening chapter of Genesis, that the foundational base for the meaning of the number “four” is *UNCHANGЕABLY ESTABLISHED and SET*.

Accordingly, throughout ALL subsequent Scripture, the num-

ber “four,” when dealing with numeric values, would ALWAYS be used in the SAME manner seen in these opening verses, referencing “the creation,” “the earth” (cf. Dan. 8:4, 8, 9; Rev. 20:7, 8).

Genesis chapter one records the past restoration of the material creation, the earth; Revelation 6-19 records the future restoration of the material creation, the earth.

And with the number “four” inseparably connected with the first restoration, one could ONLY expect to find this number inseparably connected with the second restoration as well.

Then, to help in this respect, note something else about HOW God began the revelation of Himself to man, also UNCHANGEABLY ESTABLISHED and SET in Gen. 1.

God opens His Word with a foundational framework, SET in a septenary form, showing in a very succinct manner NOT ONLY WHAT the whole of subsequent Scripture was about BUT HOW the whole of subsequent Scripture would be structured.

This is the way God began His Revelation to man, SHOWING within this septenary structure HOW He restores a ruined material creation, then man (man dealt with later).

a) Genesis and Revelation

And with the preceding in mind, note that EXACTLY the same thing is seen at the close of God’s Word, in the Book of Revelation, when God, once again, restores a ruined material creation.

The past restoration of the material creation in Genesis, covering four days, SET in a septenary structure, is the way God opened His Word.

And the future restoration of the material creation in Revelation MUST occur in EXACTLY the SAME manner. It HAS to occur EXACTLY the SAME way, for the way God restores a ruined creation was UNCHANGEABLY ESTABLISHED and SET in Genesis.

And to see this, all you have to do is turn to Rev. 6, at the beginning of the future restoration of the material creation, and begin reading.

This restoration opens with the introduction of “four horsemen” (vv. 1-8). And it is evident (from the place occupied by these horsemen [opening eight verses], that stated about each, and their number) that *the ENTIRE restoration is seen in FUTURE time (and, as will be shown, of necessity, in PAST “time” as well) through the actions of these four horsemen, paralleling, numerically, the “four days” opening Gen. 1.*

In Revelation, *EVERYTHING pertaining to this restoration (ALL the judgments of the Tribulation and those immediately following) are seen encapsulated within the actions of these four horsemen (effecting the restoration of the earth, the outworking of that introduced in the previous chapter, in chapter 5).*

And, *EXACTLY* as God’s work during the first four days in Genesis *NOT ONLY* resulted in the restoration of the material creation *BUT* was set within a septenary structure, the actions of the four horsemen in Rev. 6 will *NOT ONLY* result in the future restoration of the material creation *BUT* are also set within a septenary structure as well.

God’s redemptive terms for the earth are seen contained in a threefold, septenary arrangement of Judgments — a seven-sealed scroll (ch. 5), with the seventh seal, once broken, containing seven trumpets and seven vials of wrath (chs. 8-10, 15, 16). And the breaking of these seven seals of the scroll occur during the last seven years of Man’s Day, and time immediately following.

(“Three” is the number of *Divine perfection*, and “seven” is *God’s number, showing the Divine completeness of that in view.*)

THEN, as Gen. 2:4-Mal. 4:6 forms commentary for that seen in the septenary structure of Gen. 1:1-2:3, Rev. 6:9-19:21 forms commentary for that seen in the septenary structure surrounding Rev. 6:1-8 (*ALL following [6:9ff], wherein the septenary structure is seen, is encapsulated within the actions of the four horsemen in vv. 1-8 [cf. John 1:1-2:11]).*

b) *Genesis, Daniel, Revelation*

NOW, note *HOW* the number “four” is used in the Book of Daniel in a different manner, relating to and providing a *part of the SAME word picture*.

Gentile world power throughout the Times of the Gentiles, from its beginning to its end (the final 2,600 years of Man’s 6,000-year Day), is depicted through a “four-part great image” (2:31-45) and “four great beasts” (7:1-28).

And *the same climactic end* wrought through the actions of the four horsemen in Rev. 6:1-8 (developed in continuing Scripture, succeeding commentary [6:9-19:21]), is seen at the end of these two corresponding sections in Daniel, *each depicting, after different fashions, the end and destruction of Gentile world power* (cf. Isa. 63:1-6; Ezek. 38, 39; Rev. 14:14-20; 19:11-21).

Genesis introduces matters, covering the entire time from creation to the Messianic Kingdom, with the government of the earth in view throughout (first thirty-four verses).

Then, Daniel is about the government of the earth during the entire Times of the Gentiles, ending with the destruction of Gentile world power, followed by the Messianic Kingdom.

And *THAT’S* what Scripture is about, the government of this one province in God’s kingdom — correcting matters after one fashion at the time Gentile world power is destroyed and Satan is bound, then taking 1,000 years of a righteous rule, with “a rod of iron,” to bring matters regarding correcting the government of the earth *to a FINAL and COMPLETE end*.

THEN, AFTER the Son delivers a *COMPLETELY* restored kingdom up to His Father (I Cor. 15:24-28), the earth, with its heavens, will be “burned up,” “dissolved,” “the elements shall melt with fervent heat” (II Peter 3:7-13; cf. Rev. 7:12).

As can be seen, God is *NOT* going to countenance one of the provinces in His kingdom which had any past connection with sin, death, and destruction to *EVEN* remain in existence, in *ANY* form.

ONLY THEN, ONLY AFTER THIS has been done, will God bring into existence "a new heavens and new earth" (NOT a renovated heavens and earth, BUT a completely NEW heavens and NEW earth). The OLD, associated with sin and death, will have passed COMPLETELY out of existence; and the NEW, associated with righteousness and life, will have been brought into existence [Rev. 21:1ff].

2) After Six Days

Then, rather than "four," as in the creation's restoration, note that "six" is used relative to man's restoration, foreshadowed in Gen. 1 and dealt with throughout Scripture.

"Six" is man's number (Rev. 13:18). Man fell, and God is taking six days, 6,000 years, to effect his restoration, with a view to the seventh day, the seventh 1,000-year period.

3) Four Days, Two Days, the Seventh Day

Now, the redemption of the province (four days), the redemption of man (six days), all with a view to the Messianic Era (the seventh day), should provoke thought on why all seven days in Gen. 1 are so often divided into "four days" and "three days" (four days for the earth's redemption, two additional days for man's redemption, with the seventh day added to the last — "on the third day.")

This division of "seven" into two parts, "four" and "three," is seen numerous places throughout Scripture, with a tremendous amount of Biblical truth dealt with through this means — "on the third day," "after six days," with the ending points for both being the same, "the seventh day."

This is simply one of the different ways that God has structured His Word.

Numerous things can be stated in a very succinct manner through the simple use of numbers. The way God has begun each Testament provides a case in point.

The first sixty-two verses in John's gospel, beginning the N.T., incorporate this numeric arrangement, with events during the first four days dealt with in a separate respect from the remaining three days. Four days (vv. 29, 35, 43) take you to the end of chapter one; then the remaining three days appear as a unit beginning chapter two — "And the third day...", plus the previous four days, take you into the seventh day, into the Messianic Era (first sign in this gospel).

As well, note that events in the O.T. are spread across four days (4,000 years), with those in the N.T. taking two additional days (2,000 years). And all six are with a view to restoration (the earth and man), with man's rule over a restored earth to be realized on the seventh day (a day dealt with throughout Scripture, beginning in Gen. 1:28; 2:1-3).

4) After 483, 490 Years

For an indispensable part of Scripture on *HOW* all of this will be worked out, note Daniel's prophecy of the Seventy Weeks (Seventy Sevens, 490 years) in Dan. 9:24-27.

All but the last seven years of Daniel's prophecy, along with all but the last seven years in the Jewish dispensation, were fulfilled at the time of Christ's crucifixion in 33 A.D. — seven years short of the full 490 years, seven years short of a complete four days, a complete 4,000 years.

And at this time God, so to speak, stopped the chronometer marking off time in Daniel's 490-year prophecy and began a completely new dispensation, working for another two days, another 2,000 years, with a completely new entity — *the one new man* "in Christ."

And once God has completed His work with this new man, He will remove the new man from the earth (Rev. 1:10; 4:1, 2), turn back to Israel (Rev. 6:1ff), and complete the Jewish dispensation by restarting the chronometer, marking off the last seven years in Daniel's 490-year prophecy.

THIS “time” FROM Daniel’s prophecy, FROM man’s finite vantage point, is yet FUTURE. BUT, with “time” continuing from the point that it left off in the spring of 33 A.D., from God’s vantage point, it will be fulfilled 2,000 years in the PAST.

The Jewish people, in THAT day, timewise, will FIND themselves in the POSITION of having JUST crucified their Messiah, at a TIME preceding His burial and resurrection (cf. Zech. 12:10-14).

And Israel’s Messiah will THEN lie in the grave two days (the present dispensation, where He will have ALREADY lain in the grave two days [note Israel’s blindness throughout these two days]), with BOTH of God’s firstborn Sons to be raised up on the third day (the seventh day), with Israel’s sight restored.

THESE final seven years of “time,” with their associated judgments — completing the fourth day, completing the fourth 1,000-year period dating back to the restoration of the earth and man’s creation in Gen. 1 — will result in the restoration of the earth the SECOND time. And this restoration will occur EXACTLY where it is supposed to occur, where it HAS to occur, at the end of four days, at the end of 4,000 years.

NOR can this restoration occur at ANY other “time,” for THIS “time” was UNCHANGEABLY SET at the beginning in Genesis.

BUT, with “time” comprising the fifth and sixth days, the fifth and sixth 1,000-year periods (the present dispensation) having ALREADY been completed BEFORE events seen in the previous several paragraphs even BEGIN to occur, Christ can return following the completion of Daniel’s prophecy, and, following certain events, usher in the long-awaited seventh day, the seventh 1,000-year period, the Messianic Kingdom.

And IF you are wondering how God can work with “time” and do something of the preceding nature, DON’T!

Note Eccl. 3:14, 15 in this respect:

“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 fear before him.

That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past" (cf. Josh. 10:12-14; Isa. 38:8, 9; 46:9, 10; 48:1ff; Rom. 9:20).

