

THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD

The Condition of the Church in the World Today
(Seen from Several Perspectives, O.T. & N.T.)

By Arlen L. Chirwood

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 immediately beyond), and a secondary application would be seen in the type dealing with the Church at the end of the present dispensation and immediately beyond.

Scripture presents the same bleak picture pertaining to both *Israel* and *the Church* at the end of their respective dispensations — 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 a condition in which *the Church as well 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 that 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 (*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.*

The Matthew Thirteen Parables

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.*

Thus, these four parables present a history of Christendom throughout the dispensation, *from God's perspective, not man's*. 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*.

(For additional information, refer to the author's book, MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM.)

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 (*ref. Ch. VII in the author's book, THE TIME OF THE END*).

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).

And all of this is relative to the same thing previously seen in the Matthew thirteen parables — relative to 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 must be in complete agreement with the former account.

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, which move 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 total and complete corruption existing in the Churches of the land*.

(For additional information, refer to the author's book, JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST.)

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). 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 with messages associated with darkness and unrighteousness.

Look for Satan and his ministers occupying *the chair of Bible* in colleges and seminaries; look for them occupying *the pulpits* of the Churches of the land on Sunday morning, Sunday night.

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 today would not be in the world's entertainment centers but in the Churches*. That seen out in the world in which we live is not really the world in its true form, *i.e.*, a form with respect to that associated with the central work of Satan and his angels. For this, today, *look in the Churches instead*.

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