Beginning the Old Testament (the first thirty-four verses), the Messianic Kingdom is seen to come after six days, after 6,000 years. And the same thing is seen beginning the New Testament (first sixty-two verses of John's gospel).

BUT, beyond this, in *BOTH Testaments*, the kingdom is seen to come at the end of four days, at the end of 4,000 years.

To see this in the O.T., other than referencing Dan. 9:24-27, where the kingdom follows the fulfillment of this prophecy (v. 24), note Hosea 5:13-6:2. *The two days and third day in the text can ONLY have to do with the Jewish dispensation, NOT the subsequent Christian dispensation.*

Israel is to be raised up, to live in God's sight, "after two days, on the third day" (time extending from Abraham to the end of Daniel's Seventieth Week, seven years following Christ's crucifixion).

And to see this in the New Testament, turn to the four gospels and Acts. The kingdom of the heavens was offered to Israel at the end of four days, at the end of 4,000 years, *EXACTLY* when it should have been offered.

Daniel's Seventy-Week prophecy, with the kingdom following, *was nearing completion*; and the four days, the 4,000 years *were almost up, with the earth about to be redeemed.*

BUT, wait a minute!

According to the way *BOTH Testaments* begin, *TWO additional days, TWO additional 2,000-year periods, MUST FIRST come to pass BEFORE the kingdom can be established.*

And *THAT* (as previously shown, in part) is dealt with, explained, and clarified by *comparing Scripture with Scripture, allowing Scripture to interpret itself*—studying the typology of the O.T., Daniel's Seventy-Week prophecy, the gospels and Acts, and Paul's gospel *TOGETHER*.

(On the previously mentioned offer of “the kingdom of the heavens” to Israel at the end of four days, note something about the matter in relation to “heavens” in Gen. 1:1ff.

This expression, “the kingdom of the heavens” [correct rendering from the Greek text, *NOT* “the kingdom of heaven”], appears thirty-two times in Matthew’s gospel. And it is peculiar to this gospel, except possibly John 3:5 [some Greek manuscripts have “the kingdom of the heavens” instead of “the kingdom of God” in this verse].

But, since we have Matthew’s gospel, the way John 3:5 is translated in this respect would be immaterial. The expression, “the kingdom of God,” found in all four gospels [also in Acts and some of the epistles], would be limited to and refer to the subject at hand, “the kingdom of the heavens.”

On the other hand, the translation found in almost any English version of Scripture, “the kingdom of heaven,” certainly *HASN’T* helped matters. This translation *does NOT* identify the referenced kingdom in a proper manner; *NOR* would the expression, “the kingdom of God,” standing alone, apart from the expression, “the kingdom of the heavens.”

BUT, IF translated properly, and an individual begins with Gen. 1:1 and remains with the way “heavens” is dealt with throughout this chapter, along with other related parts of the O.T., *the expression becomes self-explanatory.*

This expression, having to do with REGALITY and LOCATION, can ONLY have to do with the heavens in relation to the earth, from whence Satan and his angels presently rule, from whence Christ and His co-heirs will one day rule.)

Now, Something Else

All six days in Gen. 1 have parts to them, both “*ABOVE*” and “*BELOW*,” which is where the teaching seen in John 1, 3, “brought forth from above,” is introduced in Scripture.

On the first day there was light from above dispelling the darkness below.

On the second day there were both waters above and waters below.

On the third day there was land rising out of and above the waters below.

On the fourth day there were lights in the heavens above providing light on the earth below.

On the fifth day there were birds above and sea creatures below.

On the sixth day there were land animals below, with man then created to rule the whole, from the heavens above, on the seventh day.

Note that the things dealt with in John 1, 3 (also see James 1, I Peter 1, and I John 2-5) *draw from that seen at the very beginning, in Gen. 1, among numerous other places in the O.T.*

No wonder Jesus, responding to Nicodemus' lack of understanding (v. 9), asked him the question that He did (v. 10)!

"Nicodemus answered and said unto him, 'How can these things be'?"

Jesus answered and said unto him, 'Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?'"

Brought forth from above, as opposed to being brought forth from below, can be seen at every turn in Scripture.

How was Eve brought forth when she ate of the forbidden fruit? How was Cain brought forth when he slew Abel? How was Noah brought forth when he built the ark? How was Abraham brought forth when he left Ur and went out to another land, by faith?...

And Christians, as Abraham, have been called to another land and are to exercise faith, follow what God's word has to say about the matter. They are to be *brought forth FROM ABOVE in all areas of life, fixing their thoughts upon things ABOVE, things relative to or connected with the future kingdom,*

NOT brought forth FROM BELOW in any area of life, NOT fixing their thoughts upon things relative to or connected with the present kingdom.

Christians are to study these things out and put these different things seen at the outset in the first thirty-four verses of Genesis and the first sixty-two verses of John together, *allowing them to NOT ONLY know and understand WHAT Scripture is all about BUT to ALSO know and understand HOW to properly deal with the numerous things seen throughout all subsequent Scripture.*

The WHOLE was set forth at the beginning, in each Testament (Isa. 46:9, 10).

Know and understand this FIRST!

THEN, with a CORRECT foundation, you can deal with the SAME thing in ALL subsequent Scripture, BUILDING the superstructure upon the CORRECT foundation, in a PROPER manner.

(Note that dealing with the septenary structure beginning each Testament in relation to the WHOLE of Scripture covers "time" and "events" having to do SOLELY with the LAST 7,000 years of the existence of the present heavens and earth.

That's WHY the WHOLE of Scripture does not move beyond this seventh day, for the WHOLE of Scripture rests on the foundation set forth at the beginning of each Testament. This is simply the way Scripture, in an overall respect, has been structured.

ALL of the types and signs point to and foreshadow things out ahead, mainly things having to do with the seventh day; BUT, NONE point to and foreshadow things beyond the seventh day. They CAN'T, for that would be moving beyond the established "time" in the previously SET foundation.

And the same would be true for the Psalms, the Prophets or the central teaching of Scripture anywhere else, O.T. or N.T.

EVERYTHING MUST be kept within the 7,000 years of "time" covered by the previously laid foundation. And EVERYTHING MUST be built upon and rest upon THAT foundation.)

Appendix III

The Earth's Government

Part I

The Rule of Satan and His Angels From the Heavens Over the Earth

From what realm do Satan and his angels presently rule?
It is clear from both Old and New Testament Scriptures
that *they rule FROM a heavenly realm OVER the earth.*

Through the Gentile Nations

Satan and his angels *have access to the earth and rule through the Gentile nations on the earth* (Gen. 6:2-4; Job 1:7; 2:2; Dan. 10:12-21; I Peter 5:8; Jude 6), *BUT they themselves do NOT rule on the earth.*

Daniel chapter ten presents certain insights into *HOW* the present kingdom of Satan is structured, along with the *LOCATION* of those administering power and authority in this kingdom.

In this chapter, a heavenly messenger who had been dispatched to Daniel on the earth from that part of the heavens where God resides and rules (“the uttermost parts of the north [a superlative in the Hebrew text]” — the northernmost point in the universe in relation to the earth [Isa. 14:13, ASV]) was detained at a point en route. This messenger was detained *in the heavens above the earth* by “the prince of the kingdom of Persia.”

Then Michael was dispatched from heaven, and the messenger remained there with “the kings of Persia” while Michael fought with the prince of Persia for his release (v. 13).

The picture presented is that of *powerful angels in the kingdom of Satan ruling the earth from a heavenly realm (a heavenly realm in relation to the earth) through counterparts in the human race on earth.*

There was a prince (ruler) of Persia in the heavens, and there was a prince (ruler) of Persia on the earth. Then, in the heavens, there were lesser rulers associated with Persia (the kings of Persia); and the same would have been true in the earthly kingdom (*cf.* Dan. 2:39; 5:28-31; 7:5; 8:3-6, 20).

Then beyond that “the prince of Greece” is mentioned — another heavenly ruler, the angelic heavenly ruler over the Grecian kingdom on earth (v. 20).

And the reason why attention is called to this heavenly ruler is easy to see and understand. Daniel, throughout his book, deals with the kingdom of Babylon, from the days of Nebuchadnezzar to the days of Antichrist; and Dan. 10:20, “...the prince of Greece shall come,” anticipated that day when Alexander the Great in the Grecian kingdom on earth would conquer the kingdom of Babylon under the Medes and the Persians (*cf.* Dan. 2:39; 7:6; 8:7, 8, 21, 22; 11:1ff).

Thus, *there is NOT ONLY* a breakdown of powers in the heavenly kingdom under Satan corresponding to a breakdown of powers in various earthly kingdoms under fallen man *BUT* there is also a shifting of powers in the heavenly kingdom corresponding to a shifting of powers in the earthly kingdoms.

In the preceding respect, *ANY* person occupying a position of power *in ANY* Gentile earthly kingdom during the present age, during Man’s 6,000-year Day, is merely occupying a position of power under Satan and his angels, as they rule from the heavens through counterparts among the nations on the earth.

Through the Nation of Israel

The nation of Israel is the LONE exception among nations on earth whose rulers presently hold positions of power and authority under fallen angels in the kingdom of Satan.

The prince over Israel is *Michael* (Dan. 10:21), an angelic prince in the heavens *who is NOT numbered among those ruling in Satan's kingdom, as Israel is NOT numbered among the nations* (Num. 23:9).

And Michael would have a great host of angels ruling with and under him, as Satan has a great host of angels ruling with and under him.

The whole of the matter is *a rule by angels from two places in the heavens through individuals from the human race on earth* — one is by Satan and his angels through *ALL of the Gentile nations, and the other is by Michael and his angels through the nation of Israel.*

The Earth's Government

Part II

Existing Powers, Heavenly, Earthly Proper Attitude Toward Existing Powers

“Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke thee.’

But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves” (Jude 8-10).

The message throughout the Epistle of Jude is twofold:

1) Christians are exhorted *to earnestly strive* “for [with respect to] the faith.”

2) Christians are warned concerning apostasy manifested in the lives of those who, instead, *stand away* “from the faith.”

Verses three and four introduce this message, verses five through seven form examples to illustrate that which has been introduced, and verse eight continues within the framework of teachings set forth in verses three through seven:

“Likewise [in like manner to the individuals previously mentioned in the examples (vv. 5-7, continued in v. 8)] also these filthy dreamers [those in v. 4] defile the flesh [*cf.* v. 7], despise dominion [*cf.* v. 6], and speak evil of dignities [*cf.* v. 5].”

Proper and improper attitudes toward dignitaries are then given in verses nine and ten.

A basic teaching throughout the entire passage, beginning with verse three, has to do with the governmental administration of the earth and with apostasy in relation to this administration.

Christians are to earnestly strive with respect to the faith in view of attaining the goal of their faith, the salvation of their souls (I Peter 1:9).

The realization of this salvation will follow the issues of the judgment seat of Christ and involves the placement of Christians in positions of power and authority as joint-heirs with Christ in His coming kingdom.

Thus, the salvation of the soul, in the preceding respect, has to do with REGALITY.

Christians earnestly striving with respect to the faith is *with a view to their occupying positions in the coming governmental administration of the earth following that time when "the kingdom of the world" (presently ruled by Satan) has become "the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ" (Rev. 11:15, ASV).*

Despising Dominion (v. 8)

Despising dominion refers back to the sin of the angels in verse six.

The word "despise" is from a Greek word meaning to "set aside," "disregard."

Angels in the kingdom of Satan had "set aside," "disregarded" their positions of power in the heavens and had come to earth in the form of man for the specific purpose of cohabiting with members of the human race.

These angels set aside the positions for which they had been created and involved themselves in something completely alien to their very existence.

This account has been recorded in Jude, allowing the Spirit of God to draw spiritual lessons from Jude, showing

how Christians can, *in like manner*, despise dominion; and this dominion is the very same dominion which the angels despised.

The Church has been brought into existence *to occupy heavenly places, to fill positions of power and authority in the heavens as God's firstborn son during the coming age*; and these positions are the *SAME* positions presently being occupied by angels ruling from heavenly places in Satan's kingdom.

Angels holding positions of power and authority under Satan in the present kingdom of the heavens will continue to rule from this heavenly sphere *UNTIL* that day when they, along with Satan, are cast out of the heavens onto the earth.

Christians *will THEN* be brought to the goal of their calling, and, as the bride of Christ, be placed in this heavenly realm and occupy these positions.

Christians have been saved with a view to their replacing the incumbent rulers in the heavens, and the warning in this passage concerns the present existing danger of Christians "setting aside" or "disregarding" their calling.

Angels apostatized in the past by standing away from the position for which they had been brought into existence; and Christians can, *in like manner*, apostatize during the present time by standing away from the position for which they have been brought into existence.

Corruption, followed by judgment, was the inevitable outcome of this apostasy by angels; and corruption, followed by judgment, will also be the inevitable outcome of the same apostasy by Christians today.

(The English word "apostasy" is derived from, transliterated from, the Greek word *apostasia*.

This is a compound word [*apo*, "from," and *stasis*, "to stand"]. Thus, the word simply means "to stand away from." And a person *can ONLY* "stand away from" a position which he had previously occupied.)

Speaking Evil of Dignitaries (vv. 8-10)

Speaking evil of dignitaries in verse eight refers back to verse five and moves forward into verses nine and ten.

The same word translated “speak evil” in the Greek text of verse eight is also used in verses nine and ten (*blasphemeo*, the verb form, appears in vv. 8, 10; and *blasphemia*, the noun form, appears in v. 9). The word is translated “railing accusation” in verse nine and rendered, once again, as “speak evil” in verse ten.

This is the Greek word from which the English word “blasphemy” is derived; and the translation, “railing accusation,” in verse nine actually captures the thought expressed by the word somewhat better than the translation, “speak evil,” in verses eight and ten.

Railing accusations, emanating from unbelief on the part of the people of Israel in the historic account covered by verse five, were directed against *Moses*. However, by so doing, *the people were actually directing these railing accusations against God Himself*.

Moses was the one whom God had chosen to lead the Israelites out of Egypt and into the land covenanted to Abraham and his posterity through Isaac and Jacob.

His power and authority were of Divine origin; and, consequently, accusations leveled against the leadership of Moses were, in actuality, accusations leveled against God Himself.

The people of Israel who questioned Moses’ authority, seeking to appoint a new leader and return to Egypt, *were questioning the very authority of God vested in Moses* (cf. Num. 14:2, 27).

This sin was the end result of unbelief concerning the nation’s ability to go into the land as God had commanded, with judgment then befalling the people of Israel.

They could no longer enter the land under Moses and realize the purpose for their deliverance from Egypt.

They had fallen away, apostatized, in such a manner that it was impossible to renew them again unto repentance (cf. Heb. 6:4-6).

As a result, during the next thirty-eight and one-half years, the entire generation — murmuring against Moses, and thus against the Lord — *perished in the wilderness.*

Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and those who followed them constitute another similar example (Num. 16:1ff).

They rose up against Moses and Aaron in matters concerning their authority — Moses, as leader of the people; and Aaron, as high priest in the camp.

When this occurred, Moses “fell upon his face” (v. 4). Moses knew that Korah and those with him were questioning, *NOT JUST his and Aaron’s authority, BUT the authority of God.*

This rebellion against authority led to unacceptable incense being offered upon the altar at the door of the tabernacle by two hundred fifty prominent men who had sided with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram against Moses. This, in turn, led to God’s judgment on the entire group.

God exhibited his wrath upon Korah, Dathan, and Abiram by opening a chasm in the earth and causing them, along with “all that appertained unto them [their wives, children (save Korah’s sons; cf. Num. 26:11, 58)],” to go down into *Sheol* alive:

“And the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods.

They, and all that appertained unto them, went down alive into the pit [‘into *Sheol*’], and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation” (Num. 16:32, 33).

A fire then came out from the Lord and consumed the two hundred fifty men which had offered the incense upon the altar (v. 35).

Immediately after the destruction of Korah and those following him, the people of Israel again murmured against Moses and Aaron, saying, "Ye have killed the people of the Lord."

Again, as before, this was a murmuring NOT ONLY against Moses and Aaron BUT against God.

God was the One Who had performed the execution of Korah, Dathan, Abiram, their families, and the two hundred fifty men offering incense. *And because of this same sin of murmuring against Divinely established authority, God sent a plague into the camp of Israel.*

This was done so speedily that before Aaron had time to make an "atonement for the people," standing "between the dead and the living," fourteen thousand seven hundred Israelites perished (vv. 41-50).

According to Scripture, it is a serious thing to murmur against, bring railing accusations against, those whom God has placed in positions of power and authority. Any rebellion against Divinely established authority is a rebellion against the Lord. It was so during Moses' day, and it is no different during the present day.

"The powers that be are ordained of God," whether during Moses' day or today. *ALL positions of power and authority are by Divine appointment. And whosoever "resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation ['judgment']"* (Rom. 13:1, 2).

God rules in the kingdom of men and gives it "to whomsoever he will." God is the One Who establishes rulers, and He is also the One Who removes rulers (Dan. 4:17, 25-32). "There is no power but of God" (Rom. 13:1), which today, in view of the coming age, is vested in His Son.

Jesus told His disciples, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matt. 28:18).

In view of this, any rebellion against existing ordained powers — whether in the heavens or upon the earth — is a rebellion against the power vested in God’s Son, which is simply a rebellion against Christ Himself.

Note the example given in Jude 9: Michael, the archangel, *WOULD NOT* bring a railing accusation even against Satan. He, knowing that *Satan held his position by Divine appointment and that Satan possessed NO power BUT that which emanated from God*, would go *NO* further than to simply say, “The Lord rebuke thee.”

Michael knew that *any accusation against Satan would be an accusation against the One Who had appointed him to this position, the One in whom ALL power and authority reside.*

(The parallel section in II Peter 2:11 is expanded to include other angels and other dignitaries as well: “Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them [dignitaries] before the Lord.”)

Again, note the typology of Saul and David, Satan and Christ, in this whole overall respect [ref. particularly to I Sam. 24:8-10; II Sam. 1:2-16].

For comments on this typology from the Books of I, II Samuel, refer to the author’s article, “Saul and David, Satan and Christ.”)

Now, with all this in mind, *the particular apostate element existing in Christendom in the latter days — with its parallel drawn from experiences of individuals during the days of Moses — should be clear.*

Bringing railing accusations against those whom God has placed in positions of power and authority *is a form of apostasy.*

It is that simple!

Such reviling or railing against Divinely established authority is *NOT ONLY standing away from* the God-ordained position which a Christian is to occupy, *BUT*, as well, *it is moving into a position wherein the apostate, in actuality, brings these accusations against the Lord Himself.*

And through such accusations, these apostates, as “brute beasts...corrupt themselves” (Jude 10; cf. II Peter 2:12).

Appendix IV

Christians and Politics

Part I

*Christians Possess a Heavenly Calling, Inheritance
Israel Possesses an Earthly Calling, Inheritance*

(Christians during the present day and time are being urged on practically every hand *to involve themselves in the political structure of this present world system.*

Politicians single out and make appeals to particular groups of Christians, sometimes speaking in Churches and Christian colleges or universities; and numerous Christian ministers of Churches throughout the land often urge their people to become involved.

What is this all about? Are Christians to involve themselves in the political structure of this present world system?

If so, *WHY?*

If not, *WHY NOT?*

Answers to these questions are dealt with in the two parts of this appendix article.

As well, this article will supply complimentary material for Chapter VI of this book, dealing with the parable of the Mustard Seed. This article will enlarge upon the subject and provide necessary information to better understand this parable [also see Appendixes III and V].

And this article will address the issue after such a fashion that no room can be left *for ANY Christian* to misunderstand the place which he/she should occupy in relation to the government as it presently exists.

In this respect, note the question:

CAN Christians produce FRUIT for the coming kingdom of Christ while, at the SAME TIME, having a mind for and being involved in the present kingdom under Satan.?

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children [sons] by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will...

Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself.

That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him.

In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will” (Eph. 1:3-5, 9-11).

Christians have *a heavenly calling, a heavenly hope, a heavenly inheritance, a heavenly citizenship, heavenly blessings, and they are confronted with an ever-present heavenly battle* against the present rulers who occupy the heavenly land to which they have been called (Eph. 1:3; 6:11-18; Phil. 3:20; Col. 1:5; Heb. 3:1; I Peter 1:4).

The one book in the New Testament which, in its overall structure, possibly sets forth that facet of truth dealing with the Christians’ relationship *to this heavenly land* better than any other is Paul’s epistle to the Ephesians.

Paul used the expression “in heavenly places [*lit.*, ‘in the heavenlies’]” five different times in this epistle.

Two of these times, *the Christians’ position in the heavenlies* is in view (1:3; 2:6).

Two other times, *the position of Satan and his angels in the heavenlies* comes into view (3:10; 6:12).

And the one other time, *the position of Christ at the right hand of God, also in a heavenly place*, is in view (1:20).

The Christians' Position — in the Heavens

Revelation in Paul's letter to the Ephesians begins by revealing *blessings awaiting Christians* "in heavenly places in Christ," and terminates by revealing *a present warfare confronting Christians* against "spiritual wickedness in high places ['the spirit forces of wickedness in the heavenlies']" (1:3; 6:12).

The heavenlies, wherein blessings are to be realized in chapter one, and *the heavenlies* in which the enemy presently resides in chapter six, *MUST be looked upon as ONE and the SAME*.

The Christians' positional standing is "in Christ" in the heavens where God Himself dwells.

But, contextually, the spiritual blessings in view are to be realized by Christians as they move in, conquer, and dwell in the heavenly land held by the enemy in chapter six.

In this respect, there are heavenly blessings for present victorious engagements of the enemy, and there are heavenly blessings awaiting victorious Christians in that coming day when the enemy will finally be dislodged from the land.

Contextually, *the blessings* in chapter one are associated with the "adoption" (v. 5), the "dispensation of the fulness of times" (v. 10), the "inheritance" (vv. 11, 14, 18), and the "wisdom and revelation in the knowledge [Gk., *epignosis*, 'mature knowledge'] of him" (v. 17). Such blessings to be realized by Christians are, thus, intimately associated with *the heavenly land to which they have been called*; and the entire matter is projected out into the coming age, *but not to the exclusion of the present dispensation*.

The present spiritual warfare in the heavenlies is with a view to *the coming age*, but spiritual blessings await the victors *during BOTH present and future time*. *There can be NO future occupation of the land APART FROM a present warfare against the enemy; and the blessings extend throughout BOTH eras.*

(Ephesians, in the preceding respect, would follow the typology set forth by the Israelites under both Moses and Joshua, but more particularly under Joshua as they moved into the land set before them and gradually took the land from its inhabitants by conquest [ref. Exodus through Joshua].)

Ephesians moves progressively from chapter one into things relative to the proffered salvation and the revelation of the mystery in chapters two and three.

Believing Gentiles have been placed together in the same body with believing Jews. God has broken down the “middle wall of partition” by creating *one new man*, where there is neither “Jew nor Greek” (2:8-16; cf. Gal. 3:28).

Believing Jews and believing Gentiles, together in the same body, forming *the one new man*, become “fellowheirs” of *the heavenly* promises and blessings in view (Eph. 3:6; cf. Gal. 3:29).

The very purpose for an individual’s salvation is to be realized through the reception of the inheritance introduced in chapter one and continued in subsequent chapters.

The Christians’ association with *the heavenlies* is presently being made known to the “principalities and powers in heavenly places [‘in the heavenlies’]” “by [‘through’] the church” (3:9, 10).

God is making known to the incumbent rulers in the heavenlies that *they are about to be replaced; and He is making this known through the ONES who are destined to occupy these positions, the ONES presently engaging the enemy in the heavenlies.*

(Note that revelation of *THIS* nature — a making known through the Church to the principalities and powers in the heavens that a change in the government was about to occur — *was done through a first century Church, with the Christians in that Church realizing their calling.*

The vast majority of Christians today find themselves knowing more about and being more involved in the things having to do with Satan's present kingdom than they know about and find themselves involved in the things having to do with Christ's coming kingdom.

In this respect, though the Church remains the Church, *LITTLE* could be made known to the principalities and powers in heavenly places through the vast majority of Christians filling the Churches today.)

Ephesians then continues by exhorting Christians to walk worthy of their high calling (4:1ff) and revealing the need for pastor-teachers in the Churches (4:11-16).

Pastor-teachers have been placed in the Churches to lead Christians into a mature knowledge of, contextually, *their CALLING in relation to the heavenlies.*

Christians are to know about the blessings awaiting them in the heavenlies, the coming dispensation, the inheritance, the mystery, etc.

And to make this known, in the strict Biblical sense, is the PRIMARY task of pastor-teachers.

The latter part of chapter four and the first part of chapter five continue with thoughts and exhortations concerning walking worthy of one's high calling;.

And this is followed by related material in the latter part of chapter five and the first part of chapter six concerning the relationship of husbands and wives, children and parents, and servants and masters.

THEN, at the conclusion of the epistle, in the latter part of chapter six, *the CRUX* of the entire matter comes into view.

Beginning in 6:10, the Apostle Paul says, “*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*”

The engagement with the enemy now comes to the forefront in the epistle. *The enemy is fully revealed, and the proper armor with which Christians are to clothe themselves is given (vv. 12-17).*

The Christians’ Warfare — In the Heavens

There is a *battle* to be fought, and there is a *victory* to be won.

THIS battle NOT ONLY requires extensive preparation BUT ALSO the correct armor; and pastor-teachers in the Churches are to see that Christians placed under their care become properly equipped to engage the enemy in the battle at hand (cf. 3:10, 11; 4:11-16; 6:11-18).

Going forth to battle, one’s loins are to be *girded with truth* (showing truthfulness, earnestness, and sincerity in the conflict).

A person is to have on *the breastplate of righteousness* (showing a righteous manner of living).

His feet are to be shod with *the preparation of the gospel of peace* (showing that the messenger properly understands and is able to proclaim both present and future aspects of salvation).

He is to take *the shield of faith* (showing faithfulness to act in the realm God has commanded).

He is to put on *the helmet of salvation* (showing a hope relative to a future salvation [the salvation of the soul]).

And he is to take *the sword of the Spirit* (showing an acquisition of the Word of God).

ONLY in this fashion can a Christian stand in a victorious manner against “the wiles of the devil.”

(*Ref.* Chapter IV in the author's book, *Judgment Seat of Christ*, for a fuller discussion of Eph. 6:14-17.)

One's *faithfulness* in the entire realm of proper preparation is the primary prerequisite. As in Jude 3, one is to "earnestly contend for the faith [*i.e.*, 'earnestly strive for (with reference to, in the good contest of) the faith']". He, according to the parallel passage in I Tim. 6:12, is to "Fight the good fight of faith [*lit.*, 'Strive in the good contest of the faith']"; and, in this manner he is to "lay hold on eternal life [*lit.*, 'lay hold on life for the age' (a future salvation, to be realized during the Messianic Era, associated in the text *with his calling*)]."

The words translated "contend" in Jude 3 and "fight" in I Tim. 6:12 are from *epagonizomai* and *agonizomai* respectively in the Greek text.

Note that the only difference in these two words is the prefix "*ep*" in Jude (this is the preposition *epi* ['upon'] prefixed to the word [the "*i*" is dropped when *epi* is prefixed to a word beginning with a vowel]). *Epi*, used in this manner, intensifies the meaning of the word, providing the translation, "earnestly contend ['earnestly strive']".

(*Agonizomai* is the Greek word from which our English word "agonize" is derived. The word could more properly be translated "strive," as in Luke 13:24 and I Cor. 9:25.

Every muscle is to be strained, every effort is to be expended, in the "good contest of 'the faith'".)

In Jude 3-5 this contest is associated with entrance into the land to which Christians have been called, drawing from the type of the Israelites under Moses; and the false teachers in these verses are seeking, through that which they are teaching, to mislead and thus prevent Christians from entering this land (*ref.* the ten unfaithful spies during Moses' day and the results of their message).

However, Christians following the admonition in Jude 3 *need NOT* fear the false teachers in Jude 4, *NOR* fear being numbered among the unfaithful in Jude 5.

Such Christians will experience victory after victory in the battle and partake of rich spiritual blessings which the Lord has reserved for His conquerors, both now and in the coming age.

Seated on the Throne — In the Heavens

Dare to be a Caleb!

Dare to be a Joshua!

Rewards for those who so govern their lives will be the same as Caleb and Joshua's — *present victory, and the ultimate possession of one's inheritance* (Joshua 13:7-14; 19:48-50).

As Christ is today seated with His Father on His Father's throne, He is inviting Christians to one day sit with Him on His Own throne (Ps. 110:1; Rev. 3:21), which will be located *in the heavens* — located in the place from which Satan and his angels rule today, with Christ and His co-heirs replacing Satan and his angels in that day.

Christ, having a reign *from both the heavens and upon earth* in that day, *will rule from His Own throne with His co-heirs in the heavens and from David's throne in Israel's midst on earth* (Joel 2:27-32; Luke 1:31-33; Rev. 3:21).

And these two thrones should NEVER be confused, one with the other.

Israel's calling is *EARTHLY*, connected with David's throne; the Church's calling is *HEAVENLY*, connected with Christ's Own throne.

And overcoming Christians will sit with Christ on His throne in the heavens, NOT with Him on David's throne on earth.

Christians and Politics

Part II

Christian Involvement in the Affairs of this World Defiling One's High Calling

“And he brought us out from thence [the Israelites under Moses, brought out of Egypt, in the type; Christians under Christ, brought out from this world, in the antitype], that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he swore unto our fathers [brought into an earthly land in the type; brought into a heavenly land in the antitype]” (Deut. 6:23).

In the central Old Testament type, alluded to in the preceding reference, having to do with the Israelites under Moses, *earthly Gentile nations dwelling in an earthly land were in view.*

The antitype though, as it pertains to Christians under Christ, has to do *with a heavenly land and the rulers therein.* Rather than Gentile nations in an earthly land, it has to do *with Satan and his angels in a heavenly land — the incumbent rulers over the Gentile nations on the earth, ruling from a heavenly realm.*

Christians have been called to a heavenly land presently occupied by Satan and his angels. And their warfare is *THERE*, against Satan and his angels, *NOT HERE* against the earthly rulers.

AS Israel's warfare was against those dwelling in the land to which the nation had been called (*an earthly land*), *SO* is the Christians' warfare against those dwelling in the land to which they have been called (*a heavenly land*).

That's why Eph. 6:12 states:

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places ['against spirit forces of the evil one in heavenly places']."

THIS is a spiritual battle which is specifically stated to NOT be against "flesh and blood" opponents, BUT against the spirit forces of Satan in heavenly places.

And Christians concentrating their efforts in the spiritual warfare against the correct enemy in the correct realm, apart from distraction, is *EXACTLY what Paul had in mind in II Tim. 2:4, 5:*

"No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully [i.e., according to the manner which God has revealed in His Word]."

Lawful, Unlawful Warfare

A Christian expending his time and energy in the wrong realm — which often involves a warfare against the wrong enemy in this realm (i.e., a warfare against "flesh and blood" opponents *on the earth* rather than against "spirit forces" *in the heavens*) — is *NOT striving lawfully*.

It would be IMPOSSIBLE to overcome in the warfare in which Christians are to be engaged IF one becomes wrapped up in "the affairs of this life."

That's why Christians *will NOT* be crowned apart from striving lawfully. They will have separated themselves from *the ONLY place* where one can overcome and gain the victory — *the spiritual warfare*.

And if any warfare has been carried out at all in their lives, *it could ONLY be* warfare against the wrong enemy in the wrong realm (again, separate from the only enemy and realm where one can overcome and gain the victory).

And warring against the wrong enemy in the wrong realm is something being carried out among Christians today on a scale which encompasses, after some fashion, almost the whole of Christendom.

It is quite common in today's world to see Christians allying with or opposing governmental leaders among the nations, who all hold positions under Satan and his angels in the present kingdom of the heavens (*cf.* Dan. 10:12-20).

(Note Appendix III in this book for an overview of Satan's present rule among the Gentile nations and what involvement in the political structure of the present kingdom under Satan would actually involve.)

Christians, *NOT* understanding the true nature of the spiritual warfare have turned things completely around; and, through so doing, they have found themselves warring against "flesh and blood" opponents, placing their crowns in jeopardy.

Why is this the case? Why is something of this nature — completely contrary to the clear teaching of Scripture — so prevalent within Christian activity today?

The answer can be seen through viewing what has happened, *in the antitype*, relative to the commission which Moses gave the twelve elders from the twelve tribes before they were sent into the land of Canaan.

That is, the answer can be derived through:

- 1) Understanding how the elders under Moses were supposed to heed his commission during a past dispensation, *in the type*.

2) Then, seeing what has happened when this same commission is supposed to be heeded *after EXACTLY the same fashion* by elders under Christ during the present dispensation, *in the antitype*.

In the type, the twelve elders which Moses sent into the land were told to go *up a CERTAIN WAY, and THAT WAY would lead them up into the MOUNTAIN* (Num. 13:17 [“a mountain” signifying a kingdom — Isa. 2:1-4; Dan. 2:34, 35, 45]).

THEN, while in the MOUNTAIN, they were to learn EVERYTHING that they could about the land and the inhabitants therein. And, after learning ALL these things, they were to bring back word concerning their findings to the people in the twelve tribes.

The message of the twelve was to involve the strength of the people dwelling in the land, how the Israelites could move in and overcome them, all the various things about the land itself, etc.

In other words, *they were to find out EVERYTHING that they could about the KINGDOM — both the present kingdom ruled by the Gentile nations (under Satan) and the anticipated future kingdom ruled by Israel (under God) — and they were to proclaim these things to the people of Israel upon their return.*

This message would provide knowledge *about the hope set before them* — that of going into the land, conquering the inhabitants, and realizing an inheritance therein.

And this knowledge would *NOT ONLY* provide them with an incentive to move out and be victorious over the inhabitants in the land, *BUT* it would also provide them with information concerning how this was to be accomplished.

THEN, bringing this over into the antitype, the elders, the pastor-teachers, those whom God has called to lead and feed His flock, ALL have a central commission. They have been commissioned by the Lord to *LOOK to the LAND and go up a CERTAIN way, which will lead up into the MOUNTAIN.*

And, once on the mountain, they are to find out *EVERYTHING* that they can about the things of the mountain and then proclaim these things to those under their ministry.

THIS is *CENTRAL*!

EVERYTHING in the pastor-teachers' ministry *SHOULD* revolve around *THIS*, for it involves the hope set before every Christian, which centers around the very reason for their salvation.

And the *ONLY* place which God has provided for those whom He has called to go up into the mountain and learn these things for this particular purpose is *His WORD*.

LOOKING to the *LAND* and going up a *CERTAIN* way, which will lead *UP* into the *MOUNTAIN*, is *LOOKING* to and *DELVING* into those things in the *WORD* having to do with the *KINGDOM*.

And, so doing, the person is to *TRAVERSE* the *WORD* *FROM* one end *TO* the other, learning *ALL* that he can about the complete scope of the *KINGDOM*.

THEN, he is to take this message to the people, *PROVIDING* them with a knowledge of the *HOPE* set before them — that of *GOING* into the land, *CONQUERING* the inhabitants, and *REALIZING* an inheritance therein.

And this knowledge will *NOT ONLY* provide them with an incentive to move out and be victorious over the inhabitants of the land, *BUT* it will also provide them with information concerning how this is to be accomplished.

But...

BUT, a *MAJOR* problem exists.

The elders under Christ — the leaders whom God has placed among His people, the pastor-teachers — *have NOT* followed the command in Num. 13:17. They have *NOT* looked toward the *LAND* and gone *UP* a *CERTAIN* way, which leads *UP* into the *MOUNTAIN* (cf. Gen. 19:17).

They, *NOT* having followed the Lord's command, *DON'T* understand the true nature of the spiritual warfare, *HOW* it is to be fought, *WHAT* is at stake in the fight, and *ALL* the various things about the kingdom — both present and future.

NOT having been there themselves and NOT understanding these things, they CAN'T bring back a message to those under their ministry concerning THAT which is there, the HOPE set before Christians, ALL the various things about victory over the enemy, etc.

SUCH would be impossible!

And the pastor-teachers' failure to heed the Lord's commission after this fashion has produced far-reaching ramifications seen throughout Christendom.

Christians, because of the failure of pastor-teachers in this realm, *are NOT* knowledgeable concerning the various facets of "the Word of the Kingdom".

And THIS is the reason so many Christians find themselves wrapped up in "the affairs of this life" and, within such actions, often also find themselves engaged in a battle against the WRONG enemy in the WRONG realm.

THIS is the reason that numerous Christians find themselves involved in the political structure of this present world system, often encouraged by their religious leaders to do so — that is, they find themselves involved in Satan's present kingdom rather than looking to the Lord and His coming kingdom.

Or, referencing the overall typology of I, II Samuel, involvement of this nature would be comparable to David's faithful men during his time of exile (19:1ff; 22:1, 2) *leaving their place with David, going back to Saul's kingdom, and involving themselves in his kingdom.*

(Ref. the author's article, "Saul and David, Satan and Christ.")

And what will be the end result of the present state of

Christendom (which is not far removed, though after a different fashion, from that of the Israelites at Christ's first coming *after* the Scribes and Pharisees had finished their work)?

This end result was given by Christ Himself, almost 2,000 years ago, before the Church had even been brought into existence.

Because of the working of the leaven which the woman placed in the "three measures of meal" (evidently very early in the dispensation) — which would work *UNTIL* "the whole" had been leavened (Matt. 13:33; cf. Matt. 16:6), resulting in the "lukewarm" condition in Christendom at the end of the dispensation (Rev. 3:14-21) — Christ asked:

"Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith ['the faith'] on the earth?" (Luke 18:8).

The expression, "the faith," is peculiarly related to "the Word of the Kingdom" (cf. I Tim. 6:12-15, 19; II Tim. 4:7, 8; Jude 3); and the way in which the question is worded in the Greek text indicates that a negative response is anticipated.

"The Son of man" (a Messianic title) *is NOT going to find "the faith" on the earth at the time of His return. He will NOT find the true message surrounding things pertaining to the kingdom being taught among Christians in the Churches at this time.*

WHY?

Again, because the pastor-teachers *have NOT heeded* the Lord's commission. *They have NOT looked TOWARD the land and gone a CERTAIN way, which leads UP into the MOUNTAIN.*

They know little to nothing about the land and its inhabitants; and, resultingly, the people under their ministry know little to nothing about these things either (cf. Matt. 23:13).

And *THAT'S* where we are. *THAT'S* the way matters surrounding "the Word of the Kingdom" exist during the closing days of the present dispensation.

WILL conditions improve?

NOT according to Scripture!

According to Scripture, deterioration will continue. Matters will ONLY become worse, for "the whole" is to be leavened!

Appendix V

What Has Happened?

THE CHURCH — THEN, AND TODAY

2,000 Years of Church History — WHAT Has Happened?

During the early years of the Church, attention was focused *on an inheritance in a heavenly land* to which Christians have been called.

And from what can be seen in the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen, the Book of Acts, the twenty-one epistles, and Revelation chapters two and three, *THIS could ONLY have been the CENTRAL message* proclaimed throughout Christendom during those days.

THIS was the message of the hour!

But in Christendom today — *in ALL Christendom, so-called fundamental and liberal circles alike — attention is centered ELSEWHERE; and the true message concerning a heavenly inheritance awaiting Christians is SELDOM, if EVER, heard.*

So WHAT brought about the change FROM the way things were TO the way things presently exist?

Scripture reveals EXACTLY what happened!

The Way Things Were

The Bible is a book dealing with “salvation.” But the Biblical scope of redemption *DOESN’T* stop with man passing “from death unto life” (John 5:24). Rather, *it CONTINUES with “that which is really life [literal translation]”* (I Tim. 6:19).

The former has to do with *the gospel of the grace of God*, and the latter has to do with *the gospel of the glory of Christ*. And Scripture, as a whole, concerns itself *FAR, FAR more with the latter than with the former, for Scripture has been written to the saved, NOT to the unsaved, to REVEAL the end from the beginning* (Isa. 46:9, 10; I Cor. 2:9-14).

Scripture BEGINS this way (the framework set forth in the six and seven days in Genesis chapters one and two [ref. the author's book, *The Study of Scripture*, Chs. II-IV]), necessitating that *Scripture REMAIN this way*.

It is man who has turned things around and *has NOT ONLY* placed the emphasis at a point where Scripture *DOES NOT* place it *BUT has ALSO* either *minimized or completely done away with teachings surrounding the point where Scripture does place the emphasis*.

Note, for example, Paul's dealings with the Church in Ephesus. He spent three years teaching them. But what did he teach them?

That's revealed in Acts 20:17-38 when Paul called the elders of this Church together for the last time that he would be with them.

Paul, referring to that which he had previously taught them, *BEGAN* with "the gospel of the grace of God" (v. 24). *BUT*, he didn't remain there. He *THEN* referred to his subsequent proclamation of "the kingdom of God" (v. 25). And both of these together constituted "*ALL* the counsel of God" (v. 27).

God purchased the Church (with the use of "Church" viewed in a complete sense, as in Rev. 2, 3) "with his own blood," and the elders in Ephesus were exhorted by Paul to "feed" those in the Church over which they had been placed (v. 28).

(There are manuscript variances in the Greek text of Acts 20:28 relative to whether *Theos* [God], *Kurios* [Lord], or both words together [both *Theos* and *Kurios*] should appear in the text — *i.e.*, God's blood, the Lord's blood [referring to Christ], or the blood of both the Father and His Son.

There is manuscript evidence for each of the three renderings, though most grammarians and translators, who study these things, usually see more evidence for the use of *Theos*

[God] alone, with the translation as it appears in the KJV [also in the NASB and NIV]. In the final analysis though it would really be immaterial which of the three manuscript variances was followed, for the Son is God manifested in the flesh.

The time that the paschal lambs were being slain throughout the camp of Israel on the 14th day of the first month of the year in 33 A.D., “in the evening [*lit.*, ‘between the evenings,’ understood to be between 3 and 6 P.M. (Ex. 12:6)] was the time when the Paschal Lamb was slain.

This was the time *when God died*. This was the time *when God purchased the Church with His Own blood.*)

And the elders, called to feed Christians in the Church, which had been purchased by the very blood of God, would, of necessity, have to move beyond teachings surrounding the simple gospel of the grace of God. Contextually, in this passage, it would have to involve things surrounding “the kingdom of God.”

And, in conjunction with that, contextually, it would involve commending them to God and to His Word — *THAT which could build them up in “the faith” so they might one day realize the inheritance to which they had been called* (v. 32).

Paul, in Acts 20:17ff, exhibited *EXACTLY* the same qualities which Peter exhibited in his second epistle. Paul had previously spent three years teaching the Christians at Ephesus, and that which he taught them centered around “*the Word of the Kingdom.*”

Then, when he had called the elders of this Church together for his last time with them, he still called their attention to teachings surrounding “*the Word of the Kingdom,*” though these were things that he had spent three previous years teaching them.

THIS is HOW important he considered this overall teaching to be.

And Peter, writing his second epistle and calling attention to *this SAME message*, stated that he was going to *ALWAYS keep these things before the Christians to whom he wrote*, though they had previously been taught these things and were established in these truths. As long as he remained alive he was going to *STIR them up by calling these things to their attention* (1:12-18; 3:1, 2; cf. 1:1-11).

Many Christians in the Church today would look upon anyone proclaiming the message surrounding Christ's return after this fashion as "fanatical," or as someone who has "gone to seed on Christ's return."

BUT, THAT'S NOT the way Scripture presents the matter at all!

THIS was the *CENTRAL* message Paul (et al.) proclaimed, and *THIS* was the way that the Holy Spirit moved him to structure his epistles (seen in the structure of the other epistles also, Hebrews through Jude).

Accordingly, this was a message *NOT ONLY* constantly proclaimed *BUT* well known and understood throughout Christendom during Paul's day (Col. 1:5, 6, 23-28).

Note, for example, the Book of Ephesians: As elsewhere throughout the Word of God, there are references in the epistle to the gospel of the grace of God (e.g., 2:1-9), but almost the entire epistle concerns itself with things surrounding the gospel of the glory of Christ. The epistle concerns itself, in the main, with that which is stated in Eph. 2:10, giving the purpose for man's salvation (vv. 8, 9).

THIS is what the inheritance in chapter one has to do with; *THIS* is what the mystery revealed to Paul in chapter three has to do with; and the epistle ends with details concerning the present warfare against those in the land of our inheritance and how we are to array ourselves for the battle at hand.

And between these points, in other parts of the epistle, one will find the same central teaching.

And, in this respect, it's interesting that the Church in Ephesus appears first among the seven Churches in Revelation chapters two and three. The Church in Ephesus sets forth an example of the way that the Church existed at the beginning of the dispensation (knowledgeable about the present spiritual warfare, the Christians' future inheritance, etc.).

BUT, then things began to happen, as seen even in the Church in Ephesus, which left its "first love" (Rev. 2:4).

THEN, the Church appears at the end of the dispensation *in a completely different setting*, a condition resulting from the Church initially leaving its "first love," seen in the seventh and last of the Churches in Revelation chapters two and three, the Church in Laodicea — described as "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. 3:14-21).

That Which Happened

So, WHAT happened?

A woman placed leaven in the three measures of meal.

THAT'S what happened.

And Christ stated that the leaven would do its damaging work, "till the whole was leavened" (Matt. 13:33).

This depicts a work by Satan beginning very early in the dispensation.

The approximate time when this was done can be known through observing that even during the first few decades of the existence of the Church things were beginning to go awry.

The Church in Ephesus had left its "first love" (Rev. 2:4), and false prophets (Christian teachers, elders, proclaiming a message contrary to "the Word of the Kingdom" — apostates) were beginning to appear in the Churches (II Peter, Jude).

This all occurred within the first forty years of the Church's existence, and the heaven took the Church down over the next several centuries *UNTIL the message surrounding "the Word of the Kingdom" had all but disappeared.*

By the fourth century A.D., during the days of the Roman Emperors Constantine the Great and Theodosius I, the Church had so *completely lost its true focus THAT the unthinkable eventually happened.*

The Church MERGED with the State!

In the year 380 A.D., Theodosius I issued an edict that made Christianity *the exclusive state religion*; and by the year 395 A.D., Christianity had become recognized as *the OFFICIAL and ONLY religion of the Roman Empire — something which could NOT have occurred apart from almost three centuries of the working of the heaven from within.*

The Church, called to inherit *in another land (a heavenly)*, had settled down in the land from which it had been called (*an earthly*); *the Church, CALLED to rule and reign in a future kingdom (under Christ), had forsaken its high calling and MERGED with the powers in the present kingdom (under Satan).*

A 1,000-year period of darkness then engulfed the Church, awaiting the Reformation under Martin Luther, along with succeeding events.

The Reformation itself though *had NOTHING* to do with a restoration of truths surrounding the gospel of the glory of Christ. The reformers were concerned centrally with the simple gospel of the grace of God.

It was only in later years that men began to look beyond the simple message of salvation by grace through faith — *beyond that set forth in Gen. 1:2-5 to that set forth in Gen. 1:6-2:3.*

But even then there was *NO* restoration of these truths. There was *ONLY* a bringing of them to light again, with one Christian here and one Christian there understanding and receiving the truth of the matter.

The leaven had centered its attack at this point, it had done its damaging work, and the ONLY thing which remained was for the leaven to complete its work.

And THIS is WHY, when the Son of Man returns for His Church, He will NOT find “the faith” being proclaimed by elders in the Churches of the land.

The WHOLE will have been leavened.

Those in the Churches will be talking about everything BUT the central message of Scripture.

And the dispensation will end with the Church — the complete Church, fundamental and liberal alike — in the condition depicted by the Church in Laodicea.

The Way Things Are

We’re in the final days of a dispensation in which the leaven has been working for almost two millennia. The Church at the end of the dispensation is to be completely permeated by the leaven, and this has particular reference to the message surrounding “the Word of the Kingdom.”

THIS is the message Christ will NOT find being proclaimed in the Churches at the time of His return.

And, IF a person wants to see EXACTLY where we ARE in relation to THAT day through the working of the leaven ALONE, ALL he has to do is go into practically ANY Church of the land and listen to the message being proclaimed from the pulpit.

He will listen in VAIN for any mention of that which is NOT ONLY the central message which Scripture directs to the saved BUT also the central message which was proclaimed and understood throughout Christendom during the early years of the Church — namely that Christians have been purchased by the blood of God for a PURPOSE, to be realized, first and foremost, during the Messianic Era, but then continuing during the ages beyond.

Will conditions in Christendom improve?

Can matters be turned around?

WHAT does Scripture say? WHAT does the SOLE and FINAL Authority on the subject say?

Scripture states that “the whole” *will be leavened*; and Scripture further states that, as a result, *the Son of Man is NOT going to find “the faith” on the earth at the time of His return* (Matt. 13:33; Luke 18:8).

So DON’T look for an end-time revival. It’s NOT coming!

Scripture foretells TOTAL apostasy instead. Scripture foretells the COMPLETE Church standing COMPLETELY away from “the faith.”

Thus, matters can ONLY go in ONE direction. Matters can ONLY become worse!

(And don’t bother to try the so-called fundamental Churches, thinking that you might find some semblance of the message taught there. They are often worse than the liberal Churches when it comes to the non-proclamation of this message on the one hand and fighting any type mention of or adherence to the message on the other.

And the preceding would be perfectly understandable. How better to deceive than through that which purports to adhere to the Word in ALL respects?

Remaining SOLELY with Scripture, the leaven has been at work in the Church for almost the entire past 2,000 years, with THIS message at the FOREFRONT of its destructive work!

And with THIS in mind, OTHER than what exists, WHAT could you expect?)

The Church in the World Today

THE CHURCH TODAY — THAT WHICH EXISTS

Part I

*The Condition of the Church in the World Today
(Seen from Several Perspectives, O.T. & N.T.)*

“And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me...

And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

...and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play” (Ex. 32:1,2, 4, 6b).

The type in Exodus *deals primarily with Israel* at the end of the Jewish dispensation and immediately beyond (at the end of Daniel’s Seventy-Week prophecy [fulfilling the last seven years of the previous dispensation, the Jewish dispensation]).

And a secondary application would be seen in the type dealing *with the Church* at the end of the present dispensation.

Thus, Scripture presents the same bleak picture pertaining *to BOTH Israel and the Church* at the end of their respective dispensations.

THIS is a condition in which Israel presently finds itself, which will continue on into and through the Tribulation (Daniel's Seventieth Week, ending the Jewish dispensation); and, as well, THIS is a condition in which the Church presently finds itself, which will also continue to the end of the dispensation.

Two Places in the New Testament

To depict the picture pertaining to the Church as it currently exists, since Exodus chapter thirty-two is being dealt with, we'll begin doing it from this chapter first.

Then we'll go to Matthew chapter thirteen and Revelation chapters two and three to provide some complementary, additional information to help complete the picture.

Christ, following events seen at His first coming, resulting in the necessity of the Church being brought into existence (a new entity called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected, which had been taken from Israel — the proffered kingdom of the heavens), has gone back into the Mount, back to heaven, back to the center of universal government (*cf.* Matt. 21:33-45; 25:14ff; Luke 19:12ff).

And He is going to remain in the Mount, for a complete period of time, *EXACTLY* as Moses remained in the Mount for a complete period of time in the type (Ex. 24:18; Deut. 9:9).

Prior to the end of that complete period of time (forty days in the type, 2,000 years in the antitype), when Christ returns for the Church, *EXACTLY* as in the type, the Church will be seen *in the SAME state* as Israel before Moses came down from the Mount.

And though this *would NOT* normally be seen and recognized in today's Christendom, the Church presently existing as Israel existed at the foot of the Mount during Moses' day can be easily and clearly shown.

There are two places in the New Testament where a succinct, overall history of the Church throughout the dispensation is seen. And this history is seen *FROM God's perspective, NOT FROM man's*.

One account was given during Christ's earthly ministry in Matthew chapter thirteen; and the other account was given by John, in the second and third chapters of the Book of Revelation, following Christ's ascension.

And the two accounts present matters *from the SAME perspective, centering on THAT which would occur in Christendom throughout the 2,000-year dispensation relative to the proclamation of "the Word of the Kingdom," along with WHY this would occur*.

1) The Matthew Thirteen Parables

As previously seen in this book, the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen, recording the first of the two accounts of the history of the Church in the New Testament, have their setting in the previous chapter.

In chapter twelve, Christ had performed a number of supernatural signs, which had been rejected by the religious leaders and consequently the people at large. And this rejection had gone to the point of ascribing the supernatural power through which these signs had been performed to Satan (vv. 9-30).

Then, after Christ stated a number of things pertaining to the consequences of this rejection and blasphemy (vv. 31-45), a rejection which had reached an apex in Christ's ministry, matters move into that seen in chapter thirteen, which begins:

"The same day went Jesus out of the house and sat by the seaside.

And great multitudes were gathered together unto him..."
(vv. 1, 2a).

The picture is that of Jesus, because of the type rejection which He had previously experienced, leaving the house (the house of Israel) and going down by the seaside (going to the Gentiles).

This *NOT ONLY* sets the stage for the parables about to follow *BUT* anticipates the mention of the Church in chapter sixteen and the announcement concerning the kingdom (the proffered kingdom, the kingdom of the heavens, the heavenly sphere of the kingdom) being taken from Israel and being offered to an entirely new entity in chapter twenty-one (previously introduced in chapter thirteen and then identified in chapter sixteen).

Then in chapter thirteen, the first four parables present *the complete history of this new entity throughout the dispensation relative to the proclamation of that which had been rejected by Israel, taken from Israel, and offered to this new entity.*

And the parables carry the reader *FROM the point of fruit-bearing at the beginning of the dispensation TO a completely leavened Church at the end of the dispensation.*

Both the fruit-bearing and the leavening process have to be understood in relation to the subject matter at hand, "*the Word of the Kingdom*" — which is *NOT ONLY* the announced subject matter in the chapter *BUT* the subject matter seen contextually as well.

The work of Satan and his angels, by sowing tares among the wheat (second parable) and eventually taking Christendom into the very realm which Satan and his angels occupied (world government among the nations [third parable]), *NOT ONLY* stopped fruit-bearing *BUT* ultimately brought matters into the state seen in the fourth parable — *a completely leavened Church.*

And note once again *the subject matter in these first four parables, along with who is being dealt with (the subject matter and identity of the one being dealt with are seen both textually and contextually).*

The subject matter has to do with the work of Satan and his angels in relation to “the Word of the Kingdom,” and this work is seen being done among Christians throughout the dispensation, NOT among the unsaved.

Thus, these four parables present a history of Christendom throughout the dispensation, *FROM God’s perspective, NOT FROM Man’s perspective.*

And this history has to do with that which Satan and his angels would be allowed to accomplish throughout 2,000 years of Church history in relation to the proclamation of “the Word of the Kingdom” among Christians — COMPLETE, TOTAL CORRUPTION.

2) Revelation Chapters Two and Three

These two chapters in the Book of Revelation present a dual word picture.

The central word picture presented is that of the removal of the Church and the appearance of Christians before Christ’s judgment seat at the end of the dispensation, seen in chapter one (vv. 10-18).

Then the subsequent two chapters (two and three) simply continue with the same subject matter from chapter one and present different facets of this judgment, both negative and positive.

But, continuing on into chapter four, beginning at the same place seen in chapter one (the removal of the Church at the end of the dispensation, the rapture), it appears evident that there is a secondary word picture seen in chapters two and three as well.

These two chapters *NOT ONLY present the Church before Christ’s judgment seat BUT present a history of the Church throughout the dispensation*, beginning with the Church in Ephesus, which left its “first love” (2:4), and ending with the Church in Laodicea, which is seen as “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (3:17).

(Note the manner in which the Book of Revelation has been structured — “signified,” made known in the opening verse — allowing for the preceding type interpretation.

Refer to the author’s article, “Signified.”)

And all of this is relative to the same thing previously seen in the Matthew thirteen parables, which has to do with *the proclamation of “the Word of the Kingdom” among Christians throughout the dispensation.*

It can be NO other way, for the latter account of Church history throughout the dispensation (Rev. 2, 3) *MUST* be in complete accord with the former account (Matt. 13).

And this can easily be seen throughout the account. There is an overcomer’s promise to each of the seven Churches in the seven short epistles making up these two chapters, and it is evident that these overcomer’s promises *are millennial in their scope of fulfillment.*

That is to say, though presented from a different perspective, *EVERYTHING is EXACTLY the same as previously seen in the first four parables of Matthew chapter thirteen, moving toward the SAME goal.*

The work of Satan and his angels attacking *the proclamation of “the Word of the Kingdom”* is the subject matter throughout, whether in Matthew chapter thirteen or in Revelation chapters two and three.

And that which Satan and his angels are allowed to accomplish *is the SAME in BOTH — taking matters in Christendom FROM fruit-bearing, TO leaving one’s first love, to seeing NON-FRUIT-BEARING among Christians in the COMPLETE and TOTAL state of corruption existing throughout the Churches of the land.*

Satan and His Angels

The introduction of Satan in Scripture, in Gen. 3:1ff, in

association with the first man, the first Adam, *presents an individual well-versed in the ways of God and that which God had said.*

And *EXACTLY the SAME thing* is seen in his interaction with the second Man, the last Adam in Matt. 4:1ff, or anyplace else in Scripture where Satan's activities are seen.

Satan uses the Word; and he knows full-well how to use the Word in a deceptive manner, evident at the beginning in Gen. 3:1ff, establishing a first-mention principle at this early point in Scripture *on HOW Satan will ALWAYS* appear.

He will ALWAYS appear in a deceptive manner, and he will ALWAYS, after some fashion, use the Word of God in his deception.

In this respect, *God has His deep things, and Satan has his deep things* (I Cor. 2:10; Rev. 2:24 [the Greek text reads the same in both verses: "deep things").

Satan uses the Word in this manner to counter that which the Word actually has to say, centering his attack *upon "the Word of the Kingdom"* (cf. II Cor. 4:3-6). And, to accomplish his purpose through the preceding means, Satan appears, as "an angel of light," and his ministers "as the ministers of righteousness" (II Cor. 11:13-15).

Thus, if you want to find Satan and his ministers, DON'T go to the entertainment centers of the world. Go where the Word is being proclaimed.

And don't look for Satan and his ministers the way that they are often depicted. Rather, look for those advocating what may appear to be messages associated with light and righteousness, NOT messages associated with darkness and unrighteousness.

Look for Satan and his ministers occupying *the chairs of Bible* in colleges and seminaries; look for them occupying *the pulpits* of the Churches of the land on Sundays.

They occupy these places to make certain that *the one message Satan DOESN'T want proclaimed is NOT proclaimed.*

And how well Satan and his ministers have succeeded over time can easily be seen from *the ALMOST universal absence of this message from the Bible colleges, the seminaries, and the pulpits of the Churches of the land today.*

And because, over time, *the deep things of God* have become so watered down with *the deep things of Satan*, the Churches have been left so emasculated that they have had to invite the world into the Church to maintain some semblance of attendance — their music, their message, their inclusion of entertainment, etc.

Conditions have become so bad that one often DOESN'T know what is Christian and what is the world.

Thus, if an individual wants to see “the world” in which Satan and his angels dwell, *the best place to look — actually, the ONLY place to look — would NOT be in the world's entertainment centers BUT in the Churches.*

That seen out in the world is *EXACTLY* what you see. You get what you see. *It's the world*, regardless of form. And *there's NOTHING* deceptive about the world.

Deception can be found in that associated with Christians and their calling. The world enters into the matter *ONLY AFTER individuals have been deceived*, either finding themselves out in the world or the world brought into the Church.

Thus, for THIS type Satanic deception, which, carrying matters back to Genesis chapter three, is the ONLY type which exists, DON'T, DON'T look for Satan and his ministers in the world!

They are NOT THERE!

Instead, LOOK for them where they ARE! LOOK for them in the CHURCHES, or ASSOCIATED places!

The Church in the World Today

THAT WHICH EXISTS — THAT WHICH SHOULD EXIST

Part II

The Biblical Relationship of Christians to the World

“I have given them thy Word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil [‘the evil one’].

They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Sanctify them through thy truth; thy Word is truth”
(John 17:14-17).

Christians live in a world governed and controlled by Satan and his angels, a world which would date back to a time following the creation of the heavens and the earth when God appointed and placed Satan and his angels in positions of power over the earth (*cf.* Ezek. 28:14ff; Dan. 4:17ff; Rom. 13:1).

Thus, it is a world in which Satan and his angels continue a rule which they have held since time immemorial, since a time preceding Satan’s fall (with one-third of Satan’s original contingent of angels presently ruling in lesser positions of power under him [*cf.* Rev. 4:4, 10, 11; 12:3, 4]).

THEN, since man’s creation and fall 6,000 years ago — an individual created in God’s image, after His likeness, created to take the sceptre in the stead of Satan and his angels (Gen. 1:26-28 [though the fall, requiring redemption, has delayed man from occupying this position]) — Satan and his angels, continuing to rule, have carried out this rule *through fallen man, through earthly rulers among the nations* (Dan. 10:12-20).

And since the time Israel was brought into existence, over two millennia following man's creation, during Moses' day (descendants of Jacob, a special creation, separate from the nations), the rule of Satan and his angels through fallen man *has been restricted to the Gentile nations*.

Israel's ruling angel is Michael, with undoubtedly a large contingent of angels ruling under him. And Michael, with his angels, *is NOT part of Satan's kingdom* (Dan. 10:21).

(Ref. the author's book, *The Most High Ruleth*, for a more complete, overall picture of the preceding.)

A World Which Hates Christians

The preceding, according to John 17:14, describes *a world which hates Christians, for a revealed reason — a world presently governed and controlled by Satan and his angels*.

Something though *is evidently WRONG in today's world, for there is NO presently existing hatred between the world and Christians*. The world and Christians appear to get along with one another just fine.

The conflict described in Scripture, for all practical purposes, *simply DOESN'T exist in today's world*.

So, what is this all about?

The answer is simple.

All a person has to do is read the first part of John 17:14, then take a look at Christendom in the world today.

And doing so, *that person can know, SOLELY from a Scriptural standpoint, WHAT is wrong. He can know, SOLELY from a Scriptural standpoint, WHY Christians are NOT hated by the world today*.

Note the verse:

"I have given them thy Word; and the world hath hated them..."

The world *EITHER* hates *OR DOES NOT* hate Christians, the world *EITHER* gets along with *OR DOES NOT* get along with Christians, *on ONE basis alone — the WORD.*

Christians holding to the Word, proclaiming the Word, *will NOT find the world to be their friend.*

On the other hand, *Christians NOT holding to the Word, NOT proclaiming the Word, will have NO problem with the world. The two can walk hand-in-hand.*

Stated another way, *there can be NO such thing as Christians holding to, proclaiming the Word, and, at the same time, being loved by the world.*

And the inverse of that would have to be equally true. *The world would have NO basis for hating Christians NOT holding to the Word, NOT proclaiming the Word.*

The base for the whole of the matter is SINGULAR.

It's NOT aids to devotions, it's NOT so-called Christian music, it's NOT anything connected with any type so-called Christian activity!

Rather, it's the WORD, the WORD, the WORD, NOTHING else, with that being the END of the matter!

Why?

The “*WHY*” of the world’s hatred for Christians holding to and proclaiming the WORD is very simple.

Satan could ONLY have an extreme hatred for what the WORD reveals about where matters are headed.

Satan is the god of this age (II Cor. 4:4), he and his angels rule through and control the nations, and the nations could ONLY follow suit concerning WHAT the WORD has to say about that which the future holds for Satan, his angels, and unsaved man under his control and sway.

But, IF the WORD is removed, THEN NOTHING is left. Apart from the WORD, there would be NO basis for an existing enmity between the world and Christians.

Again, it's the WORD, the WORD, the WORD, NOTHING else!

So, What Has Happened?

The Church and the world find themselves today at the very end of a 2,000-year dispensation in which God has been dealing *with the new creation* “in Christ.”

Israel was set aside for a dispensation, *a new creation* was called into existence, and the Spirit of God has been performing a special and particular work throughout the dispensation. He has been calling out a bride for God’s Son, who will reign as consort queen with Him — co-heir over all things — following Satan and his angels being put down.

Satan and his angels know these things, which form the heart of the message to be proclaimed by and heard in the Churches of the land today.

BUT, how many Christians know anything about or have ever even heard these things proclaimed?

The answer to that question will explain the “why” of the problem presently existing throughout Christendom.

1) *In Christendom*

In the chronology of Church history, as depicted in the first four parables of Matthew chapter thirteen, or in the letters to the seven Churches in Revelation chapters two and three (the only two places in the N.T. where this complete history is revealed), *the Church at the end of the dispensation is seen in two descriptive ways:*

- 1) As *completely leavened* (Matt. 13:33).
- 2) As *wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked* (Rev. 3:17b).

In the latter, the Church has been deceived into believing that it is “rich, and increased with goods, and have [has] need of nothing” (Rev. 3:17a [which would be relative to the subject matter at hand, whether here or in Matt. 13]).

And *the subject at hand*, as previously seen, has to do with an adherence to and a proclamation of “the Word of the Kingdom.”

The Church at the end of the dispensation believes that conditions exist one way when, in reality, they exist in a completely opposite respect, which is the way that God, NOT man, sees the Church at this time.

Why is this the case? The answer, part and parcel with the working of the leaven, is very simple.

Because of the working of the leaven over 2,000 years time, the Church has progressively strayed from the pure, unadulterated proclamation of the Word (John 16:9-11), the Church has progressively gone the way of the world, and the world has won the Church over.

Accordingly, the world has disarmed the Church, stripping the Church naked of the armor which God has provided (Eph. 6:11-17 [again, note the end result of this “naked” condition in Rev. 3:17b]).

If a person doesn’t believe that this is the case, ALL he has to do is open his eyes and look around.

There is no hatred between the world and the Church; and it is difficult to know whether we have a worldly Church or a Churchly world — probably both. Equally difficult is to know where one begins and the other ends in the world today.

2) *In the World*

The world though, by disarming the Church, has sealed its own fate. In a respect, the nations comprising the world, through disarming the Church, have committed genocide.

The Church, possessing the Word, believing and proclaiming this Word, is in possession of a restraining power for all which exists among the nations.

But a disarmed Church, having ignored the Word, is another matter entirely.

Note how such a Church is aptly described in Matt. 5:13-16:

“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

(Matthew 5-7, the Sermon on the Mount, was given to Israel and had to do with the proffered kingdom.

Once the kingdom had been taken from Israel, with an entirely new entity, *the one new man* “in Christ,” having been called into existence to be the repository for the kingdom, the Sermon on the Mount then became applicable to *this new man*.)

The Church, in this passage in Matthew chapter five, can be seen as the “salt of the earth” which has “lost his savor” and is now “good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.”

The Church can be seen as the “light of the world,” though NOW “put under a bushel.” And, occupying this position, there is *NO longer* a shining light which can glorify the “Father which is in heaven.”

The restraining power of such a Church is *GONE*. And apart from this restraining power, there is *NOTHING* withholding *the god of this age* from taking the nations under his control and sway to heretofore unseen depths of degradation — *e.g.*, homosexuality and same-sex marriage running

rampant, uprisings in nations worldwide, etc.

The Church, by being out in the world, part of the world, has allowed this to occur on the one hand; and the world, under Satan, has brought it to pass on the other.

And the end result will be far from anything that anyone might desire.

3) *The End of the Matter*

The principle pertaining to the whole of that which exists is seen in II Thess. 2:3-12. This passage, dealing with an already working “mystery of iniquity,” has to do with things which will occur, yet future, after an existing restraining power has been removed.

(This restraining power has to do with the work of the Spirit during the present dispensation, in the antitype of that seen in Gen. 24. Thus, in that respect, it would have to do with the continued existence of the Spirit and the Church in the world.

For information on this restraining power referenced in II Thessalonians chapter two [vv. 6, 7], refer to the author’s article, “Antichrist Cannot Appear Until...”)

Once this restraining power has been removed, the man of sin (the Antichrist) is going to be revealed, one “whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.”

This man, seated on Satan’s throne, will take the nations of the earth, including Israel, to the very brink of complete destruction (Matt. 24:22; Rev. 13:2).

And, leading into this man’s rise, paving the way for him to put the finishing touches on all seen happening in the world today, *is the worldly Church NO longer holding to or proclaiming the Word, OPENING the door for the world under Satan and his angels to become fully engaged in the madness seen beginning to build all around us.*

The world, spiritually speaking, *is dead*; and the Church, the only means through which the world could possibly find life during the present time, *for all practical purposes, has become like the world. And the same fate awaits both* (I Cor. 11:31, 32).

Note from the preceding two verses that it is possible for Christians who do not judge themselves during the present time to one day be judged by the Lord after a fashion that they will be “condemned with the world.”

For the Christian, this could ONLY have to do with his calling, with millennial verities in view; but for the world, without life or a calling, this could ONLY have to do with eternal verities.

And that brings matters back to the existing problem. *The Church, by forsaking the Word (progressively brought about by the working of the leaven), has allowed a friendship with the world to ensue* (cf. James 4:4; I John 2:15-17), *sealing its own fate in one respect; and the world, having disarmed the Church, has sealed its own fate in another respect.*

How much worse will it become on both fronts before the Lord steps in and removes the Church?

Only time will tell!

But when the Church is removed, and the existing flicker of light, though under a bushel, is gone — *with NOTHING but darkness and death remaining — things will begin tumbling completely out of control.*

And you DON'T want to be here!

But you WILL be IF unsaved!

And you DON'T want to be among Christians at Christ's judgment seat, “condemned with the world”!

But you WILL be IF...!